

In 2001 – 2003,  
researchers studied  
bacterial contamination  
in coastal watersheds  
in the towns of Wells,  
Kennebunk and  
Sanford, Maine.

For more information on *Microbial  
Source Tracking in Two Southern  
Maine Watersheds*, please contact  
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**What can we do  
to open more  
clam flats and  
promote clean  
swimming water?**

Here is what this study  
revealed about the  
sources of bacterial  
contamination in our  
area, and how you can  
help protect our local  
environment.



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Project partners include:



## Researchers Study Local Contamination

The *Microbial Source Tracking in Two Southern Maine Watersheds* study was a significant step toward identifying sources of bacterial contamination in the Webhannet and Little River estuaries and their coastal watersheds in Wells, Kennebunk and Sanford, Maine.

## Contamination Impacts Local Resources

The Webhannet estuary in Wells is a valuable shellfish resource, and the town beach is a popular tourist destination. Bacterial contamination in the estuary has closed 31 acres of shellfish harvesting areas for more than seven years and poses a potential problem at local swimming beaches.

All of the Little River estuary has been closed to clamming for about 20 years due to bacterial contamination. One of its tributaries, Branch Brook, is a drinking water supply. Our efforts to reduce bacterial contamination could reopen these clam flats and help protect the public water supply.

Visit our website for more information:

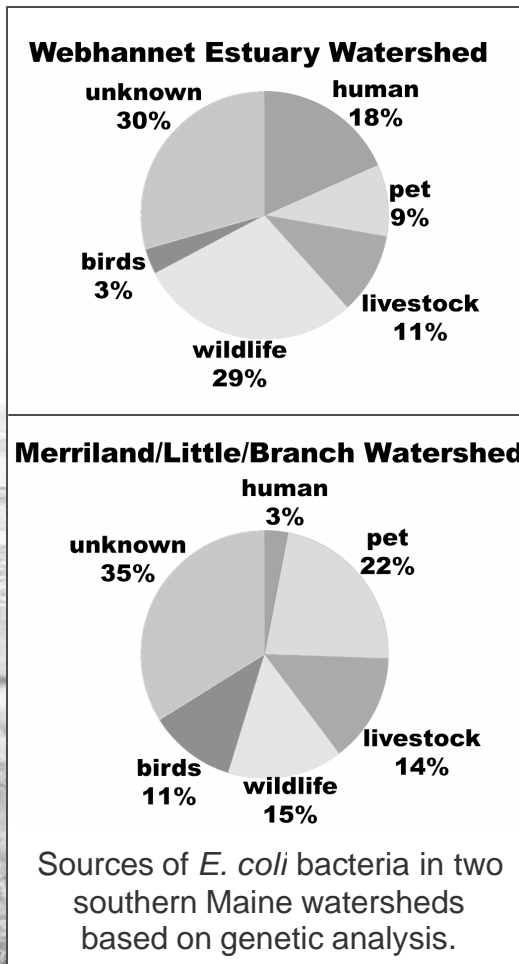
[www.umseagrant-mst.org](http://www.umseagrant-mst.org)



## Results

In both watersheds, wildlife was an identified source of contamination. However, **nearly 40%** of sources were humans, pets or livestock.

Contamination occurring naturally from wildlife is difficult to reduce, but by addressing human and human-related sources, we *can* improve water quality.



## WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

### Septic System Users

Do you know when your septic system was last serviced? Generally, septic systems should be pumped out every two to five years. Proper maintenance protects water quality and helps avoid costly failures.

### Pet Owners

Remember to clean up after your pets, whether you take them for walks or they stay in your yard. Depending on local ordinances, options include: flushing waste down the toilet; burying it 5 inches deep away from gardens and waterways; or putting it in the trash.

### Farmers and Gardeners

Manure used for fertilizing may contain bacteria that can degrade water quality. To reduce contamination, locate gardens away from waterways. Do not apply manure before heavy rainfalls and avoid over-fertilizing. Work manure into soil, using only composted manure.

### Boat Owners

Use the boat pump-out facility at Wells Harbor for waste disposal.

