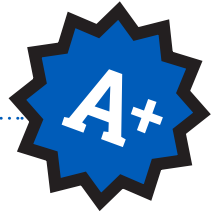


HONOR ROLL



To earn a spot on the Honor Roll, a beach must be monitored weekly throughout the year and receive an A+ grade in all conditions — Summer Dry, Winter Dry, and Wet Weather.

This year, 62 out of over 500 monitored beaches in California earned a spot on the Honor Roll, a significant improvement from just 12 beaches last year and only two in 2022–2023. This return to a higher Honor Roll count reflects levels more consistent with the reporting five years ago. The increase in beaches on the Honor Roll this year is likely attributed to less overall rainfall during the 2024–2025 winter season, leading to substantially improved overall coastal water quality.

This year, seven counties in California earned top water quality marks, a notable increase from previous years. Historically, Southern California beaches have dominated the Honor Roll, in part because many counties in Northern and Central California do not monitor water quality year-round. However, this year's list saw broader geographic representation, with most Honor Roll counties located in Southern California, from Santa Barbara to San Diego, alongside two Central California counties: San Mateo and San Francisco.

Orange County tops the Honor Roll for a second consecutive year, with 34 beaches recognized, a marked increase from 10 beaches last year.

San Diego County has 12 beaches on the Honor Roll this year, which is up from two in the last report. This county also stands out as it has two beaches included in the Bummer List.

Los Angeles County has seven beaches on this year's Honor Roll, a significant improvement, as no beaches were included in the last two reports. Most of these top-performing beaches are located along the Palos Verdes Peninsula or Malibu.

Ventura County has five beaches on this year's Honor Roll, a substantial increase from just one in the previous report. This marks a return to the County's typical performance in past years, when several beaches consistently earned top marks.

Guadalupe Dunes in Santa Barbara County earns a spot on the Honor Roll this year, the first time the county has been represented on the list since 2021, marking a significant improvement in water quality.

San Mateo County has two beaches on the Honor Roll this year, but also stands out as the only county with three beaches featured on the Bummer List.

San Francisco County is on the Honor Roll this year with China Beach, the first time a beach from this County has been included since 2020. We're encouraged to see Bay Area representation return to the list.

In 2024–2025, California saw a noticeable improvement in coastal water quality, likely due to a very dry summer and winter. With 9% less rainfall this year compared to the historical 10-year average (356.69 inches of rain in CA during the 2024–2025 report year), fewer pollutants like bacteria, trash, and chemicals were washed from streets into storm drains and eventually into the ocean. These dry conditions also led to more stable coastal waters, reducing the risk of sudden contamination that typically follows storms. The first major "first flush", when the season's first heavy rains carry built-up pollution into waterways, didn't occur until late January in Los Angeles, and only a few storms followed, limiting pollution events throughout the year.

This marks a clear contrast to the previous two years, when intense and frequent rainfall significantly degraded beach water quality. In 2023–2024, California experienced 31% more rainfall than the 10-year average, and in 2022–2023, coastal counties received 50% more rain than usual during the winter. From October 2022 to March 2023, the state endured 19 atmospheric river events, more than triple the typical number. These heavy storms overwhelmed stormwater and sewage systems, pushing large volumes of pollutants into the ocean and leading to a sharp drop in Wet Weather Grades during that grading period. In fact, only two beaches qualified for the Honor Roll in 2022–2023, the lowest number ever recorded.

During a typical rain event, stormwater runoff is considered the most significant source of ocean pollution. Following the unprecedented wildfires in Los Angeles in early January, the “first flush” amplified the pollution, carrying not only high levels of typical contaminants like oil and grease, trash, plastic, bacteria, and heavy metals, but also wildfire debris and hazardous materials such as ash, fire suppressants, household chemicals, and even car batteries. These combined threats present serious challenges for water quality, especially as climate

change increases the frequency of both extreme storms and wildfires. The Palisades Fire significantly impacted beaches along the Santa Monica Bay near Malibu, rendering five sites, including Las Flores and Big Rock, inaccessible to county officials for water quality sampling due to hazardous conditions and limited access.

