

Great Lakes water temps strangely high

July 3 2005

Water temperatures in the lower Great Lakes are at a 5-year high, mysteriously measuring now where they were in mid-August of last year.

While swimmers are enjoying it, Rochelle Sturtevant, a systems ecologist with the Great Lakes Sea Grant network said researchers might not make sense of current temperature data for months or even years.

"Heat is very good for making things grow, including weeds, algae and bacteria," Sturtevant said.

Gary Towns, Lake Erie management supervisor for the state's fisheries division, told the Detroit News he expects to see accelerated weed growth in inland lakes and the possibility of more frequent toxic blue-green algae slicks.

As a result, he also expects an earlier and more dramatic onset of the annual midsummer fish die-off because of low oxygen levels in some lakes.

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