

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Far West Region, PO Box 342, BOURKE NSW 2840



**Infrastructure, Planning
and Natural Resources**

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**Algae Alerts in the Barwon-Darling river system
as of Thursday, 20 January 2005**

	CURRENT ALERT LEVEL	PREDOMINANT BLUE- GREEN ALGAE GENERA[#]	PREVIOUS ALERT LEVEL
LOCATION	15 DECEMBER 2004		10 NOVEMBER 2004
Barwon River @ Mungindi	NIL	No blue-green algae detected	NIL
LOCATION	13 JANUARY 2005		14 DECEMBER 2004
Barwon River @ Collarenebri	LOW	Oscillatoria	NIL
Barwon River @ Walgett Dangar Bridge	NIL	No blue-green algae detected	NIL
Namoi River @ Walgett	LOW	Oscillatoria	NIL
LOCATION	12 JANUARY 2005		14 DECEMBER 2004
Barwon River @ Brewarrina	LOW	Oscillatoria	LOW
LOCATION	11 JANUARY 2005		16 DECEMBER 2004
Darling River @ Bourke	MEDIUM	Aphanocapsa Oscillatoria	LOW
LOCATION	11 JANUARY 2005		15 DECEMBER 2004
Darling River @ 'Rose Isle' 30km north east of Louth NSW	MEDIUM	Oscillatoria Aphanocapsa	VERY HIGH
Darling River @ Louth	MEDIUM	Oscillatoria Aphanocapsa	MEDIUM
LOCATION	11 JANUARY 2005		15 DECEMBER 2004
Darling River @ Tilpa	LOW	Oscillatoria	MEDIUM
Darling River @ 'Trevallyn' 70km south west of Tilpa NSW	No current information		No current information
Darling River @ 'Atley' 10km east of Wilcannia NSW	No current information		No current information
Darling River @ Wilcannia	LOW	Aphanocapsa	NIL
Darling River @ 'Culpaulin' 25km south west of Wilcannia NSW	No current information		No current information

Only the two most frequently observed blue-green algae genera that contribute to the current alert level are presented above in order of their abundance. *There may also have been other blue-green algae genera present.* These data are presented for information only. We recommend that water treatment and stock management responses should not be altered according to the observed blue-green algae genera. All blue-green algae genera should be considered as potentially harmful to human and animal health when present in blooms.

www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au

For all media enquiries concerning this report contact: Geoff Wise (02 6883 3000 or 0429 822 591) or Richard Hicks (02 6883 3000 or 0419 842 587)

For further information about this report contact Sean Dwyer on 02 6872 2144

For toll free information on blue-green algae in upstream water storages ring 1800 243 997

For further information on blue-green algae in the Barwon-Darling River ring 1300 657 763

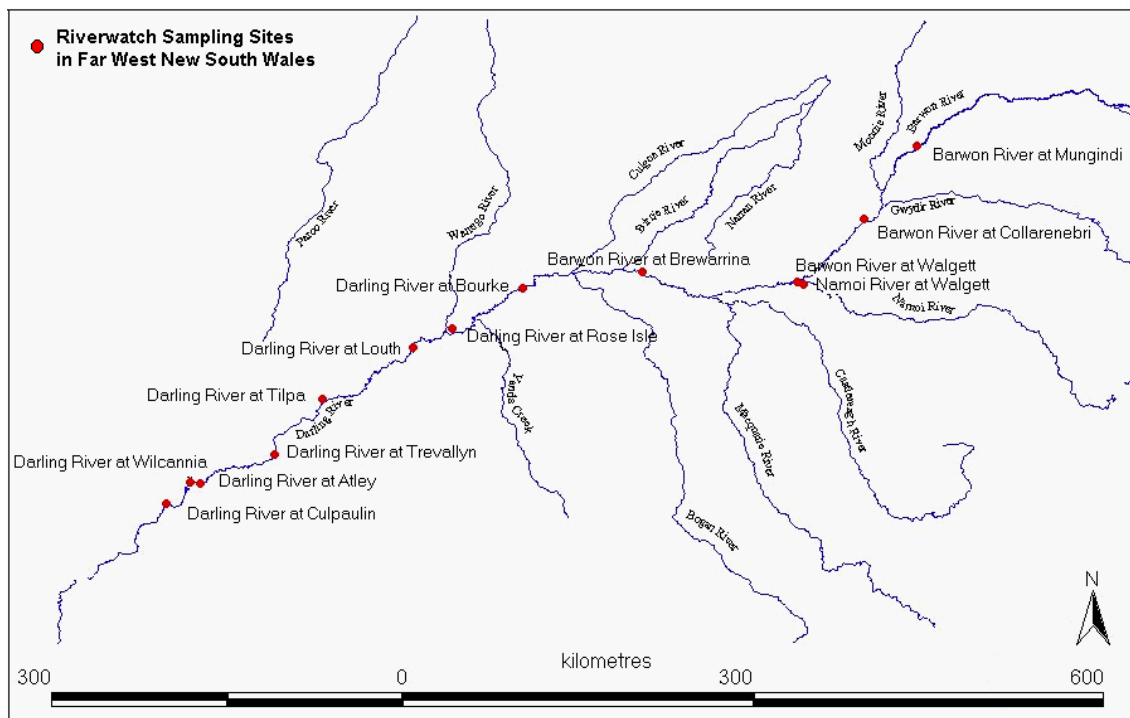
Far West Algal Alert Report

Thursday, 20 January 2005

COMMENTS

No blue-green algae blooms were identified in the Barwon-Darling river system on the stated sampling day. However, medium levels of blue-green algae were also observed in the Darling River at Bourke. 'Rose Isle' and Louth, which suggests there is potential for bloom development in these areas.

River users and landholders are advised to avoid waters in areas subject to high and very high alert levels or with visible areas of algae scums. They should also consider either alternative sources of water or treatment of river water supply to remove algae and algae by-product. NSW Health advises that any domestic use of surface water without treatment should be avoided.



ALERT DEFINITIONS

High Alert (>15,000 cells/ml), Very high alert (>50,000 cells/ml)

These alert levels represent 'bloom' conditions. The water will appear green and may have strong, musty or organically polluted odours. The blue-green algae will be visible as clumps or as scums. Blue-green algae 'blooms' may be toxic to humans and animals. Toxicity should be assumed. People should avoid reaches where blue-green algae can be seen or which have a strong odour as previously described. Contact with or consumption of untreated water from the river should be avoided because of the risk of eye and skin irritations and stomach upsets. Boiling is not a suitable way of treating water containing blue-green algae and in fact may release more toxins. Filtration in conjunction with activated carbon is a more effective means of water treatment. Dogs and stock are particularly at risk from toxic blue-green algae blooms. Owners should keep dogs away from high alert areas and provide alternative watering points for stock.

Medium Alert (2,000-15,000 cells/ml)

Blue-green algae may be multiplying in numbers. The water may have a green tinge and musty or organic taste and odours. Alternative supplies of raw water for domestic purposes should be considered. Domestic water suppliers should institute taste and odour removal systems where available. The water may be suitable for recreational use, however people should be cautious as algal concentrations can increase rapidly.

Low Alert (<2,000 cells/ml)

Blue-green algae occur naturally at low numbers. At this concentration, algae do not pose a threat for recreational, stock or domestic use.

This blue-green algal alert report is based on routine monitoring by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources and local Shire Councils. It should be noted that the presence and location of blue-green algae in the Barwon-Darling river system could vary considerably, according to water and weather conditions.

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