

Didymo Report

You may never know what's lurking on the bottom of your boot. It could be didymo, a single celled organism that is taking over our rivers. You can only see didymo through a microscope. How can you fight something you can't see? Didymo is really messing with our fish.

What is didymo? Didymo is a form of algae that makes thick mat like things on river bottoms. The mat is formed by stalks that weave together. Those stalks are made by didymo, a single cell organism called a diatom. The diatom has two chambers but people still call it a single cell organism. The real name for the diatom is *Didymosphenia geminata*.

What does didymo do and what is it like? Didymo grows on the bottom of rivers or streams. It can grow in still or moving water. It can last for months even after the cell has died. By then more didymo will have already come and infected what is left of the river. If you fish in one stream and you get didymo on your felt bottom boot and not know it, and you go to another stream, it will get infected and the fish will leave.

Rock snot or {didymo} can really affect fish. The real problem is that the fish can't lay their eggs because there's no room or oxygen in the water. According to Rich Langdon from the state of Vt., "Fish eggs need a good circulation of water that carries oxygen to the eggs while they are developing." The thick growth of didymo sucks up all the oxygen. Didymo also affects the fish because they can't eat. The organisms on the rocks that they eat can't survive without oxygen. Because of didymo, the fish are moving up to higher elevation where didymo can't live.

We need to stop rock snot, get the word out, educate people to clean their stuff after fishing, boating, kayaking even swimming. We are the ones who spread it, so we need to take precaution when in the water. Save our rivers. Stop spreading rock snot.

Works Cited:

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