



Ottawa RIVERKEEPER®  
SENTINELLE Outaouais

# Identifying Water Pollution

The Ottawa River is vulnerable to many sources of pollution. Look out for pollution on the river and follow best practices in your home to reduce pollution.



*Pollution in the Ottawa River can cause fish kills and closes beaches.*

The Ottawa River plays a key role in our economy. In addition to providing dozens of municipalities with drinking water, the river generates over \$1 million worth of hydro electricity every day and is crucial to industries such as pulp and paper mills. At the same time, the river supports large tourism and recreation industries. This heavy use of the river makes it vulnerable to pollution.

Municipal waste is one of the largest sources of pollution in the river. Although there are over 90 wastewater treatment plants in our watershed, cities and towns often release raw sewage directly into the river when sewers are filled over capacity during rain storms. Even treated wastewater can carry traces of pharmaceuticals and personal care products that we use into the river. Because there are so many sources of pollution in our river, river users may see blue-green algae blooms, oil pollution, foam, dead fish, and sedimentation.

**You can help** us fight pollution by looking out for changes on the river. If you're worried about something you see, call our toll-free pollution hotline at **1-888-9KEEPER**. We can also minimize pollution by following best practices in our homes. Let's keep our river drinkable, swimmable, and fishable!

**Did you know?**  
Chemicals found in shampoo such as triclosan can cause reproductive disorders in fish.

*Defending the Ottawa River. Protecting our Communities.  
À la défense de la rivière des Outaouais. Pour la protection de nos communautés.*

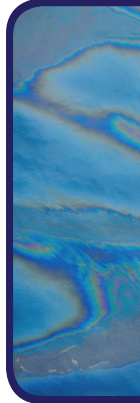


# What to look for



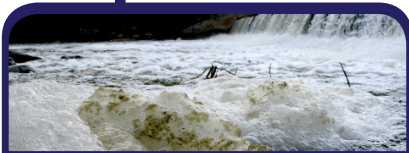
## Algal Blooms

Blue-green algae has been observed in our watershed. Blooms occur when there is a rapid increase of nutrients such as phosphorous that can come from fertilizers and septic tank leakage. Algal blooms deplete the water of oxygen which can create a dead zone for fish.



## Water Sheen

A water sheen isn't always oil pollution. Bacterial sheens are a common sighting in wetlands, ponds, and ditches of the Ottawa River, and are completely natural. However if the sheen smells of petroleum, there could be pollution from automobile oils or a pipeline. These cause serious environmental damage.



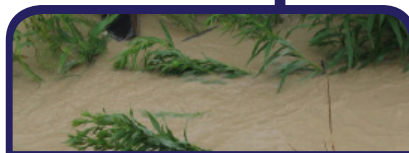
## Foam

Foam is common near shorelines or below dams. Although often mistaken for pollution, foam usually forms naturally from decomposing organic materials. However foaming is worsened when detergents and other household products are disposed of in the river.



## Dead Fish

If you see fish floating on the surface, there is likely a larger water quality issue. Algal blooms and chemical industrial spills are known to kill fish in our watershed. When fish die, other aquatic life also suffers even though we might not always see it.



## Sedimentation

Look out for unusually muddy water. Often when it rains, sediment runs off of farmers fields and construction sites into the river. This can destroy fish spawning grounds, among other things. Proper enclosures and buffer zones help reduce sedimentation.

## 5 Ways You Can Reduce Pollution

- 1 Do not throw chemicals, paints, and medication down the drain. Properly dispose of hazardous household products.
- 2 Plant a rain garden or buffer zone on your property to reduce stormwater runoff. Stormwater often carries fertilizers and other pollutants with it.
- 3 Opt for non-toxic biodegradable household and personal care products whenever possible.
- 4 Use sustainable gardening methods with drought resistant native plants on your property.
- 5 Report pollution on the river to our toll-free pollution hotline:

**1-888-9KEEPER**