EPA's BEACH Report:
New Hampshire 2008 Swimming Season

May 2009

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 New Hampshire for the 2008 swimming season.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) began monitoring coastal beaches in 1989 and the program continues to provide weekly summer monitoring. From May 28th through Labor Day of 2008, 413 beach inspections were conducted and 1664 samples were collected and analyzed for Enterococci. Six beach advisories were posted in 2008, an increase from one in 2007. New Castle Town Beach, New Castle, was the location with the multiple postings, three advisories in total.

In addition to the standard sampling, DES began a stormwater modeling project to both determined bacteria sources affecting beaches and to develop a predictive model for issuing bacteria advisories. A final report for this project is due in mid-summer 2009 and will be available on the DES website.

The local chapter of Surfrider Foundation, a non-profit ocean environmental organization, continues to work with the DES Beach Program by volunteering to monitor coastal beaches in the off-season. From March to May and September to November, Surfrider volunteers conducted 38 inspections at North Beach and Jenness Beach, collecting 170 samples to be analyzed for enterococci. The program is continuing in 2009.

The DES Beach Program continued the cooperative effort with the Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation (Blue Ocean), begun in April 2005, to clean-up coastal beaches. Blue Ocean organizes volunteer groups to conduct monthly beach clean-ups. The DES Beach Program provides each group of volunteers with garbage bags, gloves, scales, and other necessary supplies at 12 of the 16 coastal beaches. In addition to collecting the trash, volunteers tally the weight and number of trash items collected. In 2008, 7,468 pounds of trash were collected. Cigarette butts were the most numerous item with 18,332 collected. Volunteers spent a total of 2,221 hours participating in these clean-up efforts. The DES Beach Program hopes this program will continue for many years to come.

Figure 1. New Hampshire coastal county.

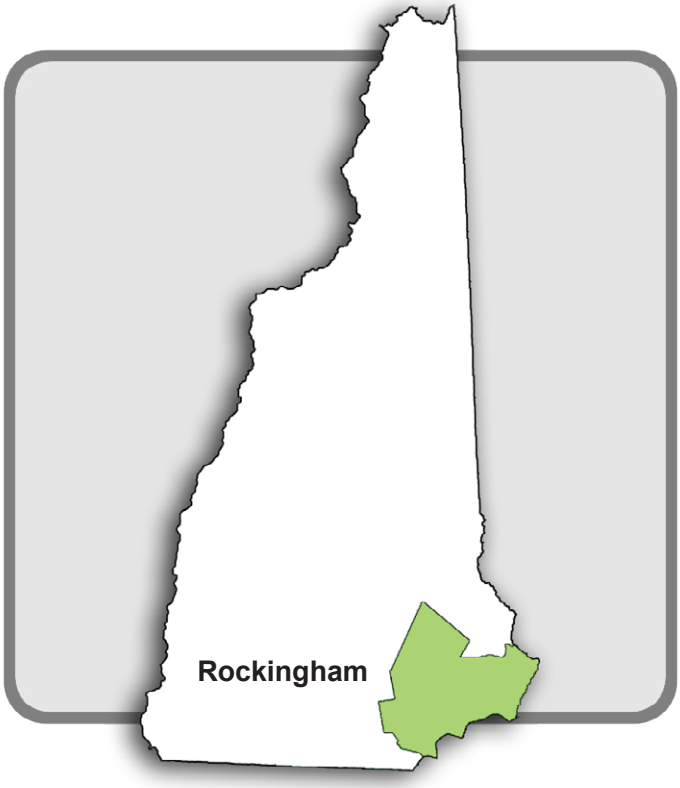


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2008.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ROCKINGHAM	16	16	0
TOTALS	**16**	**16**	**0**

2008 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, New Hampshire's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. Four monitored beaches had advisories issued during the 2008 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For New Hampshire's 2008 swimming season, actions were reported less than one percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2008 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2008 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

