

# EPA's BEACH Report: Wisconsin 2011 Swimming Season

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## 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 Wisconsin for the 2011 swimming season.

## 2011 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Wisconsin monitored 116 coastal beaches in thirteen counties during the 2011 swimming season (Figure 1 and Table 1). When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Wisconsin 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.

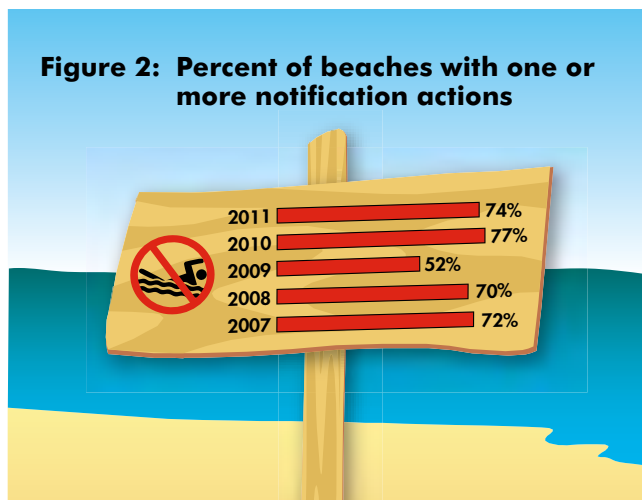
**Figure 1. Wisconsin coastal counties.**



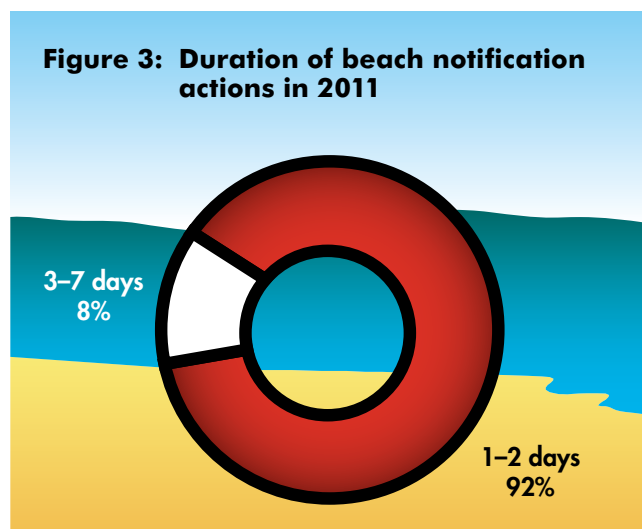
**Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2011.**

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ASHLAND	7	7	0
BAYFIELD	17	17	0
BROWN	3	3	0
DOOR	31	31	0
DOUGLAS	12	12	0
IRON	5	5	0
KENOSHA	5	5	0
KEWAUNEE	2	2	0
MANITOWOC	9	9	0
MARINETTE	6	0	6
MILWAUKEE	11	9	2
OZAUKEE	7	6	1
RACINE	2	2	0
SHEBOYGAN	8	8	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>9</b>

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



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



#### **How many beaches had notification actions?**

In 2011, of the 116 coastal beaches that Wisconsin monitored, 86 (74 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is approximately the same as in most previous years with the exception of 2009.

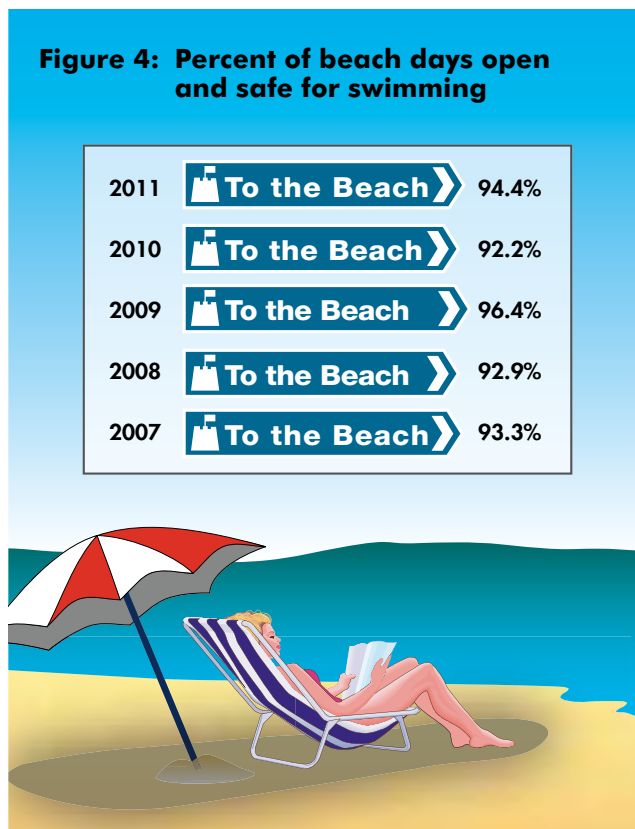
#### **How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?**

Wisconsin issued 438 notification actions during the 2011 swimming season. Typically Wisconsin lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (92 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3).

#### **What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?**

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with notification actions

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



to better track trends over time. 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 10,710 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 116 monitored Wisconsin beaches. Wisconsin reported notification actions on 601 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 94 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at state beaches (Figure 4).

#### **For More Information**

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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/>.