

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

## 2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Louisiana reports 30 coastal beaches located in six parishes (Figure 1). Louisiana monitored 25 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, Louisiana 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.

### How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 25 coastal beaches that Louisiana monitored, 21 (84 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). Hurricane Isaac, which made landfall on August 28, 2012, caused extended closures of beaches in Jefferson and St. Tammany Parishes. Jefferson Parish's eight monitored beaches reopened after 24 days and St. Tammany's lone monitored beach reopened after 65 days.

Figure 1. Louisiana coastal parishes

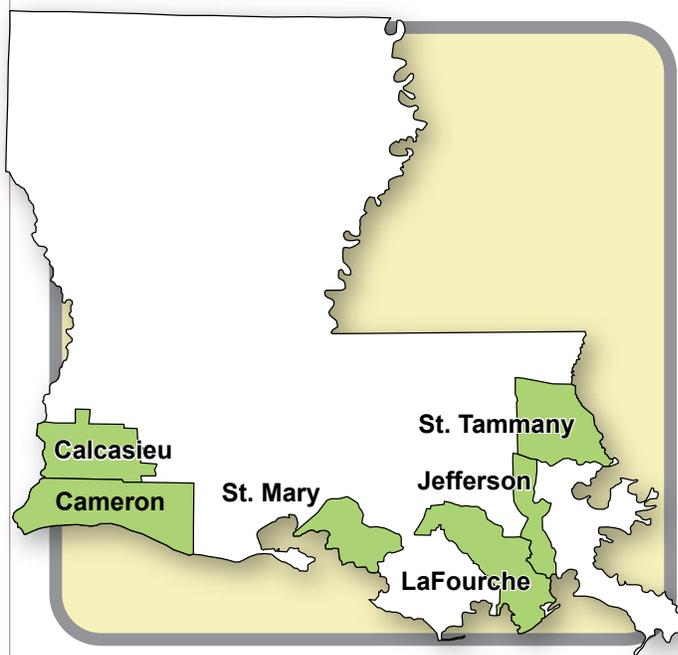
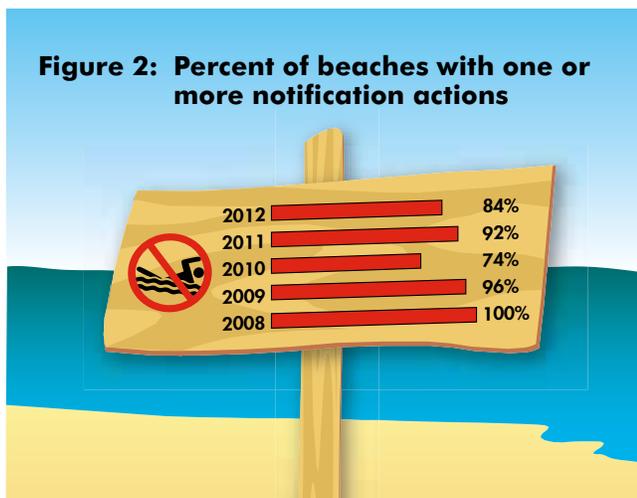


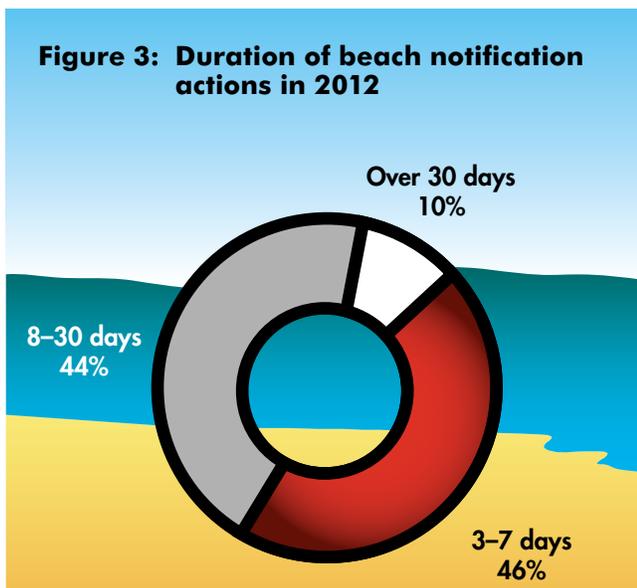
Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by parish for 2012

| Parish        | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| CALCASIEU     | 2             | 2         | 0             |
| CAMERON       | 13            | 12        | 1             |
| JEFFERSON     | 9             | 8         | 1             |
| LAFOURCHE     | 4             | 1         | 3             |
| ST. MARY      | 1             | 1         | 0             |
| ST. TAMMANY   | 1             | 1         | 0             |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>30</b>     | <b>25</b> | <b>5</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?**

Louisiana issued 52 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Louisiana lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards.

**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 length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 4,392 beach days were associated with the

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



swimming seasons of the 25 monitored Louisiana beaches. Louisiana reported notification actions on 688 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 84 percent of the time. (Figure 4). This increase in open days indicates that Louisiana beaches are overcoming the impacts from previous hurricanes and the 2010 explosion of the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling platform.

**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/>.