

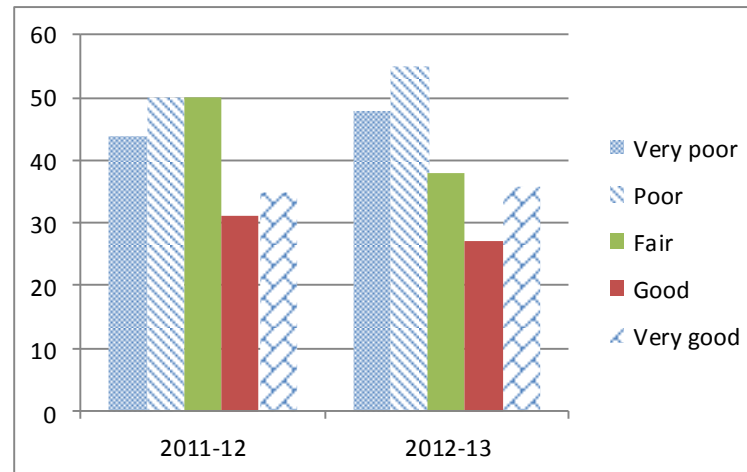
Suitability for Swimming at Freshwater Beaches

Since 2011, the Ministry for the Environment has changed its 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, 2013). As the SFRG results cannot be compared with previous ones due to various methods (Ministry of the Environment, 2012), comparison of recreational water quality can only be made from 2011 onwards.

In 2012-2013, there were 204 freshwater beaches reported with SFRG. Among them, 36 (18%) sites were graded as "very good" (suitable for swimming for almost all of the time), 27 (13%) sites as "good" (suitable for swimming for most of the time), 38 (19%) sites as "fair" (generally suitable for swimming), 55 (27%) sites as "poor" (not always suitable for swimming), and 48 (24%) sites as "very poor" (often be unsuitable for swimming) (figure 1).

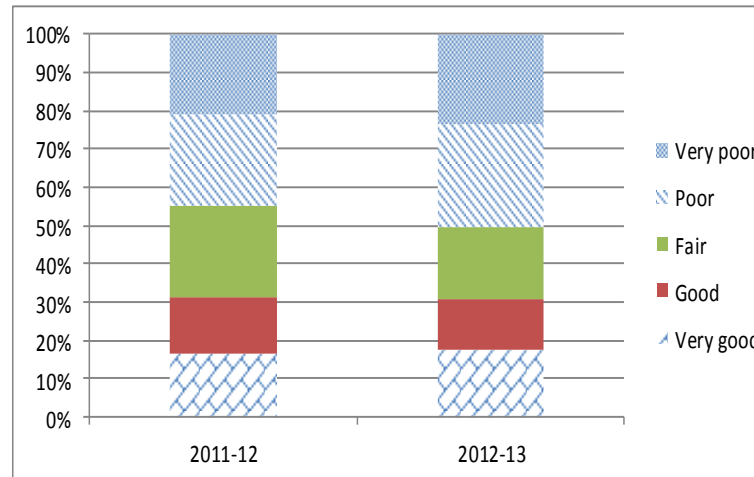
During the bathing season of 2012-2013, the proportion of monitored freshwater beaches graded as "good" and "very good" was very similar to that observed for 2011-2012. However, in 2012-2013, more than half of the monitored freshwater beaches were graded as "poor" and "very poor" compared to 45% in the previous year (figure 2).

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



Source: Ministry for the Environment (2013)

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



Source: Ministry for the Environment (2013)

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 204 freshwater beaches which were reported with SFRG, there were 36 (18%) sites graded as "very good", 27 (13%) sites as "good", 38 (19%) sites as "fair", 55 (27%) sites as "poor" and 48 (24%) sites as "very poor".
- During the bathing season of 2012-2013, more than half of the monitored freshwater beaches were graded as "poor" and "very poor" compared to 45% in the previous year.

REFERENCES

- Ministry for the Environment. (2012). Recreational water quality in New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/environmental-reporting/fresh-water/suitability-for-swimming-indicator/recreational-water-quality-update-oct-2012.html>. (accessed on 18 October 2013)
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