



Rick Scott
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 10, 2011

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Caution Recommended – Caloosahatchee River by Pat Dobbins

The Hendry and Glades County Health Departments are recommending caution of exposure (for humans, pets, or livestock) to the waters of the Caloosahatchee River for the next few weeks.

A toxin produced by Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) has shown up in preliminary tests which can cause harm to fish, animals and humans when swallowed. This blue-green algae is also known to reduce the oxygen levels in the water as the algae bacterium decomposes resulting in fish kills.

At this time, the Hendry and Glades County Health Departments have not received any information that the toxins in the Caloosahatchee River have reached harmful levels. However, the Health Departments are recommending that people in the communities avoid eating fish from the river if dead fish are floating on the surface, in addition to avoiding ingestion (swallowing) the river water.

The World Health Organization reports that humans can be affected with a range of symptoms including skin irritation, stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, fever, sore throat, headache, muscle and joint pain, blisters of the mouth and liver damage. Swimmers in waters containing the cyanobacterial toxins may suffer allergic reactions such as asthma, eye irritation, rashes, and blisters around the mouth and nose. The toxins can also affect the kidneys.

There are several toll free hotlines available for people to report fish kills or illness associated with blue-green algae:

Fish Kill Hotline (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) 800-636-0511
Human Illness (Florida Aquatic Toxin Hotline) 888-232-8635

For more information, you can go to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/hab/cyanobacteria/default.htm> or you can the Environmental Health Office at the Hendry or Glades County Health Departments:
LaBelle-(863)674-4041 xt154, Clewiston-(863)902-4224 or Moore Haven-(863)946-0707

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