BEACH REPORT CARD

Essential water quality information for beachgoers

Overview of Heal the Bay's End of Summer Report 2017

Heal the Bay’s 2017 End of Summer Beach Report Card provides beachgoers with essential water quality information by grading over 400 monitoring locations in California, from Humboldt County to San Diego County. The data analyzed for this report includes all available beach data collected from Memorial Day through Labor Day (May 5 – September 4) to coincide with the peak beach tourism season in California.
**County Breakdown**

Despite all the rain California received in the earlier part of the year, overall water quality this past summer at California beaches was excellent, with 96% of sampled sites earning an A or B grade. 18 sample sites (4%) received a grade of C or lower, including 8 sites earning a F. Heal the Bay assigned grades to locations that were sampled at least 75% of the dry weather samples during the Memorial Day-Labor Day peak summer season.

**San Diego County**

Beach water quality throughout San Diego was excellent this summer with 100% of sampled locations (37 sites) receiving an A grade. The only issue with San Diego is the number of sites sampled during the summer months. For example, Orange and Los Angeles counties sampled 3 and 2.5 times as many more sites this summer than San Diego, respectively. Historically, San Diego used to sample at over 100 beach sites. The current discrepancy in monitored sites both historically and geographically makes little sense to the beach going community.

**Orange County**

94% of Orange County beaches earned an A grade this past summer. While Monarch Beach in Dana Point landed on the Beach Bummer list for the 2016-17 Annual BRC report, it earned a B this past summer. In addition, the other Beach Bummer, San Clemente Pier, received a C grade. San Clemente Pier was a new Bummer addition on the Annual Report list, and continued to be affected by fair water quality this summer season. Finally, once historically known for chronic poor water quality, both Poche Beach and Doheny State Beach, continued to perform well this summer with A grades.

Two sewage spills occurred in Orange County this summer. In early July, County Health officials closed the Harbor Marina area in Newport Beach after a 100-gallon sewage spill reached the water. In late August, a 900 gallon sewage spill shut down Baby Beach and a handful of boat docks in Dana Point.

**Los Angeles County**

Nearly 97% of beaches in Los Angeles received an A or B grade. Only three sites (Little Dume drainage at Zumirez Drive, Cabrillo Beach near the restrooms, and Santa Monica Pier) received C and D grades. Santa Monica Pier (D grade) has been on the Beach Bummer list five times in the past eight years. Continued efforts by the City of Santa Monica to improve water quality at the Pier involve the construction of a new storm water capture project underneath the northside parking lot. The catchment tank is expected to collect over 1.6 million gallons of runoff for treatment and reuse by the city. Mother’s Beach in Marina del Rey earned an A grade for the summer despite consistently poor water quality over the past few years. Hopefully, this water quality improvement continues into the future and may indicate that the numerous projects implemented at Mother’s Beach to lower fecal bacteria concentrations are actually producing effective results.
Long Beach recorded 100% A and B grades for this summer. Despite a 7,500 gallon sewage spill that closed several beaches along Alamitos Bay in June, Long Beach City remains committed to improving its water quality. Earlier this summer, Coronado Lagoon reopened after the City completed Phase 2 of a major restoration project, which included reconnecting the Lagoon to Marine Stadium, planting eelgrass beds, and creating new subtidal and intertidal habitats along the Lagoon.

Ventura County
Beach water quality in Ventura County continues its impressive streak of 100% A grades for the summer. A 200,000 gallon sewage spill in July closed Ormond Beach and Port Hueneme Beach Park for three-days as a safety precaution, but did not affect overall beach grades.

Santa Barbara County
All 16 monitoring locations in Santa Barbara received summer A grades.

San Luis Obispo County
SLO County scored excellent marks in water quality this summer, with 17 sites earning A grades. Two beaches, Avila Beach near the creek outfall and Pismo Beach south of the Pier, received B’s for the swimming season.

Monterey County
Water quality at all eight beaches in Monterey County earned A grades. The only blip for Monterey this swimming season was a 1,200-gallon sewage spill that occurred in July at MacAbee Beach.

Santa Cruz County
Overall beach water quality in Santa Cruz was very good for the summer season. 85% of sampled sites earned an A or B grade. There were two beach locations that received lower than a B grade, Rio del Mar Beach (C) and Cowell Beach west of the wharf (F). Cowell Beach has consistently ranked within the top three Beach Bummers for the past eight years. While the most recent Annual Report noted that Cowell Beach water quality improved slightly last summer with the installation of steel fencing to deter birds from roosting under the wharf, additional steps need to be taken to reduce the high fecal bacteria concentrations plaguing the popular beach.

