

## Oh No, Not Didymo!

Guess what feels like wet wool and looks like a sewage spill? It is an alga that is a diatom called didymo. It is extremely fast spreading and looks like tissue paper when parts of it die. I am studying *Didymosphenia geminata* a.k.a “Rock snot” or Didymo. Also, I am wondering if Didymo affects underwater species.

So, now you are wondering what Didymo is? It is a light to brown in color single celled organism that is mostly made of carbon. It has stalks that weave together to form 10-12 inch thick mats. The habitats at risk are stable flow water, 3in. to 6in deep, sunny open streams with moderate to high current, and or below outlets of lakes and reservoirs. It does not feel slimy. Instead it feels like wet wool. This horrible thing is originally native to northern latitudes of Europe, Asia and North America.

How does Didymo affect under water species? That is my question, and I have found some answers. Here is what I found. Mayflies, caddis flies and stone flies are dying and they are important trout food. Less preferred trout food like midges and worms, are increasing in density. Also, it affects aquatic plants which are part of trout habitat. Mats smother the insects and plants. Mats may create significant impacts to the stream ecosystem function, with the ability to alter the food web. One study showed that Didymo did not have an impact on under water species, but all the other studies showed that it does have an impact on underwater species

In conclusion, I think that it does affect underwater species, but not directly. It affects things that fish eat like insects. There are many opinions about whether it affects under water species. What do you think?

## Bibliography

"Didymo or Rock Snot (*Didymosphenia geminata*) in Vermont and the Northeast." *Water Quality Division*. VT DEC, May 2008. Web. 2 Nov. 2009.

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