

# Colorado Drought Conference

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# Johnson Reservoir closed to fishing because of blue-green algae

By Joe Vaccarelli *(YourHub)*

Elevated levels of cyanobacteria, commonly called blue-green algae, have prompted park officials to temporarily close Johnson Reservoir at Clement Park in Littleton.

Swimming and boating on the lake are not allowed at any time, but Colin Insley with the Foothills Park and Recreation District said additional signs barring fishing and encouraging park visitors to keep their pets from jumping into the lake have been put up.



Dear South Platte River Stakeholder:

The City of Denver noticed sick and dead ducks along the S Platte River early last week. We collected sick and dead ducks last Wed-Sat from the South Platte River. We have worked large stretches of the river and have collected ~100 dead ducks and several more sick ducks. We suspect that avian botulism is affecting the ducks, as it has in years past in city lakes. Denver delivered a few dead ducks to the CSU lab for necropsies being run Saturday Sep 8 and likely won't have results until mid-late week (Sep 11-14). We are having the ducks tested for Avian Botulism as well as West Nile Virus. We will follow-up when we have the results.

We have had small to moderate avian botulism duck die-offs for the past few decades in a couple of our lakes. The fact that this year they are concentrated on the Platte versus the lakes is the only new wrinkle and may be due to lower flows and warmer temperatures. Denver worked the Denver section of river through the weekend to collect additional dead ducks to minimize the spread of the disease, which occurs when live ducks feed on the carcasses.

We are removing dead ducks as soon as we find them, since this disease spreads when healthy ducks eat decaying ducks. If you have the resources and/or discover a similar problem, it is encouraged you do the same. Currently, we are collecting the dead ducks in bags and having them incinerated. Several live ducks have been sent to Wild B.I.R.D. for rehabilitation.

This notice is mainly to alert you should you notice sick or dead ducks or get complaints from the public. Public health risks are very low, though people should prevent pets from eating any dead duck carcasses.

For more information on avian botulism, follow this link:

<http://www.denvergov.com/WaterQualityProgram/AvianBotullism/tabid/437574/Default.aspx>

## Low water level at Barr Lake



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## Low lake level and dead carp at Barr Lake



## Extremely low flow in the South Platte River in Weld County





Water quality impacts of low flow combined with hot, dry, sunny conditions.



# How will the 2012 Drought Impact Communities in the Future?

- Future permits will have lower low-flow calculations – which means more stringent effluent limits
- Increased water temperature affects ammonia effluent limits
- More algae means
  - Higher pH which affects ammonia effluent limits
  - Lower dissolved oxygen
- More impaired waters leading to more TMDLs



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