

## Bathing Water Profile for Whitesands

Dunbar, Scotland

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

### Description

Whitesands bathing water is located approximately 3 km south east of Dunbar in East Lothian. It is a small, shallow enclosed sandy bay, approximately 700 metres long. The beach is popular with walkers and picnickers. During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–400 metres. The beach slopes gently towards the water.



### Site details

Local authority	East Lothian Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NT 71186 77436

### Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Whitesands bathing water extends to 2.5 km<sup>2</sup>. The area is predominantly rural (72%), with agriculture the major land use. Approximately 4% of the bathing water catchment is urban but there are no main population centres within the catchment. A portion of the catchment is occupied by a quarry and associated cement works.

There are no major rivers within the bathing water catchment.

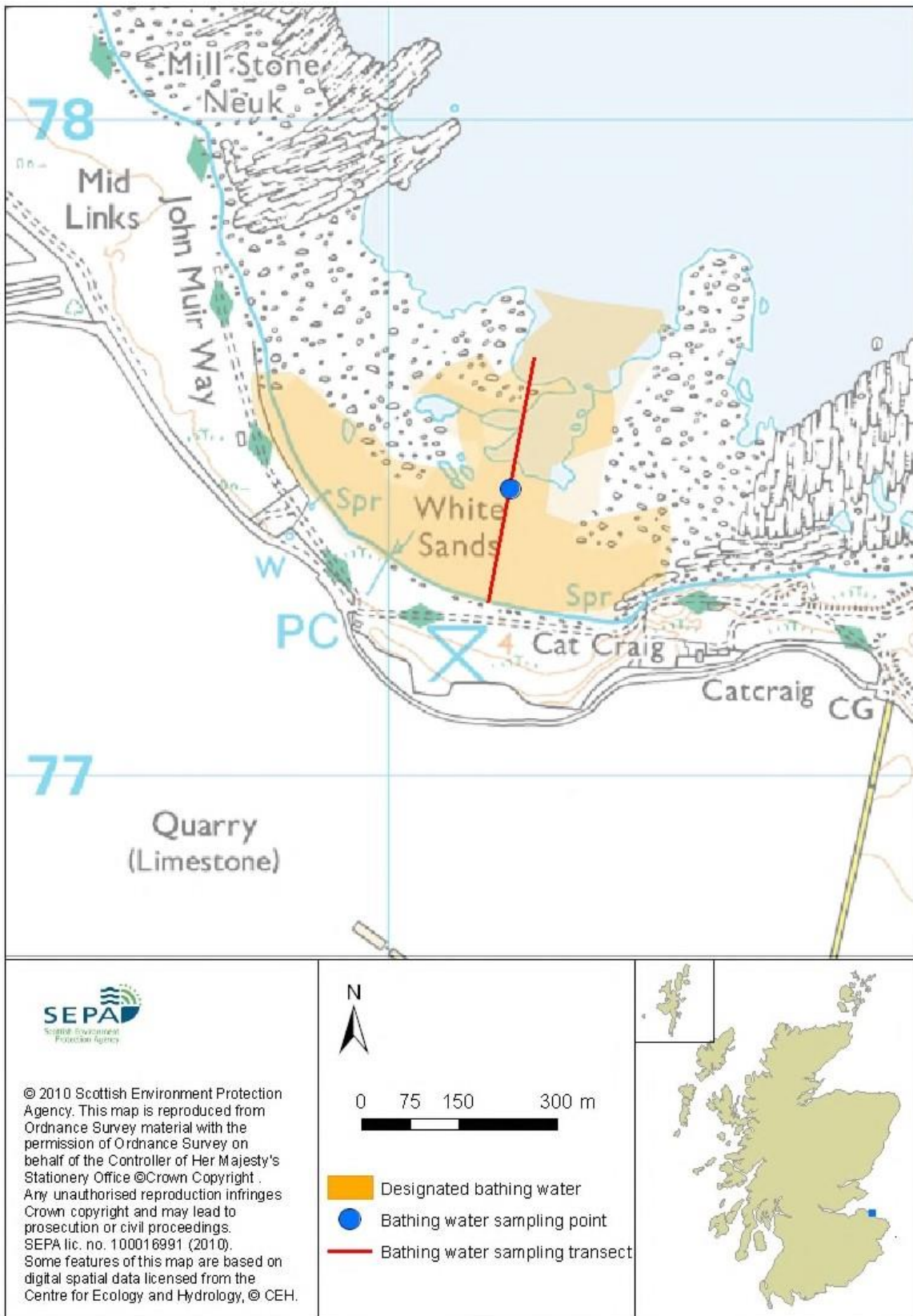
The bathing water lies within the Barns Ness Coastal Site of Special Scientific Interest. The SSSI is designated due to the presence of salt marshes, shingle and sand dunes and is not considered to influence water quality at the bathing water. For more information see Scottish Natural Heritage's information service website.

The Lothian and Borders area was designated as a surface water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone in 2002.

