June 22, 2021

New test results show the level of toxicity from blue-green algae at a monitoring site in Lake Travis has declined significantly, and now is below laboratory detection limits.

Samples collected June 10 from the Travis Landing area of Lake Travis showed trace amounts of cyanotoxins were present, but not at quantifiable levels. Algae species capable of producing toxins were still present.

Even with the decreased toxicity levels at the Travis Landing site, LCRA strongly recommends people continue to avoid contact with algae while swimming and to keep their dogs from ingesting or playing in algae in the Highland Lakes.

Blue-green algae are naturally occurring in all of the Highland Lakes and become more prevalent in the summer and early fall, when water temperatures are warm.

“It’s good to see those toxicity levels fall, but this is no time to let your guard down,” said John Hofmann, LCRA executive vice president for Water. “Conditions can change rapidly, and blue-green algae can be harmless one day and harmful the next.

“Given that you can’t tell by looking at algae whether it’s producing toxins or not, our recomendation is to stay on the safe side and treat all algae as if it may be producing toxins,” Hofmann said. “We encourage people to continue to keep their dogs and children from ingesting or playing in any algae in any of the Highland Lakes.”

LCRA began regular testing at the Travis Landing area of Lake Travis in February, after a dog playing in the water there died. Until the June 10 tests, every sample taken from that area since the death has contained potentially dangerous levels of dihydoanatoxin-a, a form of cyanotoxin. Additional samples taken this spring detected toxicity in algae at 10 sites along Lake Travis, and in samples collected from Inks Lake and Lake Marble Falls.

Beginning July 1, LCRA will expand its routine monitoring efforts to include cyanotoxin monitoring at 16 additional sites in lakes Buchanan, Inks, LBJ, Marble Falls and Travis. The City of Austin is conducting testing in Lake Austin and Lady Bird Lake.

For more information on what homeowners can do to minimize the growth of algae, see the Keep the Lake Clean, Not Green fact sheet on lcra.org. For more informaiton about blue-green algae, visit lcra.org/algae.

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