



# Seneca Lake **PURE WATERS** Association

## **BLOOM WATCH UPDATE**



### SHORELINE MONITORING SCORECARD

Observation Dates: Thru 8/2/2020

% Zones Monitored: NA

**Suspicious Blooms: 0**

**Confirmed Blooms: 0**

### 2020 HABs Weekly Zone Surveys Started This Week

Our 120+ volunteers are trained and are out looking for HABs! Although volunteers have been doing spot HAB surveys in July, now that August is here, they will be surveying their zones at least once a week.

As mentioned in the last Bloom Watch, Pure Waters has updated its HAB website ([senecalake.org](http://senecalake.org)) for 2020. There is a real-time bloom scorecard that will tell you if there are reported blooms on the lake “today”, “this week”, or “last week”. The map is there as well as a link to more detailed information about the blooms. As always, there is background information and links for more details.

We did have one report of a possible bloom on July 25<sup>th</sup>, but after further review we decided it was not a cyanobacteria bloom.

Now that the Cladophora is decaying and the water is clearing up, we can expect HABs to form. Please be alert. The following article about this summertime change in the lake’s biology is from Ian Smith, our Seneca Lake Watershed Steward.

## Change Is in the Air

On a recent trip to the northwestern side of the lake, a familiar and unpleasant note was in the air; the smell of dying Cladophora, a nuisance algae. With the reign of the Cladophora at an end we now find ourselves in the season of the Cyanobacteria.

The algal community is diverse. As the chemical, physical, and biological conditions in the lake change over time, the composition of this community changes as well. Some species thrive and multiply under specific conditions found at certain times of year while others struggle to survive. This ebb and flow is referred to as algal succession and is an important ecological characteristic of the lake.

Green algae such as Cladophora tend to thrive during the early summer period. These are preceded by Cyanobacteria; also known as blue green algae (BGA). Cyanobacteria can produce harmful algal blooms (HABs), which are the focus of Bloom Watch. Both are natural and important components to the health of the lake. However, excessive amounts of either can negatively impair waterways as many of you are aware of.

Understanding the conditions that lead to this excessive growth is still a subject of research, but elevated nutrient levels and the presence of dreissenid (zebra and quagga) mussels, are commonly implicated as primary drivers for both [Cladophora](#) and [BGA](#). Addressing these drivers is an ongoing and long-term challenge made more complex by additional factors, yet we must rise to it and work towards the goal of a healthier Seneca Lake.

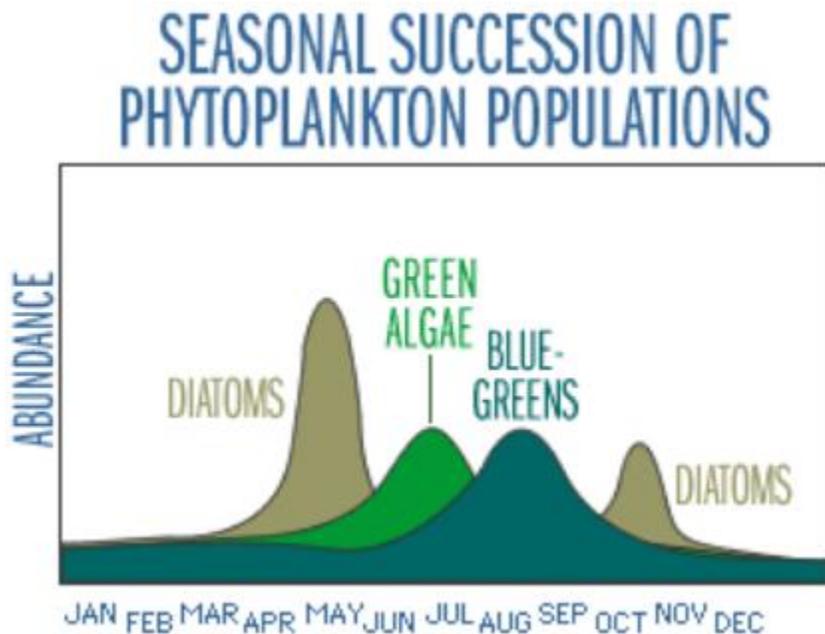


Photo Credit link: [http://www.waterontheweb.org/under/lakeecology/14\\_algalsuccession.html](http://www.waterontheweb.org/under/lakeecology/14_algalsuccession.html)

## What do blooms look like?

We will provide some photos in each Bloom Watch to help everyone better identify blooms.



This week, we show how easy it is to confuse blooms with other phenomenon. These two pictures look a lot like blooms, but they are pollen. Pollen generally is at its peak earlier than blooms happen (June) and it tends to be very yellow. There were many instances of pollen that look like HABs this spring. Sometimes dust can stay on the surface and look like sparse HABs.

Do not put your hands in a bloom. Blooms are very 2-dimensional and don't stick together like seaweed or filamentous algae does. It is mainly green, but can take on some other colors. It can be streaky, blotches, dots, or scum in appearance.

## What is one of the best things I can do to stay on top of this situation?

Visit the Seneca Lake Pure Waters website frequently at [senecalake.org](http://senecalake.org). It will have the most current information. In addition, if you live on the lake, it might be a good idea to check with neighbors and determine who your local Shoreline Survey Volunteer is. All of our volunteers are a wealth of information and a good person to know. Our 120+ volunteers are well distributed around the lake and many residents have regular conversations with our volunteers as they survey our shores on a regular basis.

If not a Pure Waters member, consider joining. We can use your support and help as we work

hard to accomplish our mission of Preserving, Protecting and Promoting Seneca Lake Water Quality. Click [here](#) if you would like to become a member now. Those who need to renew and know their login information can click [here](#) to renew.

I look forward to keeping you up to date as we progress through our HABs/Cyanobacteria season. Enjoy the rest of your summer!!

Bill Roege

HABs Director

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

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## **HAB FACTS: What you need to know!**

Exposure to any cyanobacteria HABs can cause health effects in people and animals when water with blooms is touched, swallowed, or when airborne droplets are inhaled. This is true regardless of toxin levels; some blue-green algae produce toxins, while others do not. Exposure to blooms and toxins can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea or vomiting; skin, eye or throat irritation and allergic reactions or breathing difficulties.

Because blue-green algal bloom conditions change rapidly over time, the best prevention is to take steps to avoid waters with visible blooms:

- People, pets, and livestock should avoid areas with blooms or surface scums, or water that is noticeably discolored.
- Avoid blooms when swimming, boating, fishing, and don't eat fish caught from areas of water with blooms.
- If you or your pets are exposed to blue-green algal blooms, stop using the water and rinse off with clean water.
- Consider medical attention for people and animals if symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting; skin, eye, or throat irritation; and allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur after contact with surface waters with blooms.
- Never drink untreated surface water. Even if you treat it in your home with water filtration, chlorine, ultraviolet (UV) light, or other treatment; it's still not protected from

blue-green algae and toxins.

- If you would like to see where HABs are occurring in NY State, visit the DEC Website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>. Their map is [here](#).
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