

Bathing Water Profile for Girvan

Girvan, Scotland

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

Description

Girvan bathing water is a 2 km long, flat bay. It is situated on the South Ayrshire coast adjacent to Girvan town. Most of the beach is sandy with some shingle. The beach is prized for its views of the Ailsa Craig and the Kintyre peninsula.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 30–150 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



Site details

Local authority	South Ayrshire Council
Year of designation	1987
Water sampling location	NX 18154 97413

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Girvan bathing water extends to 260 km². In general, the area comprises of rolling countryside. To the south and south east the land is hillier rising up to the highest peak, Caerloch Dhu. There are several lochs and reservoirs in the catchment which drain into the main river, the Water of Girvan.

The area is predominantly rural (98%) with agriculture the major land use. The upland areas support mixed sheep and beef farming. The lowlands are used for intensive dairy farming (particularly the plains and northern area) and some arable farming of potatoes. Approximately 2% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The main population centres are the towns of Girvan and Maybole.

Risks to water quality

The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arises from agricultural run-off.

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 potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can originate from human, ruminant or other sources.

Map 1: Girvan bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Girvan bathing water



Improving bathing water quality

Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

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

There is potential for agricultural diffuse pollution to occur in the Water of Girvan and other small burns. This could impact on the bathing beach during periods of heavy rain.

Farm visits started in the Girvan catchment during 2015. These visits looked to identify diffuse pollution sources and pathways. Mitigation measures were agreed with land managers to reduce the risk of bacterial pollution on water quality.

SEPA has observed significant changes in land management practice within the catchments. SEPA will continue to work with the farmers in these catchments to reduce the risk of pollution to the bathing water.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

The discharge from the Girvan sewage treatment works is remote from the bathing water and is not thought to affect water quality.

A Scottish Water study indicated that improvements to their assets would not improve bathing water quality.

Discharges from the sewerage systems serving the other towns and villages in the catchment are not considered to have any impact on water quality. The same applies to discharges from private treatment plants.

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 South Ayrshire Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Ayr office 31 Miller Road Ayr KA7 2AX 01292 294 000 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>South Ayrshire Council Burns House Burns Statue Square Ayr KA7 1UT 01292 618222 environmental.health@south-ayrshire.gov.uk www.south-ayrshire.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>		

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.1	May 2012	
1.2	April 2014	
1.3	June 2015	
1.4	May 2016	
1.5	April 2020	
1.6	April 2022	
1.7	May 2023	