

MIAMI BLUE WATER TASK FORCE

2024 Water Quality Monitoring Annual Report

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Blue Water Task Force (BWTF) is the Surfrider Foundation's volunteer water quality monitoring program that provides critical water quality information to protect public health at local beaches. Water quality samples are tested for the presence of enterococcus, a fecal bacteria that indicates the presence of human or animal waste. Elevated levels of enterococcus increase the likelihood that other pathogens that can make people sick may be present.



The goal of BWTF is to fill in monitoring gaps and quickly communicate with the public where it is safe to swim, and where bacteria levels are elevated. Water quality results are compared to the standards used by the Florida Department of Health (FL DOH) to issue swim advisories, specifically greater than 70 colony-forming units of enterococcus per 100mL sample (70 CFU/100mL). Beachgoers should take precautions when swimming, surfing, or recreating after heavy rain events. Do not enter brown water areas or where there is a warning sign for high bacteria levels. Water quality data can be accessed at bwtf.surfrider.org.

WHERE WE SAMPLE

In 2024, Miami Chapter volunteers collected samples from a total of 22 sites along Biscayne Bay, from Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park in the south to Sunny Isles in the north. Samples were collected from sites in beach, canal, and bay locations on a weekly basis throughout the year and were processed at the Chapter's BWTF lab in Miami Beach. To complement the monitoring done by the Florida Department of Health, the Miami BWTF collects samples on Thursdays, whereas FL DOH tests beaches on Mondays; therefore, the Miami BWTF provides timely water quality results for weekend recreation.



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RESULTS

Table 1 shows the percentage of samples that exceeded state health standards at 22 sampling sites in 2024. At Little River Pocket Park and Parkview/Kayak Launch, 90% and 93% of the samples, respectively, failed to meet state standards (**Table 1**). Many of the sites with the most consistently high bacteria levels are located in the bay. Higher pollution rates at these sites may be attributed to land-based runoff from inland areas that is carried by canals and released into the bay. Comparatively, ocean beaches tend to have lower percentages of bacterial exceedance, likely due to dilution.

High bacterial counts indicate the presence of human and/or animal waste in these waters, which may threaten public health. Potential sources of pollution include leaking septic systems, sewer line failures, animal agriculture, pets, birds, and other wild animal waste. These data are important in identifying chronically polluted sites that should continue to be prioritized for public health and safety. Families, ocean users, and the public should be aware of areas with poor water quality conditions and seek to avoid them.

SITE NAME	TOTAL SAMPLES	% HIGH BACTERIA (>70 MPN/100 ML)
Miami: Little River Pocket Park	41	93%
Miami Beach: Parkview / Kayak Launch	50	90%
Virginia Key: MAST Academy	41	41%
Virginia Key: Darwin Beach At RSMAS	36	39%
North Bay Village: 360 Condo	50	38%
Virginia Key: Dog Beach	38	37%
Miami Beach: Pelican Harbor Kayak Launch	45	33%
Miami Beach: Pinetree Park Kayak Launch	46	33%
Key Biscayne: Crandon Park South	41	32%
Miami Beach: 6500 Indian Creek	45	29%
Miami Beach: Purdy/Sunset Harbor Kayak Launch	48	23%
Miami Beach: Normandy Shores	48	19%
North Biscayne Bay: Haulover Sandbar N	38	18%
Miami Beach: 53rd St Beach	49	16%
Key Biscayne: Beach Club	42	7%
Key Biscayne: Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park	42	7%
Miami Beach: North Shore Ocean Terrace, 73rd St	45	7%
Miami Beach: 35th Street Beach	48	6%
Miami Beach: Collins Park, 21st St	47	6%
Miami Beach: South Pointe Park	49	6%
Sunny Isles: 174th St	50	6%
Surfside Beach: 93rd St	44	5%

Table 1. Percent of samples at each site that failed to meet state health standards of 70 CFU/100 mL in 2024.

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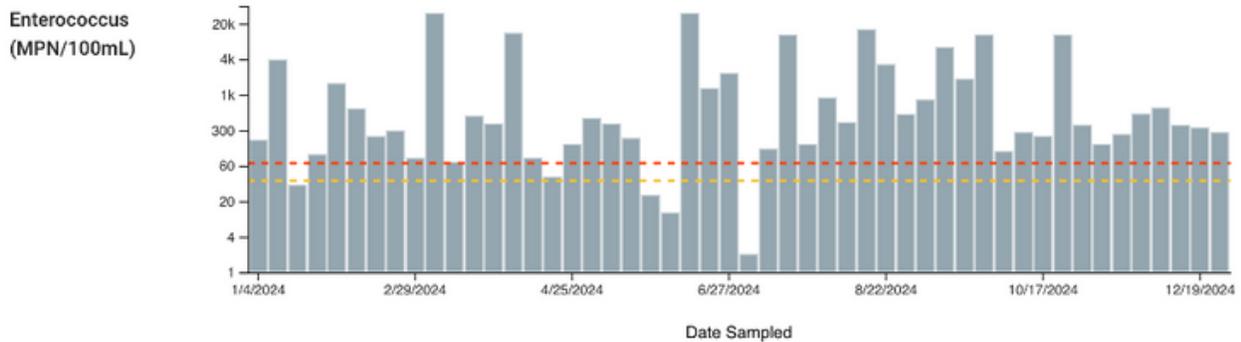
PRIORITY SITE - MIAMI BEACH: PARKVIEW/KAYAK LAUNCH

In 2024, 90% of samples taken from Parkview/Kayak Launch failed to meet state health standards. The Park View Island canal has been under a no-contact-with-water advisory since March 2020. Despite the high bacteria levels and no-contact advisory, people can still be found swimming and kayaking in the canal. Efforts are being made to pinpoint the sources of pollution at this site.

90%

OF PARKVIEW/KAYAK LAUNCH SAMPLES HAD UNSAFE BACTERIA LEVELS DETECTED IN 2024.

Miami Beach: Parkview/Kayak Launch Results



PRIORITY SITE - MIAMI: LITTLE RIVER POCKET PARK

In 2024, 93% of samples taken from Little River Pocket Park failed to meet state health standards. Efforts are underway to pinpoint the sources of pollution at this site. This park remains an important recreational space for the community, offering a green oasis in an urban setting.

93%

OF LITTLE RIVER POCKET PARK SAMPLES HAD UNSAFE BACTERIA LEVELS DETECTED IN 2024.

Miami: Little River Pocket Park

