EPA's BEACH Report:
New York 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 New York for the 2007 swimming season.

Each summer, New York monitors bacteriological indicator levels at bathing beaches along Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Long Island Sound, and the Atlantic Ocean as part of EPA's BEACH Grant Program. Indicator bacteria are used to detect pollution sources, such as sewage or stormwater runoff that could affect water quality at a beach. The New York State Department of Health contracts with local health departments, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to provide up-to-date information regarding beach water quality conditions to the public.

In 2007, 9,379 beach water samples were collected from the State's 353 monitored beaches and analyzed for *E. coli* (freshwater beaches) or Enterococcus (marine beaches). Sample analysis and local predictive models resulted in 803 instances of beach closures or advisory postings to protect the public from swimming in potentially contaminated water. Public notification occurs if a sample exceeds the threshold of 235 *E. coli* colonies per 100mL or 104 Enterococcus colonies per 100mL of water. New York's beach water quality is generally excellent; in 2007 the State's coastal beaches were open 96% of the time.

Figure 1. New York coastal counties.

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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BRONX	10	8	2
CAYUGA	1	1	0
CHAUTAUQUA	9	9	0
ERIE	10	10	0
JEFFERSON	3	3	0
KINGS	11	11	0
MONROE	4	4	0
NASSAU	65	65	0
NIAGARA	2	2	0
OSWEGO	7	7	0
QUEENS	11	11	0
RICHMOND	3	3	0
SUFFOLK	201	194	7
WAYNE	3	3	0
WESTCHESTER	25	22	3
TOTALS	**365**	**353**	**12***

* These beaches were not in operation in 2007.

2007 Summary Results

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

New York'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 ocean water. A total of 141 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2007 swimming season. About 84 percent of New York's 803 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For New York's 2007 swimming season, actions were reported about 4 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 New York's monitored beaches potentially impacted by various pollution sources. In 2007, 53 percent of the beaches included storm-related runoff as a known potential source. No known pollution sources were identified at 42 percent of the beaches.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

http://www.epa.gov/beaches/

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

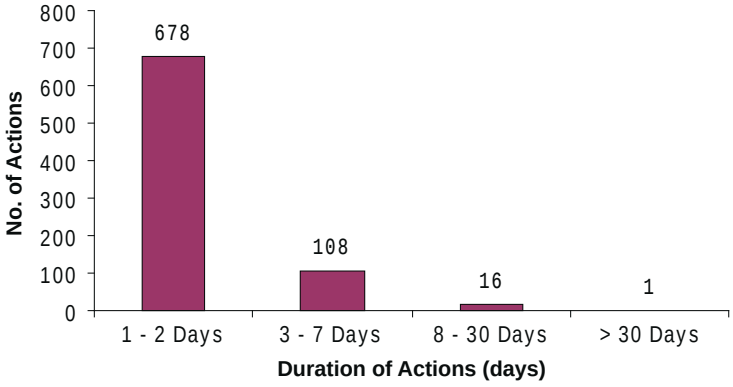

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

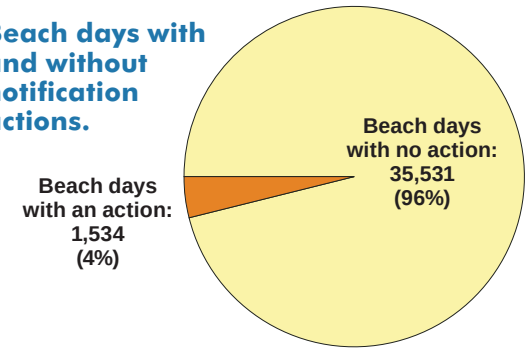

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2005–2007.

	2005	2006	2007
Number of monitored beaches	347	354	353
Number of beaches affected by advisories or closings	106	132	141
Percentage of beaches affected by advisories or closings	31%	37%	40%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	3%	4%	4%

Figure 4: Percent of monitored beaches potentially impacted by pollution sources (353 beaches).