

Bathing Water Profile for Achmelvich

Lochinver, Scotland

Current water classification <https://www2.sepa.org.uk/BathingWaters/Classifications.aspx>

Description

The Achmelvich bathing water is in a small, shallow bay, about 200 metres long. It is situated on the west coast of the Highlands, three miles northwest of Lochinver.

The area is popular with tourists, especially during the summer months. The white sandy beach and clean water quality attract those interested in the outdoors and water sports.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 200–250 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



Site details

Local authority	Highland Council
Year of designation	2008
Water sampling location	NC 05560 24940

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Achmelvich bathing water extends to about 500 m². The catchment is lowlying, ranging from plains along the coast (average elevation of 5 meters) to low hills (maximum elevation 60 metres) in the south-east.

The area is predominantly rural (96%) with agriculture the major land use. The agricultural area is a mixture of grassland and heath. There are numerous crofts in the area which support sheep farming. There is no urban development within the bathing water catchment and the population density is generally very low. During the summer months there can be a high influx of tourists to the area.

There are no rivers or small burns within the bathing water catchment. However, there are a few drainage ditches in the catchment which drain directly into the bathing water.

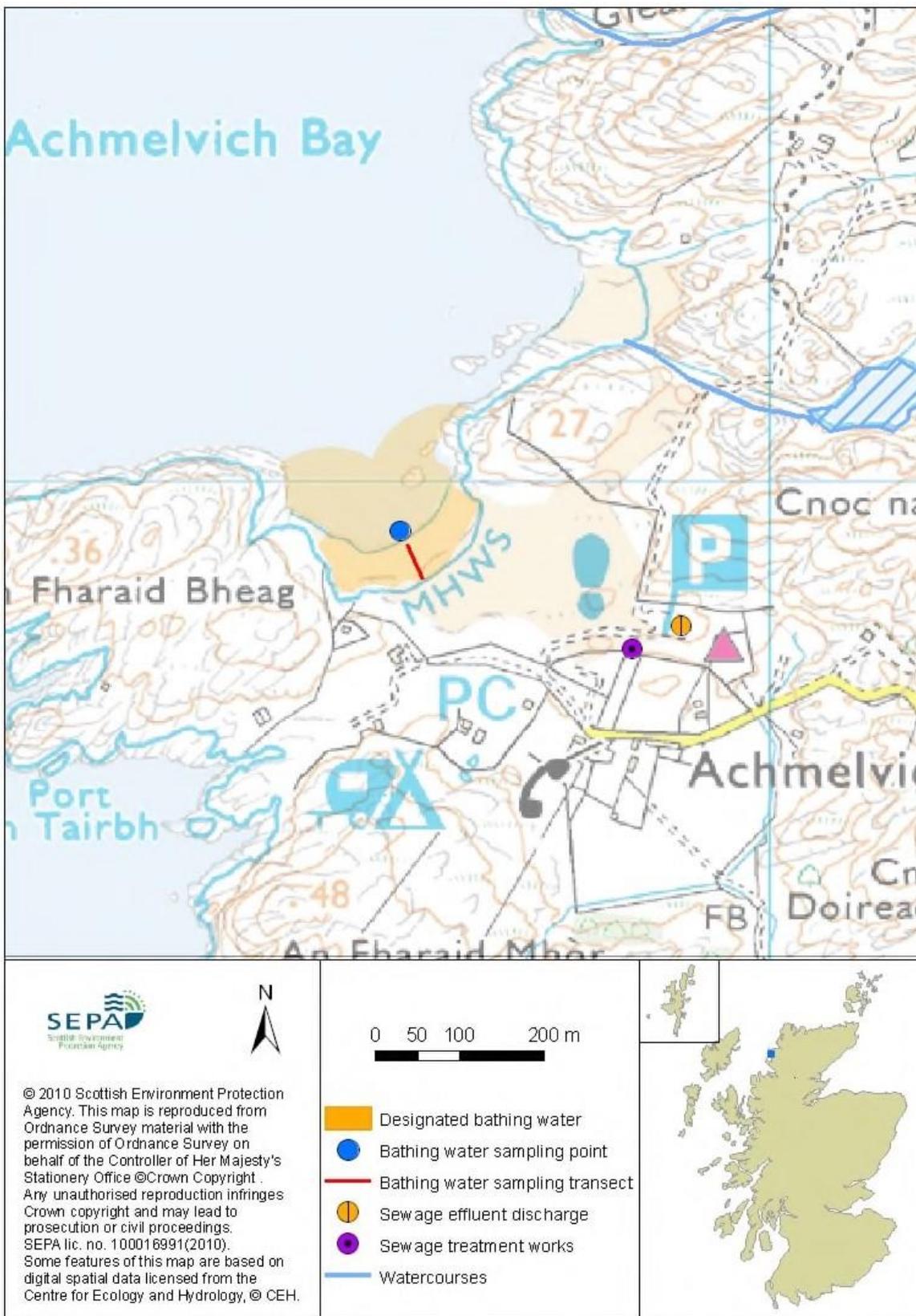
Risks to water quality

The principal risk and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from agricultural runoff.

There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that there are no significant pollution inputs under normal conditions.

Map 1: Achmelvich bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Achmelvich bathing water



Improving bathing water quality

Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

Diffuse pollution from agricultural sources is the result of rain driven events causing cumulative inputs of pollutants to rivers and streams.

There are many crofts supporting sheep farming in the area. There is potential for agricultural diffuse pollution to occur in small unnamed ditch to the north of the bathing water.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

Scottish Water provides most waste water collection and treatment services in Scotland.

A caravan park discharges effluent to a soakaway via a septic tank. There are several other septic tanks within the catchment. They are thought to pose a minimal risk to bathing water quality under normal operating conditions.

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Marine waters are not at risk of cyanobacteria overproduction.

Algae

Current information suggests that this bathing water is not at risk of excessive growth of macroalgae (seaweed) or phytoplankton.

Jellyfish

There is a possibility of increased numbers of jellyfish in the water during summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Most species common to the UK are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Responding to pollution incidents

Please use our 24 hour hotline (0800 80 70 60) to report pollution. SEPA will investigate the incident and contact other relevant organisations. That may include Scottish Ministers, Scottish Water, the local authority and the relevant health board. Where necessary, measures will be put in place to resolve the problem.

If beach users or bathers are considered to be at risk, the local authority will warn the public by erecting signs at the bathing water. Information will also be available on our website.

SEPA will investigate whenever our sampling identifies pollution.

Beach users are encouraged to use the bins provided or to take litter home. Beach cleaning and litter clean-up is maintained by Highland Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Dingwall office Graesser House Fodderty Way Dingwall Business Park Dingwall IV15 9XB 01349 862021 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>Highland Council Glenurquhart Road Inverness IV3 5NX 01349 886606 service.point@highland.gov.uk www.highland.gov.uk</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org</p>
<p>Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</p>		
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