United States Environmental Protection Agency

# EPA's BEACH Report: Connecticut 2012 Swimming Season

September 2013

EPA 820-F-13-024

## 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 Connecticut for the 2012 swimming season.

## 2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Connecticut reports 73 coastal beaches in four counties (Figure 1). Connecticut monitored 72 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, Connecticut 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. In some cases, advisories and closings are issued preemptively (i.e., without having actual bacteria monitoring results) due to storms or other conditions that might affect swimmer safety.

**Figure 1. Connecticut coastal counties**

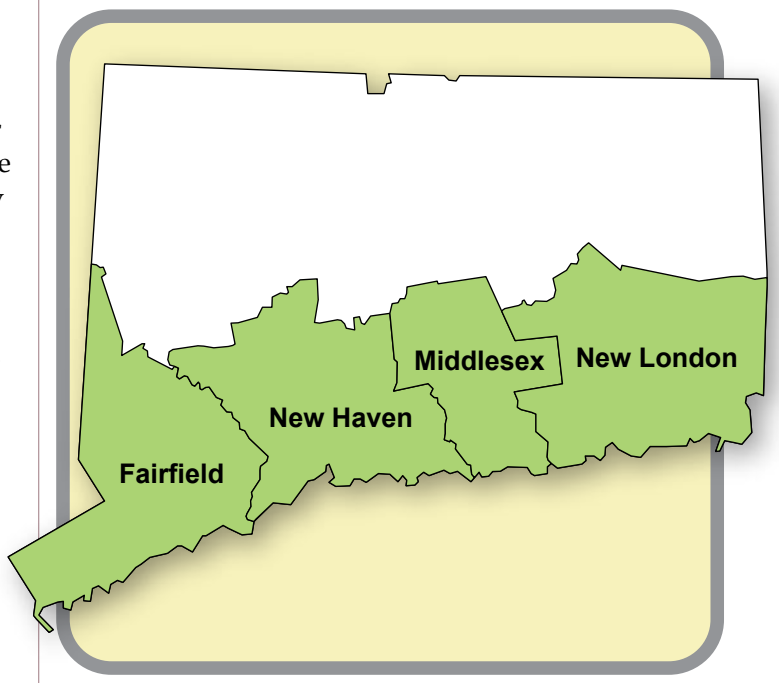



**Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012**

| County | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---|---|---|---|
| FAIRFIELD | 28 | 28 | 0 |
| MIDDLESEX | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| NEW HAVEN | 27 | 27 | 0 |
| NEW LONDON | 13 | 12 | 1 |
| **TOTALS** | **73** | **72** | **1** |

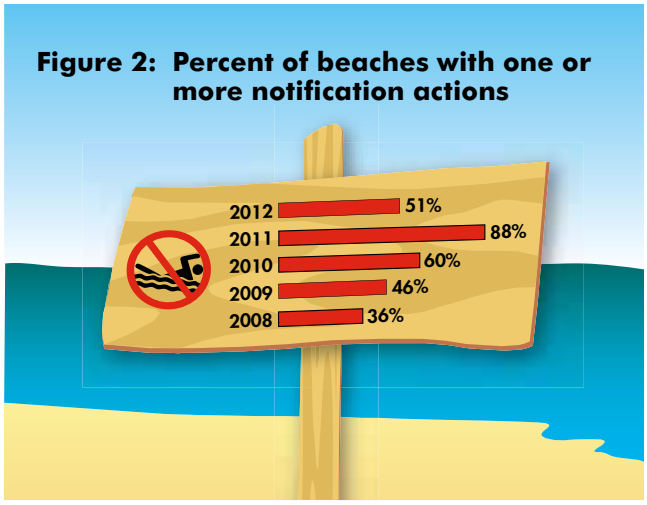



**Figure 2: Percent of beaches with one or more notification actions**

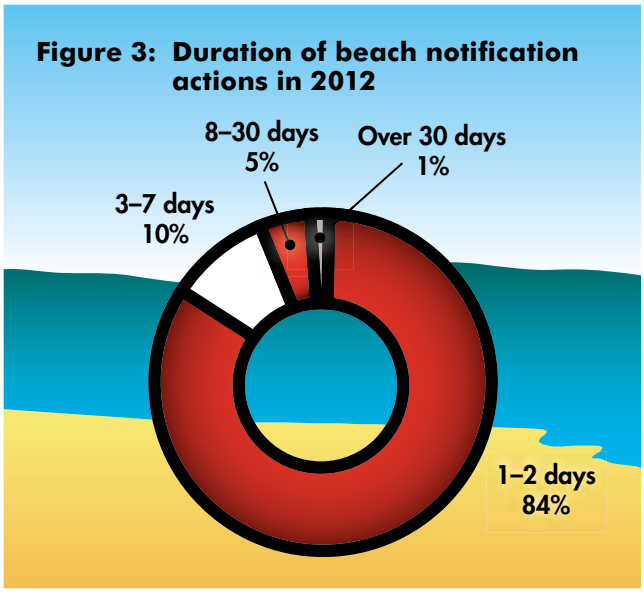



**Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012**

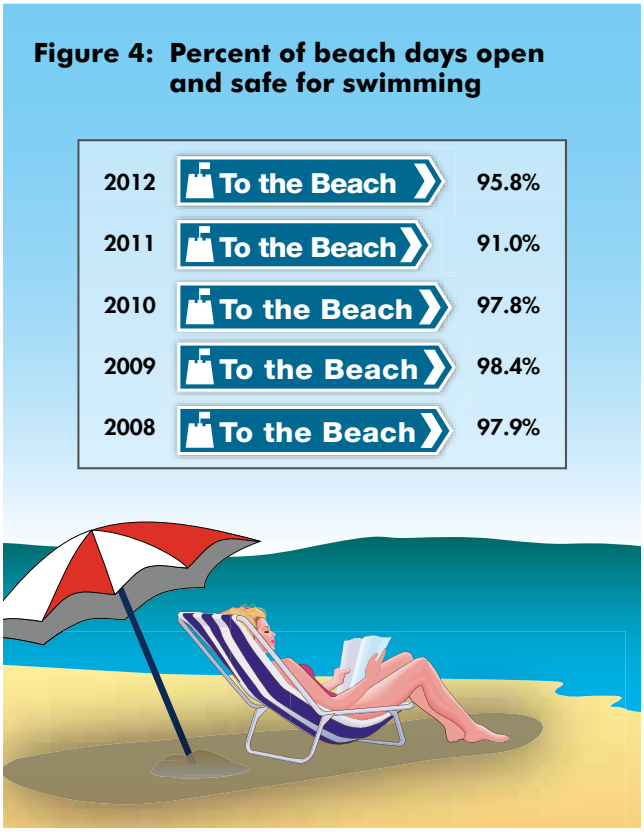
### *How many beaches had notification actions?*

In 2012, of the 72 coastal beaches that Connecticut monitored, 37 (51 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is a decrease from 2011, the year of Hurricane Irene.

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

Connecticut issued 92 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Connecticut lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of cases (84 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3). Only rarely (six percent) did notification actions last more than a week.

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




### *What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?*

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with advisories or closings to better track trends over time. Total available 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 7,056 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 72 monitored Connecticut beaches. Connecticut reported notification actions on 298 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 96 percent of the time (Figure 4).

## For More Information

For information about the Connecticut beach program contact:
Jon Dinneen, Connecticut Department of Public Health
Tel: 860-509-7305
e-mail: jon.dinneen@ct.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/.