

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas And St. John Beaches Not Tested This Weekend; Only Grapetree In St. Croix Not Safe

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ST. CROIX -- The beaches in St. Thomas and St. John were not tested for quality standards this weekend, therefore the Department of Planning and Natural Resources did not give guidance for or against fishing or swimming in the beaches on those islands.

On this island, however, Grapetree Bay was the only beach that did not meet the agency's quality standards, as it exceeded the established enterococci bacteria threshold and was deemed unsafe for swimming or fishing.

All other beaches here are good to go, according to D.P.N.R. They include the following: Protestant Cay, Buccaneer, Cramer Park, New Fort (Ft. Louise Augusta),

Dorsch, Frederiksted Public Beach, Pelican Cove (Comorant), Shoy's, Rainbow, Cane Bay, Chenay Bay, Princess (Condo Row), A – Mill Harbour, Halfpenny, Princess (Condo Row) and B – Breezez.

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.

Feature Image: Frederiksted Beach. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)