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

From May to September 2008, the Rhode Island Beach Program collected approximately 2,800 samples from all its monitored saltwater beaches. All samples were analyzed for Enterococci, as required in the federal BEACH Act.

Figure 1. Rhode Island coastal counties.

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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BRISTOL	20	4	16
KENT	16	4	12
NEWPORT	92	23	69
PROVIDENCE	8	0	8
WASHINGTON	102	43	59
TOTALS	**238**	**74**	**164**

2008 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Rhode Island's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 18 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2008 swimming season. About 76 percent of Rhode Island's 54 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Rhode Island's 2008 swimming season, actions were reported about 2 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 Rhode Island's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2008, 92 percent of the beaches were listed as having unidentified sources of pollution.

For More Information

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

For information about beaches in Rhode Island:
www.ribeaches.org/index.cfm

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

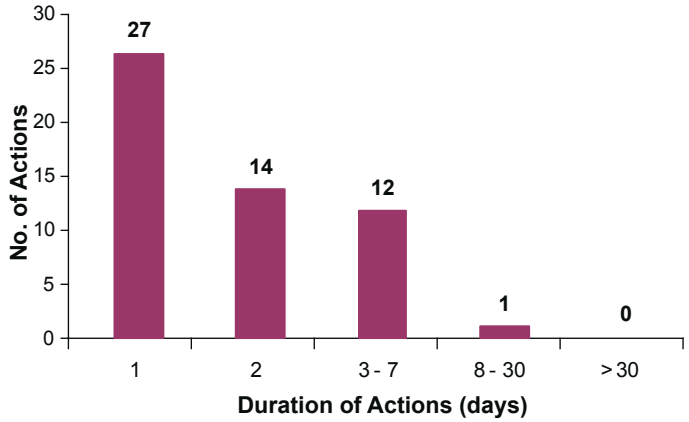

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

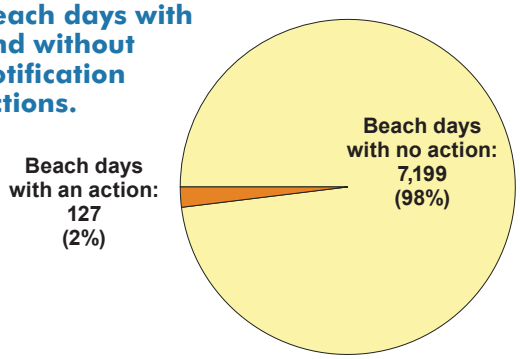

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2006–2008.

	2006	2007	2008
Number of monitored beaches	74	68	74
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	17	15	18
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	23%	22%	24%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	6%	1%	2%
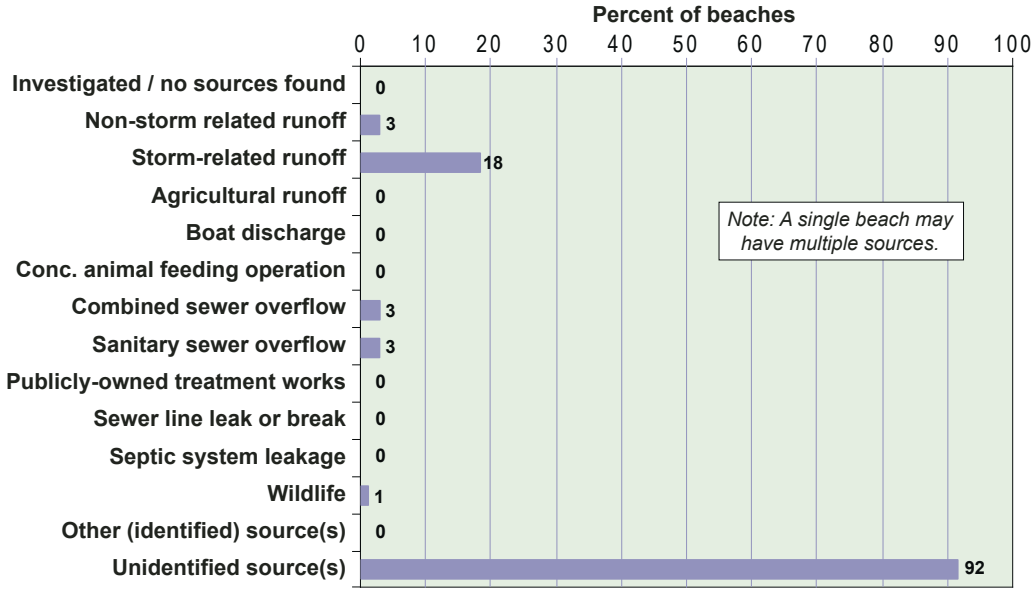
Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (74 beaches).