



EPA's BEACH Report: Texas 2010 Swimming Season

May 2011

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires 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 Texas for the 2010 swimming season.

The Texas Beach Watch Program continues to collect water samples at 167 stations along the Texas coast in Aransas, Brazoria, Cameron, Galveston, Jefferson, Kleberg, Matagorda, Nueces and San Patricio counties. The Texas General Land Office contracts with universities, local governments and commercial laboratories to collect the samples and test them for the presence of enterococcus bacteria. Samples are collected and tested weekly from May through September (the peak beach season) and every other week from October through April. In addition, weekly samples are collected at Gulf of Mexico beaches during March to coincide with spring break and the increased number of tourists visiting the Texas coast.

Texas' website, www.TexasBeachWatch.com, provides current water quality advisories and water quality conditions that are available through email and RSS subscriptions as well. Texas also posts public notification signage at its beaches in English and Spanish to indicate whether contact with beach water is recommended based on the most recent water testing. The distribution of Texas Beach Watch brochures, in English and Spanish, and promotional items at various public events continues to be instrumental in promoting awareness of the Texas Beach Watch website and the water quality of our Texas beaches.

To further promote traffic to the website, Texas initiated a Beach Conditions Pilot Project in Nueces County in 2010 that reports current beach conditions at five Gulf of Mexico beaches on a daily basis or as conditions change.

Figure 1. Texas coastal counties.

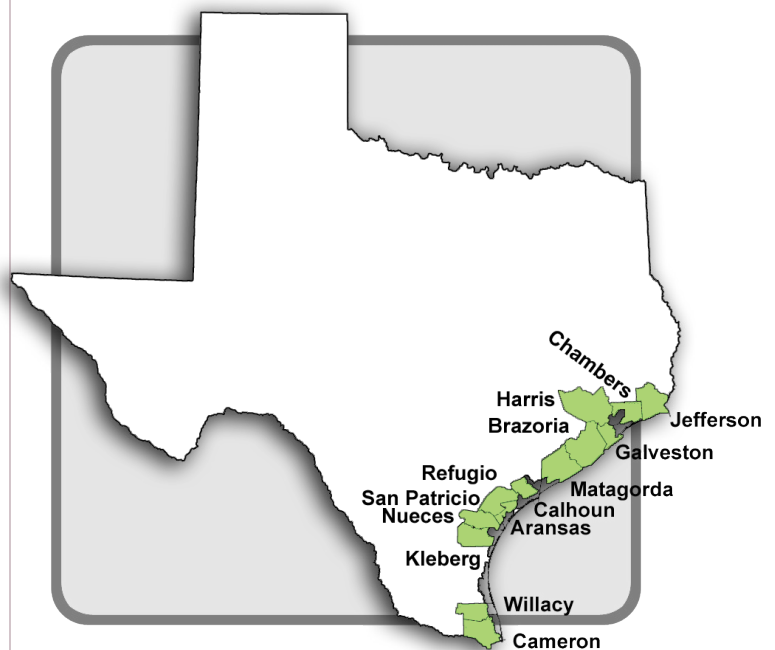


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2010.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ARANSAS	9	1	8
BRAZORIA	10	4	6
CALHOUN	18	0	18
CAMERON	12	9	3
CHAMBERS	2	0	2
GALVESTON	36	23	13
HARRIS	8	0	8
JEFFERSON	2	2	0
KLEBERG	7	4	3
MATAGORDA	12	3	9
NUECES	43	18	25
REFUGIO	1	0	1
SAN PATRICIO	6	1	5
WILLACY	3	0	3
TOTALS	169	65	104

2010 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Texas issues a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 56 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2010 swimming season. About 88 percent of Texas' 207 notification actions lasted one day. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Texas' 2010 swimming season, actions were reported about one and one-half percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2010 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2010 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

In 2010, no sources of pollution were found at investigated monitored beaches.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For more information about water quality conditions go to: www.TexasBeachWatch.com.

Additional information regarding the Texas Beach Watch Program is available by contacting the Beach Watch Coordinator at beachwatch@glo.state.tx.us, or by calling the Texas General Land Office at 1-(800)998-4GLO.

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

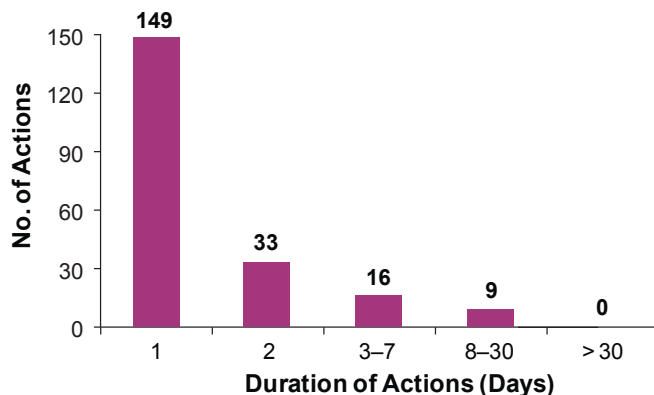


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

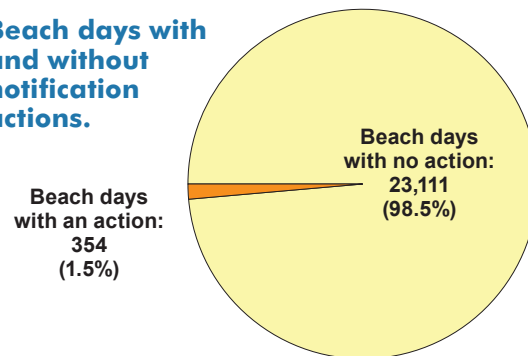


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2008-2010.

	2008	2009	2010
Number of monitored beaches	65	65	65
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	48	50	56
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	74%	77%	86%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	2%	1%	1.5%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (65 beaches).

