

Recreational Water Quality Monitoring Summary 2011-12

Key Points

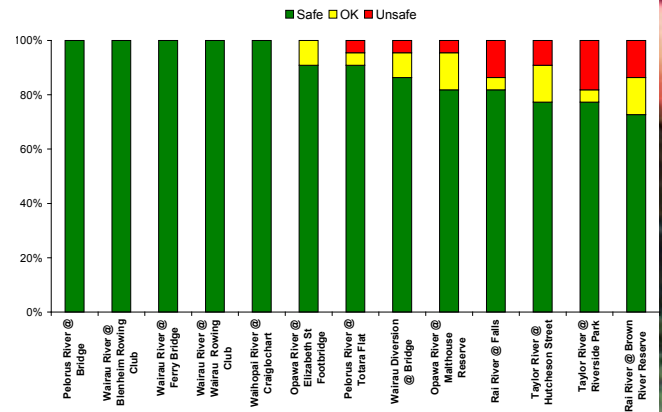
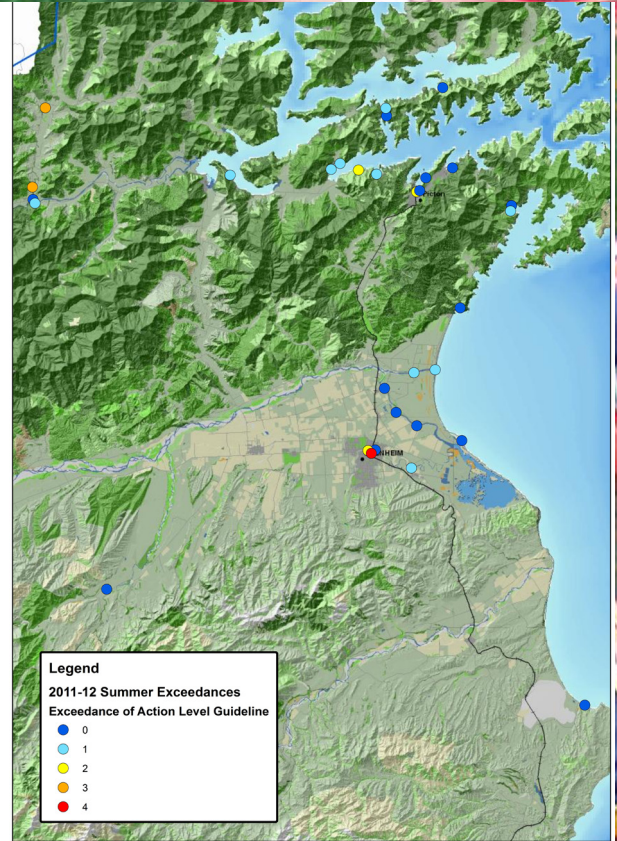
- * 31 swimming sites are regularly monitored every summer
- * Swimming should be avoided during and after wet weather, particularly in urban and intensively farmed areas
- * Four beach sites and one river site showed an improvement in their beach grade.
- * One river site showed a deterioration in its beach grade.
- * The number of sites monitored will be changed from 2012-13 onwards based on results from the beach survey carried out in Jan/Feb 2012
- * Water quality is a critical for most peoples enjoyment of rivers and beaches, scenery is also rated as being very important.

Why we monitor

* Every summer 13 river swimming spots and 18 coastal beaches are sampled for the presence of bacteria (E. coli in freshwaters and Enterococci in coastal waters). The number of bacteria present in the sample gives an indication of the risk of contracting illness or infection from being in contact with the water. The numbers are based on the Ministry for the Environments (MfE's) bathing water guidelines. Sampling takes place once a week from November to March. Results are published once a week on the Councils website. The purpose of the monitoring is to inform the public of the relative safety of our popular swimming sites.

