



EPA's BEACH Report: Louisiana 2010 Swimming Season

May 2011

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report beach water quality monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters to EPA. The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar activities in the water.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by the State of Louisiana for the 2010 swimming season.

Beaches monitored in 2010 continued to experience lingering impacts from hurricanes Katrina, Rita (August and September 2005, respectively), and Gustav and Ike (September 2008). Use of Cameron Parish Beaches remained below pre-storm levels, although they are slowly recovering as the area is rebuilt, and Hackberry Beach remained inaccessible. Although Louisiana experienced no direct hurricane impacts during 2010, the oil spill that resulted from the April 20, 2010, explosion on the BP leased Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling platform affected most coastal beaches on the eastern half of the state. Oil flowed from the damaged well for three months following the explosion until it was capped on July 15, 2010, although closures at some beaches continued through the end of the swimming season due to persistent oil fouling and the presence of cleanup crews. Use at the remaining beaches during 2010 was at approximately historic levels.

Notification actions directly attributable to the oil spill are not included in the summary statistics presented on page 2 of this report. A total of 1,427 beach days were under oil-related closures at 10 monitored Louisiana beaches.

Figure 1. Louisiana coastal parishes.

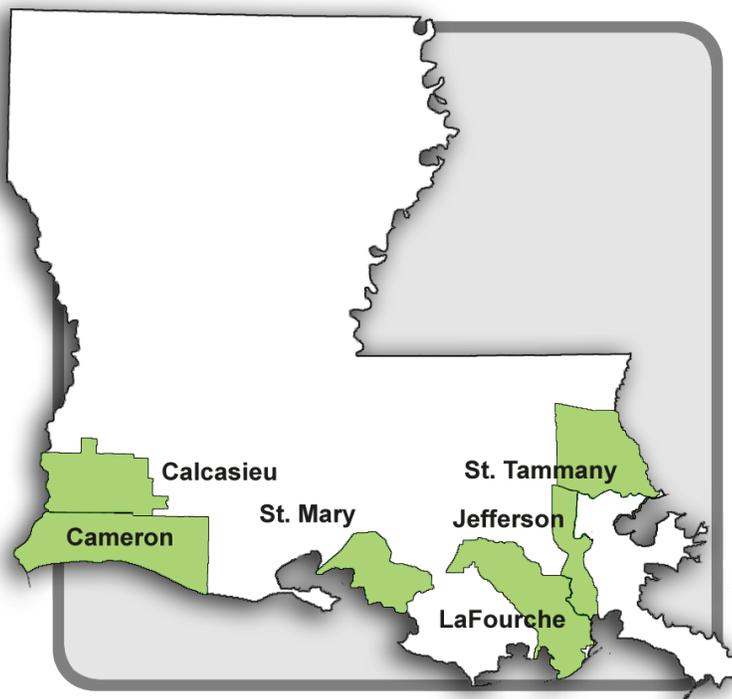


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by parish for 2010.

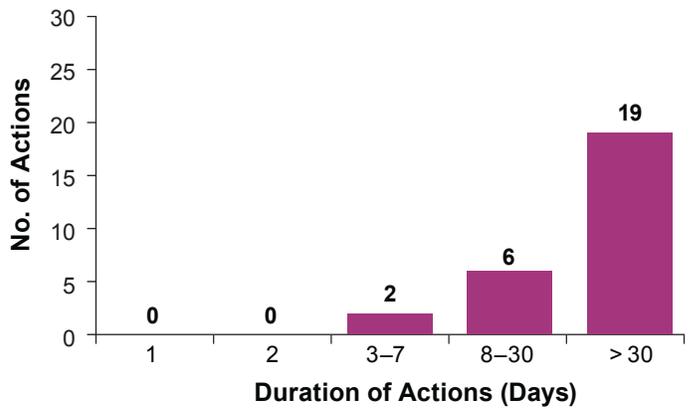
Parish	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CALCASIEU	2	2	0
CAMERON	13	12	1
JEFFERSON	7	7	0
LAFOURCHE	4	4	0
ST. MARY	1	1	0
ST. TAMMANY	1	1	0
TOTALS	28	27	1

2010 Summary Results

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

Louisiana issues beach advisories when water quality standards are exceeded. A total of 20 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2010 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations. This figure includes advisories issued when water quality standards were exceeded. It does not include closures issued following beach contamination from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

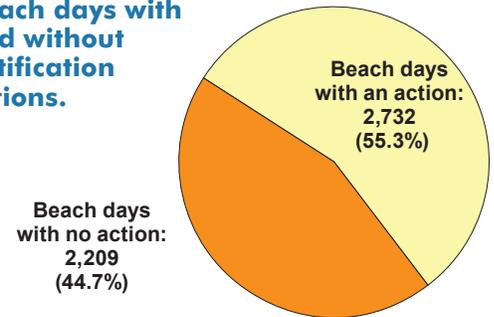
Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Louisiana's 2010 swimming season, actions due to exceedances of recreational water quality standards were reported about 55 percent of the time (Figure 3). This percentage does not include oil contamination closures associated with the Deepwater Horizon spill.

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.



How do 2010 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2010 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years. However, due to annual changes in monitoring tier assignments, these results cannot be directly interpreted. A thorough analysis of water quality trends is presented in Louisiana's annual report.

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2008-2010.

	2008	2009	2010
Number of monitored beaches	26	27	27
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	26	26	20
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	100%	96%	74%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	66%	53%	55%

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Louisiana has conducted sanitary surveys of all monitored beaches and continues to investigate possible sources of contamination at monitored beaches with high exceedance rates. However, no possible sources of pollution affecting Louisiana's monitored beaches were identified in 2010 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (27 beaches).

For More Information

For general information about beaches: www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Louisiana, including the Program's annual report, Louisiana BEACH Grant Report, 2010 Swimming Season: www.ophbeachmonitoring.com

