

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Seven Beaches Unsafe This Weekend

Health / **Published On November 21, 2015 08:39 AM /**

Staff **November 21, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- As per the Department of Planning and Natural Resources weekly beach water quality monitoring program, seven of the territory's beaches -- one on St. Croix, three on St. Thomas and three on St. John -- are not safe for swimming and fishing this weekend.

DPNR says the failed beaches did not meet water quality standards because they exceeded the established enterococci bacteria threshold. They include Halfpenny here, on St. John, Frank Bay, Cruz Bay and Great Cruz Bay. Unsafe beaches on St. Thomas are Frenchman's Bay, Hull Bay and Lindbergh Bay.

Most of the territory's beaches are safe for activity this weekend, though, including the following:

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, Gentle Winds, Princess (Condo Row) and Grapetree Bay.

St. Thomas: Magen's Bay, Lindquist, Coki point, Vessup Bay, Brewer's Bay, Bluebeards, Secret Harbor, Bolongo Bay, Sapphire and Water Bay.

St. John: Oppenhiemer and Johnson Bay.

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.

It 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: Frenchman's Bay, St. Thomas.