

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report: Connecticut 2010 Swimming Season

May 2011

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 Connecticut for the 2010 swimming season.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health collects beach monitoring data for 65 marine beaches located along its shoreline with Long Island Sound. Local health departments monitor 61 of these beaches. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection monitors the remaining four State Park marine beaches.

Connecticut has adopted a set of beach monitoring guidelines that are based on U.S. EPA criteria for recreational bathing waters. These guidelines have been in effect since May 1989. They were revised most recently in April 2003.

Questions about a municipal beach should be directed to the shoreline local health department that monitors it. Questions about a State Park beach should be directed to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.



Figure 1. Connecticut coastal counties.

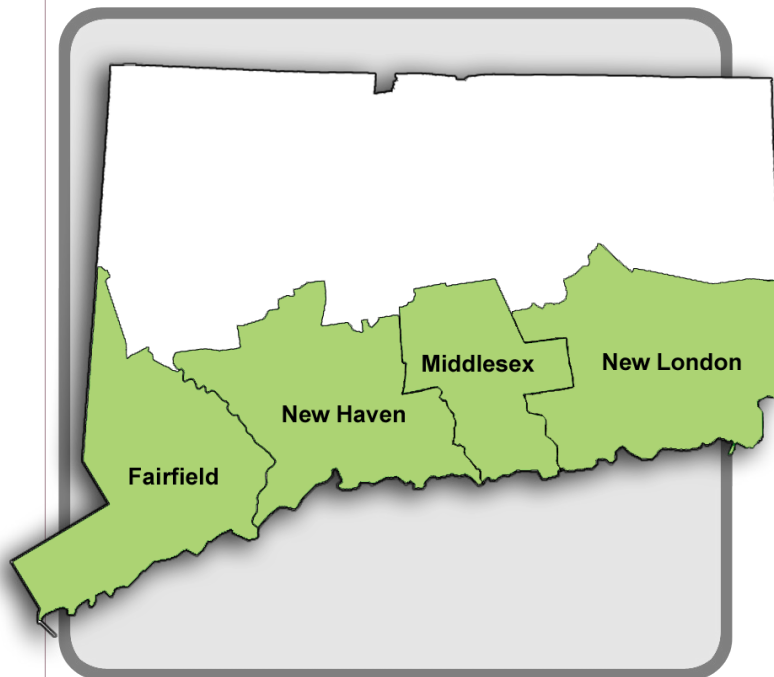


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2010.

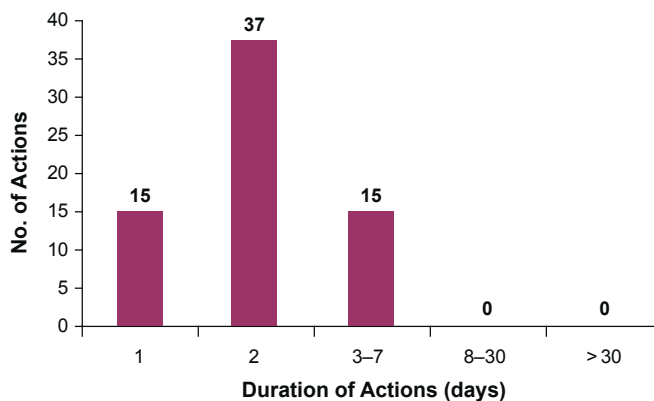
| County | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| FAIRFIELD | 28 | 28 | 0 |
| MIDDLESEX | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| NEW HAVEN | 19 | 19 | 0 |
| NEW LONDON | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 66 | 65 | 1 |

2010 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Connecticut issues a beach advisory or closure to warn people to avoid contact with the ocean water. A total of 39 monitored beaches had at least one notification action issued during the 2010 swimming season. About 78 percent of Connecticut's notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

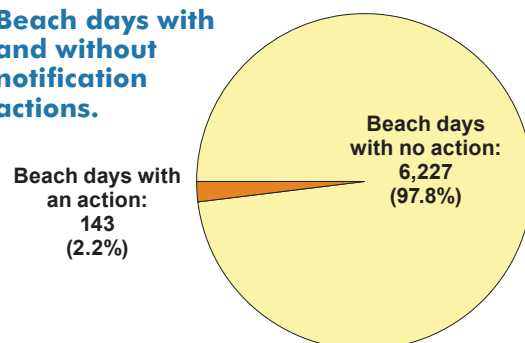
Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Connecticut's 2010 swimming season, actions were reported about two percent of the time (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.



How do 2010 results compare to previous years?

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

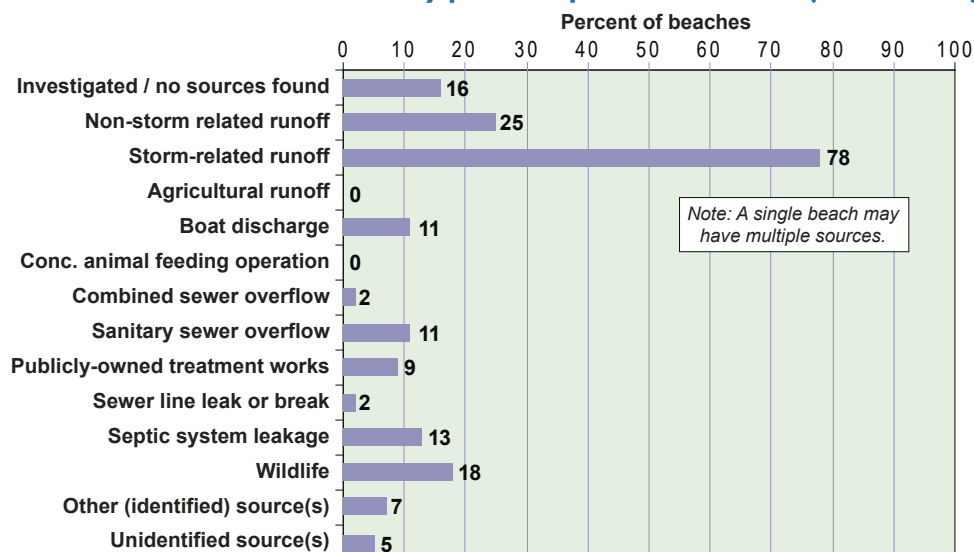
Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2008-2010.

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Number of monitored beaches | 66 | 65 | 65 |
| Number of beaches affected by notification actions | 24 | 30 | 39 |
| Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions | 36% | 46% | 60% |
| Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions | 2% | 2% | 2% |

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Connecticut's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2010, 78 percent of the beaches included storm-related runoff as a possible source. No pollution sources were identified at 16 percent of the beaches.

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (55 beaches).



For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Connecticut:

www.ct.gov/dph/publicbeaches