



EPA's BEACH Report: Oregon 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 Oregon for the 2008 swimming season.

Between May and September each year, the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) helps protect people who play in coastal waters that are designated for swimming, bathing, surfing, and similar water contact activities.

During the 2008 swimming season, the OBMP monitored sampling sites at 26 recreational beaches along the Oregon coast. Ocean water is sampled either once a week or every two weeks. The beach program works with other state agencies to collect and test water samples, and when bacteria levels exceed the state standard of 158 enterococci organisms per 100mL of ocean water sampled a water contact advisory is issued.

Oregon uses various methods for notifying the public about water contact advisories, including media releases, phone calls to city and county officials, email notification to local governments and interested stakeholders, statewide advisory hotline, signage at beach access points, posting information on the program Web site.

The OBMP works with the Oregon Coastal Atlas to share and display beach water quality monitoring data on the Web. The Atlas is a collaborative project of the Oregon Ocean-Coastal Management Program, and is considered one of the Nation's most useful and comprehensive information sources about a State shoreline. To view recent and historic beach sampling data at the Atlas, visit www.coastalatlantlas.net/learn/topics/waterquality/beach.

Figure 1. Oregon coastal counties.

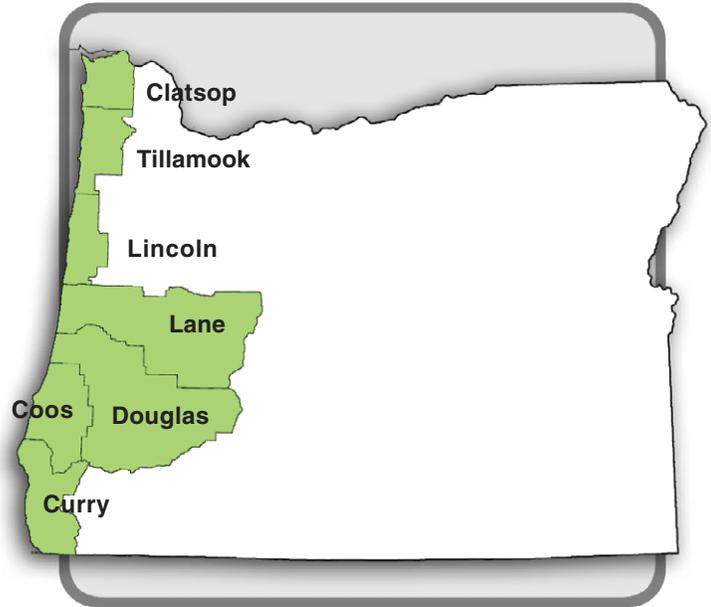


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2008.

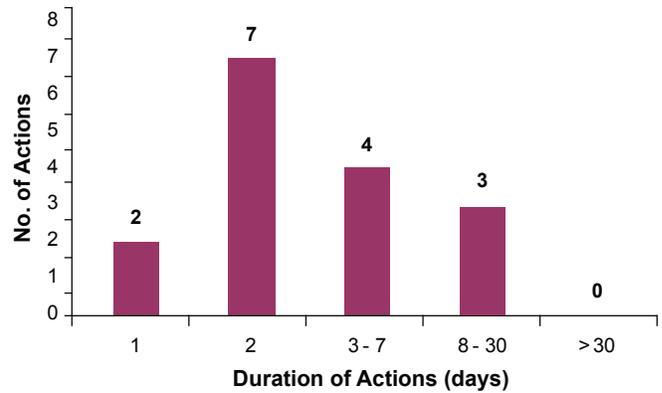
County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CLATSOP	7	4	3
COOS	3	2	1
CURRY	13	7	6
DOUGLAS	1	0	1
LANE	4	1	3
LINCOLN	18	6	12
TILLAMOOK	13	6	7
TOTALS	59	26	33

2008 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Oregon’s approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the ocean water. A total of 10 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2008 swimming season. About 56 percent of Oregon’s 16 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

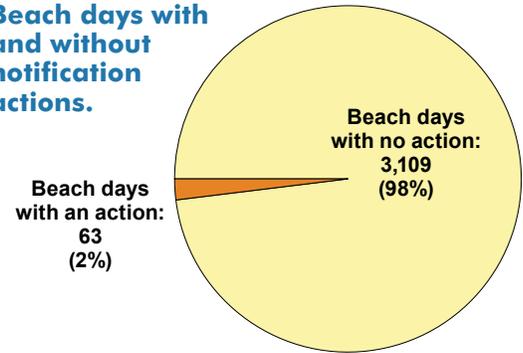
Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Oregon’s 2008 swimming season, actions were reported about 2 percent of the time (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.



How do 2008 results compare to previous years?

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

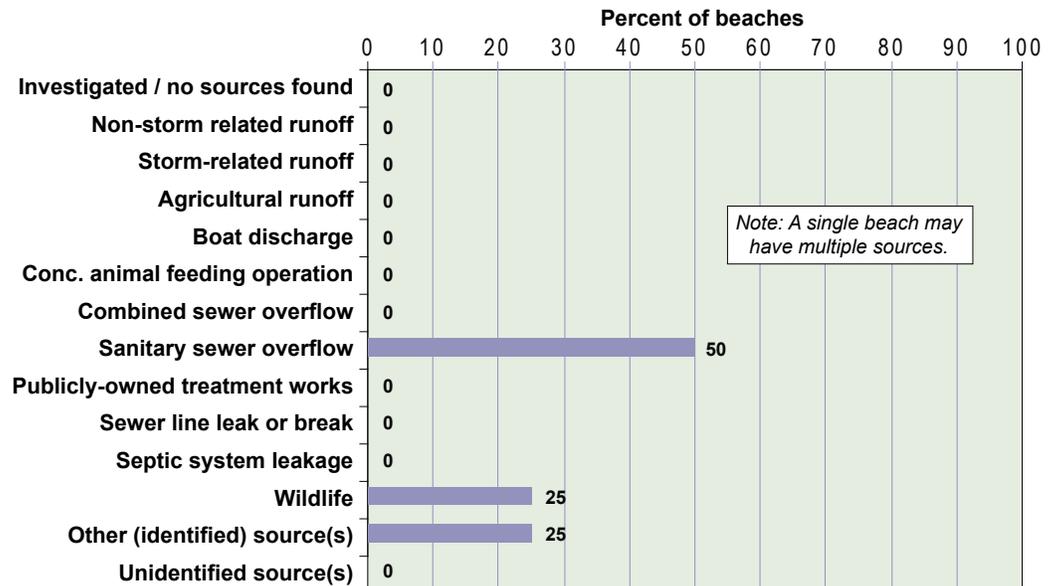
Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2006–2008.

	2006	2007	2008
Number of monitored beaches	20	20	26
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	8	14	10
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	40%	70%	38%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	1%	4%	2%

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Oregon’s investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2008, 50 percent of the beaches included sanitary sewer overflows as a possible source.

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



For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information on Oregon’s monitored beaches and sampling results visit

www.healthoregon.org/beach, or

contact (971) 673-0431.