

Bathing Water Profile for Southernness

Southernness, 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

Southernness bathing water is a relatively small, horse shoe shaped area of beach, approximately 4 km long. It is situated on the north coast of the Solway Firth close to the village of Southernness, south of the town of Dumfries.

The beach is fairly rocky, leaving an array of rock pools exposed at low tide.



As this beach sits on a transitional water, mud flats are exposed at low tide making the water's edge difficult to access in certain areas.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 50 metres to just over 1 km.

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Site details	Local authority	Dumfries & Galloway Council
	Year of designation	1999
	Water sampling location	NX 97686 54006
	EC bathing water ID	UKS7616053

Catchment description

The immediate catchment draining to the Southernness bathing water extends to just under 7 km². The area varies in elevation from a maximum of 200 metres in the north to an average of 10 metres along the coast. There are two coastal burns within this catchment, one of which drains directly into the designated area.

The immediate bathing water catchment is predominantly rural (97%) with grassland the major land use. The area supports some, but not many, dairy and beef cattle as well as arable production. Approximately 1% of the immediate catchment is urban with the main population centre, Southernness village, adjacent to the bathing water. Population density out with the village is low comprising of a few scattered farms and houses.

The bathing water sits within the Upper Solway flats and marshes which is a Ramsar site, a Special Area of Conservation), a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protected Area (Map 2).

Risks to water quality

The principal risks and sources of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from surface water urban drainage, agricultural run-off, combined sewer overflows and treated sewage effluent.

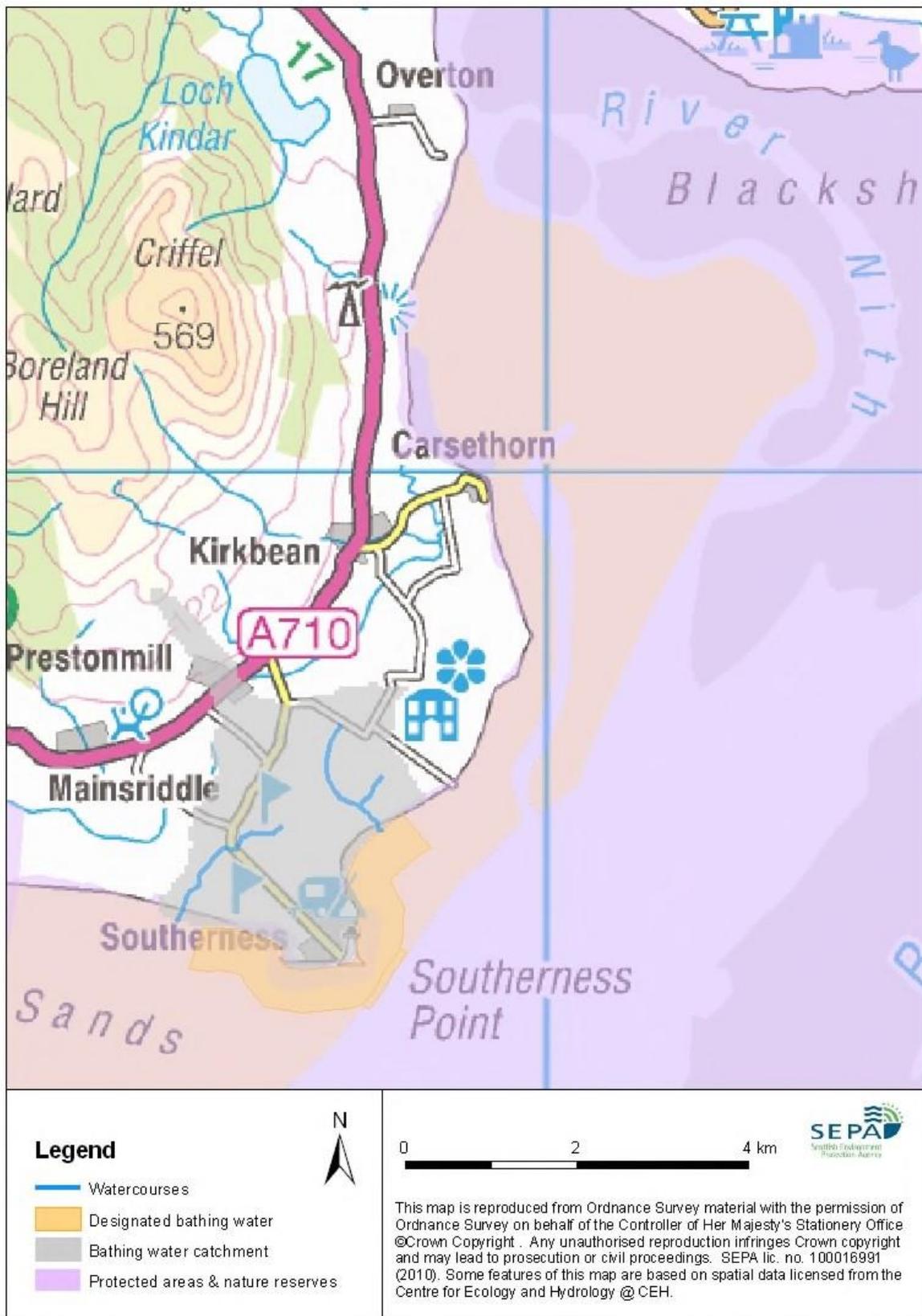
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can at times originate from human or animal sources.

Map 1: Southernness bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Southernness bathing water



Daily water quality forecasts

Water quality is forecast on a daily basis during the bathing water season (1 June to 15 September). The forecasts indicate 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 electronic message signs at the beach, SEPA's website, mobile website and Beachline (03000 996699).

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 is potential for agricultural diffuse pollution to occur in the River Nith which could impact on the bathing beach during and following heavy rain. Also cattle are known to have direct access to the River Nith at the Merse, downstream of Dumfries.

Farm visits started in the Nith priority catchment in 2014 and are ongoing. These visits look to identify diffuse pollution sources and pathways. Mitigation measures have been 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 catchment. SEPA will continue to work with the farmers 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.

Combined sewer outfalls in the Troqueer catchment of Dumfries were upgraded in 2005 to provide better screening and reduce the frequency of spills. Residual issues at two outfalls and settled sewage at Troqueer sewage treatment works were addressed in 2010.

There is a private waste water treatment plant at Southernness, which serves both the caravan park and the village. This treatment works has been upgraded to secondary treatment and includes ultraviolet disinfection during the bathing season.

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 Dumfries & Galloway Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Dumfries office Irongray Road Dumfries Dumfries and Galloway DG2 0JE 01387 720502 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>Dumfries & Galloway Council Council Headquarters Council Offices English Street Dumfries DG1 2DD 030 33 33 3000 www.dumgal.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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