



EPA's BEACH Report: Hawaii 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 Hawaii for the 2010 swimming season.

Under the BEACH Act, almost all of Hawaii's coastal waters are considered "beaches." A beach can be a cliff, rocky shoreline, or a sandy stretch of coastline. As long as the water along the coastline is used for full contact water recreation, it is considered a beach.

Hawaii's monitoring program focuses on intensity of use, as the guide in the selection of beaches to be monitored and the frequency of sampling.

Recent budget cuts and reductions in force have drastically affected the monitoring of Oahu beaches by the Hawaii Department of Health. The monitoring section lost five employees on the island of Oahu. As a result, Oahu sampling was concentrated only on Tier 1 beaches in 2010. Tier 2 beaches on the island of Oahu were normally monitored on a rotating six-month schedule prior to the staffing reduction. On the islands of Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, Tier 1 beaches were monitored three times a week, and Tier 2 beaches were monitored twice a month in 2010.

Figure 1. Hawaii coastal counties.

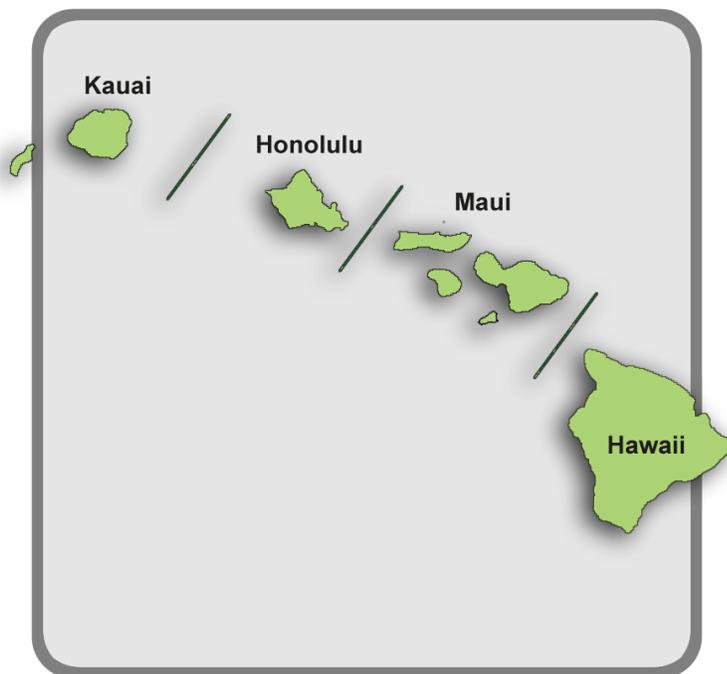


Table 1. Monitored coastal beaches by island for 2010.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
HAWAII	82	50	32
HONOLULU	112	27	85
KAUAI	64	15	49
MAUI	127	127	73
TOTALS	385	146	239

2010 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Hawaii issues a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the ocean water. A total of 20 monitored beaches had a notification action issued during the 2010 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Hawaii's 2010 swimming season, actions were reported less than one percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2010 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2010 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years. The decrease in the number and percentage of beaches affected by actions in 2010 is due to the lack of island-wide rain advisories.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Hawaii's monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2010, nearly 100 percent of the beaches had no known potential sources.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Hawaii:

www.hawaii.gov/health/environmental/water/cleanwater/index.html

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

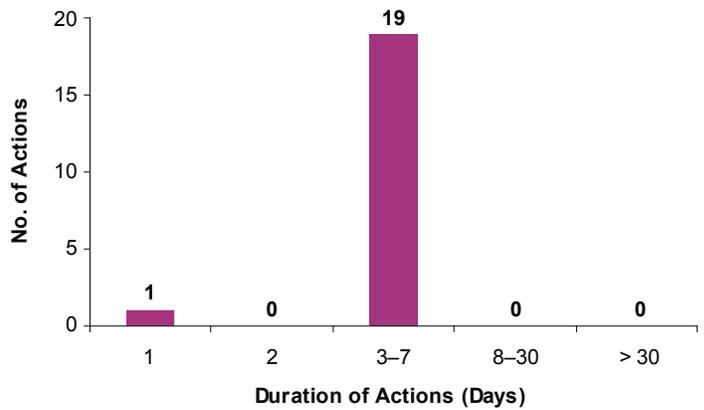


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

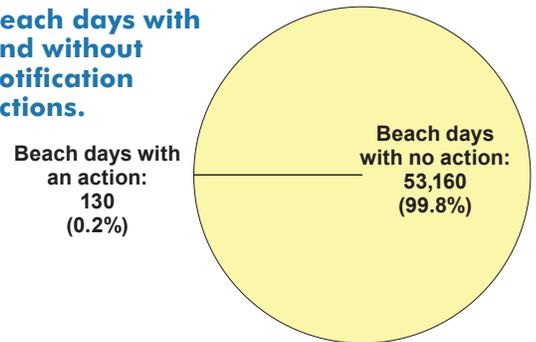


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2008–2010.

	2008	2009	2010
Number of monitored beaches	248	245	146
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	7	245	20
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	3%	100%	14%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	<1%	1%	<1%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (146 beaches).

