

## Bryozoan Colonies: A Naturally-Occurring Phenomena



The Department of Environmental Quality often receives complaints claiming that there are gelatinous balls, floating blobs and even “water boogers” some as large as basketballs on the lake shore or in a lake or pond. This phenomenon is due to the presence of bryozoans, also called moss animals.



Bryozoans are water animals that live in colonies made up of microscopically-connected individuals called zooids. Bryozoans are invertebrates (animals without backbones) that have a box-like or tube-shaped body, a U-shaped gut, and a cluster of tentacles to trap small particles of food. Worldwide, there are about 5,000 species of bryozoans.

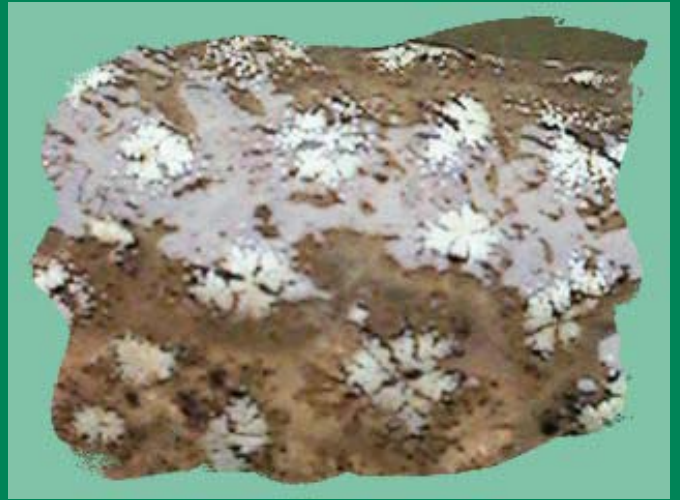
Colonies of freshwater bryozoans form gelatinous ball-like masses and are commonly found in small farm ponds in water less than a meter in depth and in shallow eutrophic (nutrient enriched) lakes and open areas of swamps for brief periods. They have also been reported to wash up on shores of deep inland lakes after storms.



If you find pollution and believe it is human-induced, please report it to the State of Michigan’s Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) hotline: 1-800-292-4706. For more information, please contact any Water Bureau district office or call the State of Michigan’s Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278.



# Bryozoan



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