

The Daily Item

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Warnings don't dampen a day at the beach



LYNN — Krystle McLellan takes a close look at the ocean water off Kings Beach before she lets her 7-year-old play in it, and an environmental advocacy group says her caution is well-founded.

The water quality rating assigned for health assessment purposes by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay dropped this summer compared to the rating assigned to the Swampscott and Lynn beach last summer. Kings Beach received an 88 percent rating in 2014 and a 74 percent rating for the period spanning Memorial Day to July 18.

The rating took into account the percentage of days ocean water tests fell below a specific bacterial count. The percentage results for Kings were lower than results for other beaches, including Nahant and Revere, according to the Save the

Harbor study.

McLellan said she avoids the more-crowded Nahant Beach in the summer, preferring to bring her son, Elijah, to Kings Beach. She said the ocean water is “pretty clean,” but she stays away from algae that overspreads the beach on some days.

“I won’t let him go in if it’s really yucky,” he said.

Save the Harbor spokesman Bruce Berman said small ocean storm and sewage bacteria in the ocean affect beach water quality ratings.

“Though the total rainfall amount so far this season is similar to 2014, there were more frequent small storms during the study period, which has a dramatic impact on water quality on some of our beaches this year,” Berman said.

Lynn native Julie Dorsey called Kings Beach “a beauty — a gem” and credited the state Department of Conservation and Recreation for working to keep the beach clean and open for ocean frolickers.

The DCR oversees 80 beaches around the state, including Kings, which is tested on a daily basis. DCR’s website listed Kings as open on Thursday. Kings Beach frequenter and Saugus resident Marianne Kelleher said she takes ocean water quality in stride.

“It’s a big ocean. What’s one small sample?” she asked.

Like McLellan, Kelleher prefers Kings Beach’s quiet and open spaces to the crowded stretches of more popular Nahant Beach.

“A little bacteria doesn’t bother me,” she said.

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