Despite these challenges, the drier conditions in 2024–2025 helped water quality rebound. Summer Dry Grades were strong, with 91% of California beaches earning A or B grades. Winter Dry Grades followed closely at 89%. Even Wet Weather Grades improved significantly, with 76% of beaches receiving A or B grades, well above average. These improvements show just how strongly water quality is tied to storm patterns, pollution management, and the growing influence of climate-driven extremes.

Even though we were unable to grade $\frac{1}{3}$ of San Diego beaches, as testing using ddPCR methods is not compatible with our grading system, we still saw 62 beaches in CA achieve zero bacterial exceedances all year under all conditions, which is a formidable challenge.

HONOR ROLL 2024-2025



BEACH NAME	COUNTY
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave., 50 yards South of storm drain	Los Angeles
Hermosa Beach at 26th St.	Los Angeles
Long Point, Rancho Palos Verdes	Los Angeles
Manhattan Beach at 28th St., 50 yards South of storm drain	Los Angeles
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	Los Angeles
Nicholas Beach, 100 feet West of lifeguard tower	Los Angeles
Portuguese Bend Cove, Rancho Palos Verdes	Los Angeles

BEACH NAME	COUNTY
Balboa Beach at the Wedge	Orange
Balboa Beach Pier	Orange
Capistrano County Beach, South Capistrano Bay	Orange
Crystal Cove State Park	Orange
Crystal Cove, El Moro Beach	Orange
Crystal Cove, Emerald Bay Beach	Orange
Crystal Cove, Los Trancos	Orange
Crystal Cove, Muddy Creek Beach	Orange

(continued)

A+

HONOR ROLL 2024-2025 *(continued)*

BEACH NAME	COUNTY	BEACH NAME	COUNTY
Dana Point Harbor, Fuel Dock	Orange	San Clemente, Linda Lane Beach	Orange
Dana Point Harbor, Guest Dock	Orange	Cardiff State Beach, Charthouse parking	San Diego
Dana Point Harbor, Harbor Patrol Dock	Orange	Cardiff State Beach, Las Olas	San Diego
Dana Point Harbor, Pier	Orange	Carlsbad at Palomar Airport Rd.	San Diego
Dana Point Harbor, Youth Dock	Orange	Carlsbad at Poinsettia Ln.	San Diego
Dana Point Marine at Science Institute Beach	Orange	Carlsbad at Ponto Dr.	San Diego
Huntington City Beach at 17th St.	Orange	Encinitas, San Elijo State Park, Pipes surf break	San Diego
Huntington City Beach at Beach Blvd.	Orange	Mission Beach, Belmont Park	San Diego
Huntington Harbour, Admiralty Dr. Beach	Orange	Oceanside at Forster St.	San Diego
Laguna Beach at Laguna Lido Apt.	Orange	Oceanside at Tyson St.	San Diego
Laguna Beach at West St.	Orange	Point Loma, Lighthouse	San Diego
Laguna Beach, Camel Point	Orange	Point Loma, Point Loma Treatment Plant	San Diego
Laguna Beach, Goff Island Beach	Orange	Solana Beach, Tide Beach Park at Solana Vista Dr.	San Diego
Laguna Beach, Table Rock	Orange	China Beach, end of Sea Cliff Ave.	San Francisco
Laguna Beach, Treasure Island Beach	Orange	Half Moon Bay, Dunes Beach	San Mateo
Laguna Beach, Victoria Beach	Orange	Sharp Park Beach at Birch Ln.	San Mateo
Newport Bay, De Anza Beach	Orange	Guadalupe Dunes	Santa Barbara
Newport Bay, N St. Beach	Orange	County Line Beach	Ventura
Newport Bay, Newport Dunes-West	Orange	Ormond Beach at Oxnard Industrial drain	Ventura
Newport Beach at 38th St.	Orange	Port Hueneme Beach Park, north of the Pier	Ventura
Newport Beach at 52nd/53rd St.	Orange	Silverstrand at Santa Paula Dr.	Ventura
Newport Beach at Orange St.	Orange	Silverstrand at Sawtelle Ave.	Ventura
Newport Beach, Pelican Point Beach	Orange		
North Aliso County Beach	Orange		
San Clemente Pier, in front of Clock Tower	Orange		

