



EPA's BEACH Report: Florida 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report to EPA on beach monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters. The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar activities in the water.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by the State of Florida for the 2009 swimming season.

During 2009 Florida monitored 305 beaches along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. These beaches are located in 34 of Florida's 35 coastal counties. One coastal county has no accessible beaches along the Gulf. In total, there are approximately 1,100 miles of recreational beaches in Florida, and approximately 600 miles are monitored at least once per week, year round. The geography of these beaches varies from open coasts on barrier islands to more enclosed bays, sounds, and intra-coastal water ways.

Florida's beaches are heavily used most of the year. April through September is the peak swimming season, with winter visitors still swimming during the colder months in the southern third of the state. Surfers ply the state's waters year round. The state's population is estimated at 18 million, and approximately 70 million tourists visit per year. Estimates from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) place the number of swimmers at just over 14 million a year. In addition, NOAA estimates that another 3.5 million snorkelers, surfers, and divers enter Florida's water each year.

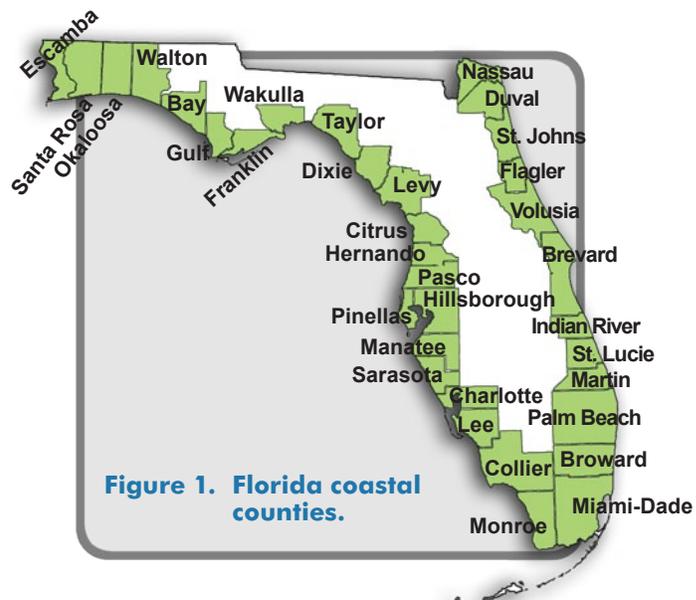


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BAY	16	13	3
BREVARD	27	9	18
BROWARD	19	15	4
CHARLOTTE	10	8	2
CITRUS	1	1	0
COLLIER	56	14	42
DIXIE	1	1	0
DUVAL	10	10	0
ESCAMBIA	18	12	6
FLAGLER	9	6	3
FRANKLIN	6	6	0
GULF	7	6	1
HERNANDO	1	1	0
HILLSBOROUGH	9	9	0
INDIAN RIVER	16	6	10
LEE	19	13	6
LEVY	2	1	1
MANATEE	11	10	1
MARTIN	21	9	12
MIAMI-DADE	16	15	1
MONROE	39	17	22
NASSAU	29	11	18
OKALOOSA	26	12	14
PALM BEACH	24	14	10
PASCO	7	7	0
PINELLAS	42	14	28
SANTA ROSA	10	7	3
SARASOTA	33	16	17
ST. JOHNS	8	8	0
ST. LUCIE	25	4	21
TAYLOR	5	4	1
VOLUSIA	16	15	1
WAKULLA	2	2	0
WALTON	12	9	3
TOTALS	553	305	248

2009 Summary Results

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Florida's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 102 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2009 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Florida's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 3 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Florida's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2009, 53 percent of the beaches listed storm-related runoff as a possible source.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Florida go to: www.doh.state.fl.us (Select "Beach Water Quality" from the subject list.)

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

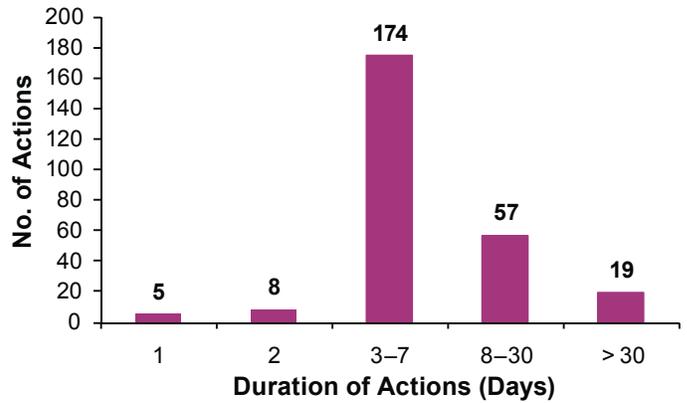


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

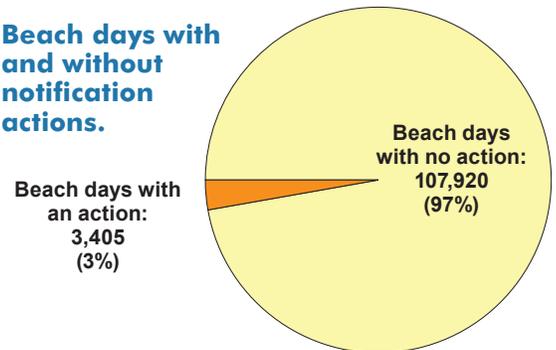


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007-2009.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of monitored beaches	308	305	305
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	98	109	102
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	32%	36%	33%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	5%	5%	3%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (305 beaches).

