

Water Quality in Short Beach

2023 Summary

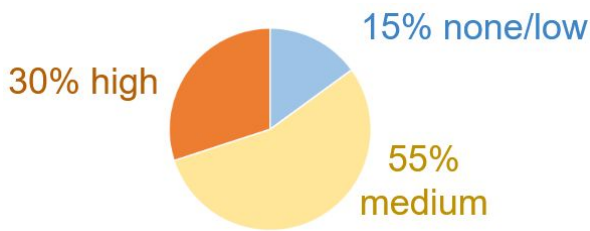


Dog waste is the primary driver of bacterial water pollution in Short Beach

The Civic Association of Short Beach, in dialogue with East Shore District Health Department, has devised a plan to respond.

We ask all residents to pick up after their dogs, separate dog waste from other garbage, and put dog waste only in designated bins or in your household trash.

Dog: Dogs are the major bacteria concern. **85% of samples tested for dog found moderate to high abundance.** High dog contamination samples were substantially higher than human or bird contamination levels.



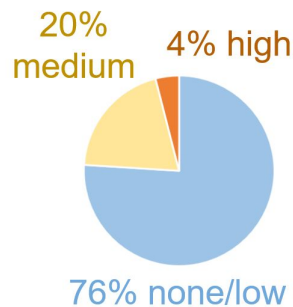
Animal Species' Contributions to Short Beach Fecal Bacteria, 2023

	High	Medium	None/Low
Human	4%	20%	76%
Bird	0%	50%	50%
Dog	30%	55%	15%

Short Beach bacterial counts are in the top 4 out of 37 Connecticut beaches (measured by Save the Sound, 2016-2021). Fecal bacteria contamination has been a persistent problem since at least the 1990s. Previous Yale-East Shore District Health Department studies have found that the fecal contamination is coming from multiple locations and identified human, bird, and dog fecal bacteria as the most likely causes.

In 2023, water samples were collected from the storm drains in the Short Beach neighborhood connected to outfalls flowing into the Long Island Sound. The samples were tested for *E.coli*, a fecal indicator bacteria, under post-rain and dry conditions between 4/24/2023 and 10/30/2023. The samples that tested the highest were sent for microbial source tracking analysis to measure fecal contributions from the most likely animal species (human, bird, dog).

Human: 76% of samples were none/low and moderate levels are consistent with expected background levels. Human bacteria is not a concern at this time and regular ongoing maintenance efforts are effective.



Bird: Moderate presence at multiple locations and multiple dates. Gull, goose, and chicken species were tested individually and all were below detectable levels. A combination of multiple bird species is likely contributing to the bacteria levels.



Project Team: East Shore District Health Department, Civic Association of Short Beach, Town of Branford, Katherine A Kelley State Public Health Laboratory, Short Beach volunteers led by Ann Davis