

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

## 2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Georgia monitored 26 coastal beaches in three 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, Georgia officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

### How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 26 coastal beaches that Georgia monitored, seven (27 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). The Southeast, and particularly Georgia, was unusually dry in 2012. This condition was likely a factor in causing fewer actions at beaches than previous years.

Figure 1. Georgia coastal counties

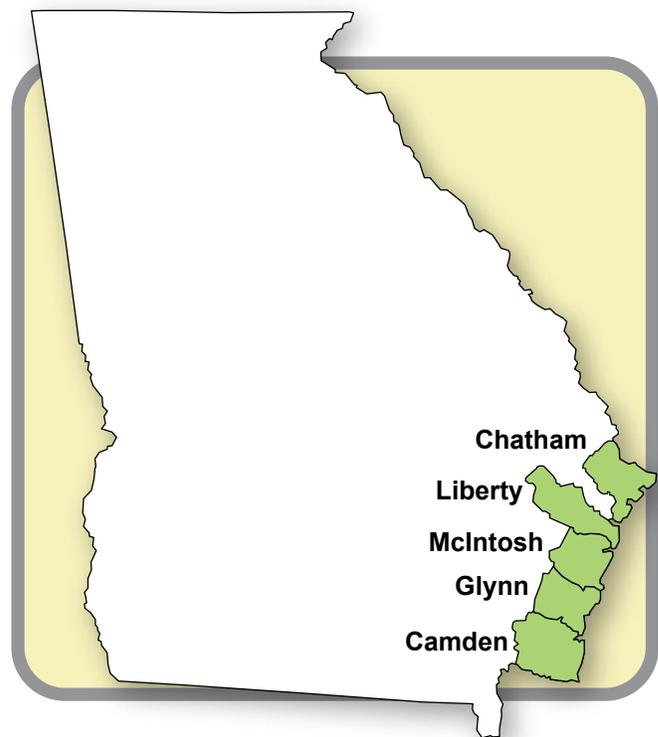
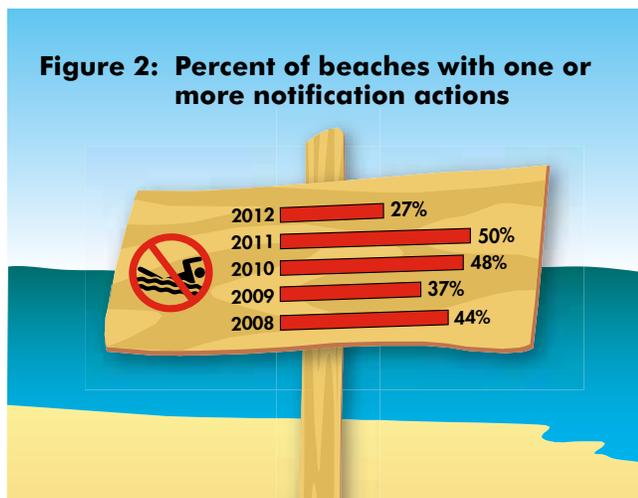


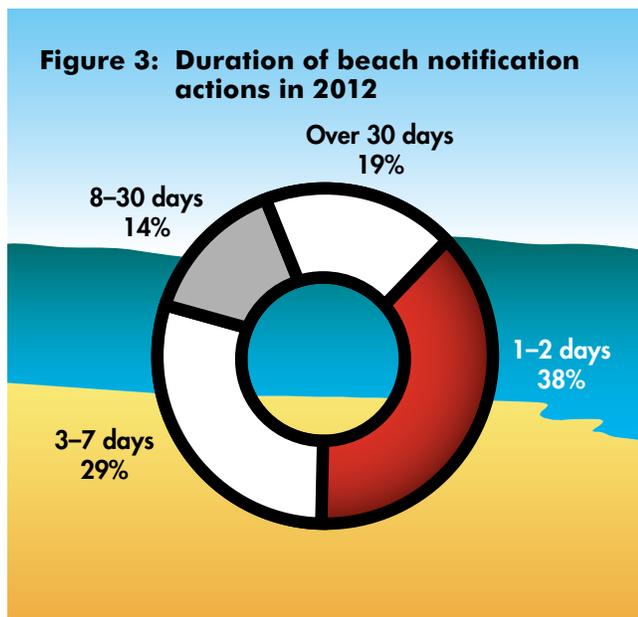
Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CAMDEN	2	0	2
CHATHAM	13	8	5
GLYNN	19	16	3
LIBERTY	1	0	1
MCINTOSH	6	2	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>

**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?**

Georgia issued 21 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Georgia lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For two-thirds of the actions 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 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 8,460 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 26 monitored Georgia beaches. Georgia reported notification actions on 386 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 95 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in Georgia (Figure 4).

**For More Information**

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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/>.