

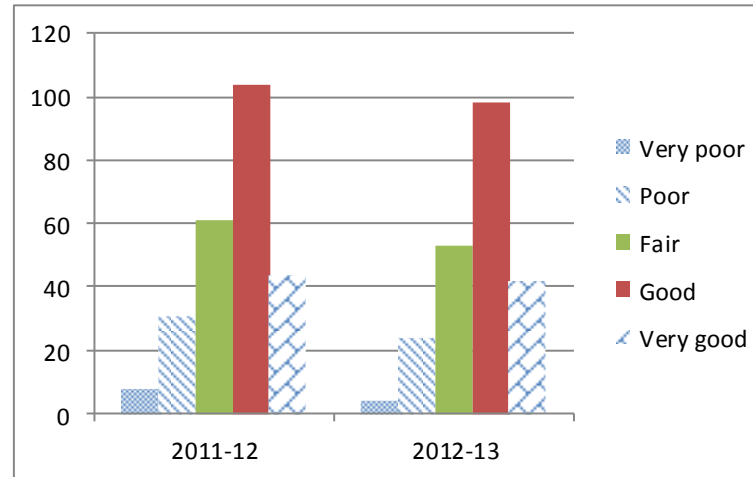
Suitability for Swimming at Coastal Beaches

Since 2011, the Ministry for the Environment has changed their methods of reporting recreational water quality to the 'suitability for recreation grade' (SFRG) (Ministry of the Environment, 2012). SFRG divides the water quality of recreational sites into five categories: very good, good, fair, poor, very poor (Ministry of the Environment, 2013b). As the SFRG results cannot be compared with previous ones due to various methods (Ministry of the Environment, 2012), comparison of recreational water quality data can only be made from 2011 onwards.

In 2012-2013, among the 221 marine beaches which were reported with SFRGs, 42 (19%) sites were graded as "very good" (suitable for swimming almost all the time), 98 (44%) sites as "good" (suitable for swimming most of the time), 53 (24%) sites as "fair" (generally suitable for swimming), 24 (11%) sites as "poor" (not always suitable for swimming) and 4 (2%) sites as "very poor" (often be unsuitable for swimming) (figure 1 & 2). Compared to 2011-2012, the proportions of being graded as "very good" and "good" have increased, while "fair", "poor", and "very poor" have decreased (figures 1 & 2).

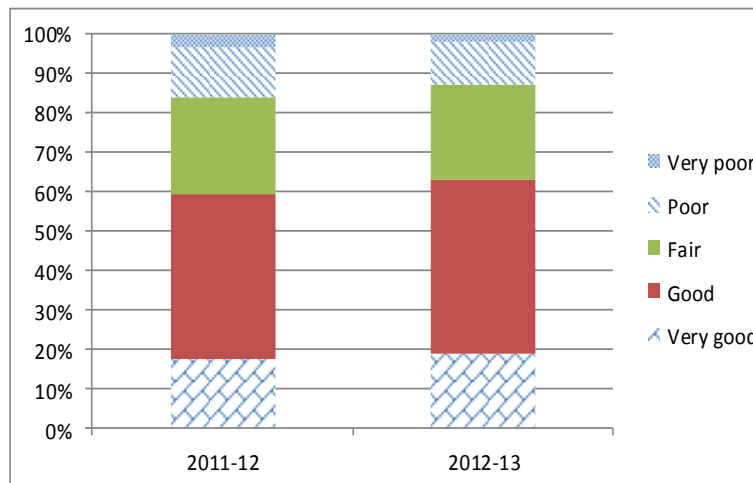
Compared to previous years, the number of marine beaches that were sampled decreased since 2011. This is because the monitoring programmes in some regions are not compatible with reporting SFRG while others have not sampled long enough to be able to calculate SFRGs or have yet to undertake catchment sanitary inspections. Some regions have not provided any data (Ministry for the Environment, 2013a).

Figure 1: Number of recreational coastal beaches by SFRG, 2011-2013



Source: Ministry for the Environment (2013b)

Figure 2, Proportion of recreational coastal beaches by SFRG, 2011-2013



Source: Ministry for the Environment (2013b)

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Since 2011, the Ministry for the Environment has changed their methods of reporting recreational water quality to the 'suitability for recreation grade' (SFRG).
- in 2012-2013, among the 221 marine beaches which were reported with SFRG, there were 42 (19%) sites graded as "very good", 98 (44%) sites as "good", 53 (24%) sites as "fair", 24 (11%) sites as "poor" and 4 (2%) sites as "very poor".
- Compared to previous years, the number of marine beaches that were sampled decreased since 2011. This is due to the incompatible monitoring programmes and inadequate sample data in some regions.

REFERENCES

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