

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Steer Clear From These Five Beaches This Weekend; D.P.N.R. Says

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Planning and Natural Resources announced on Friday that five beaches throughout the territory failed to meet accepted water quality standards because they exceeded the established enterococci bacteria threshold and are therefore not considered to be safe for swimming or fishing.

These beaches are Cruz Bay in St. John, Secret Harbor in St. Thomas and Frederiksted Public Beach, Buccaneer and Grapetree Bay in St. Croix.

But there were more beaches to swim and fish in than not, including the following in St. Croix: Stoney Ground, Protestant Cay, Cramer's Park, Pelican Cove (Comorant), Shoy's,

Rainbow, Chenay Bay, New Fort (Ft. Louise Augusta), Halfpenny, Dorsch, Cane Bay, Spratt Hall, Columbus landing and Princess (Condo Row).

St. Thomas safe beaches are: Lindquist, Coki Point, Bluebeards, Bolongo Bay, Water Bay, Frenchman's Bay, Hull Bay, Magen's Bay, Lindbergh Bay, Brewer's Bay, Vessup Bay and Sapphire.

Beaches cleared as safe in St. John were: Johnson Bay, Great Cruz Bay, Oppenhiemer and Frank Bay.

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, says DPNR.

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.