

EPA's BEACH Report: Alaska 2012 Swimming Season

September 2013

EPA 820-F-13-038

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 Alaska for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Alaska monitored eight coastal beaches in three communities 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, Alaska officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, none of the three coastal beaches that Alaska monitored had a notification action (Figure 2). This is consistent with previous years.

Figure 1. Alaska coastal communities

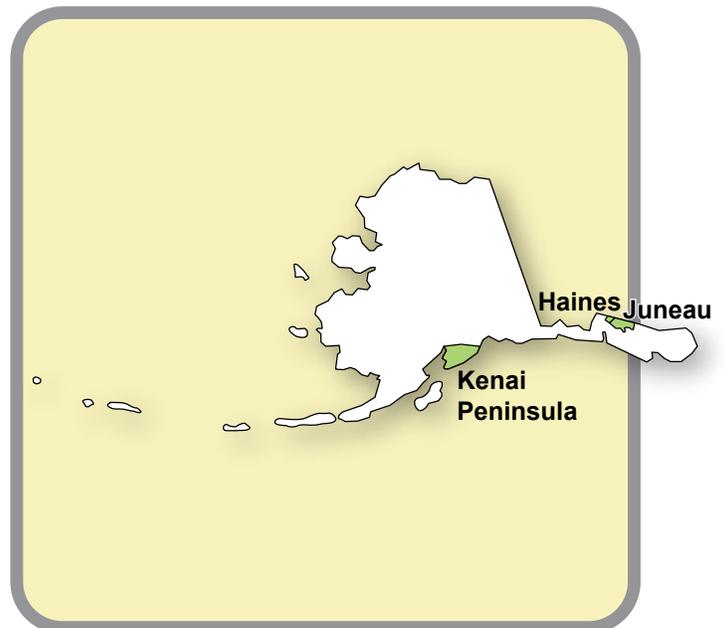


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches for 2012

| Community | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| HAINES | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| JUNEAU | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| KENAI PENINSULA | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 8 | 8 | 0 |

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

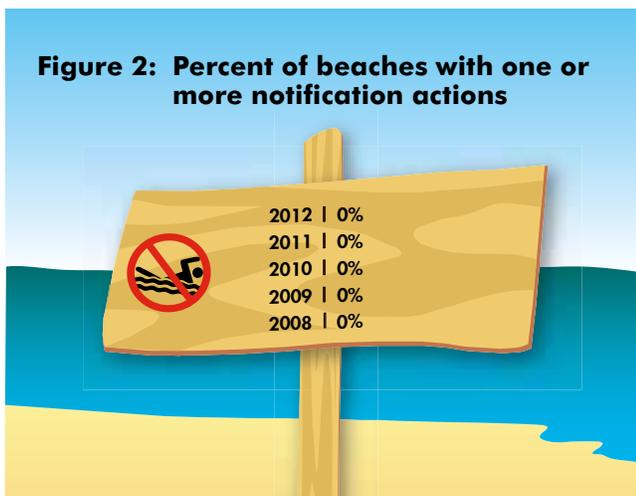


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



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

Alaska issued no notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. If an action were to occur, Alaska would lift the action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. In 2012 Alaska beaches were deemed safe for swimming 100 percent of the time (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 561 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 8 monitored Alaska beaches. Alaska reported notification actions on 0 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming 100 percent of the time. This continues the trend of 100 percent open beach days in Alaska (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Alaska beach program contact:

Brock Tabor
Department of Environmental Conservation
Tel: 907-465-5185
e-mail: brock.tabor@alaska.gov

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/>.