



Water Quality Test Results Show High Bacteria Counts Here

By Christine Sampson | July 7, 2016 – 1:30pm

Water quality testing conducted on Monday in East Hampton and Southampton Towns showed high bacteria counts in several bodies of water, the Concerned Citizens of Montauk announced this week.

The group tests for the presence of the enterococcus bacteria, found in fecal matter. The bacteria often enters the water through runoff after heavy rains or through failing septic systems. Its presence indicates the presence of fecal matter in the water and of "all sorts of other pathogens that can make people sick," according to Mara Dias of the Surfrider Foundation, which conducts the testing along with C.C.O.M.

Results of 104 or higher per 100 milliliters of water fail to meet established health standards, C.C.O.M. said.

In Amagansett, Fresh Pond showed a enterococcus reading of 4,106. Pussy's Pond in Springs showed 1,005 in a sample. In Wainscott, Georgica Beach/Third Jetty had a result of 160, the beach side of Georgica Pond had a result of 1,564, and the Montauk Highway kayak launch at Georgica Pond had a result of 7,215.

In Southampton Town, Sagg Pond in Sagaponack showed a reading of 341. Tests performed at Sagg Main Beach, Mecox Bay, and Scott Cameron Beach in Bridgehampton came up negative for the bacteria.

"Most sites tested in East Hampton and Amagansett [on Monday] were high, which are in line with what we typically see after a major rainfall," C.C.O.M. said in a release.

The group has been periodically testing the water for about four years, having trained citizen volunteers to do the tests through the Surfrider Foundation. C.C.O.M. recently launched a campaign to clean up and preserve the waters of Lake Montauk and Fort Pond in Montauk. Test results can regularly be found on the group's website, preservemontauk.org, under the "News and Noteworthy" column.

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Clarification: An earlier version of this article referred to diseases associated with enterococcus. The reason C.C.O.M. and the Surfrider Foundation test for that particular bacteria, however, is that it is tied to the Environmental Protection Agency's bathing beach standards, and because its presence in the water is an indicator of other fecal-borne pathogens that can make people sick.