

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Eleven Beaches Unsafe For Swimming And Fishing This Weekend, DPNR Says

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Ernice Gilbert **November 13, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- The Department of Planning and Natural Resources has announced via its weekly press release that 11 of the territory's beaches are not safe for swimming or fishing this weekend, stating that the beaches failed accepted water quality standards because they exceeded the established enterococci bacteria threshold, and therefore are not considered to be safe for swimming or fishing.

The unsafe beaches include Princess (Condo Row), Grapetree Bay and Halfpenny on St. Croix. On St. Thomas, DPNR says Bolongo Bay, Frenchman's Bay, Sapphire, Water Bay, Hull Bay, Brewer's Bay and Lindbergh Bay are unsafe. And on St. John, Frank Bay failed to meet accepted conditions.

Good news is, there are more safe beaches than unsafe ones this weekend, including, on St. Croix: Stoney Ground, Protestant Cay, Buccaneer, Cramer Park, New Fort (Ft. Louise Augusta), Dorsch Frederiksted, Public Beach Pelican Cove (Comorant), Shoy's, Rainbow, Cane Bay, Chenay Bay and Gentle Winds.

St. Thomas safe beaches are: Magen's Bay, Lindquist, Coki Point, Vessup Bay, Bluebeards and Secret Harbor. St. John beaches Cruz Bay, Oppenhiemer, Johnson Bay and Great Cruz Bay are all safe this weekend, according to the government agency.

DPNR says there may be an elevated health risk to anyone swimming in rain-water impacted areas as a result of increased concentrations of bacteria. All persons should also be aware that storm-water runoff may also contain contaminants or pollutants harmful to human health and therefore all persons should avoid areas of storm-water runoff (i.e. guts, puddles, and drainage basins), the release added.

DPNR further stated that high levels of enterococci bacteria and turbidity may be caused by runoff due to heavy rains, heavy marine vessel traffic, high wave activity near the shoreline, irresponsible recreational use, etc. Runoff can consist of sediment, pesticides, animal feces and oil & grease, all of which are harmful to the waters of the territory.

The department, led by Commissioner Dawn L. Henry, says it will continue to monitor these popular swimming areas. DPNR also recommends that residents use their discretion when swimming or fishing at the designated beaches. If the waters appear muddy or murky or have foul odors, do not swim or fish.

For additional information regarding water quality, call the Division of Environmental Protection at 773-1082 in St. Croix.

*Feature Image: Sapphire Beach.*

*Image Credit: Sapphire Beach Rentals, USVI.*