



# EPA's BEACH Report:

## Texas 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 Texas for the 2007 swimming season.

The Texas Beach Watch Program collects water samples from 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.

The year 2007 saw a decrease in the number of advisory days during the beach season. In addition, the percentage of beaches and beach days affected by notification actions also decreased all while the number of beaches monitored and miles of beach increased. Texas also saw above normal rainfall in 2007 compared to 2006 (based on data from the National Climatic Data Center). Normally an increase in rainfall would portend an increase in actions; however, this was not the case.

All monitored recreational beaches in Texas now have public notification signage indicating whether contact with beach water is recommended based on the most recent testing.

Figure 1. Texas coastal counties.

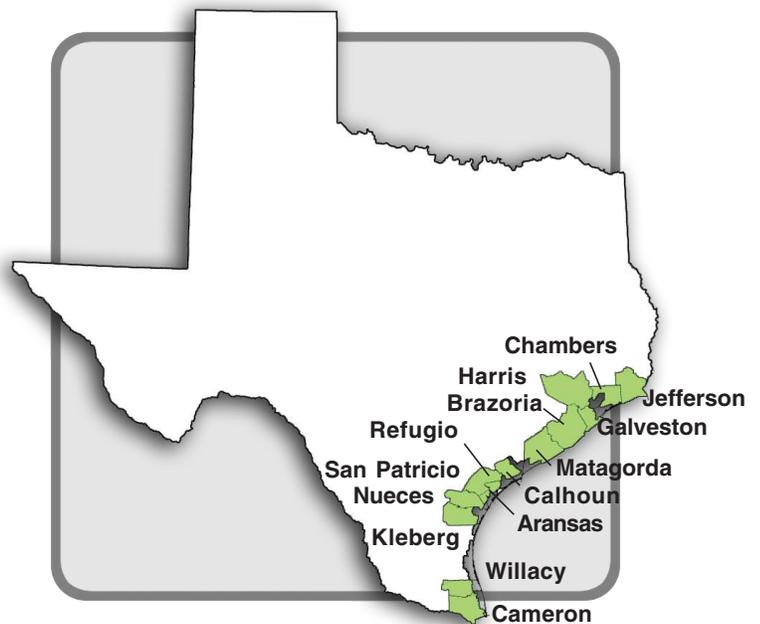


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2007.

| County        | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| ARANSAS       | 9             | 1         | 8             |
| BRAZORIA      | 10            | 5         | 5             |
| CALHOUN       | 18            | 0         | 18            |
| CAMERON       | 12            | 9         | 3             |
| CHAMBERS      | 2             | 0         | 2             |
| GALVESTON     | 36            | 24        | 12            |
| HARRIS        | 8             | 0         | 8             |
| JEFFERSON     | 2             | 2         | 0             |
| KLEBERG       | 7             | 4         | 3             |
| MATAGORDA     | 12            | 4         | 8             |
| NUECES        | 42            | 17        | 25            |
| REFUGIO       | 1             | 0         | 1             |
| SAN PATRICIO  | 6             | 1         | 5             |
| WILLACY       | 3             | 0         | 3             |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>168</b>    | <b>67</b> | <b>101</b>    |

## 2007 Summary Results

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

Texas' 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 50 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2007 swimming season. About 83 percent of Texas' 236 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 Texas' 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 Texas' monitored beaches potentially impacted by various pollution sources. In 2007, 85 percent of the beaches were not investigated for sources of pollution.

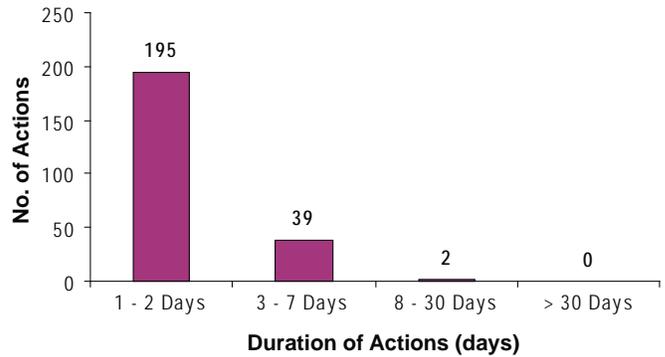
## For More Information

For general information about beaches:  
[www.epa.gov/beaches/](http://www.epa.gov/beaches/)

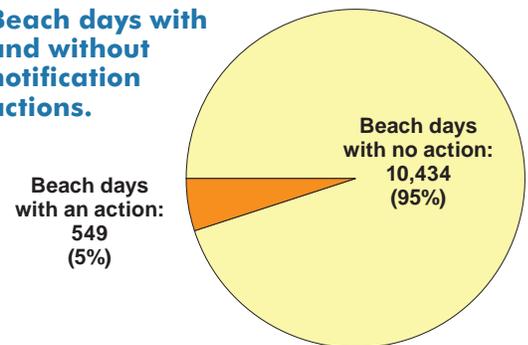
For more information about water quality conditions go to: [www.TexasBeachWatch.com](http://www.TexasBeachWatch.com).

Additional information regarding the Texas Beach Watch Program is available at [www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/beachwatch](http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/beachwatch), by contacting the Beach Watch Coordinator at [beachwatch@glo.state.tx.us](mailto: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, 2005–2007.**

|   | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Number of monitored beaches                               | 57   | 62   | 67   |
| Number of beaches affected by notification actions        | 40   | 50   | 50   |
| Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions    | 70%  | 81%  | 75%  |
| Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions | 3%   | 6%   | 5%   |

**Figure 4: Percent of monitored beaches potentially impacted by pollution sources (67 beaches).**

