

Water quality swimming advisory lifted for sound-side site in Dare County

MOREHEAD CITY – State recreational water quality officials today lifted a water quality swimming advisory at a sound-side site in Dare County.

The advisory was lifted because water testing shows that bacteria levels have dropped below the state's and Environmental Protection Agency's standards set for swimming and water play.

The advisory was posted on June 7 at the Colington Harbour swim beach at the end of Colington Drive in Kill Devil Hills. This site showed a monthly average of the bacteria enterococci above the EPA-mandated level of 35 enterococci per 100 milliliters of water, the standard for high-use sites. Subsequent testing of water samples collected at this site found that bacteria levels have fallen below this standard. The sign advising against swimming, skiing or otherwise coming into contact with the water has been removed.

Enterococci, the bacteria group used for testing, is found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. While it is not known to cause illness, scientific studies show that enterococci may indicate the presence of other disease-causing organisms. People swimming or playing in waters with bacteria levels higher than the standards have an increased risk of developing gastrointestinal illness or skin infections.

Coastal recreational waters in North Carolina are generally clean. However, it is important to continue monitoring them and inform the public of any localized problems. The N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program samples 215 sites in coastal waters of the state, most of them on a weekly basis from April through October.

For more information on the N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program or to view a map of testing sites, visit the program's website, and follow the program's Twitter feed.

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