Coastal water results 2011-12

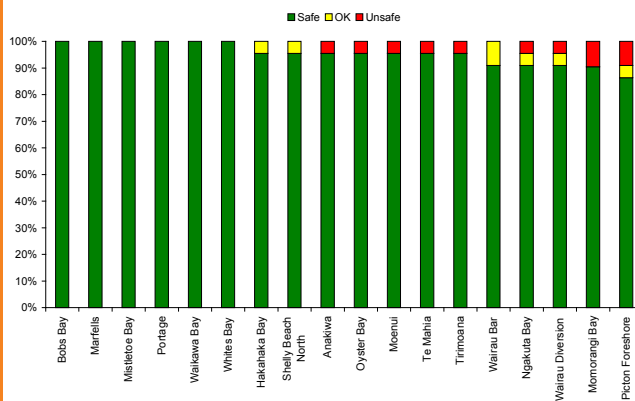
- * Our coastal water quality is generally very good in terms of compliance with the recreational water quality standards. Nearly 75% of sites monitored were safe to swim at for more than 95% of the time.
- * Poorest water quality was at Picton Foreshore, Momorangi, the Wairau Diversion and Ngakuta Bay.
- * The best water quality was at Bobs Bay, Marfells Beach, Mistletoe Bay, Portage, Waikawa Bay and Whites Bay. There were no exceedances at any of these sites in 2011-12



Freshwater sites

Freshwater results 2011-12

- * Half of the monitored river sites were safe to swim at for more than 95% of the time.
- * The best water quality was recorded for the Pelorus Bridge, the Wairau River sites and the Waihopai, where it was safe to swim for 100% of the time. The Taylor and Rai Rivers had the poorest water quality.



Coastal sites

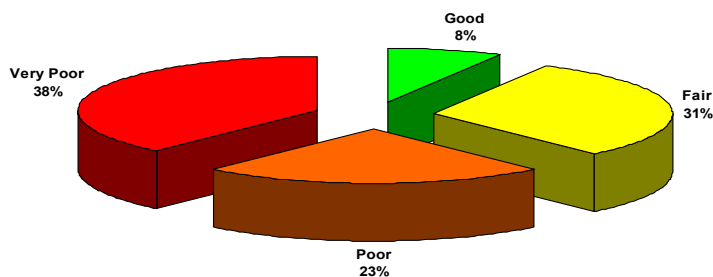
Beach Grades (SFRG's):

- * Our swimming sites are graded each year to reflect the general water quality that can be expected from them. Beaches and rivers are graded using the Ministry for the Environment's methodology. The Grade incorporates data from the most recent 5 years of sampling in addition to incorporating a risk assessment for the site. Beach grades are thus a good indicator of long term water quality or water quality that can be expected from a particular site.
- * The quality of our river sites are typical of that seen throughout New Zealand. Although there is a perception that our rivers are generally safe for swimming they often suffer from high bacteria loads during wet weather. Water quality is generally better for the coastal sites.
- * Five sites made an improvement in their beach grade over the 2010-11 grades, whilst one deteriorated. Improvements were at Hakahaka Bay, Momorangi, Portage, Tirimoana and Pelorus Bridge; the Wairau deteriorated from Good to Fair.



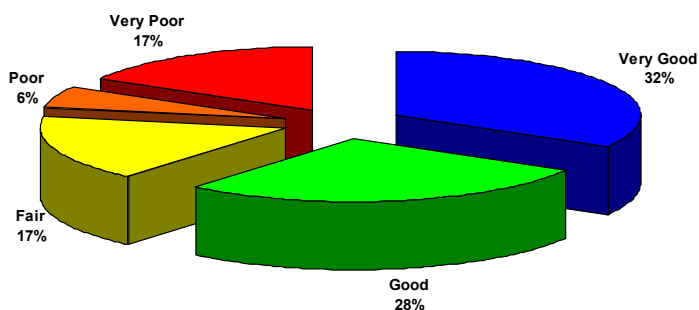
Pelorus Bridge; the most popular swimming spot overall

Freshwater Beach Grades



2011-12 River Grades

Coastal Beach Grades



2011-12 Coastal Water Grades

Results of Beach Survey

- * A beach survey was carried out from Jan-Feb 2012. The results showed the requirement to revise the number and location of sites routinely monitored every summer. The aim was to ensure that popular beaches and swimming spots were included in routine monitoring. The overall result was to cease monitoring at 15 sites and to begin monitoring at 5 new locations.
- * Some of the other results from the survey were:
 - Water quality highly rated as an important factor at swimming spots
 - Scenery was also highly rated
 - People would like more signs at swimming spots informing them of water quality at the site
 - The least important factors were the presence of rope swings/places to jump, being able to take dogs and erosion
 - A quarter of respondents objected to dogs on beaches, a further 10% said they did not mind as long as they were controlled/cleaned up after.

What can you do to help clean up our waterways?

- * Keep stock out of waterways to prevent faecal contamination
- * Ensure sewage from boats and campervans is correctly disposed of
- * Ensure septic tanks are properly maintained and can cope with increased volumes, particularly important during the summer months.