



BEPCO's "Mini" Bulletin

From the BEPCO Board

FIRST EDITION

June 4, 2010

Welcome to the first edition of the "Mini" Bulletin. This newsletter is brought to you by the BEPCO Board of Directors and is meant to give you the latest and greatest news and information that it is important for our members to know. We are committed to communicating in the most efficient and effective for all Bepco members.

DEAD CRAPPIES SEEN AT VARIOUS PLACES ON THE BIG EAU PLEINE

Bepco's Vice President contacted the DNR about the sightings of dead crappies. Here is the response we received from the DNR & WVIC regarding our concern:

Mike,

I looked at the BEP kill today near Hwy S. We were in a boat as well. I found some dead crappies and we found 3 that were alive but dying. From the looks of the fish, they appear to have a disease called columnaris. It can be common this time of year because the water temperature is perfect for it to occur. Plus the fish are under extra stress from spawning activities. I suspect you will continue to see new fish show up dead or near dead on the shorelines. This could go on for as much as a week. There did not appear to be that many lining the shores where I was though. Unfortunately this is the type of situation that you have to just monitor and not much can be done. Under normal circumstances I would take a live fish sample and send it to our pathologist for examination. But, I cannot do that today because it would arrive on Friday and no one can work due to our scheduled furlough day. I am pretty confident it is columnaris though. The fish had the signs on the gills and the white skin associated with the disease.

Thanks for bringing this to our attention. Please notify the other members if possible. Tom Meronek, DNR Thomas.Meronek@Wisconsin.gov

FYI - We had a FERC inspection at the Eau Pleine Thursday afternoon May 27 and took the opportunity to take some D.O. measurements. Thought you may be interested considering the dead crappies that had been reported. D.O. looked good at the three locations we monitored (the dam, Lisa's Landing, and Maryel Landing) with readings between 15 and 16 mg/l. These high reading represented 190 - 200% saturation, a result of the blue-green algae bloom we observed. Water temp was 72-74° - very warm for the end of May.

I agree with Tom Meronek's assessment that the bacteria Columnaris were the likely culprit for the crappie mortality that has been observed. See News Release below from the DNR web site.

David M. Coon

Director, Environmental Affairs, Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company

Fish Kills expected in Northwestern Wisconsin Lakes

News Release Published: June 2, 2010 by the [Northern Region](#) Contact(s): Heath Benike (715) 637-6864, Barron, Polk counties Larry Damman at (715) 635-4089, Washburn and Burnett counties

SPOONER - Biologists say conditions are ripe for fish disease outbreaks on lakes in Polk, Barron, Washburn and Burnett counties over the next few weeks. The cause will be a bacteria called Columnaris, which is known to only infect fish species and is not a health risk to humans.

"The bacteria is most prevalent in our lakes after water temperatures reach 65-70 degrees from late

May to late June," says Larry Damman, DNR fishery biologist. Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch and bullheads, already stressed from seasonal spawning activities are most affected by the disease. Cold or fluctuating water temperatures during spawning can compound spawning stress and weaken their immune system. Then the bacteria will erode the fishes' skin, causing leakage of bodily fluids and a fairly rapid death. Although Columnaris can appear to produce large scale fish losses in a matter of several days, it usually does not have a catastrophic impact on overall fish populations, according to fishery biologists.

If anglers or landowners have additional questions or see large numbers of other dead fish like carp, largemouth bass, muskie and walleye, they should contact their local DNR fisheries biologist to investigate the problem. For Barron and Polk counties call Heath Benike at (715) 637-6864, and for Washburn and Burnett counties, contact Larry Damman at (715) 635-4089.

SECTION TWO-ANNUAL MEETING AND PICNIC APPROACHING FAST-JUNE 12, 2010

Annual Meeting and Picnic

2010/2011 Board Election

**June 12, 2010
Big Eau Pleine Park**

**11:00 a.m. Annual Meeting & Election
Guest Speaker
Picnic to Follow**

**Bring a dish to pass and your own refreshments.
Hamburgers, brats, hot dogs and soda provided.
Bring your own lawn chairs
Door Prizes and Raffles**

Grand Raffle: 37" LCD LG TV

Please respond by Friday, June 4, 2010

Please email response to secretary@bigeaupleine.org

Or call 715/693-3254 or 715/581-5677

SECTION THREE-IMPORTANCE OF TESTING YOUR WELL WATER

Do you own a private well? Do you have a family member or friend that consumes drinking water from a private well?

Clean, safe drinking water is one of the most important elements of good health. Testing well water on an annual basis is one of the easiest things a private well owner can do to take care of their health and the health of their loved ones.

By law, municipalities regularly test the drinking water supplies to ensure they are safe. But with private wells, it's the well owner's responsibility to test. Wisconsin has approximately 1 million private wells, but most aren't tested for bacteria and other contaminants on the recommended annual basis. Many of these contaminants can cause sickness in people who drink, bathe or cook with the water. According to State studies, it's estimated as many as 20-25% of private wells may have bacterial contamination. In Marathon County, where one-third of our residents get their drinking water from private wells, that represents approximately 1,600 unsafe wells.

Marathon County Health Department is recommending that private well owners annually test their well water for

coliform bacteria and nitrate. Coliform bacteria are microorganisms that can be found in human and animal waste, in soil, on vegetation and in surface water runoff.

For more information on how to have private well water tested, contact the Marathon County Health Department Laboratory at 715-261-1908, then take a few minutes to test and know whether the well water you drink is safe.

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Comments & Suggestions can to sent to:

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