

## Indicator: Beach Advisories

### Question

How many times did beach advisory days occur on public tidal beaches in the NH and Maine Piscataqua Region due to bacterial pollution, and have beach advisory days changed over time?

### Short Answer

Across the 17 tidal beaches in the Piscataqua Region watershed, beach advisory days occurred less than 1% of beach-days from 2012 to 2016. There are no statistically significant trends.

### PREP Goal

Less than 1% of beach-days over the summer season affected by advisories due to bacteria pollution (from the PREP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, PREP 2010).

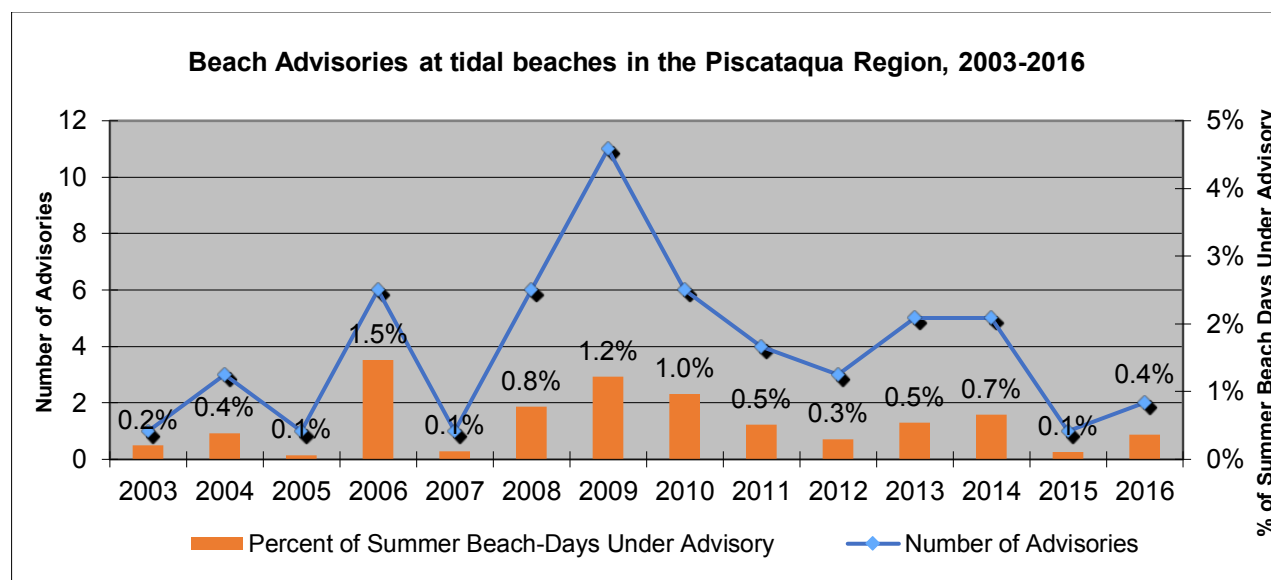


Figure BA-1. Advisories at tidal beaches in the Piscataqua Region 2003-2016. Beach days are calculated based on days between Memorial Day and Labor Day each year. Data Source: NH Dept. of Environmental Services and Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection.

### Why This Matters

Beach advisories are an indicator of water quality overall and they are a particularly important measure of the health and safety of the region's popular recreational areas. Beach areas in the region supply vital economic benefits from the tourist economy. Advisories are issued by the New Hampshire Beach Inspection program and the Maine Healthy Beaches program when bacteria water quality samples do not meet state and federal standards for swimming.

### Explanation (from the 2018 State of Our Estuaries Report)

The Atlantic coast is home to 17 public tidal beaches in the Piscataqua Region. At these beaches, between 1 and 11 advisories have been issued per year since 2003. Advisories between 2003 and 2016 have affected 130 of 23,373 beach summer days (0.06%). The most advisories occurred in 2009 with 11 advisories affecting six beaches for a total of 23 days (1.2% of total beach-days) (Figure BA-1). In 2016, North Hampton State Beach had two advisories for a total of six days (0.4% of beach-days). A 2014 report by the Natural Resource Defense

Council ranked New Hampshire beaches as the second cleanest out of 30 states (NRDC 2014). During 2012-2016, NH and ME tidal beaches in the region continue to meet PREP's goal of beach advisories affecting <1% of beach-days each summer.

