

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Water Quality Of Beaches In St. Thomas Unknown This Weekend

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The Department of Planning and Natural Resources said on Friday that it only tested 13 beaches this week -- all of which were on St. Croix -- therefore it could not determine the quality of waters in St. Thomas and St. John, along with some beaches on St. Croix.

The 13 tested beaches were all deemed safe for swimming and fishing. They are: Cramer's Park, Pelican Cove, (Comorant) Rainbow, Cane Bay, Dorsch, Protestant Cay, Shoy's, New Fort (Ft. Louise Augusta), Halfpenny, Sprat Hall, Buccaneer, Frederiksted Public Beach and Chenay Bay.

D.P.N.R. did not include in its release the reason why the untested beach were not inspected.

D.P.N.R. said 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 agency says it will continue to monitor these popular swimming areas. D.P.N.R. also recommends that beachgoers use their own 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 on St. Croix.