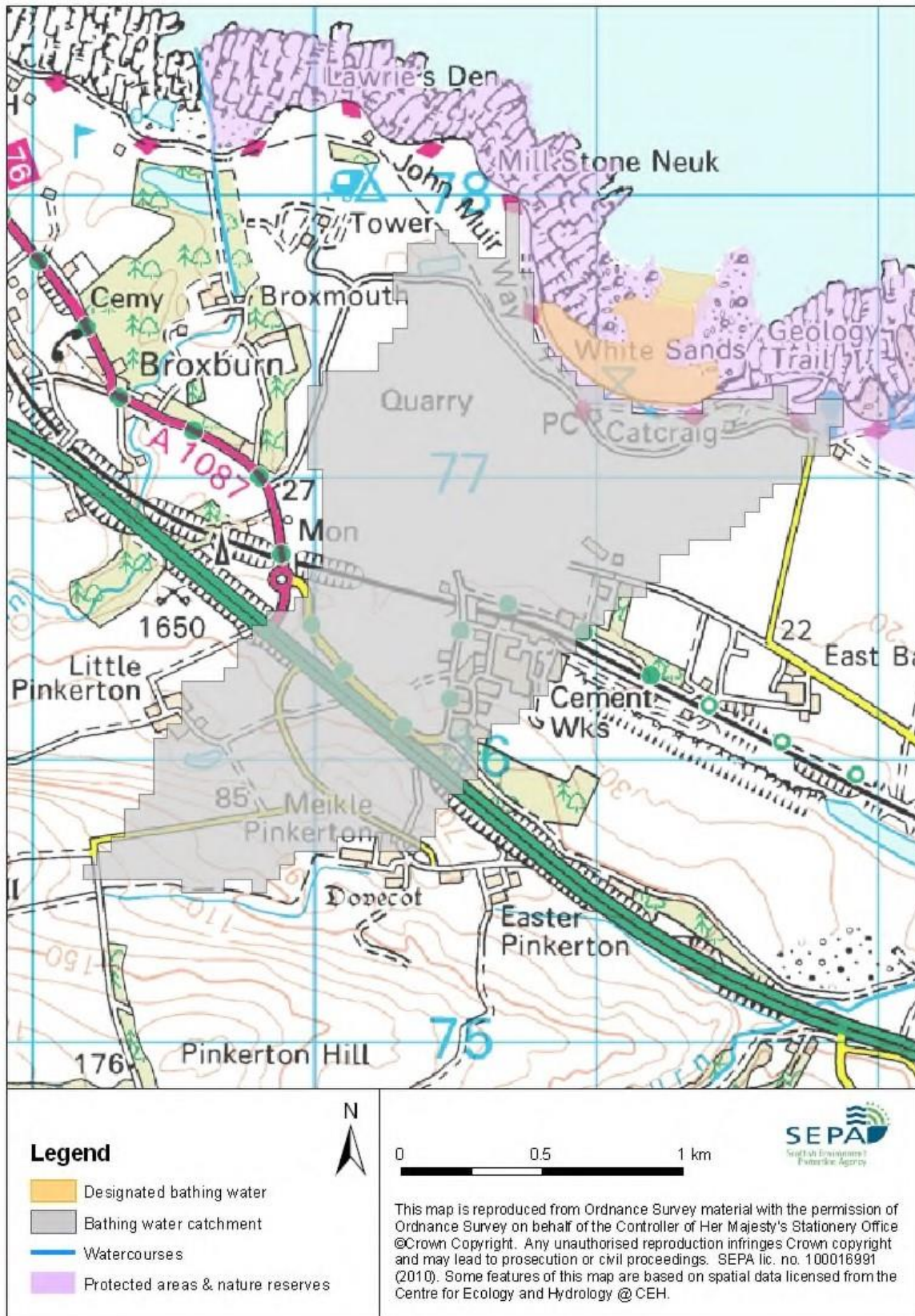
### Risks to water quality

The principal risks at this bathing water arise from diffuse inputs. Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that there are no significant pollution inputs to this bathing water under normal situations.

Map 1: Whitesands bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Whitesands bathing water



**Improving bathing water quality**

**Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges**

Our investigations in winter 2004 traced a source of contamination to a nearby local surface water input. Follow-up work suggested there may have been a temporary problem with a local private sewage treatment plant. Samples of the surface water input are collected with all bathing water surveys.

**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 East Lothian Council for this bathing water.

**Contact details and information sources**

<p><b>SEPA Edinburgh office</b> 231 Corstorphine Rd Edinburgh EH12 7AT 0131 449 7296 <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>East Lothian Council</b> John Muir House Brewery Park Haddington EH41 3HA 01620 827 827</p>	<p><b>Keep Scotland Beautiful</b> 01786 471333 <a href="mailto:beach@ksbscotland.org.uk">beach@ksbscotland.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.keeptscotlandbeautiful.org">www.keeptscotlandbeautiful.org</a></p>
<p><b>Scottish Government</b> Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 <a href="mailto:eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk">eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>		

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters)

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1.0	Nov 2010	
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