#### Methods and Data Sources

The advisories at all tidal bathing beaches in New Hampshire and Maine that are within the Piscataqua Region watershed were compiled for each year. Currently, the list of beaches includes all tidal beaches monitored by NHDES and the Fort Foster beach monitored by Maine Healthy Beaches (Figure BA-2). Only advisories due to water quality contamination were included. For each advisory, the number of days that the advisory was in effect was calculated and then the total number of beach advisory days were calculated for the year. The number of advisories were summed for each year and then compared to the number of beach days between Memorial Day and Labor Day (number of days multiplied by the number of beaches monitored).

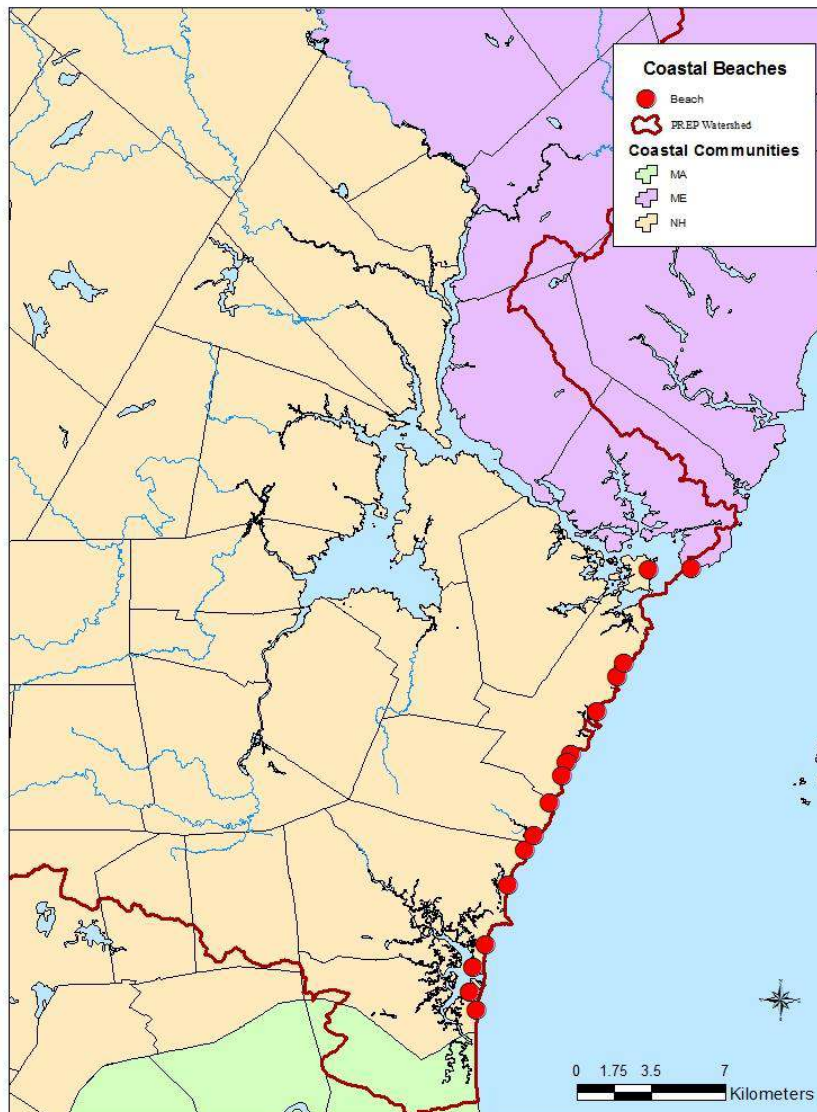


Figure BA-2. Map of Piscataqua Region watershed beaches that are monitored as part of the "Beach Advisories" indicator.

*Data Sources*

Records of beach postings are available from the NHDES Beach Program and from the Maine Healthy Beaches Program. The NHDES Beach Program and the Maine Healthy Beaches Program review the water quality results for each beach and make a determination whether or not to recommend posting.

References Cited

NRDC. 2014. Testing the Waters: A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches – Executive Summary. Natural Resources Defense Council. [https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ttw2014\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ttw2014_Executive_Summary.pdf)

PREP. 2010. Piscataqua Region Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership: D.B. Truslow Associates, Mettee Planning Consultants, 2010, Durham, NH. <http://scholars.unh.edu/prep/22/>