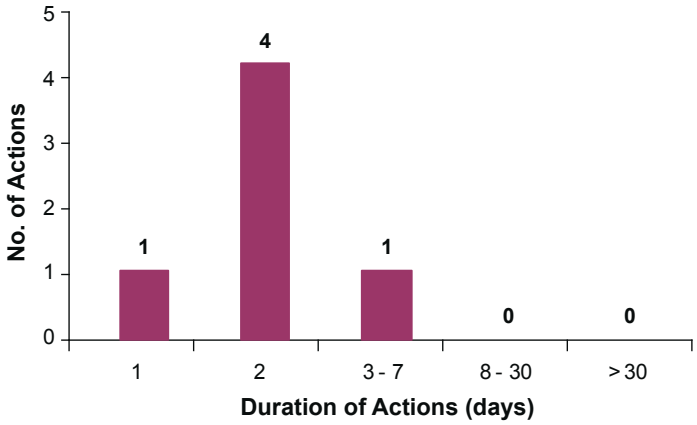
Figure 4 displays the percentage of New Hampshire's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2008, 50 percent of the beaches had no sources of pollution.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:
www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in New Hampshire:
www.des.state.nh.us/Beaches/index.asp

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



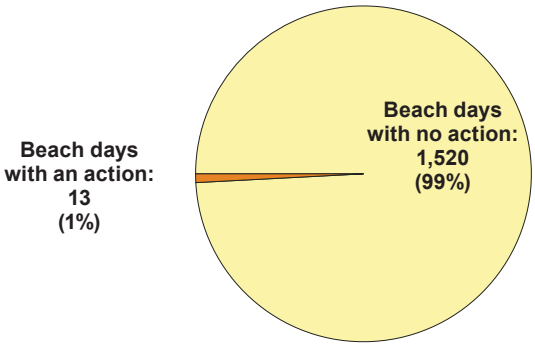


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2006–2008.

	2006	2007	2008
Number of monitored beaches	16	16	16
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	5	1	4
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	31%	6%	25%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	2%	<1%	<1%

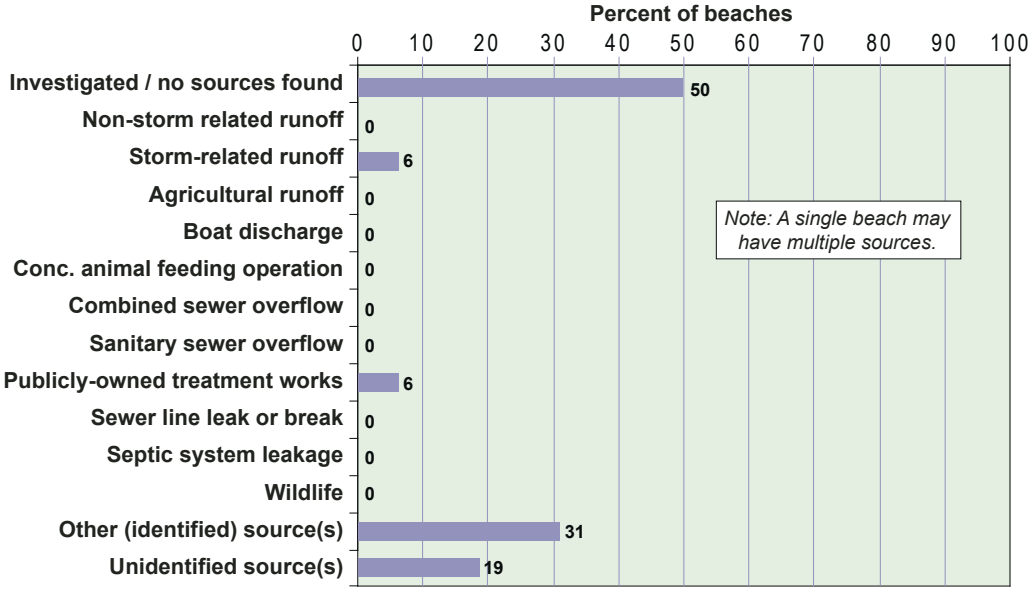



Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (16 beaches).