

EPA's BEACH Report: New York 2012 Swimming Season

September 2013

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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 New York for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

A total of 342 coastal beaches were monitored in 15 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, New York 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 342 coastal beaches that New York monitored, 151 (44 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is a decrease from 2011, the year of Hurricane Irene.

Figure 1. New York coastal counties

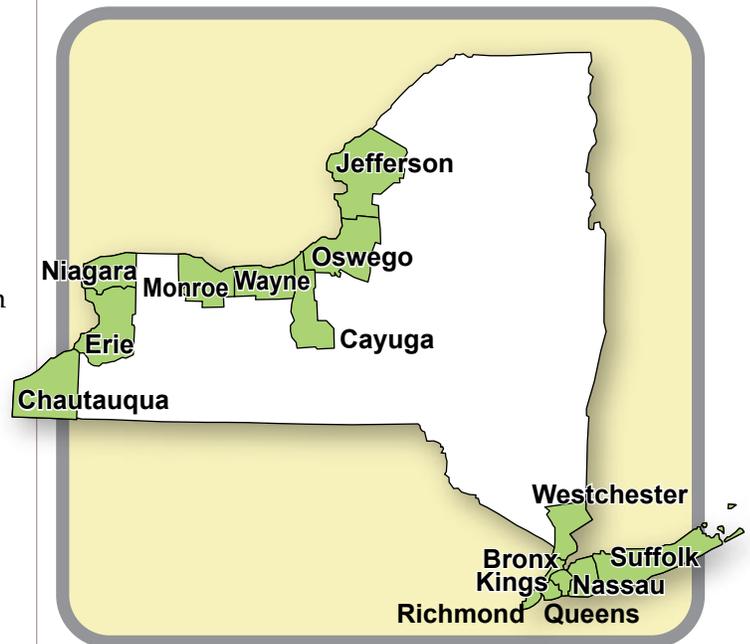


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BRONX	10	10	0
CAYUGA	1	1	0
CHAUTAUQUA	8	8	0
ERIE	9	9	0
JEFFERSON	7	7	0
KINGS	6	6	0
MONROE	4	4	0
NASSAU	68	68	0
NIAGARA	3	3	0
OSWEGO	6	6	0
QUEENS	5	5	0
RICHMOND	4	4	0
SUFFOLK	186	186	0
WAYNE	2	2	0
WESTCHESTER	23	23	0
TOTALS	342	342	0

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

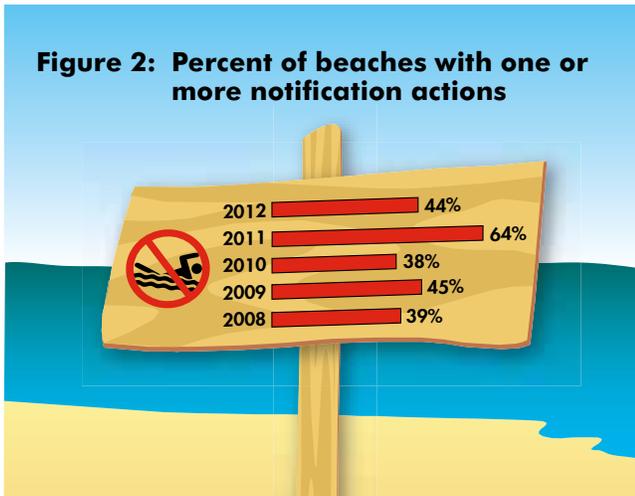
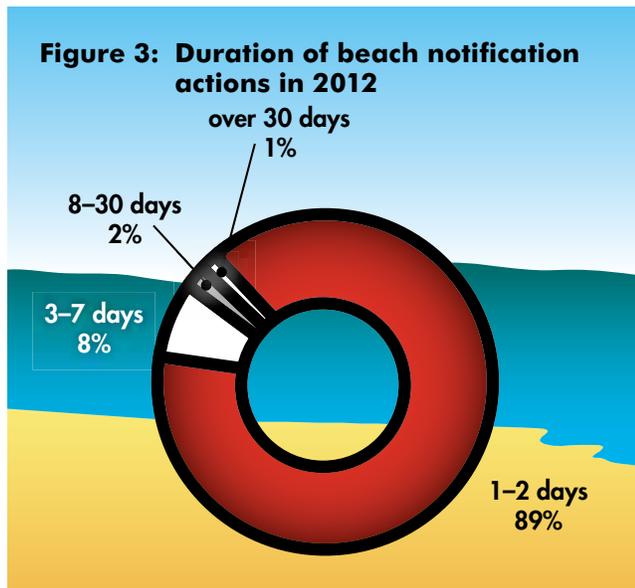


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



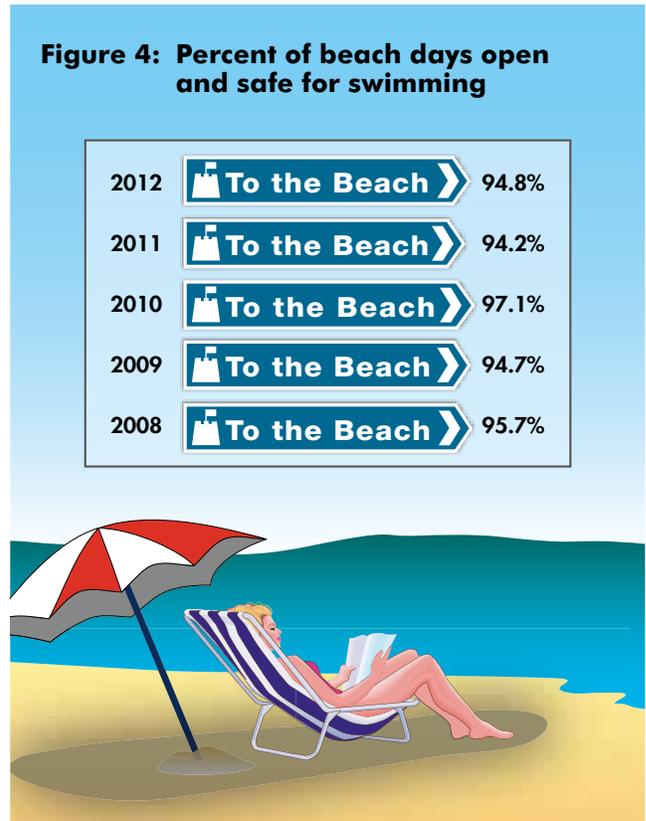
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

New York issued 857 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically New York lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (89 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3). Only rarely (three percent) did notification actions last more than a week.

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 35,280 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 342 monitored New York beaches. New York reported notification actions on 1,848 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 95 percent of the time. This percentage is similar to previous years (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the New York 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/>.