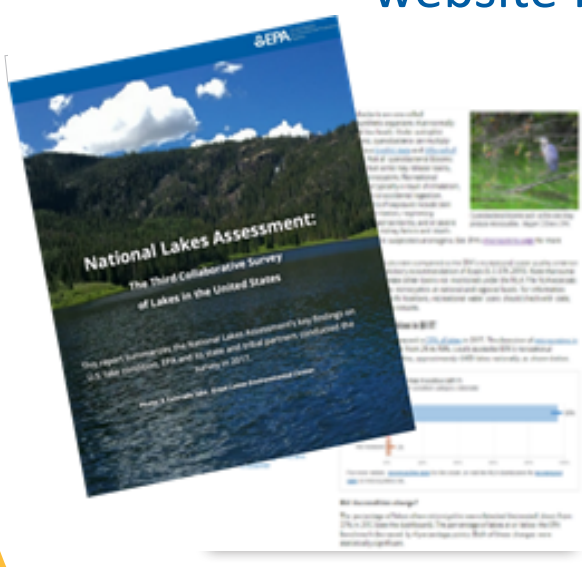
# When Good Algae Go Bad

Algae are an essential part of the lake food web, but high levels of nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen in our lakes can contribute to large, unsightly algal blooms. Some algae species (called blue-green algae or cyanobacteria) can produce toxins that are harmful to pets, people, and wildlife. EPA detected the algal toxin microcystin in 21% of lakes, but very rarely at levels that represent moderate or high risk to the public.

## What You Can Do

Play it safe: keep people and pets away from water that is green, scummy or smells bad. Report algae blooms to your local or state health department or environmental agency. Learn more at epa.gov/nutrientpollution.

## How to Learn More

In the last 15 years, EPA and its partners conducted three large scientific studies of the environmental conditions in and around U.S. lakes. At EPA's website for the National Lakes Assessment, you can view the latest report, explore the data, and more. Visit: epa.gov/national-aquatic-resource-surveys/nla.