

Oh no not Didymo, what will happen?

I am worried about Didymo and how it will affect the food chain. Didymo is an algae that is beginning to act like an invasive species. It is now in the rivers in most states including Vermont. I am studying how Didymo will affect the food chain.

Didymo has been around for many years but now Didymo is becoming a nuisance to us and other organisms. It is irritating to the skin, and eyes. It is found in fresh water and it is yellow brown and feels like wet cotton. The diatom is invisible to the naked eye. Stalks form on rocks. It starts with a single cell and it forms a stalk. As the stalk grows, more stalks come. The stalks will form thick mats by weaving together. These mats are 12 – 16 inches long and cover the river floor.

Didymo will kill aquatic insects and that will kill the fish. Didymo takes over the micro-invertebrate's habitat and oxygen. These insects are a crucial part of a fish diet. Without the invertebrates, the fish can't eat. Another reason that Didymo is a problem for fish is that they can't lay their eggs because there is no room and no oxygen for the eggs. The fish are being either driven away from their home or possibly dying. There can be a reaction with a bit of the food chain because when the insects die, the small fish can die. When the small fish die the big fish can die, but after that the eagles and ospreys won't have anything to eat so they can die. Since Didymo kills fish, it decreases fishing. That means that there is less food in the market.

If people don't take care of fishing gear and waders, they will be helping to spread this aquatic algae. A fisherman's felt waders can hold cells of didymo and these can be released when the waders are used again. To stop this spread, fishermen need to stop, check, clean and dry.

In conclusion, the food chain is in danger of shrinking. The world is in danger with this aquatic algae because people are either careless or they do not know how to stop Didymo. I know I was disappointed when I found out we were not swimming in our normal swimming hole for summer camp. It was not Didymo but another algae. This makes me feel very concerned, disappointed and sad. We are going to be more responsible and keep our gear clean, install screens to help filter the water, and create washing stations. People should work together to stop rock snot.

Bibliography

"Don't Spread Didymo!." *Didymo, Stop Spreading Didymo, Didymosphenia, geminata, rock snot, nuisane algae*. Green Mountain Troutfitters, Web. 2 Nov. 2009.

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