

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL

Bacteria Levels Remain High in Local Waters

By Christine Sampson

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Five of the nine East Hampton Town bodies of water that last week showed elevated bacteria counts remained high in samples taken this week by Concerned Citizens of Montauk. Two beaches in Southampton Town, meanwhile, came up with red flags this week in testing conducted by the Surfrider Foundation.

C.C.O.M. samples showed East Creek at Lake Montauk with 487 parts per billion of the fecal bacteria enterococcus, along with Pussy's Pond in Springs at 312, the David's Lane Nature Trail pond in East Hampton Village at 5,475, Hook Pond at Dunemere Lane, also in the village, with 567, and the outfall pipe at Surfside Place in Montauk at 573 parts per billion.

The threshold of "high" bacteria counts is considered anything in excess of 104 parts per billion. Each of those sites also tested high on June 10.

Two other areas that tested high last week, Little Reed Pond Creek and Nature Preserve Beach, both at Lake Montauk, were downgraded to "medium" bacteria counts this week. Fresh Pond Beach and Fresh Pond Creek on Napeague, which also tested high last week, were downgraded to "low" bacteria counts this week.

The bioswale at the East Hampton Village green tested at 754 parts per billion; it had not been tested the previous week.

In Noyac, the Surfrider Foundation tested the Circle Beach estuary and Long Beach, among others, and found them both with high bacteria counts. The organization reported 218 parts per billion of enterococcus at the estuary and 567 at Long Beach. Both of those sites last week were found to be free of the bacteria.

While two test sites in Fort Pond registered low and medium bacteria levels, the waters there continue to be affected by cyanobacteria, commonly known as blue-green algae, which is toxic to people and animals, according to Kate Rossi-Snook, an environmental advocate with C.C.O.M. "Wet weather and warm temperatures continue to result in the gradual elevation of both bacteria levels and in Fort Pond's blue-green algae concentrations," Ms. Rossi-Snook said in a statement. She said testing is expected to be performed weekly during the summer.