

How do our beaches and water ski areas measure up?

In the 2007-08 season there were a total of 44 exceedences of national guidelines which equates to 13 percent of samples exceeding guidelines (see Figures 1 and 2). While the percentage of exceedences was relatively high in the 2007-08 summer compared to previous years (see Figure 3), particularly for marine sites, a few freshes (rainfall events

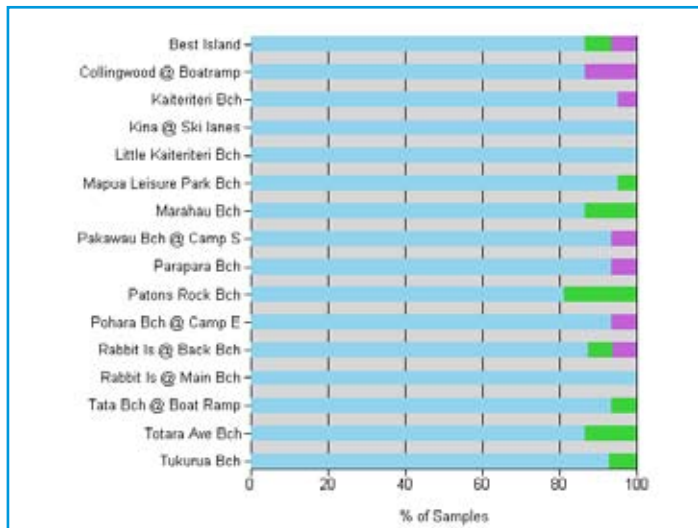
occurring after a period of several days or over a week of fine weather) accounted for many of the exceedences. The Roding River, Waimea River, and Motueka River at Alexander Bridge had the highest number of exceedences (three alarms and one alert at each) but only one of these was not related to the above-mentioned rainfall events.

Three sites remained within guidelines for the whole season: Little Kaiteriteri, Kina Ski Lanes, Rabbit Island Main Beach.

Mapua and Kaiteriteri Beaches, the most popular beaches, along with Rabbit Island Main Beach, only had one exceedence each and this was related to a rainfall event.

Key: Marine water quality sample readings (Enterococci per 100 ml).
A total of 255 samples were taken.

< 140 (235 samples)
140 – 280 (12 samples) - alert
> 280 (8 samples) - must take action



Key: Freshwater quality sample readings (E. coli per 100 ml). A total of 127 samples were taken.

< 140 (103 samples)
140 – 280 (8 samples) - alert
> 280 (16 samples) - must take action

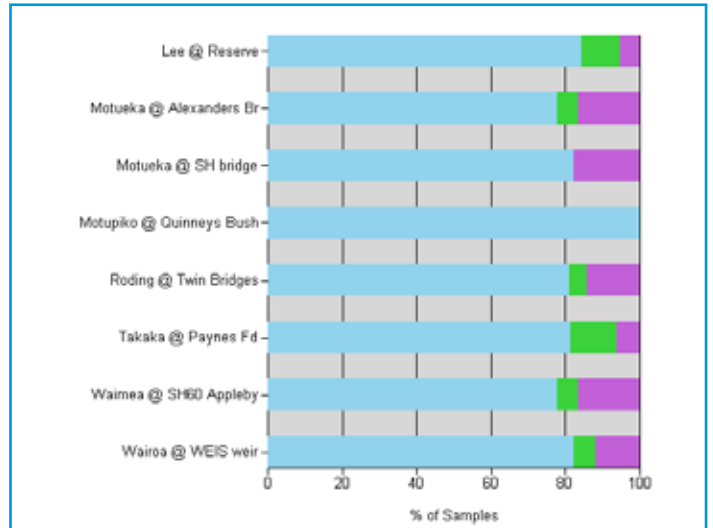


Figure 1: Percentage of samples exceeding national guidelines for contact recreation water quality at marine beaches for the 2007-08 season.

Figure 2: Percentage of samples exceeding national guidelines for contact recreation water quality at freshwater sites for the 2007-08 season.

According to national guidelines the monitoring authority must resample as soon as possible after becoming aware of an exceedence of guideline levels. If a consecutive sample also exceeds then warning signs should be erected. In the 2007 - 08 season, at only two sites did this repeat sample also exceed guidelines. These sites were Takaka River and Rabbit Island Back Beach (resampled within two days of the first sample taken). As these exceedences were

related to rainfall, and experience has shown that sometimes these sites take longer to clear, it was decided to take a third sample prior to any management response, such as signage. The third sample taken several days after the second sample was well within guidelines so no action was taken.

Every second year (between the full monitoring years) Council conducts a survey of one of the sites that is showing the poorest water quality for bathing. The Roding catchment and Murchison Creek near Murchison are currently high in the list of priorities. Once a source of pollution is identified, measures are taken to remedy the situation.

Case Study: Pohara Beach.

Following a series of relatively poor seasons of water quality a survey was conducted at Pohara Creek, which flows out at Pohara Beach to the east of Pohara Campground, to find the source of contamination. That survey in 2006-07 successfully isolated three sources of contamination and corrective action was implemented. With very good water quality evident at Pohara Beach over the 2007-08 summer (apart from a particularly heavy rainfall event) it would appear that the actions have been successful.

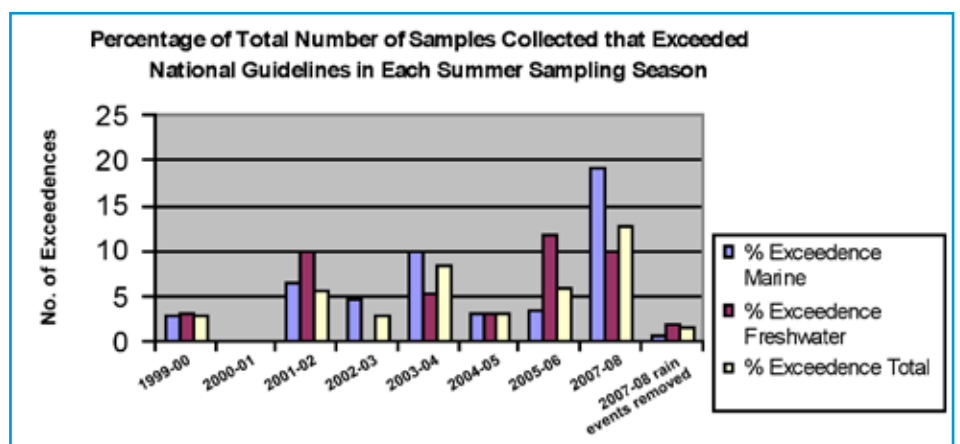


Figure 3: Percentage of total number of samples collected that exceeded national guidelines in each Summer sampling season. Note: The much lower level of exceedence for when rainfall events are excluded (cluster of bars on the right).