

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA's BEACH Report: Maine 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 Maine for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Maine reports 61 coastal beaches located in seven counties. Of this total, Maine monitored 59 of these beaches during the 2012 swimming season (Figure 1 and Table 1).

When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Maine officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 59 coastal beaches that Maine monitored, 41 (70 percent) had at least one notification action. This is an increase from last year when only 18 beaches had notifications. Maine reports the reason is primarily due to increased rainfall; nearly 22 inches fell in 2012, almost double the 2011 rainfall amount.

Figure 1. Maine coastal counties

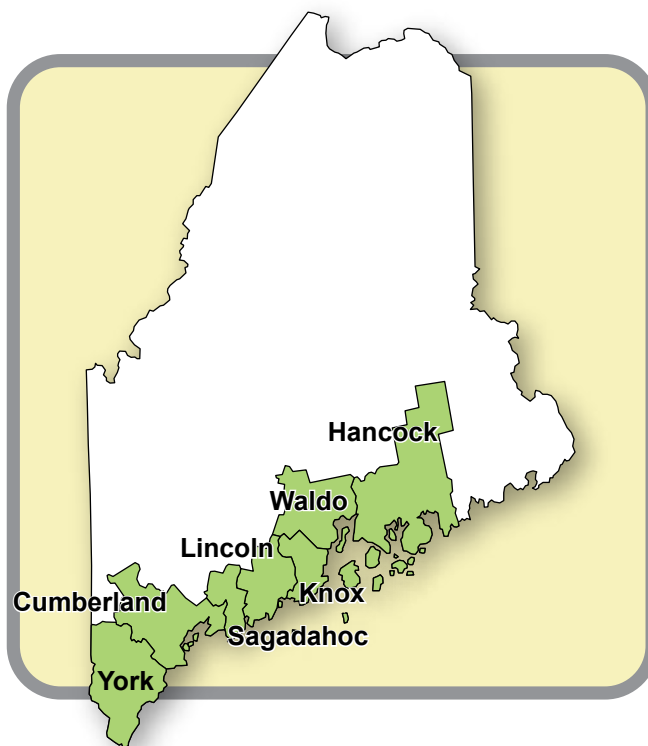


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CUMBERLAND	9	9	0
HANCOCK	4	4	0
KNOX	3	3	0
LINCOLN	1	1	0
SAGADAHOC	6	6	0
WALDO	1	1	0
YORK	37	35	2
TOTALS	61	59	2

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

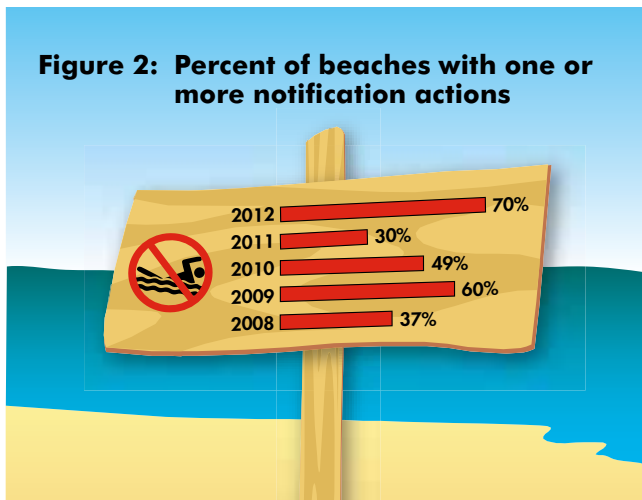
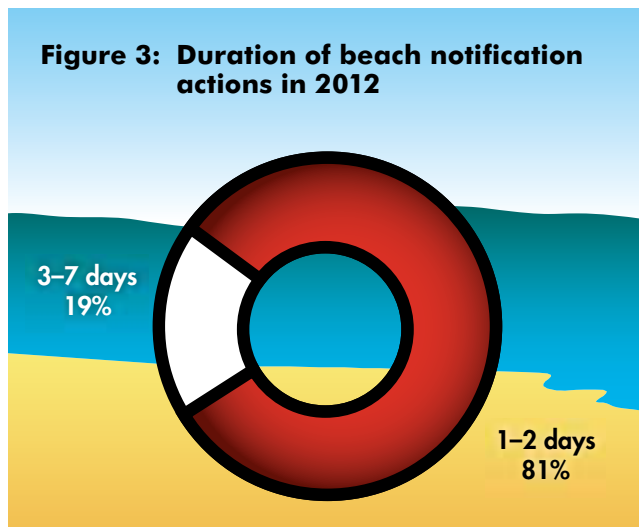


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



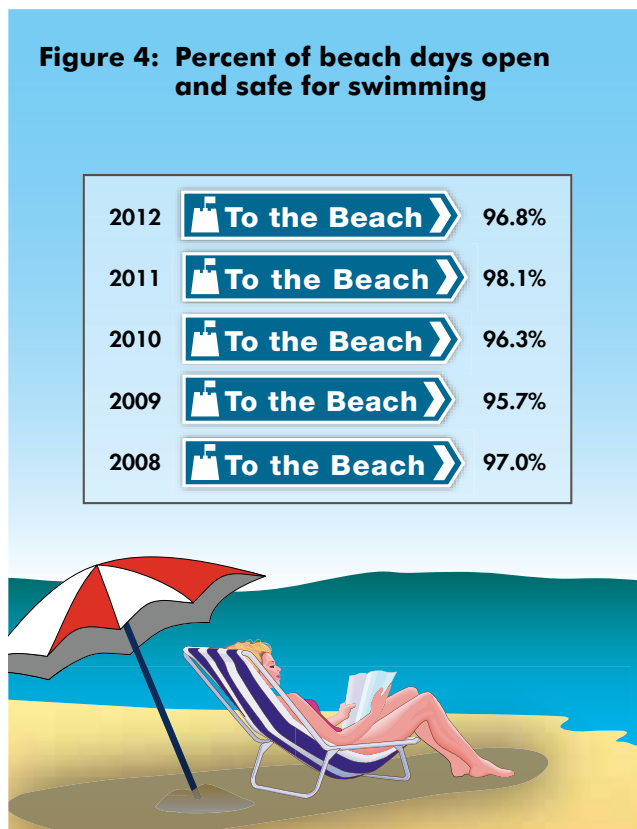
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

Maine issued 84 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Maine lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. Most notification actions (81 percent) lasted only 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 beach days are determined by multiplying the

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



length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 5,959 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 59 monitored Maine beaches. Maine reported notification actions on 189 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 97 percent of the time (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Maine 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/>.