# EPA's BEACH Report:
## Louisiana 2009 Swimming Season

**May 2010**

## Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report beach water quality monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters to EPA. 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 Louisiana for the 2009 swimming season.

Due to the lingering impacts of Hurricanes Rita and Ike, levels of use during the 2009 swimming season remained low relative to historic levels at Cameron Parish beaches, and access to Hackberry beach, which was eliminated by Hurricane Ike, remained inaccessible through the 2009 swim season. Grand Isle State Park beach was closed again in 2009 due to construction activities associated with beach restoration along the Park's shoreline to repair lingering damages from Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav. The closure ran from the week of September 16th through the end of the swim season. Use at the remaining beaches during 2009 was at approximately historic levels.

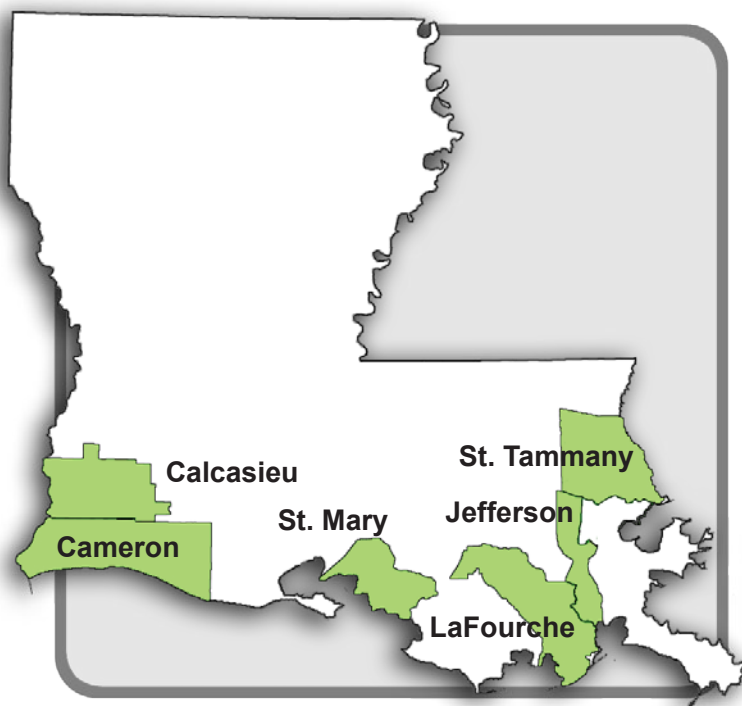**Figure 1. Louisiana coastal parishes.**



**Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by parish for 2009.**

| Parish | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---|---|---|---|
| CALCASIEU | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| CAMERON | 13 | 12 | 1 |
| JEFFERSON | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| LAFOURCHE | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| ST. MARY | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ST. TAMMANY | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **TOTALS** | **28** | **27** | **1** |

# 2009 Summary Results

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

Louisiana issues beach advisories when water quality standards are exceeded. All monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2009 swimming season. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations. This figure includes advisories issued when water quality criteria were exceeded and closures issued during beach construction or following hurricanes.

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

For Louisiana's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 53 percent of the time (Figure 3). Advisories associated with an observed exceedance of water quality criteria accounted for 93% of notifications, with the balance from construction closures. Adjusting for closures, water quality advisories were in effect 49% of the time.

## How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years. However, due to annual changes in monitoring tier assignments, these results cannot be directly interpreted. A thorough analysis of water quality trends is presented in the Program's annual report.

## What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Louisiana has conducted sanitary surveys of all monitored beaches and continues to investigate possible sources of contamination at monitored beaches with high exceedance rates. However, no possible sources of pollution affecting Louisiana's investigated monitored beaches in 2009 were found or identified (Figure 4).

## For More Information

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

For information about beaches in Louisiana, including the Program's annual report, Louisiana BEACH Grant Report, 2009 Swimming Season:
**www.ophbeachmonitoring.com**
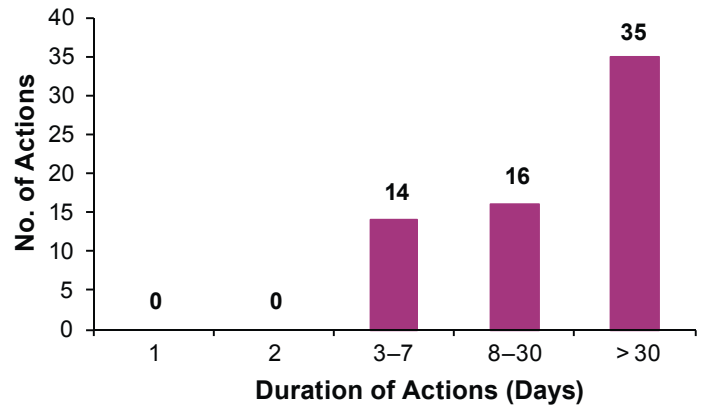
**Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.**
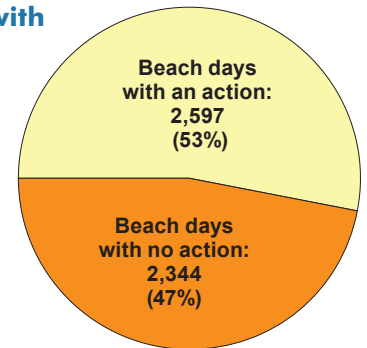


**Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.**



**Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007–2009.**

|  | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of monitored beaches | 26 | 26 | 27 |
| Number of beaches affected by notification actions | 18 | 26 | 26 |
| Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions | 69% | 100% | 96% |
| Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions | 38% | 66% | 53% |

**Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (27 beaches).**