

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report:

Georgia 2006 Swimming Season

June 2007

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 Georgia for the 2006 swimming season.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources samples the beaches on Tybee, St. Simons, and Jekyll Islands weekly year-round. Other more remote beaches are sampled monthly during the swimming season (April–November).

The beach water is monitored for the presence of the *Enterococcus* bacteria. When bacteria levels are found to exceed either a single sample level of 104 per 100ml or a geometric mean of 35 per 100ml, the Coastal Health District will issue a swimmer's advisory and send out a press release. The local government activates advisory signage at the affected beach. The advisory information is also posted on the website <http://GaHealthyBeaches.org>.

Figure 1. Georgia coastal counties with 2006 monitored beach data.

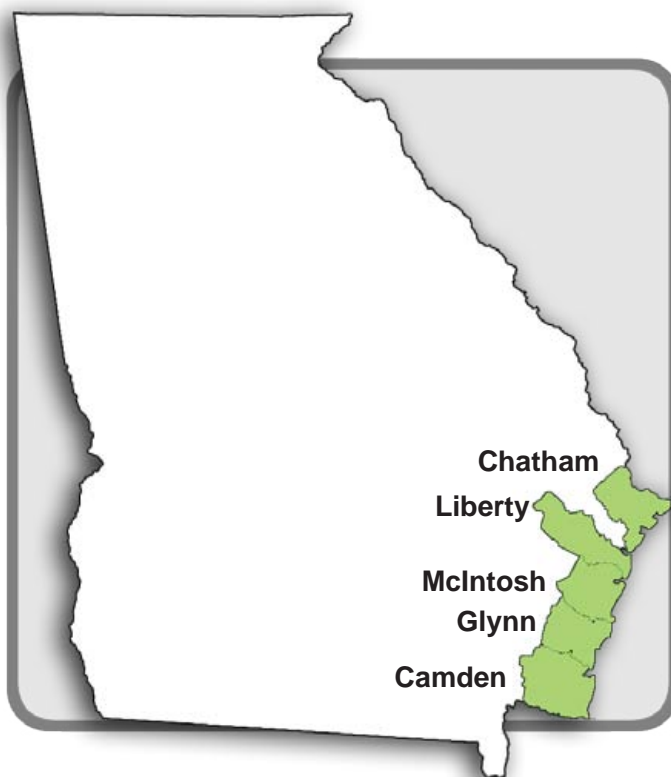


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county.

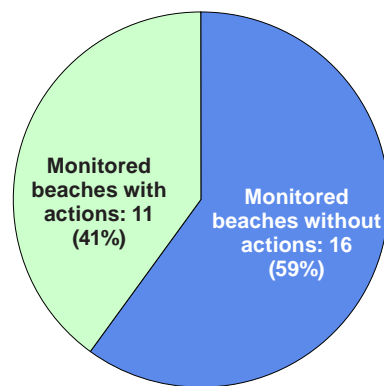
County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CAMDEN	2	0	2
CHATHAM	13	9	4
GLYNN	19	16	3
LIBERTY	1	0	1
MCINTOSH	6	2	4
TOTALS	41	27	14

2006 Summary Results

How many beaches had notification actions?

When monitoring of water at beaches shows that levels of certain bacteria exceed standards, Georgia's beach managers post a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming. Of the 27 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 11, or 41 percent, had at least one advisory during the 2006 season (Figure 2).

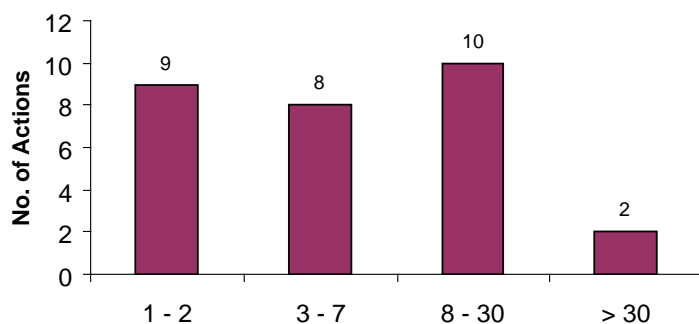
Figure 2: Monitored Beaches with and without notification actions.



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

A total of 29 beach notification actions were reported in the 2006 swimming season. Seventeen actions were of relatively short duration, while 12 actions lasted longer than 7 days. Figure 3 presents breakdowns of action durations.

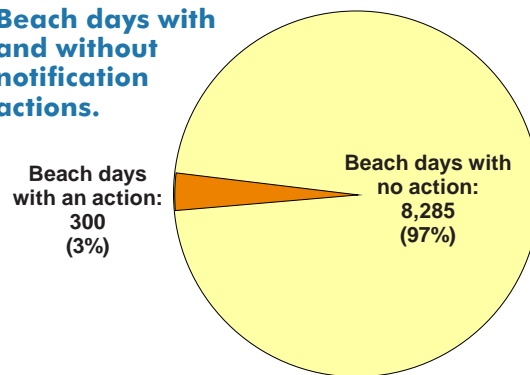
Figure 3: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Georgia's 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 8,585 beach days associated with the 27 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 300 of those days or about 3 percent of the time (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Beach days with and without notification actions.



How do 2006 results compare to previous years?

Beginning in 2003, states are required to submit data to EPA under the BEACH Act for beaches which are in coastal and Great Lakes waters. Table 2 compares 2006 data with data reported in previous years.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:
www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Georgia:
<http://GaHealthyBeaches.org>

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2004-2006.

	2004	2005	2006
Number of monitored beaches	31	27	27
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	17	17	11
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	55%	63%	41%