

Recreational water quality

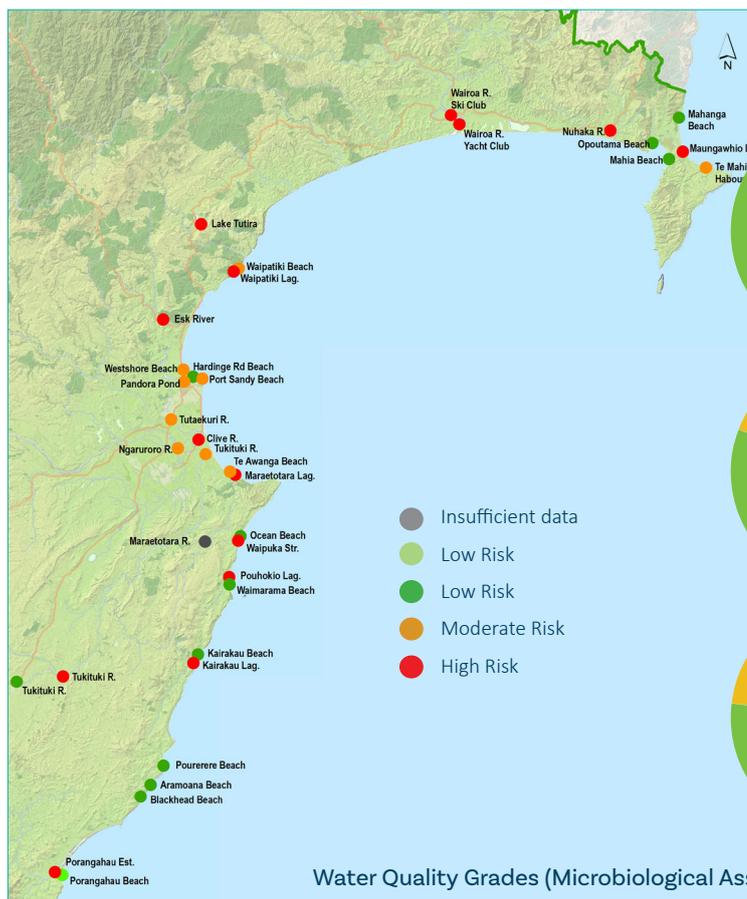


Helping people know where it's safe to swim

Summer is a great time to hit the water in Hawke's Bay, but how do you know if your local beach or river is suitable for swimming?

To help people make informed decisions about where they choose to swim, the Regional Council monitors popular recreational areas weekly throughout summer. These results are then published on the 'Can I Swim Here' page of LAWA, and shown on our website [hbrc.govt.nz](https://www.hbrc.govt.nz), search: #swim

The water quality at Hawke's Bay beaches tends to be very good and exceedances of guidelines tend to be short-lived. Our rivers and streams can be more affected by rain, which can flush animal waste into them. Lagoons and coastal streams can have poorer water quality as they are at the end of the catchment, and generally have warm, slower moving waters with abundant bird-life.



Water Quality Grades (Microbiological Assessment Category (MAC)) for the past 5 years

Quick facts

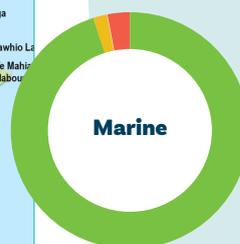
36 sites are monitored weekly or fortnightly through summer

A total of **650** samples were taken between November 2020 and March 2021

Sites were suitable for swimming **90%** of the time

Caution was advised **6%** of the time

Sites were unsuitable for swimming **4%** of the time



95% Suitable for swimming
2% Caution advised
3% Unsuitable for swimming
15 sites monitored: 1259 times over 5 years



81% Suitable for swimming
10% Caution advised
9% Unsuitable for swimming
11 sites monitored: 1000 times over 5 years



77% Suitable for swimming
11% Caution advised
12% Unsuitable for swimming
10 sites monitored: 907 times over 5 years

What we measure

Bacteria – The bacteria enterococci (for marine waters) and *Escherichia coli* (in freshwaters) are measured to provide information on whether other pathogens (viral and bacterial) are likely to be present. The levels are then compared to national guidelines to determine whether a site is ‘suitable for swimming’, ‘caution advised’, or ‘unsuitable for swimming’.

Faecal Coliforms – Popular shellfish collection sites are analysed for faecal coliform indicators. These are used to determine the risk to the public from the consumption of shellfish. This can inform the public as to the sites that persistently fail, and where shellfish collection should be avoided.



Shellfish compliance	Mahia Beach at Golf Club	Maungawhio Lagoon	Te Mahia at Boat ramp	Waipatiki at South end	Ahuriri Estuary	Te Awanga Beach	Kairākau Beach	Pōrangahau Estuary
2009/2010	Yes	NT	NT	Yes	No	No	No	NT
2010/2011	No	NT	No	No	No	No	Yes	NT
2011/2012	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	NT
2012/2013	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
2013/2014	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
2014/2015	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
2015/2016	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
2016/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
2017/2018	Yes	No	No	NT	No	NT	Yes	No
2018/2019	NT	No	No	No	No	NT	No	No
2019/2020	NT	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
2020/2021	NT	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Compliance	8/9 seasons	0/10 seasons	0/11 seasons	6/11 seasons	3/12 seasons	1/10 seasons	9/12 seasons	0/9 seasons
% Compliance	89%	0%	0%	55%	25%	10%	75%	0%

Rule of Toes!

If it's been raining heavily, our best advice is to stay out of the water for 3 days. A handy guide is if you can't see your toes when standing knee-deep in water, then water quality is not the best for a swim.



What happens next?

Faecal Source Tracking

If a site regularly exceeds the water quality guidelines for safe swimming, HBRC undertake faecal source tracking to help identify what type of animals (humans, cows, sheep, birds or dogs), may be causing the high levels of bacteria in the water. Identifying the sources helps HBRC to manage the problem and try to improve water quality.

In the 2020/21 season faecal source tracking was undertaken in the Esk River and at Lake Tutira.

We are currently awaiting the reports which will help identify the sources of the contamination.

Find out more

The purpose of Hawke's Bay Regional Council's State of the Environment report is to:

- Report on issues that affect our shared environment
- Help councils and communities set priorities for environment management
- Monitor the effectiveness of how we manage the environment
- Provide information people can use in their decision-making

This report card is part of a series prepared by Hawke's Bay Regional Council. It outlines the high-level results from the Regional Council's monitoring programme. For more details, including full technical reports and up to the minute monitoring results visit hbrc.govt.nz