

# EPA's BEACH Report:

## Virgin Islands 2012 Swimming Season

September 2013

EPA 820-F-13-049

### 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 U.S. Virgin Islands for the 2012 swimming season.

### 2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Virgin Islands monitored 43 coastal beaches on three islands during the 2012 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, Virgin Islands officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

#### How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 43 coastal beaches that the Virgin Islands monitored, 17 (40 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2).

Figure 1. U.S. Virgin Islands

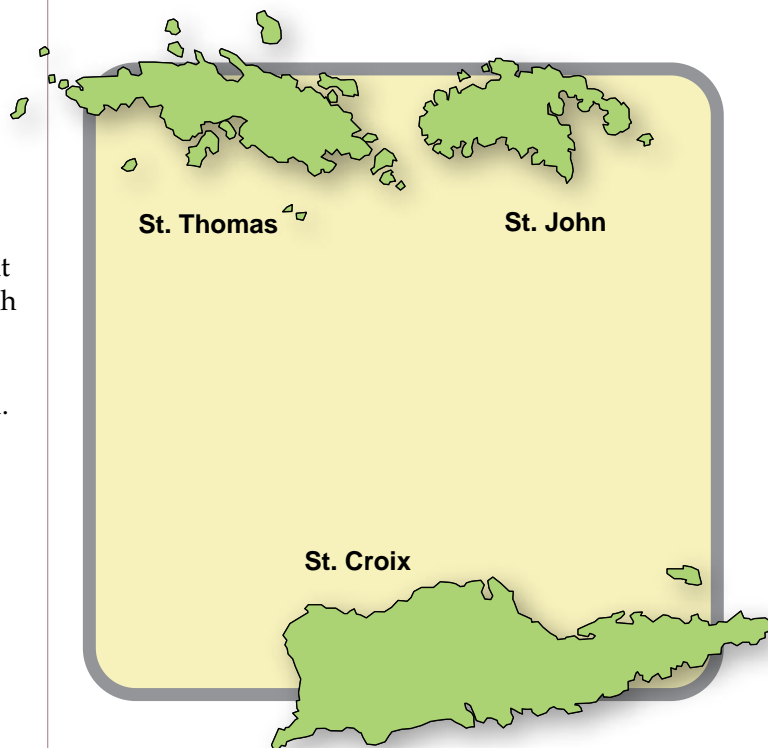
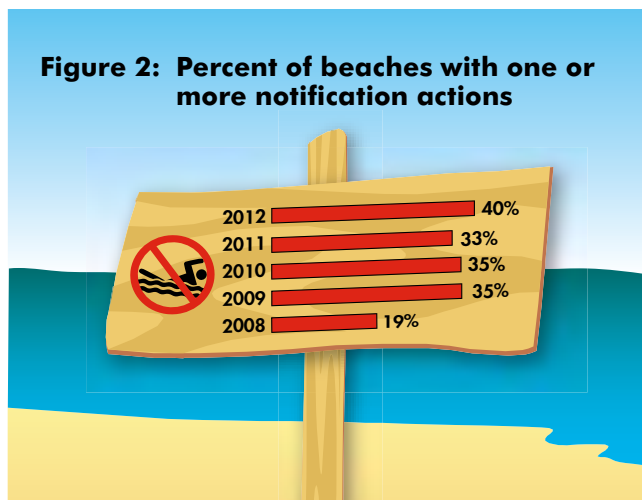


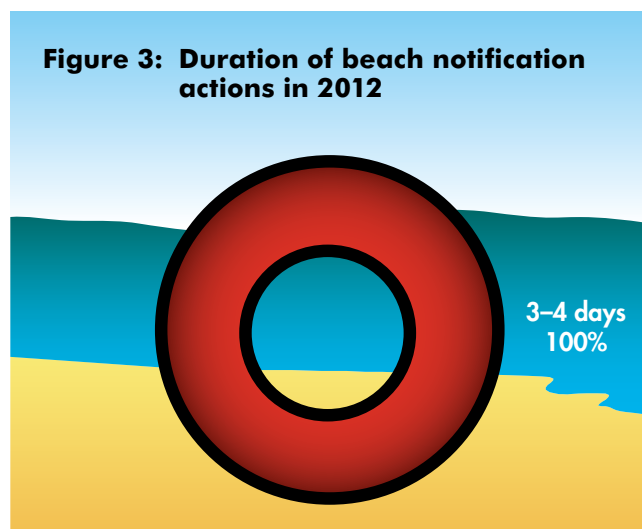
Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches for 2012

Island	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ST. CROIX	20	20	0
ST. JOHN	8	8	0
ST. THOMAS	15	15	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>

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



**Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012**



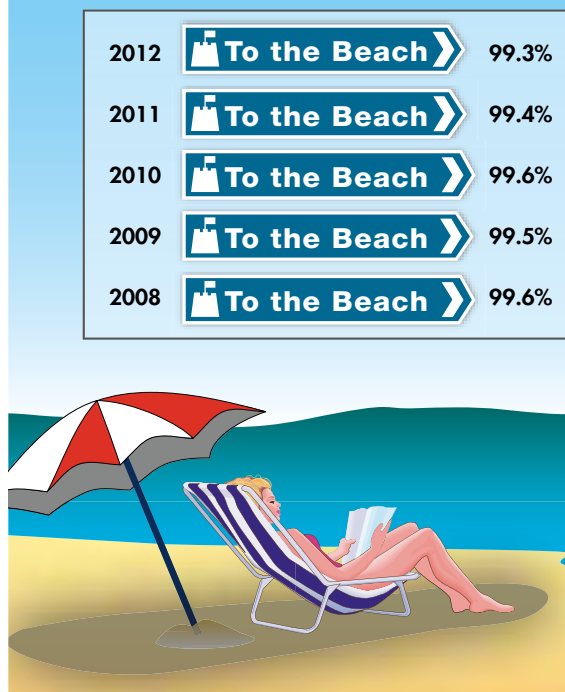
### ***How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?***

The Virgin Islands issued 95 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically the Virgin Islands lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. In all cases water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within three or four 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 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 2012

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



EPA calculated that 15,695 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 43 monitored Virgin Islands beaches. The Virgin Islands reported notification actions on 111 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming approximately 99 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in the Virgin Islands (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/>.