

2026 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.

2026 Data

Monitoring Site	5/4 & 5/18	6/1 & 6/15	6/29 & 7/13	7/27 & 8/10	8/24 & 9/14	9/28 & 9/19	11/2 - tribs only	Geo- mean	Max	Min
Most Probable Number of Fecal coliform bacteria per 100 mL										
GSP #1 (Mid harbor)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #2 (Narra. Inn Cove)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #4 (Trimm's)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #5 (N of Champlin's)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outside GSP - North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #1 (Ocean Ave)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #2 (Bridgeway Sq)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #3 (Cormorant)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #4 (Beach Ave.)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib (Breezy Pt)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #11 (Sullivan's)	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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.



Exploring the Great Salt Pond (Image from Tripadvisor website)

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Most Probable Number of Enterococci bacteria per 100 mL										
GSP #1 (Mid harbor)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #2 (Narra. Inn Cove)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #4 (Trimm's)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GSP #5 (N of Champlin's)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outside GSP - North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #1 (Ocean Ave)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #2 (Bridgegate Sq)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #3 (Cormorant)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #4 (Beach Ave.)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib (Breezy Pt)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BI Trib #11 (Sullivan's)	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Rhode Island DOH enterococci swimming standard 60 per 100 mL for beaches
 RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Enterococci Standards:
 Ion-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

Learn more about 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 - <http://cels.uri.edu/docslink/ww/water-quality-factsheets/Bacteria.pdf>. See the RIDOH beach monitoring website (<http://www.health.ri.gov/beaches/>) for information about beach monitoring and state standards. The RIDEM website has information on efforts to restore waters impaired by bacteria and other pollutants (<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/quality/>).



Getting ready to support CSGP through the The Great Salt Pond Swim-11 (<https://www.cgspblockisland.org/events>)

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