



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Subcommittee

FROM: Trevor James, Resource Scientist

REFERENCE: W416

SUBJECT: **SUMMER 2005/2006 RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY SAMPLING PROGRAMME – REPORT EP06/05/15** - Report Prepared for 30 May 2006 meeting

1. INTRODUCTION

This report briefly outlines the results of monitoring popular beaches, water ski areas and swimming holes bathing waters monitoring. Council carried out sampling throughout the summer at 26 sites (see Figure 3). Sampling frequency was approximately weekly at the most popular beaches of Kaiteriteri, Rabbit Island and Mapua and approximately fortnightly sampling at most other sites except Torrent Bay, Anchorage and Motupiko River at Quinney's Bush which were sampled only six times during the season. Two students are used for this work as it is not possible to sample all sites in one day (generally sampled on a Tuesday).

A media article (very similar content to this report) discussing these results was released in March, 2006. It was hoped that these results would be posted on the Council website within a week of sampling. However, database processes were not developed to the degree to which this was possible. It is expected that, starting next season, graphs of results for each site will be available via a clickable map interface on the "Environment", "Water" web-pages.

2. RESULTS

Generally, water quality for contact recreation was very good. During the 2005-06 summer 375 samples were collected with only nineteen of these exceeding national guidelines (above alert level). Most of these exceedences occurred on two specific days, one after heavy rain in the week prior to Christmas (this only affected freshwater sites), and one after a particularly high tide on 1 February that affected beaches mostly in Golden Bay. The Lee River Reserve site exceeded guidelines three times, which prompts further investigation as to the cause. Torrent Bay and Anchorage Beach continue to record very low results.

As per standard practice, if a site failed to meet the guideline, an additional sample was taken within two-three days of the first sample. All re-samples were within acceptable levels for contact recreation. This shows that rivers are best avoided immediately after rain – advice that we try to communicate to the public each year and applies to most regions of New Zealand.

The graphs below (Figures 1 and 2) show the percentage of compliance with national guidelines since records began (for many of the sites monitoring started in 1999). Not all sites have been sampled since that time and some sites have been removed from the programme as they had consistently good water quality and a low likelihood that that would change. The label at the top of each bar (n= __) represents the number of samples taken at the particular site.

Figure 1

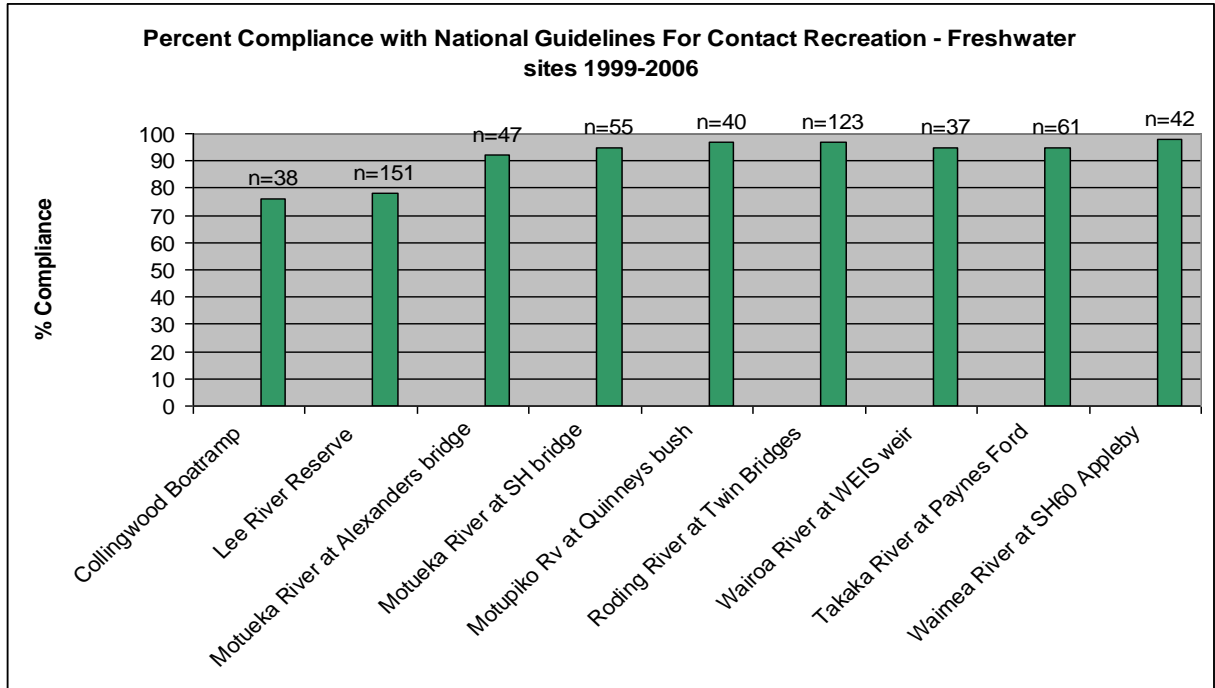


Figure 2

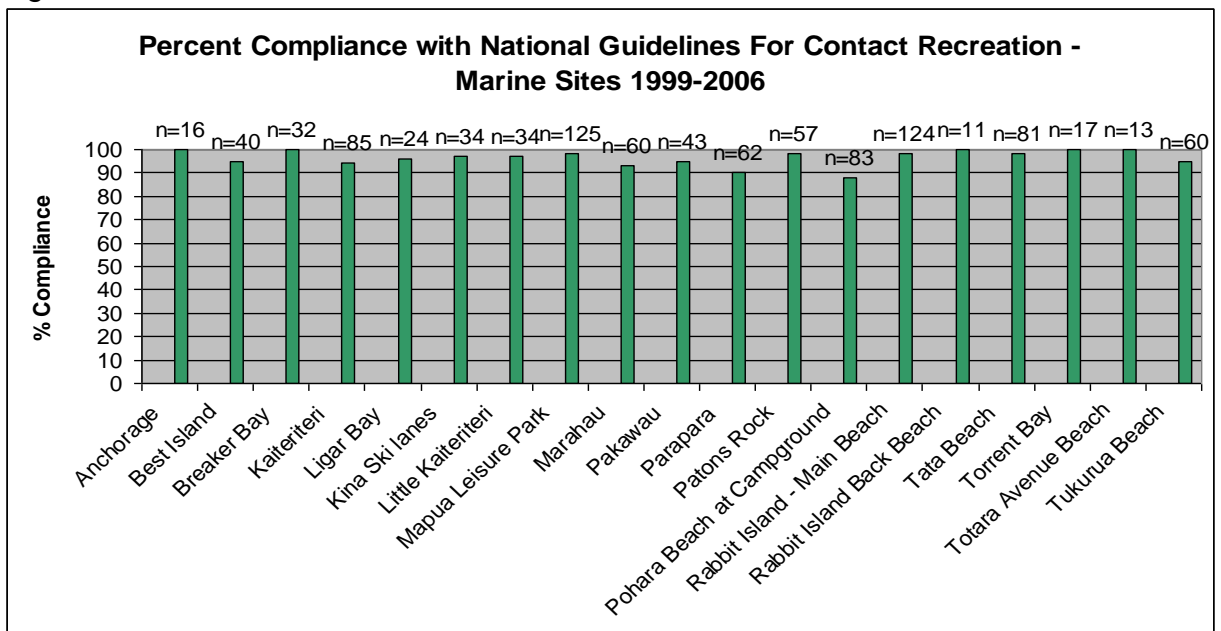


Figure 3



3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report

**Trevor James
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