

What's floating on the surface of Chippewa Lake?

Bryan Roels

Recently there is an odd-looking substance floating on top of the lake water and it isn't algae or invasive weeds. The picture below is of the substance that washed up on shore and in this case resembles green grapes (see attached picture).

As standard practice when we notice something odd, we run it past PLM who identified it as Bryozoa which isn't algae or weeds but an aquatic invertebrate (microscopic animals without a spine, like a microscopic shrimp). These microscopic animals combine and can form larger colony's and in some cases as large as a watermelon and feel slimy or sticky jelly.

Bryozoa have been on Earth for million years and their source of food is algae and is a very small animal that filters algae. Bryozoa combine into colonies potentially as large as a small watermelon and feel like slimy, sticky jelly. Normally they attach themselves to an object underwater but as we have seen recently can float on top of the water.

Is Bryozoa a health concern? No, other than being a nuisance to lake users, Bryozoa is an indication of a healthy body of water.

Thank you to Bob and Mary Smith for bringing this to my attention.

