

September 3, 2021

BEACH CONDITIONS TO SEPTEMBER 2

Second level algae toxin advisory signs were removed this week at Kerrs Lake and replaced with first level algae advisory signs, as the concentration of algal toxin microcystin is now below the recreation objective of 20 µg/L.

Algal blooms were also sampled at Birds Hill and Sandy Lake this week. The number of blue-green algae cells was above Manitoba's recreational water quality objective for both of these beaches, while the concentration of the algal toxin microcystin was below the recreation objective at both beaches. Resamples are being collected from Sandy Lake as the concentration of algal toxin microcystin was quite elevated and near exceeding the recreation objective. Results will be posted on the website as soon as they are available. First level algae advisory signs remain posted at Birds Hill and Sandy Lake. First level algae advisory signs indicate that blue-green algal blooms have been found at these beaches this summer and provide advice regarding what to do if you see an algal bloom.

Algal blooms are difficult to predict and may form and then disperse quickly or last for several days or weeks. Warm and calm weather coupled with relatively high nutrient loads provide ideal conditions for blue-green algae to develop. People are reminded to avoid swimming in water where severe algal blooms are visible and to prevent pets from drinking water along the shoreline where algal blooms are present. Home and cottage owners who use lake water as a source for drinking water should be aware that most small treatment systems are unable to remove algal toxins. Therefore, where blue-green algal blooms are present, avoid drinking the water or using it for other domestic purposes.

Densities of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) were within recreational water quality objectives at most beaches monitored this week.

E. coli counts were briefly above the recreational water quality objective at Birds Hill East beach on August 30, but quickly returned below the objective by September 1.

On Lake Winnipeg, *E. coli* counts were briefly above the recreational water quality objective at Hnusa beach on August 31, but also quickly returned below the objective by September 2.

Bathers are advised to avoid swallowing lake water, wash hands before handling food, and avoid swimming with an open cut or wound, or while experiencing illness. On Lake Winnipeg, bathers should minimize water contact if lake levels are high and strong winds are blowing from the north. Research shows *E. coli* counts tend to be elevated during these conditions as they are washed out of the wet beach sand and into the bathing area.

Information on beach water quality results, advisory signs posted at beaches, swimmer's itch advisories, swimmer and water safety, and how to report an algal bloom is available at: manitoba.ca/beaches.

Please note this is the final weekly beach conditions report for 2021.