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## No One Really Knows What's Making The Anacostia Shimmer

By [Aaron Morrissey](#) on Aug 17, 2011



First, there was [an oil spill](#) in the Anacostia. Then, [there wasn't](#). Now, authorities are saying that there's definitely *something* which is making the river shine, but they [aren't really sure what it is](#).

In fact, no one really seems to know what's floating around in the Anacostia, although there's a pretty firm consensus that it's probably not a very good thing for the water to be gleaming like it is:

“It may be very stressful for aquatic animals or may even kill them,” said Masaya Maeda, water-quality specialist for the Anacostia Watershed Society.

Mr. Maeda acknowledged that heavy rain this week churned up sediment and turned the

river brown, but he said he thinks the sheen is oil, not sediment or runoff, based on the odor he smelled.

That's less than reassuring. It sounds like the working theory is that the contaminant is likely something that was washed into the river after the weekend's heavy rain -- the Anacostia is highly susceptible to runoff pollution after such weather.

The Post [reports](#) that tests are still ongoing to determine precisely the nature of the substance which is floating among the currents -- but at this point, it could just be a "muck-encrusted mockery of a man" for all anyone knows.

[Contact the author of this article](#) or email [tips@dcist.com](mailto:tips@dcist.com) with further questions, comments or tips.

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the last two times I went kayaking on the Anacostia, there were bottles and cans floating all over the water, and a foamy brown scum in some areas. I don't understand why we don't have one of those skimmer boats to at least remove the surface trash from the river. I've seen similar boats in Baltimore's inner harbor, kindof like waterborne street sweepers. A superficial cleaning, yes, but better than nothing.

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