

The Virgin Islands Consortium

10 Beaches In St. Thomas-St. John District Not Safe This Weekend, D.P.N.R. Warns

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Ten beaches tested by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources in the past few days proved to be unsafe for swimming and fishing, according to a release the government department/agency issued Friday.

D.P.N.R. said Coki Point, Hull Bay, Water Bay, Secret Harbor and Vessup Bay in St. Thomas, along with Great Cruz Bay, Johnson Bay, Cruz Bay, Oppenhiemer and Frank Bay in St. John, were deemed unsafe because they exceeded the established enterococci bacteria threshold. The tests were performed between June 12-16. D.P.N.R. said 35 beaches were examined.

In St. Croix, all beaches were cleared as safe. They include: 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, Princess (Condo Row), A – Mill Harbour, Halfpenny, Princess (Condo Row) and B – Breezez Grapetree Bay.

The safe beaches in St. Thomas this week are: Bolongo Bay, Lindquist, Magen's Bay, Frenchman's Bay, Bluebeards, Sapphire, Lindbergh Bay and Brewer's Bay.

All the beaches tested in St. John were deemed unsafe.

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.