

# E. coli and the Middle Rio Grande



**Natural Resource Services**  
Bernalillo County Public Works Division

*We work to reduce Stormwater Pollution  
to keep our river clean.*



E. coli (*Escherichia coli*) is a group of bacteria commonly found in the lower intestine of warm-blooded organisms such as mammals and birds. Most E. coli strains are harmless, but some can cause serious food poisoning in humans. The Middle Rio Grande River is officially listed as impaired by E. coli, according to NMED & USEPA.

Human and pet wastes contribute to this problem. Even healthy people and healthy pets have E. coli in their digestive systems. Improper disposal of diapers (littering), failing septic systems, and pet wastes can lead to river pollution when stormwater carries them into the Rio Grande. ***It's our River—keep it healthy and clean!***

The screenshot shows the CDC website page for 'Healthy Swimming/Recreational Water'. The page title is 'Healthy Swimming/Recreational Water'. The main heading is 'What are Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)?'. Below the heading, there is a link to 'Esta página en español'. The text explains that RWIs are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water and cause indoor air quality problems. RWIs can be a wide variety of infections, including gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic and wound infections. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea. Diarrheal illnesses can be caused by germs such as Crypto (short for *Cryptosporidium*), *Giardia*, *Shigella*, *norovirus* and *E. coli* O157:H7. For more information on recreational water illnesses, including brochures, posters, and educational materials, please see the [Resources and Publications](#) page. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links and social media sharing options.

Please visit our website: [www.bernco.gov/stormwater](http://www.bernco.gov/stormwater)  
or our partnership website: [www.KeepTheRioGrand.org](http://www.KeepTheRioGrand.org)  
***You are the solution to Stormwater Pollution!***

# Stormwater and Pet Waste Don't Mix



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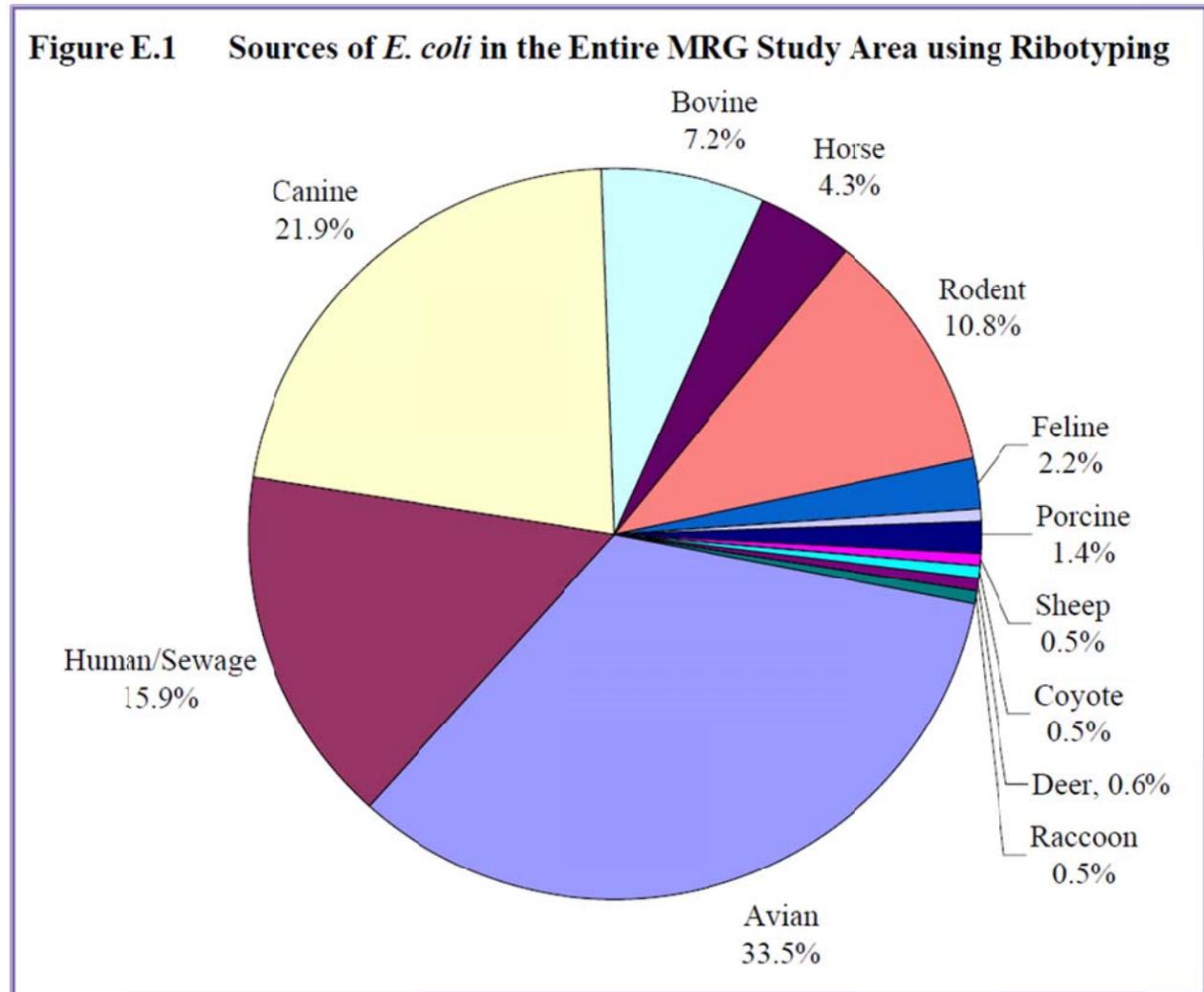
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## Poop Happens! Just pick it up!

It doesn't seem like one little dog is a big deal, but all the pet waste on lawns, parks and paths adds up to a serious problem in the Rio Grande.

**Figure E.1 Sources of *E. coli* in the Entire MRG Study Area using Ribotyping**



*Other studies across the US have found approximately the same results. It's not just us.*

**We all live here together, and we owe it to ourselves,  
our friends and neighbors to keep our community clean and healthy.**

Remember, ***Clean Yards, Clean Streams, and Clean Shoes.***