

2024 Bacteria Data: Great Salt Pond and its Tributaries - Fecal coliform and enterococci

In Rhode Island two groups of bacteria are monitored to indicate the presence of human sewage and associated pathogens, or disease causing organisms - fecal coliforms and enterococci. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIHealth) uses a single-value enterococci standard for licensed swimming beaches. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) uses a geometric mean approach for contact recreation standards on all other waters (fresh and salt). In addition, as required by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program for shellfish waters and their tributaries and as an indicator of overall water quality, RIDEM assesses fecal coliform levels.

While URIWW's analytical laboratories are certified by the State, URIWW data is intended for screening purposes only. Our data are very valuable for targeting areas of concerns and for tracking potential sources of bacterial contamination. Any result above the state standard is considered unsafe, and swimmers should refrain from swimming until results return to acceptable levels, or at least for several days after heavy rain.

2024 Data

Monitoring Site	5/7 & /20	6/3 & 6/17	7/1 & 7/15	7/29 & 8/12	8/26 & 9/9	9/23 & 10/7	10/9 - tribs only	Geo-mean	Max	Min
Most Probable Number of Fecal coliform bacteria per 100 ml										
GSP #1 (Mid harbor)	10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	10	<10
GSP #2 (Narra. Inn Cove)	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
GSP #4 (Trimm's)	10	20	-	-	-	-	-	14	20	10
GSP #5 (N of Champlin's)	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
Outside GSP - North	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
BI Trib #1 (Ocean Ave)	84	12	-	-	-	-	-	32	84	12
BI Trib #2 (Bridgegate Sq)	<10	4	-	-	-	-	-	<10	4	<10
BI Trib #3 (Cormorant)	<10	53	-	-	-	-	-	<10	53	<10
BI Trib #4 (Beach Ave.)	<10	<4	-	-	-	-	-	<4	<4	<10
BI Trib (Breezy Pt)	<10	40	-	-	-	-	-	<10	40	<10
BI Trib #11 (Sullivan's)	246	816	-	-	-	-	-	448	816	246

Rhode Island DEM Shellfishing standards for Great Salt Pond sites: <15 cfu / 100 ml
 USEPA requires tributaries to meet receiving waters standards at the point where they enter.



Clamming on BI (Image from <https://www.blockislandorganics.com/Blog/post/2016/06/01/Discovering-Block-Island-Clamming-in-the-Great-Salt-Pond.aspx>)

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Monitoring Site	5/7 & /20	6/3 & 6/17	7/1 & 7/15	7/29 & 8/12	8/26 & 9/9	9/23 & 10/7	10/9 - tribs only	Geo-mean	Max	Min
Most Probable Number of Enterococci bacteria per 100 mL										
GSP #1 (Mid harbor)	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
GSP #2 (Narra. Inn Cove)	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
GSP #4 (Trimm's)	<10	10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	10	<10
GSP #5 (N of Champlin's)	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
Outside GSP - North	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	<10	<10	<10
BI Trib #1 (Ocean Ave)	109	480	-	-	-	-	-	229	480	109
BI Trib #2 (Bridgeway Sq)	364	471	-	-	-	-	-	414	471	364
BI Trib #3 (Cormorant)	<10	64	-	-	-	-	-	<10	64	<10
BI Trib #4 (Beach Ave.)	52	343	-	-	-	-	-	134	343	52
BI Trib (Breezy Pt)	<10	44	-	-	-	-	-	<10	44	<10
BI Trib #11 (Sullivan's)	41	531	-	-	-	-	-	148	531	41

Rhode Island DOH enterococci swimming standard 60 per 100 mL for beaches

RI Department of Environmental Management Enterococci Standards:

Non-Beach (Fresh) Waters Geometric Mean Density - Not to exceed 54 enterococci per 100 mL.

Designated Beach (Fresh) Waters Geometric Mean Density - Not to exceed 33 enterococci per 100 mL.

A factsheet describing how bacteria are monitored, what bacterial indicators are, where bacteria come from and how we can all help to reduce bacterial input into our local water resources is available at <http://cels.uri.edu/docslink/ww/water-quality-factsheets/Bacteria.pdf>. See the Rhode Island Department of Health beach monitoring website (<http://www.health.ri.gov/beaches/>) for information about beach monitoring and state standards. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management website has information on State efforts to restore waters impaired by bacteria and other pollutants (<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/quality/>).



Learning what's in the Great Salt Pond (<https://www.blockislandorganics.com/Blog/post/2021/08/11/Discovering-Block-Island-Block-Island-Maritime-Institute.aspx>)

Committee for the Great Salt Pond sponsors and conducts the monitoring. See www.cgspbblockisland.org to learn more.