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## YELLOW SCUM PHENOMENA

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The Ministry of Environment reports that an increased number of complaints are received in the early summer regarding the accumulation of a mustard yellow scum on inland lakes and along the shore and bays of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay.

The scum becomes most prevalent during the month of June and floats in large masses on the water surface and accumulates along shorelines and beaches. The unsightly scum is pine pollen and should not be mistaken for algae or pollution material such as paint or petroleum.

Pollen from coniferous trees usually appears yellow while from some of the deciduous trees, the material is sandy brown or gray. The pollen is transported to water bodies from the surrounding forests by high winds. Being extremely buoyant, the windblown pollen easily drifts across the lake surface and enroute, traps floating algae and other aquatic debris. The accumulation of material that reaches the shoreline and protected bay areas, is unsightly and can cause the malodorous conditions when it decomposes. The pollen eventually breaks down or becomes trapped in the sediment along shoreline areas.

*Reprinted from Ministry of the Environment material dated June 1991*