



Heal the Bay

2013 End of Summer Beach Report Card:

California

Heal the Bay's End of Summer Beach Report Card® (BRC) provides beachgoers with essential water quality information by grading 450 monitoring locations in California, from Humboldt County south through San Diego County. The data analyzed for this report includes all available beach data collected from Memorial Day through August 21, 2013, in order to publicize summer beach grades prior to Labor Day weekend, one of the busiest beach weekends of the year. For the most recent weekly grades, go to www.beachreportcard.org where you can also download the free BRC mobile application for beach grades on-the-go.

Priority Beach News: Federal Budget Cuts Threaten Beach Program

On April 10, 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014, which eliminates the entire Beaches Grant Program. Congress has appropriated approximately \$10 million annually for the past 11 years, to aid water quality monitoring and public notification programs for coastal and Great Lakes states. While nearly half of all state beach programs are completely reliant on federal funds, these funds subsidize a portion of California's beach program (approximately \$500,000 annually).

The proposed cuts are extremely concerning as states are only obligated to implement beach monitoring when federal funding is provided. The Beach Grant-funded programs allow state, local health and environmental protection agencies to routinely monitor and track water quality at the nation's beaches, as well as alert the public when bacteria levels in the water are unsafe by posting beach warnings or closing the beach.

Without continued federal funding, bather health protection will be threatened as all states will likely be forced to scale back their beach programs. Fewer beaches will be tested, sampling frequencies will decrease, and monitoring seasons will be shortened. Reduced monitoring could also compromise the ability to track chronically polluted beaches, thus allowing potential pollution and infrastructure problems to go unnoticed. Ultimately, the absence of continued federal funding will lead to the discontinuation of many state beach programs. Americans rely on water quality monitoring and reporting to ensure that the water we swim, surf and play in is safe. The public deserves to know that the water is safe when they go to the beach.

While the fate of the federal Beach Program awaits Congressional approval, we are encouraged by the Senate Appropriations Committee's recently proposed draft bill which restores federal Beach Program funds. Heal the Bay, along with our environmental partners, will continue to advocate for this vital public health program.

Beach Breakdown

California beaches score some of the cleanest grades on record this summer. On par with last summer, most beaches in California earned excellent water quality grades with 96% (430 of 450) of sampling sites receiving A or B grades during the high-use beach-going season (92% A grades and 4% B grades). There were 20 locations (4%) throughout the state that received fair-to-poor water quality grades (6 C's, 7 D's and 7 F's).

San Diego County: Beach water quality throughout San Diego was excellent this summer with 73 As and one B grade (**San Diego Bay, Tidelands Park**).

Orange County: Orange County beach water quality improved 3% from last summer with 98 of 102 locations (96%) receiving A grades. **Poche Beach** continues to exhibit poor water quality, earning a D grade this summer. **Little Corona Beach in Corona del Mar** received the only grade lower than an A or B this summer (C grade). This is the third consecutive summer that the historically polluted **Doheny Beach** has shown improvement with all A grades.

Los Angeles County: Los Angeles County water quality grades improved 3% this summer with 80 of 89 locations (90%) earning A or B grades (up 5% since 2011). This summer, the historically polluted **Avalon Beach** has shown improvement for the first time in nine years. Though water quality is far from excellent, all five monitoring locations improved from F grades to the following: 1 A, 1 B, 2 C's, and 1 D grade.

Though the majority of summer water quality is excellent throughout Los Angeles County, the following beaches earned fair to poor water quality grades: **Surfrider-breach point** (C grade), **Santa Monica Pier** (D grade), **Malibu Pier** (D grade), **Long Beach City Beach- projection of 55th** (D grade), **Cabrillo Beach- harborside at boat launch** (D grade), and **Cabrillo Beach- harborside at restrooms** (F grade).

Ventura County: Overall water quality at beaches throughout Ventura County remains among the best in the state. All 40 beaches received A grades in this report.

Santa Barbara County: The summer water quality at beaches in Santa Barbara County was excellent with 15 monitoring locations (94%) receiving A and B grades. **Jalama Beach** was the only location that received a fair grade this summer (C grade).

San Luis Obispo County: Summer water quality at beaches in San Luis Obispo County slipped to 89% A grades (100% A grades last year). **Avila Beach – projection of San Juan Street** (C grade) and **Pismo Beach Pier** (D grade) were the only two of 19 locations earning below an A grade.

Monterey County: Summer beach water quality in Monterey County was very good with seven out of eight A grades. **Stillwater Cove** received the county's only poor water quality grade (F grade).

Santa Cruz County: Water quality in Santa Cruz was excellent with 12 out of 13 (92%) monitoring locations receiving A or B grades. However, **Cowell Beach** at the wharf continues to exhibit poor water quality and earned the county's only poor water quality grade this summer (F grade).

