

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report:

Texas 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 Texas for the 2006 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 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 during the month of March to coincide with Spring Break and the increased number of tourists.

Water quality conditions at beaches being sampled under the Texas Beach Watch Program can be obtained at www.TexasBeachWatch.com. The information on the Beach Watch Web site is updated each time sample results are entered into the database and visitors to the site may use the interactive map tool to check results from specific sampling locations, determine when samples were collected and whether an advisory has been recommended.

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

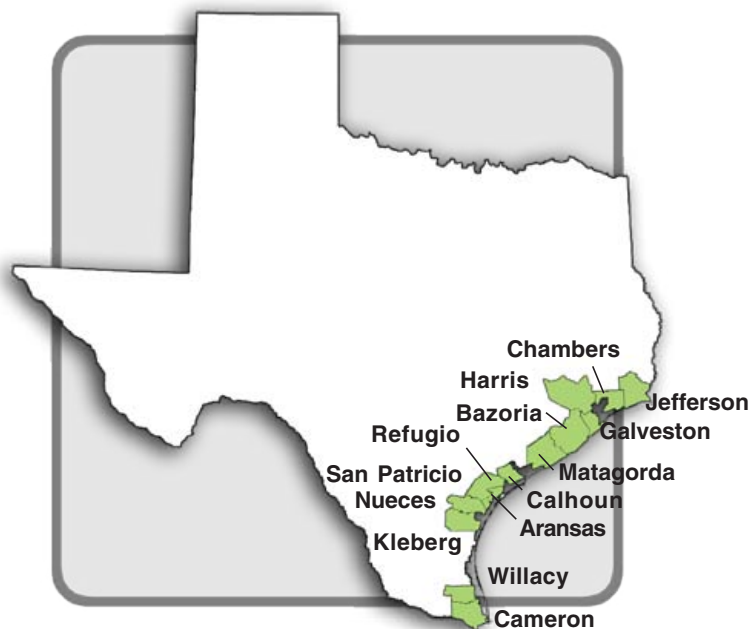


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ARANSAS	9	1	8
BAZORIA	10	5	6
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	0	7
MATAGORDA	12	4	8
NUECES	42	17	25
REFUGIO	1	0	1
SAN PATRICIO	6	0	6
WILLACY	3	0	3
TOTALS	168	62	107

2006 Summary Results

How many beaches had notification actions?

When bacteria levels exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's criteria of 104 colony-forming units per 100 ml of water, advisories are recommended and local government officials may choose to post advisory signs at the public beach access area. In addition, the water at that beach must be sampled every 24 hours until bacteria levels fall below the EPA's criteria. Of the 62 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 50, or 81 percent, had at least one advisory during the 2006 season (Figure 2).

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

A total of 250 beach notification actions were reported in the 2006 swimming season. Actions were of relatively short duration, however. Figure 3 presents breakdowns of action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For the Texas 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 10,218 beach days associated with the 62 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 575 of those days or about 6 percent of the time (Figure 4).

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 more information about water quality conditions go to:
www.TexasBeachWatch.com.

Additional information regarding the Texas Beach Watch Program is available at www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/beachwatch, by contacting the Beach Watch Coordinator at beachwatch@glo.state.tx.us, or by calling the Texas General Land Office at 1-(800) 998-4GLO

Figure 2: Monitored beaches with and without notification actions.

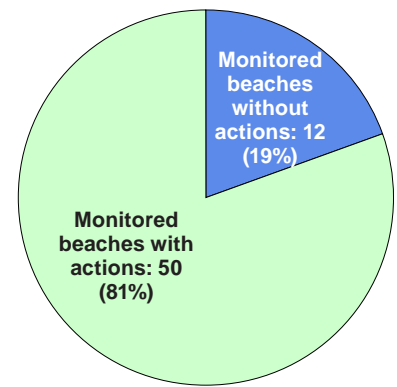


Figure 3: Beach notification actions by duration.

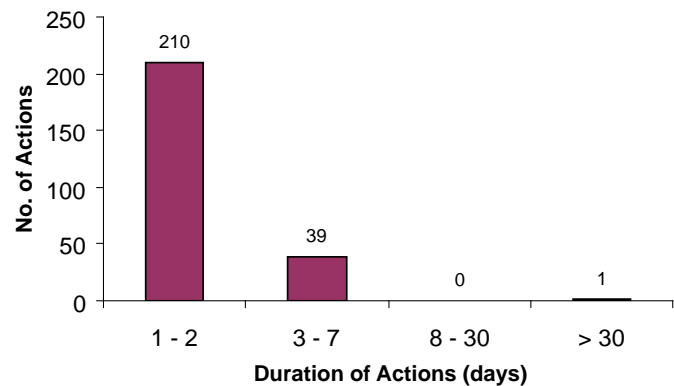


Figure 4: Beach days with and without notification actions.

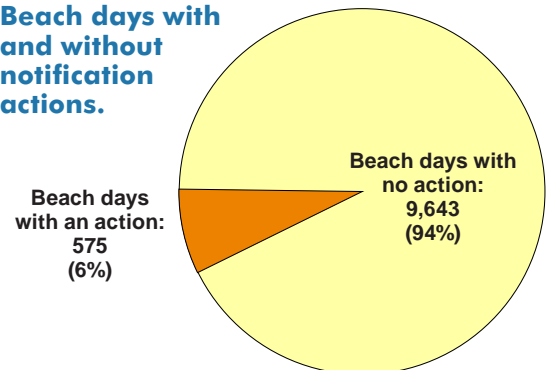


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2004-2006.

	2004	2005	2006
Number of monitored beaches	48	57	62
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	48	40	50
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	100%	70%	81%