



EPA's BEACH Report: New Hampshire 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report to EPA on beach monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters. 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 New Hampshire for the 2009 swimming season.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) began monitoring coastal beaches in 1989 and the program continues to provide weekly summer monitoring. From May 26th through September 3, 2009, 414 beach inspections were conducted and 1,374 samples were collected and analyzed for enterococci. Seven beach advisories were posted in 2009, an increase of one from six advisories in 2008. New Castle Town Beach and Seabrook Harbor Beach were the locations with the multiple postings, four advisories in total.

In addition to the standard sampling, DES began the second phase of its bacteria source identification project to both determine bacteria sources affecting beaches and to develop watershed plans for two of the nine coastal watersheds. A final report for the first phase of the project was completed in late summer 2009 and is available on the DES website. The second phase will be completed by March 2011 and the final report for the second phase will also be available on the DES website.

The local chapter of Surfrider Foundation, a non-profit ocean environmental organization, continues to work with the DES Beach Program by volunteering to monitor coastal beaches in the off-season. From March to May and September to November, Surfrider volunteers conducted 39 inspections at North Beach and Jenness Beach, collecting 1777 samples to be analyzed for enterococci. The program is continuing in 2010.

The DES Beach Program continued the cooperative effort with the Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation (Blue Ocean), begun in April 2005, to clean-up coastal beaches. Blue Ocean organizes volunteer groups to conduct monthly beach clean-ups. The DES Beach Program provides each group of volunteers with garbage bags, gloves, scales, and other necessary supplies at 12 of the 16 coastal beaches. In addition to collecting the trash, volunteers tally the weight and number of trash items collected. In 2009, 10,852 pounds of trash were collected. Cigarette butts again were the most numerous item with 34,566 collected. Volunteers spent over 2,300 hours participating in these clean-up efforts. The DES Beach Program hopes this program will continue for many years to come.

Figure 1. New Hampshire coastal county.



Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

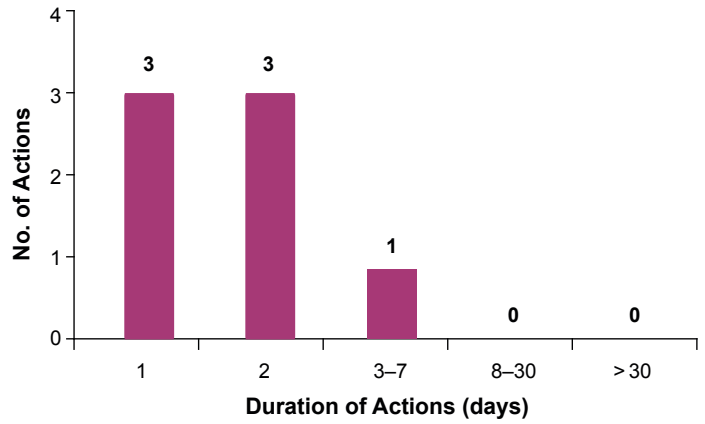
County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ROCKINGHAM	17	17	0
TOTALS	17	17	0

2009 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, New Hampshire's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. Five monitored beaches had advisories issued during the 2009 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a breakdown of notification action durations.

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For New Hampshire's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported less than one percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of New Hampshire's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2009, 53 percent of the beaches had no sources of pollution.

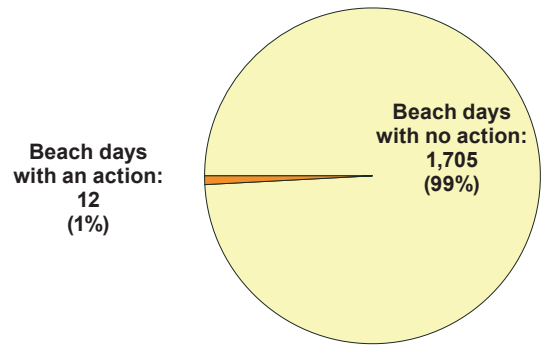


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007-2009.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of monitored beaches	16	16	17
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	1	4	5
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	6%	25%	29%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%

For More Information

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

For information about beaches in New Hampshire:
www.des.state.nh.us/Beaches/index.asp

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (17 beaches).

