

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

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Florida monitored 261 coastal beaches in 29 counties 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, Florida officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

Figure 1. Florida coastal counties

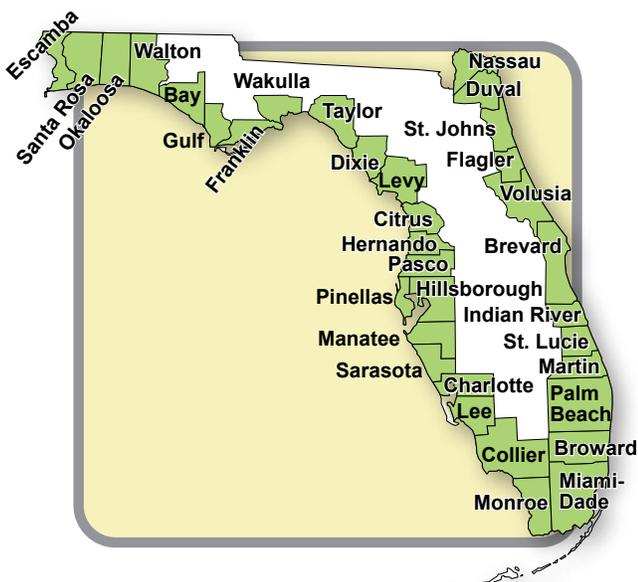


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BAY	16	10	6
BREVARD	27	8	19
BROWARD	19	13	6
CHARLOTTE	11	8	3
CITRUS	1	0	1
COLLIER	56	10	46
DIXIE	1	0	1
DUVAL	10	10	0
ESCAMBIA	18	10	8
FLAGLER	9	6	3
FRANKLIN	7	5	2
GULF	7	6	1
HERNANDO	1	0	1
HILLSBOROUGH	9	9	0
INDIAN RIVER	17	6	11
LEE	23	13	10
LEVY	2	0	2
MANATEE	12	7	5
MARTIN	21	8	13
MIAMI-DADE	19	16	3
MONROE	39	11	28
NASSAU	30	10	20
OKALOOSA	27	14	13
PALM BEACH	24	13	11
PASCO	7	5	2
PINELLAS	48	10	38
SANTA ROSA	10	5	5
SARASOTA	34	16	18
ST. JOHNS	8	6	2
ST. LUCIE	25	4	21
TAYLOR	5	0	5
VOLUSIA	16	13	3
WAKULLA	2	2	0
WALTON	12	7	5
TOTALS	573	261	312

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

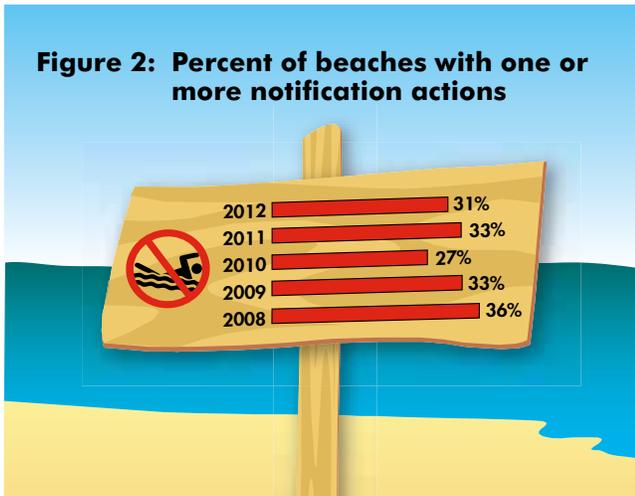
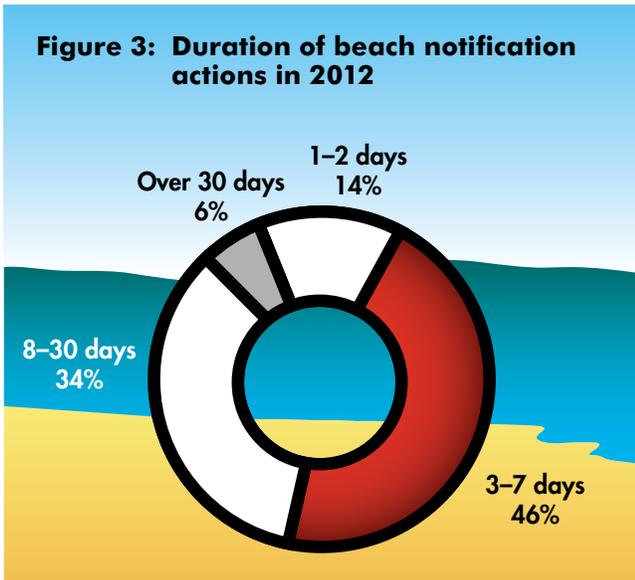


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 261 coastal beaches that Florida monitored, 82 (31 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is approximately the same as in previous years.

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

Florida issued 239 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Florida lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (60 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within a week or less (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

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



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 82,318 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 261 monitored Florida beaches. Florida reported notification actions on 2,819 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 97 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in Florida (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Florida 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/>.