San Mateo County: San Mateo's overall beach water quality slipped slightly from last summer (91% A or B grades last summer) with 19 out of 22 monitoring locations (86%) receiving A or B grades. Three monitoring locations in San Mateo exhibited poor water quality this summer: **Aquatic Park** (F grade), **Lakeshore Park** (F grade), and **Pillar Point Harbor - end of Westpoint Avenue** (F grade).

Alameda County: This is the seventh year in a row that Alameda County beaches have had perfect summer beach water quality, with all eight monitoring locations receiving (100%) A grades.

San Francisco County: San Francisco County continues to exhibit excellent summer water quality grades with all 14 (100%) locations receiving A grades. This is the third consecutive summer that **Baker Beach at Lobos Creek**, known for having historically poor water quality, has shown improvement by earning an A grade.

Contra Costa County: Summer beach water quality was excellent at both **Keller Beach** monitoring locations (A grades).

Marin County: Water quality grades at beaches throughout Marin County were excellent again this summer with all 25 monitoring locations receiving A or B grades (96% A grades).

Sonoma County: This is the sixth summer in a row Sonoma County's beaches earned excellent water quality grades (6 As and 1 B grade).

Mendocino: Water quality was excellent in Mendocino County this summer, with all six monitoring locations earning A grades this summer.

Humboldt County: Humboldt County water quality was good this summer, with four out of five monitoring locations receiving A grades (80%), with the exception of **Clam Beach County Park** which received the county's only F grade.

About the Beach Report Card

The BRC is based on the routine monitoring data provided by over 20 different agencies and dischargers, and would not be possible without their cooperation. These agencies collect and analyze marine water samples for bacteria that indicate pollution from numerous sources, including fecal waste. Data is analyzed when it is made available by these entities and ranked on an A through F grading scale. The better the grade a location receives, the lower the risk of illness to beach users. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at beaches.

Exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available online at www.healthebay.org/brc/methodology.

The End of Summer Beach Report Card is a comprehensive analysis of California’s summer beach water quality. For the latest (weekly) water quality information, consult our online BRC, which is updated with the most recent beach water quality grades every Friday at beachreportcard.org. Here you can also download the free BRC Smartphone app to access on-the-go beach water quality information, including weather conditions and user tips for more than 650 beach locations in California, Oregon and Washington.

For more in-depth information on specific beach locations, recent beach news and recommendations for improving water quality, refer to Heal the Bay’s *2013 Annual Beach Report Card* at beachreportcard.org under the “Documents” tab.

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for three days after a rainstorm. After a rainfall, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually *far exceed* health criteria stipulated in the state’s Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

Table 1

California’s County Summer Beach Water Quality 2013							
County	A	B	C	D	F	A-B%	C-F%
Humboldt	4	0	0	0	1	80%	20%
Mendocino	6	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Sonoma	6	1	0	0	0	100%	0%
Marin	24	1	0	0	0	100%	0%
Contra Costa	2	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
San Francisco	14	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Alameda	8	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
San Mateo	17	2	0	0	3	86%	14%
Santa Cruz	10	2	0	0	1	92%	8%
Monterey	7	0	0	0	1	88%*	13%*
San Luis Obispo	17	0	1	1	0	89%	11%
Santa Barbara	14	1	1	0	0	94%	6%
Ventura	40	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Los Angeles	74	6	3	5	1	90%*	10%*
Orange County	96	2	1	1	0	98%	2%
San Diego	73	1	0	0	0	100%	0%

*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

Table 2

Santa Monica Bay Beach TMDL Exceedance Count 4/1/2013 (start of AB411) –8/21/2013 (data cut-off date in this report)	
Exceedances	Location
91	Cabrillo Beach - harborside at restrooms
72	Cabrillo Beach – harborside at boat launch
68	Santa Monica Municipal Pier
31	Surfrider Beach
23	Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth
19	Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach-Playground area
17	Malibu Pier – 50 yards east
17	Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach-lifeguard tower
16	Redondo Municipal Pier – south side
13	Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach-btwn. tower and boat dock
12	Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain
5	Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.
4	Topanga State Beach at creek mouth
3	Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain
3	Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain
2	Puerco State Beach at creek mouth
2	Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon
2	Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs
2	Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain
2	Manhattan Beach at 28 th St. drain
2	Herondo Street storm drain
1	Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth
1	Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth
1	Latigo Canyon Creek mouth
1	Unnamed Creek, adjacent to public stairway at 24822 Malibu Rd.
1	Tuna Canyon
1	Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club
1	Venice City Beach at Brooks Ave. drain
1	Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain
1	North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach
1	Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain
1	Hermosa City Beach at 26 th St.
1	Redondo Municipal Pier 100 yards south
1	Redondo State Beach at Sapphire Street
1	Redondo State Beach at Topaz St. – north of jetty
1	Torrance Beach at Avenue I drain
1	Palos Verdes (Bluff) Cove, Palos Verdes Estates

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. We use science, education, community action and advocacy to pursue our mission.

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