

21.01.10 Lyngbya R Bay

# DEC investigates algae

OUTBREAKS of blue green algae in mudflats around Roebuck Bay will be investigated by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Roebuck Bay Working Group.

Lyngbya majuscula, or maiden's hair, can grow on existing seagrass meadows as well as mangrove roots and rocks and can be toxic to humans and marine life.

DEC nature conservation coordinator Sharon Ferguson said the bloom could have been caused by factors including increased water temperature or increased nutrient levels in the water caused by run off from recent heavy rain.

"As well as potentially impacting on the environment it can also be a smelly and unsightly addition to the bay," she said.

Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project coordinator Fiona Bishop said the blooms could affect the density of seagrass beds in the bay.

"It can adversely impact on animal species ranging from fish to dugong and turtles," she said.

Members of the public are advised to report suspected blooms to the DEC Broome office on 9195 5500 and to avoid contact with blooms as they can be toxic to humans and cause skin and eye irritation.