

Bathing Water Profile for Portobello (West)

Edinburgh, Scotland

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

Today's water quality forecast <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

Description

Portobello beach is situated at the small town of Portobello, on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The beach comprises of a long stretch of sand and an associated promenade. The area is popular with dog walkers and families.

Another designated bathing water, Portobello (Central), is located just to the south east of Portobello (West).

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–250 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



Site details

Local authority	City of Edinburgh Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NT 30314 74632

Catchment description

A catchment area of 32 km² drains into Portobello (West) bathing water.

Land use is split between urban and rural uses. Portobello town and the south of Edinburgh are the main urban areas within the catchment.

The main river in the bathing water catchment is the Braid Burn/Figgate Burn. It flows into the sea between Portobello (West) and Portobello (Central) bathing waters.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 296 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

Risks to water quality

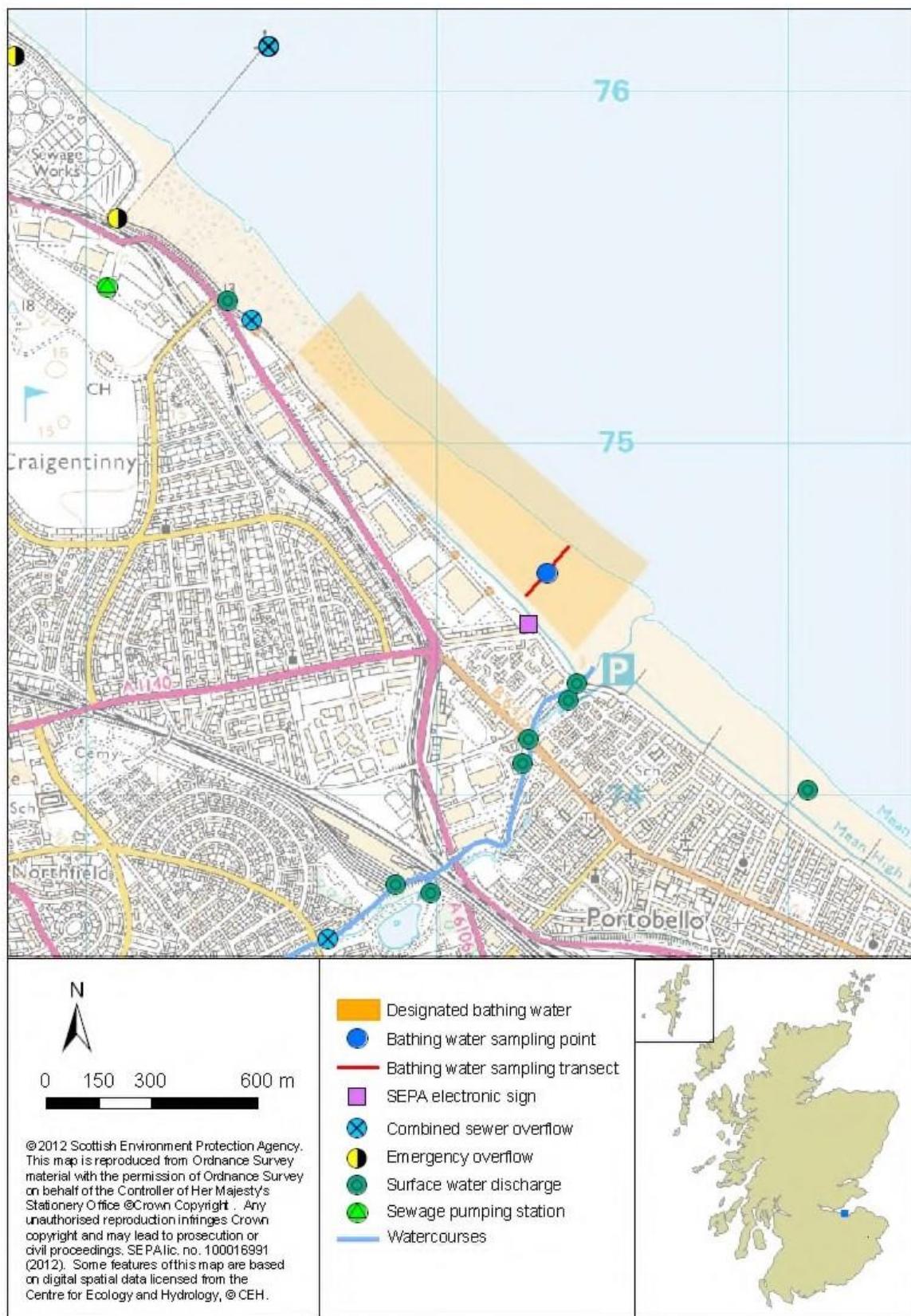
This bathing water is subject to short term pollution when heavy rainfall washes bacteria into the sea.

Pollution risks include combined sewer overflows and surface water outfalls. These are highlighted on Map 1.

