

# EPA's BEACH Report: Connecticut 2011 Swimming Season

July 2012

EPA 820-F-12-010

## 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 Connecticut for the 2011 swimming season.

## 2011 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

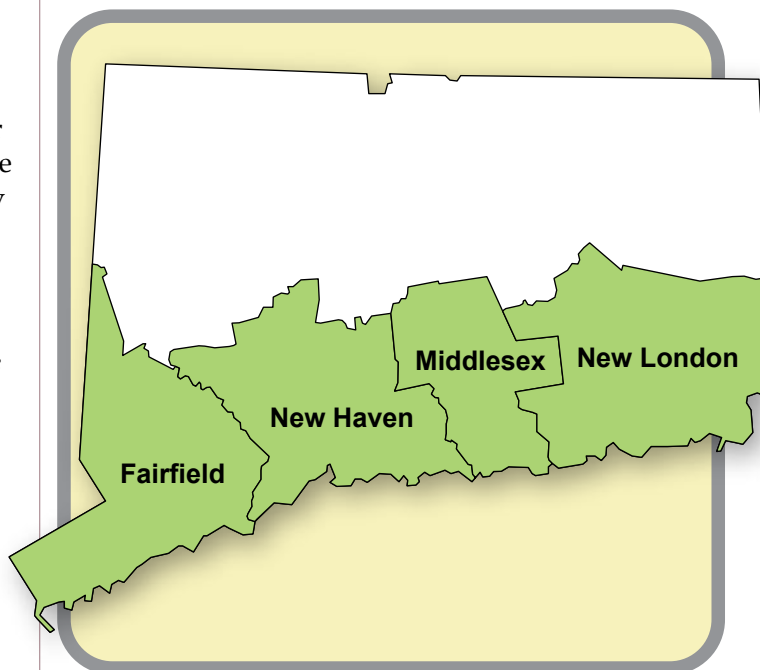
Connecticut reports 73 coastal beaches in four counties (Figure 1). Connecticut monitored 72 of these beaches during the 2011 swimming season (Table 1).

When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Connecticut 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. In some cases, advisories and closings are issued preemptively (i.e., without having actual bacteria monitoring results) due to storms or other conditions that might affect swimmer safety.

### How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2011 of the 72 coastal beaches that Connecticut monitored, 63 (88 percent) had at least one

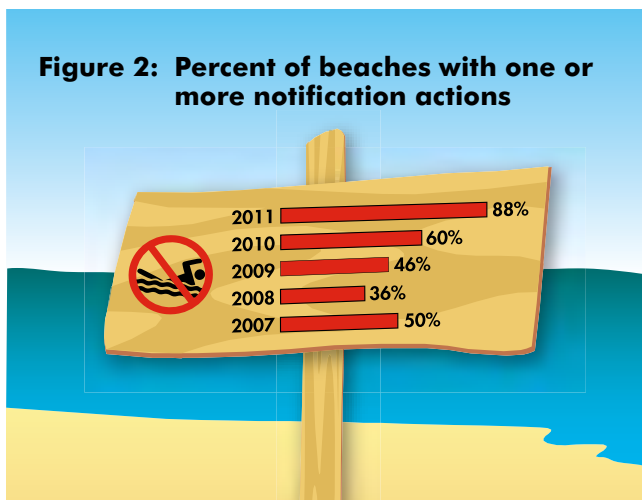
**Figure 1. Connecticut coastal counties.**



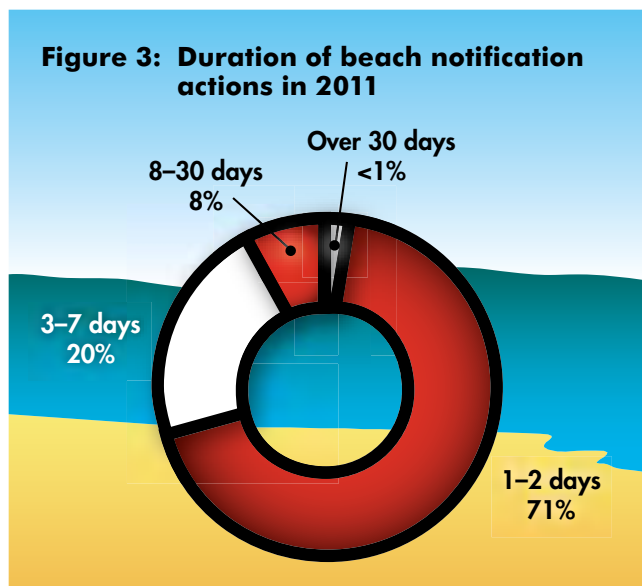
**Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2011.**

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
FAIRFIELD	28	28	0
MIDDLESEX	5	5	0
NEW HAVEN	27	27	0
NEW LONDON	13	12	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1</b>

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



**Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2011**



notification action (Figure 2). This is an increase over previous years, primarily due an increase of preemptive rainfall-based advisories in response to Hurricane Irene's landfall in late August.

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

Connecticut issued 168 notification actions during the 2011 swimming season. Typically Connecticut lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of cases (71 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3). Only rarely (9 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 advisories or closings to better track trends over time.

**Figure 4: Percent of beach days open and safe for swimming**

2011	To the Beach	91.0%
2010	To the Beach	97.8%
2009	To the Beach	98.4%
2008	To the Beach	97.9%
2007	To the Beach	98.3%



Total available beach days are determined by multiplying the length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2011 EPA calculated that 7,056 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 72 monitored Connecticut beaches. Connecticut reported notification actions on 636 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 91 percent of the time. Many of the 2011 notification actions are attributable to Hurricane Irene, causing a decrease from previous years (Figure 4).

### **For More Information**

For information about the Connecticut beach program contact:  
 Jon Dinneen, Connecticut Department of Public Health  
 Tel: 860-509-7305  
 e-mail: [jon.dinneen@po.state.ct.gov](mailto:jon.dinneen@po.state.ct.gov)

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/>.