San Mateo County
Unfortunately, San Mateo beaches underperformed this summer. Of the 18 monitoring locations, 12 sites (67%) earned an A or B grade. Both Venice Beach and Francis Beach received D grades, while Linda Mar Beach, Surfer’s Beach, Roosevelt Beach, and Lakeshore Park behind the Rec Center earned F grades. While poor water quality is a common occurrence at Lakeshore Park likely due to inadequate water circulation within an enclosed area, further analysis is needed to determine whether the low grades at Linda Mar, Surfer’s Beach, and Roosevelt Beach were an anomaly or something more chronic.
San Francisco County
100% of the 15 monitored beaches in San Francisco scored A grades. On trend with the 2016-17 Annual Report, San Francisco beaches continued to exhibit excellent water quality during the dry season.

Alameda County
Alameda County managed near perfect grades this summer. All but one site received an A grade. While fairly clean in the past, Crown Beach Crab Cove water quality exceeded the state fecal indicator bacteria limits several times throughout this summer, scoring a D grade.

Contra Costa County
Both sample sites in Contra Costa County, Keller Beach North and Keller Beach South, earned B grades this summer. This is a slight improvement compared to the C grades that both beaches received for the 2016 summer season.

Marin County
20 Marin County beaches earned A grades, and two beaches earned B grades. Only one site scored a low grade this summer – McNears Beach in San Rafael. McNears Beach was sampled 14 times throughout the peak summer season, and exceeded the bacterial standards on 10 separate occasions.

Sonoma County
This is the seventh summer in a row that all seven of Sonoma County’s monitored beaches received excellent water quality marks (100% A grades).

Mendocino County
All six beach locations in Mendocino County beaches scored A grades for the peak summer season.

Humboldt County
This summer, Humboldt experienced poor water quality at three of its five beaches. While only two locations earned A grades (Moonstone County Park and Mad River North), Trinidad State Beach near Mill Creek scored a D, and Clam Beach and Luffenholtz Beach scored F grades. Clam Beach has appeared on our Annual Beach Bummer list several times. In the past few months, the Humboldt County Public Health Laboratory began analyzing data from bacteroides tests to pinpoint the exact source of fecal bacteria. While there are several private septic systems situated along the two creeks that feed into Clam Beach, the results from the bacteroides tests indicated no human fecal bacteria. The lab is working on determining whether the bacteria is originating from cows, dogs, and birds. As for Luffenholtz Beach, this location was a new addition to the 2016-17 Bummer list; continued monitoring will indicate whether the poor water quality at this location becomes a chronic issue.
Summer Beach News

Bacterial Standards
Over the summer, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) proposed new bacterial standards for California beaches. The goal of this process is to update two statewide policies that protect recreational users from the risks of swimming in fecal contaminated waterbodies. There were 11 proposed update elements to the SWRCB standards that have major impacts to protecting beachgoer health. Heal the Bay, in its comments to the SWRCB, had two overarching concerns: 1) the 11 proposed provisions appear to ease compliance issues for dischargers and or monitoring agencies over the protection of public health for beachgoers, and 2) the policy allows for public health impairments while being in compliance with water quality standards. A hearing for these standards is likely to occur this November.

‘NowCast’ Program
Over the past two summer beach seasons, Heal the Bay been expanding the ‘NOWCAST’ predictive modeling program. This summer season we continued that growth, adding five additional beaches to our existing program for a total of 10 beaches. The models are used to inform public health officials and the public about water quality conditions on a given day for a particular beach. These ‘NowCasts’ can be produced much faster than the current public notification methods, which rely on analytical methods that can take 18-24 hours to produce results.

We successful produced 214 ‘NowCast’ results for the entire 2017 summer beach-going season (April through October). We look to build on this summer success with three sites during the winter dry season. In the summer of 2018, the program will add another 10 beach locations. For more information, visit our webpage: http://brc.healthebay.org/default.aspx?tabid=4#wqn.

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. Continued monitoring helps ensure the health protection of millions of beachgoers by highlighting problematic beaches and focusing remediation efforts on areas of greatest need while allowing the public to make informed decisions on where to recreate. 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.

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.

### California Summer Beach Water Quality 2017

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<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total Grade</th>
<th>A-B%</th>
<th>C-F%</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
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