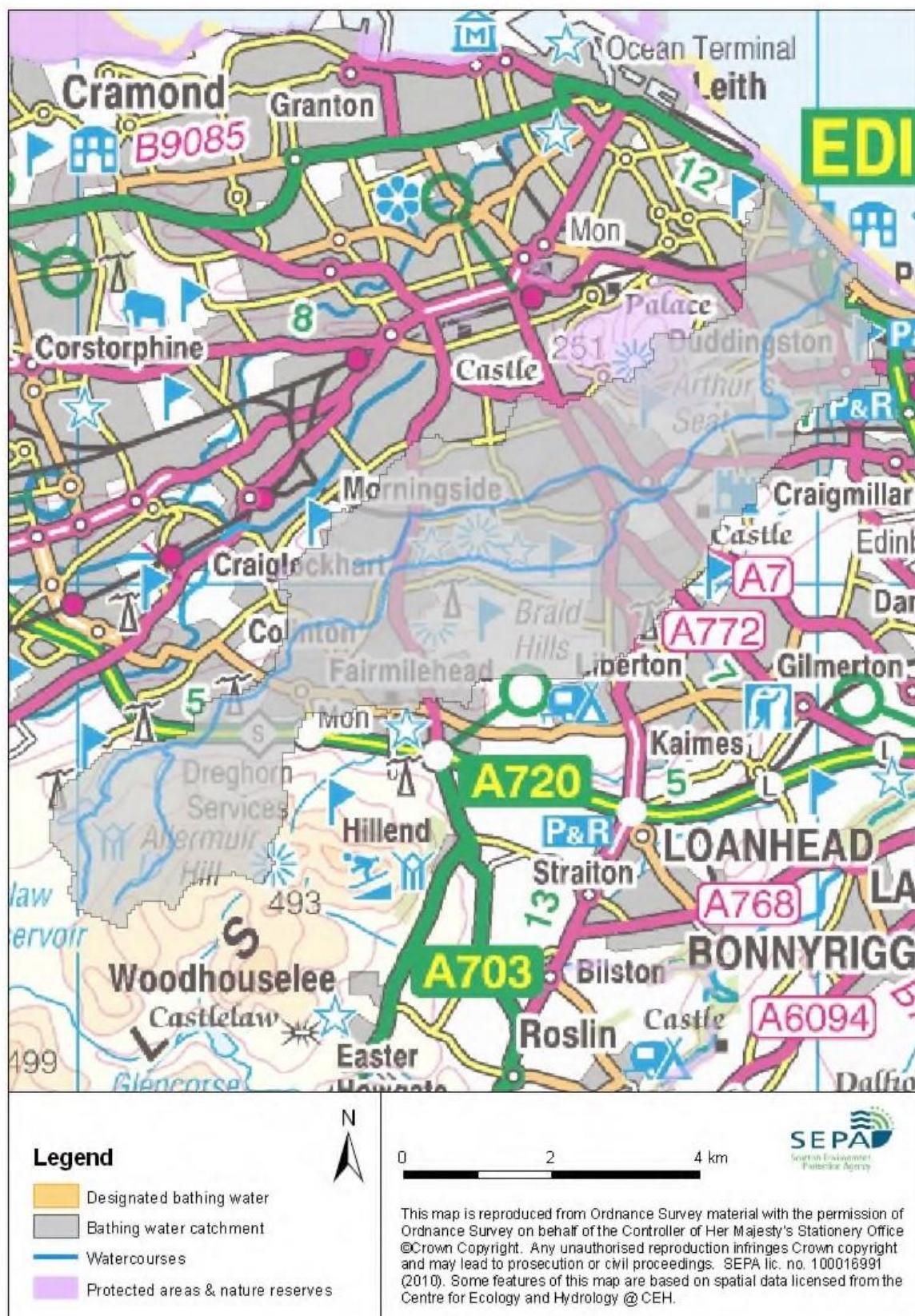
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

DNA tracing indicates that human sources are contributing to faecal pollution of the bathing water.

Map 1: Portobello (West) bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Portobello (West) bathing water



Daily water quality forecasts

Water quality is forecast on a daily basis during the bathing season (1 June to 15 September). The forecasts indicate that water quality is either acceptable or poor. Warnings against bathing are advised when poor water quality is forecast. This is because there is an increased risk to bathers' health from water pollution.

Forecasts are communicated via an electronic message sign at the beach, SEPA's website, mobile website and Beachline (03000 996699). 40 warnings advising against bathing were issued for this bathing water last year.

Improving bathing water quality

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

Combined sewer overflows which may impact the water quality at Portobello (West) include those discharging to the Braid Burn, the Fillyside group of CSO's and Albert Rd CSO.

In July 2019 spills were reduced at the Fillyside outfall by remediating a valve at Nantwich Drive CSO to increase the pass forward flow to Seafield sewage treatment works for treatment. In November 2019 four dual manholes upstream of the Braid Valley surface water outfall, which spilled to the Braid Burn if blocked, were sealed.

A Scottish Government funded misconnection study took place May 2019 to August 2021. A number of misconnections were identified and rectified in the nearby catchment area. Improvement works to rectify issues identified within the network included removal of sewer blockages, remediating fractured pipes and significant sewer cleaning.

Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources

Urban diffuse source pollution comes from contaminated rainwater discharging to rivers and streams. SEPA, local authorities and Scottish Water are working together to tackle urban diffuse pollution. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) have been incorporated into local plans and partner organisations have been encouraged to retrofit SUDS where possible.

A pigeon roost was identified a potential source of faecal pollution to the Braid Burn/Figgate Burn. The roost was netted to prevent pigeon faeces from going into the burn via road drains.

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. Further sampling of the bathing water and related rivers and streams is undertaken.

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

Keep Scotland Beautiful's "My Beach Your Beach" campaign to help keep beaches and bathing waters clean for all to enjoy is underway at this location.

Contact details and information sources

SEPA Edinburgh office 231 Corstorphine Rd Edinburgh EH12 7AT 0131 449 7296 www.sepa.org.uk	City of Edinburgh Council City Chambers High Street Edinburgh EH1 1YJ 0131 200 2300 www.edinburgh.gov.uk	Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org
Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters		

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.2	April 2013	
1.3	April 2014	
1.4	June 2015	

OFFICIAL - CONFIDENTIAL

1.5	May 2016	
1.6	June 2018	
1.7	March 2019	
1.8	April 2020	
1.9	May 2022	
2.0	May 2023	

OFFICIAL - CONFIDENTIAL