

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA's BEACH Report: Illinois 2012 Swimming Season

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Introduction

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 authorizes EPA to provide grants to coastal and Great Lakes states, territories, and eligible tribes to monitor their coastal beaches for bacteria that indicate the possible presence of disease-causing pathogens and to notify the public when there is a potential risk to public health. The BEACH Act requires that recipients of those grants report their coastal beach monitoring and notification data to EPA. This fact sheet highlights the data submitted to EPA by the State of Illinois for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Illinois reports 71 beaches located in two counties (Figure 1). Illinois monitored 53 of these beaches during the 2012 swimming season (Table 1). When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Illinois officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming or close the beach to public swimming until further monitoring finds that water quality complies with applicable standards.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 53 coastal beaches that Illinois monitored, 41 (77 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is a lower percentage than in previous years. Lake County and the Chicago Park District have been actively working to improve beach water quality and, with the help of grants from the Great Lakes Restoration

Figure 1. Illinois coastal counties

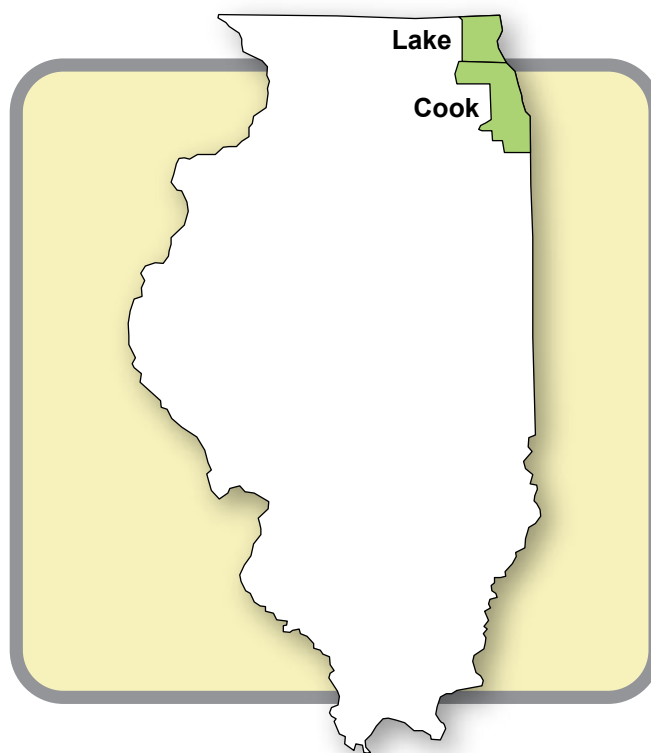


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
COOK	52	40	12
LAKE	19	13	6
TOTALS	71	53	18

Figure 2: Percent of beaches with one or more notification actions

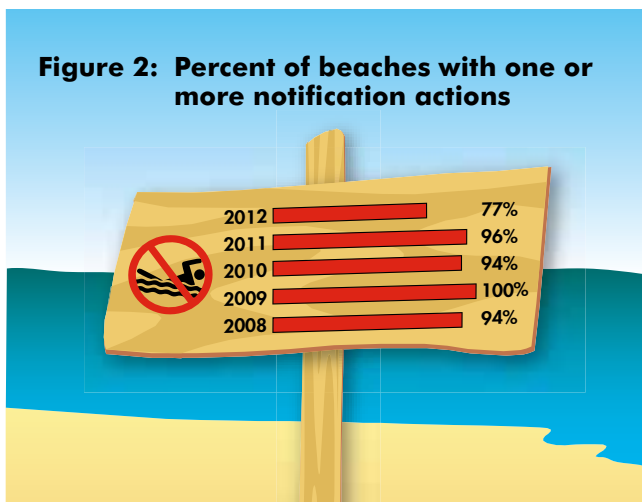
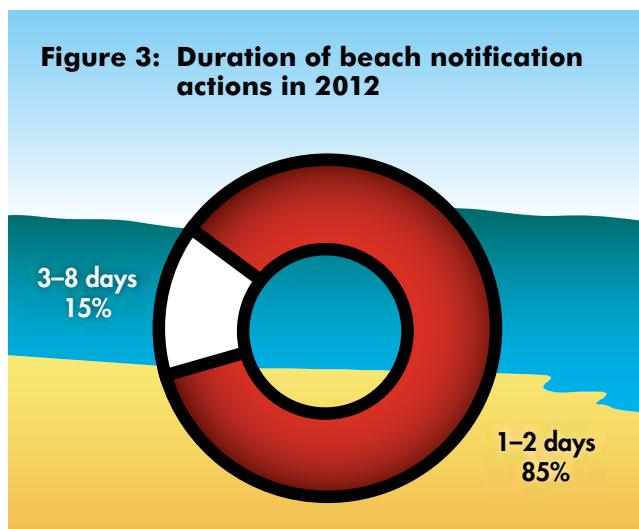


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



Initiative, have implemented several projects in the past two years to reduce beach pollution.

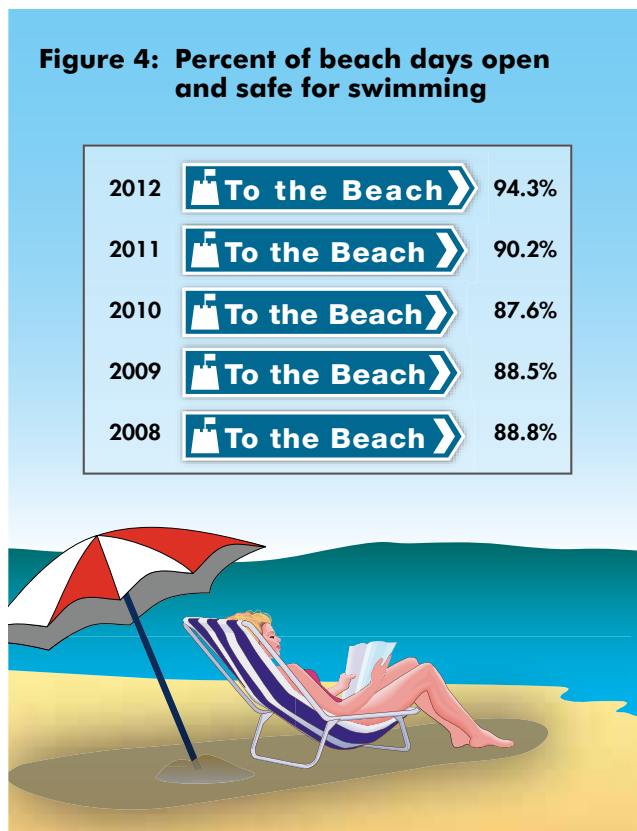
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

Illinois issued 198 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Illinois lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (85 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3).

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with notification actions to better track trends over time. Total available

Figure 4: Percent of beach days open and safe for swimming



beach days are determined by multiplying the length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 5,327 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 53 monitored Illinois beaches. Illinois reported notification actions on 303 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 94 percent of the time. This improves on the trend of higher percentages of open beach days at beaches in Illinois (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Illinois beach program contact:

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For general information about beaches visit: <http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/>.

For information about a specific beach visit: <http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/>.