

An underwater photograph showing several large, rounded, and elongated bryozoan colonies. These colonies have a porous, honeycomb-like texture and a yellowish-brown color. They are attached to dark, submerged branches and rocks in clear blue water. The lighting is bright, highlighting the intricate details of the colonies.

BRYOZOANS

A NATURALLY OCCURRING PHENOMENON



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

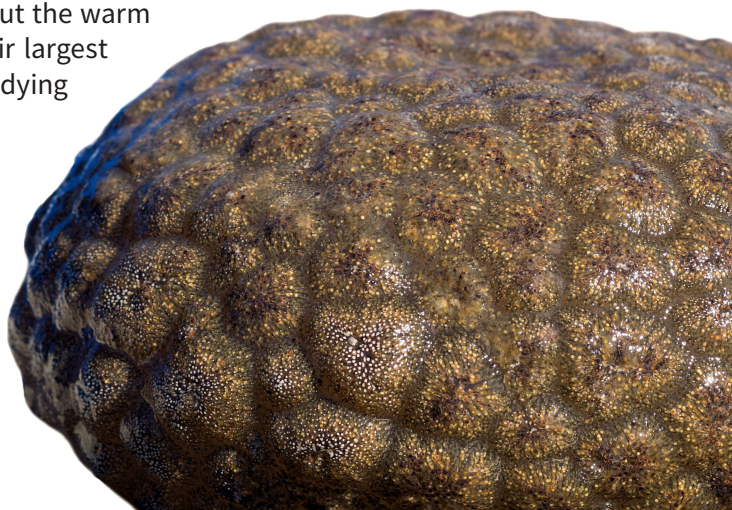


The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) often receives complaints claiming that there are gelatinous balls, floating blobs and even “water boogers” some as large as basketballs on the lake shore or in a lake or pond. This phenomenon is due to the presence of bryozoans, also called moss animals, which are not a sign of pollution.

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. While most are marine species, some are freshwater.



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. The colonies commonly attached to rocks, underwater branches, or even boats. They grow throughout the warm season reaching their largest size in the fall then dying in the winter.



For more information, please contact any EGLE district office or call the State of Michigan's Environmental Assistance Center at (800) 662-9278.

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 at (800) 292-4706.



Michigan.gov/EGLE | 800-662-9278

This publication is intended for guidance only and may be impacted by changes in legislation, rules, policies, and procedures adopted after the date of publication. Although this publication makes every effort to teach users how to meet applicable compliance obligations, use of this publication does not constitute the rendering of legal advice.

EGLE does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, political beliefs, height, weight, genetic information, or sexual orientation in the administration of any of its programs or activities, and prohibits intimidation and retaliation, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

Persons with disabilities may request this material in an alternative format by contacting EGLE's ADA Accessibility Coordinator. Please visit Michigan.gov/ADA for a list of state Coordinators.