



EPA's BEACH Report: Florida 2007 Swimming Season

July 2008

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 Florida for the 2007 swimming season.

During 2007 Florida monitored 308 beaches along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. These beaches are located in 34 of Florida's 35 coastal counties. The only other coastal county has no accessible beaches along the gulf. All total, there are approximately 1,100 miles of recreational beaches in Florida, and approximately 600 miles are monitored at least once per week, year round. The geography of these beaches varies from open coasts on barrier islands to more enclosed bays, sounds, and intra-coastal water ways.

Florida's beaches are heavily used most of the year; late April to mid-September are the peak season in most of the state. The state's population is estimated at 18 million, and approximately 70 million tourists visit per year. Estimates from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) place the number of swimmers at just over 14 million a year. In addition, NOAA estimates that another 3.5 million snorklers, surfers, and divers enter Florida water's each year.

The year 2007 saw an increase in the number of advisory days in Florida. This corresponds with the ending of a major drought affecting the majority of the state. Runoff from rain events is listed as a possible source of contamination at a large number of Florida beaches. Fewer tropical weather systems impacting the state in 2007 also greatly reduced the need for preemptive and storm-generated advisories compared to years past.

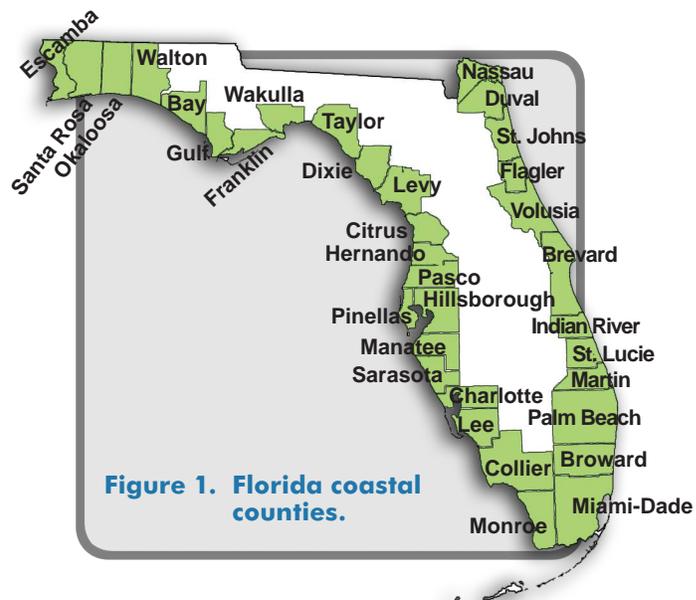


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2007.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BAY	34	13	21
BREVARD	27	10	17
BROWARD	19	15	4
CHARLOTTE	11	8	3
CITRUS	1	1	0
COLLIER	56	14	42
DIXIE	1	1	0
DUVAL	10	10	0
ESCAMBIA	20	14	6
FLAGLER	9	6	3
FRANKLIN	7	6	1
GULF	7	6	1
HERNANDO	1	1	0
HILLSBOROUGH	11	9	2
INDIAN RIVER	18	6	12
LEE	23	13	10
LEVY	2	1	1
MANATEE	13	10	3
MARTIN	23	9	14
MIAMI-DADE	17	15	2
MONROE	45	17	28
NASSAU	30	11	19
OKALOOSA	53	12	41
PALM BEACH	24	14	10
PASCO	7	7	0
PINELLAS	48	14	34
SANTA ROSA	10	7	3
SARASOTA	34	16	18
ST. JOHNS	8	8	0
ST. LUCIE	25	4	21
TAYLOR	5	4	1
VOLUSIA	16	15	1
WAKULLA	2	2	0
WALTON	17	9	8
TOTALS	634	308	326

2007 Summary Results

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

Florida’s approach is to issue a beach advisory when water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 99 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2007 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Florida’s 2007 swimming season, actions were reported about 5 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2007 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2007 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources impact monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Florida’s monitored beaches potentially impacted by various pollution sources. In 2007, 59 percent of the beaches did not have any pollution sources listed.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Florida go to:

www.doh.state.fl.us (Select “Beach Water Quality” from the subject list.)

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

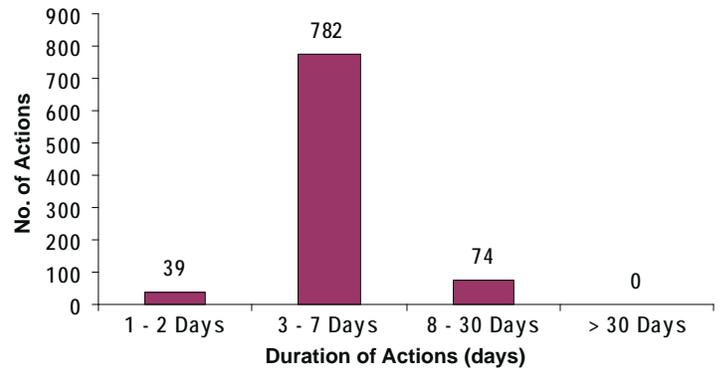


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

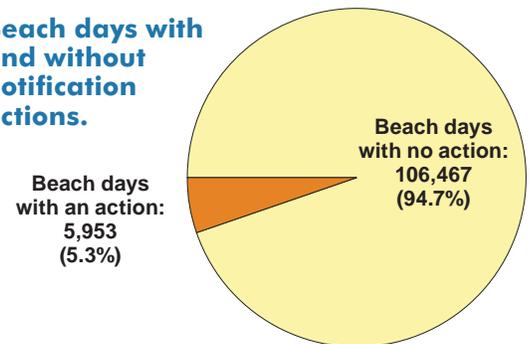


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2005–2007.

	2005	2006	2007
Number of monitored beaches	313	307	308
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	124	104	99
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	40%	34%	32%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	5%	4%	5%

Figure 4: Percent of monitored beaches potentially impacted by pollution sources (308 beaches).

