

Coastal Beach Inspection Program
2017 Summer Sampling
Annual Report



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2017 Public Bathing Beach Inspection Program: Coastal Beaches

The coastal beach program of the NHDES Public Beach Inspection Program is a federally funded program that provides resources for coastal beach monitoring to protect public health at NH beaches. NHDES inspected 16 coastal public swimming beaches in 2017. During the swim season, Memorial Day through Labor Day, six beaches were inspected twice weekly, four were inspected weekly, and six beaches were sampled twice a month according to a tiered monitoring assessment strategy. In 2015, the summer sampling frequency was reduced from weekly to twice a month at both Sawyer Beach and Seabrook Town Beach because both had been removed from the 303(d) impaired list in the most recent NHDES report to EPA. The tiered monitoring assessment remained unchanged in 2017 (Table 1).

Staff members conducted 266 inspections and collected 842 samples plus 82 field duplicates for a total of 924 Enterococci analysis during the 2017 swim season. The 2017 swim season in New Hampshire was 95 days long, translating into 1,520 beach days collectively for all 16 beaches. There was an increase in the number of samples exceeding the state standard of 104 counts/100ml for Enterococci. Bacteria results from coastal beach inspections resulted in one or more advisories from seven of the 16 coastal beaches. There were 21 total advisory days (1.38 % of swimming days) in 2017 compared to only six total advisory days (0.36 % of swimming days) in 2016. The only beach to issue coastal advisories in 2016 was North Hampton State Beach. In 2017, there were nine total coastal beach advisories issued at Bass Beach, Foss Beach, North Beach, North Hampton State Beach, Wallis Sands State Park, Wallis Sands Beach at Wallis Rd. and New Castle Town Beach. Three of the beaches are state parks. New Castle Town Beach had the most advisories with three separate advisories lasting a total of seven beach days. The mean length of advisory days was 2.3 days.

Special studies to monitor Enterococci from Parsons Creek, an outlet to Wallis Sands Beach in Rye, New Hampshire were conducted. Watershed management plans completed in 2011 for Parsons Creek watersheds are the basis for ongoing work by the town of Rye to better understand and reduce bacteria loads in the Parsons Creek watershed. NHDES Beach Program sampled the Parsons Creek outlet to Wallis Sands Beach twice weekly during the swim season (28 scheduled visits) in order to better understand the source of bacteria for this particular beach. Over 86% of samples were below the criteria of 104 counts/100 ml.

Future efforts of the beach program are focused on maintaining monitoring efforts at coastal beaches and reviews of the tiered monitoring evaluation to ensure effective sampling is in place. Additionally, communication through new media methods will continue to inform the public how the beach program works, what it samples and what advisories indicate.

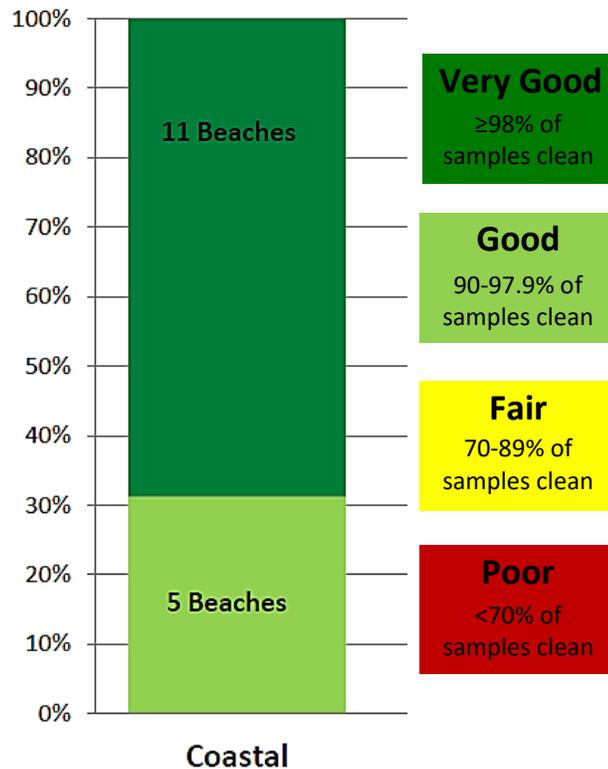


Figure 1. The number of clean samples was compared to the total number of samples tested for each beach (2003-current). During the summer, freshwater beaches are typically sampled once a month and most of the coastal beaches are sampled twice a week. All coastal beaches and most freshwater beaches in the New Hampshire assessment fall into the “Good” or “Very Good” categories, where beaches are clean > 90% of the time.

In preparation for the 2018 sampling season, NHDES Beach Program staff will continue to improve the notification process implemented for the 2017 season by completing:

1. Refinements to the live beach advisory map searchable by advisory status:
https://www4.des.state.nh.us/WaterShed_BeachMaps/WaterShed_BeachMaps.aspx
2. Annual summary reports for each coastal beach found through the OneStop data search:
<http://www4.des.state.nh.us/DESONestop/BasicSearch.aspx>

Table 1. 2017 Coastal beach locations, sampling frequency and designated monitoring tier

| Beach Name | Alternate Name | Town | Visits per week | Tier |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Hampton Harbor Beach | – | Hampton | Every other week | 3 |
| Hampton Beach State Park | – | Hampton | 2 | 1 |
| North Beach State Park | – | Hampton | 1 | 2 |
| Northside Park | Plaice Cove | Hampton | Every other week | 3 |
| Sun Valley Beach | Part of Seabrook Town Beach | Hampton | Every other week | 3 |
| New Castle Town Beach | Great Island Common Beach | New Castle | 2 | 1 |
| Bass Beach | – | North Hampton | 1 | 2 |
| North Hampton State Beach | – | North Hampton | 2 | 1 |
| Foss Beach | – | Rye | Every other week | 3 |
| Jenness Beach at Cable Road | Cable Beach | Rye | 2 | 1 |
| Jenness Beach State Park | – | Rye | 1 | 2 |
| Sawyer Beach | – | Rye | Every other week | 3 |
| Wallis Sands Beach at Wallis Road | Pirates Cove Beach | Rye | 2 | 1 |
| Wallis Sands State Park | – | Rye | 2 | 1 |
| Seabrook Town Beach | – | Seabrook | Every other week | 3 |
| Seabrook Harbor Beach | – | Seabrook | 1 | 1 |