

Bathing Water Profile for Sand Beach

Gairloch, Scotland

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

Description Sand Beach is an area of sand and shingle beach. It is situated west of Gairloch village in the North-West Highlands.

Gairloch is popular for a number of recreational activities including swimming, boating and snorkelling. The headland south of Big Sand is a North West Highland Snorkel Trail site.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0 to 200m.

For Local information see:

<http://www.ukho.gov.uk/easytide/EasyTide/index.aspx>



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| Site details | Local authority | Highland Council |
| | Year of designation | 2017 |
| | Water sampling location | NG 75860 77940 |

Catchment description

Sand bathing water has a hilly catchment area of 17 km². The River Sand flows from these hills and the tidal section flows adjacent to the northwestern boundary of the bathing water. The Allt nan Easan Bàna and the Allt Bualie a' Cheathaich flow directly into the designated bathing beach area.

Land use comprises of bogland, heather grassland, rough grassland and improved grassland. There is very little urban development and population density is low. There is a caravan and camping site located close to the beach. The main village of Gairloch is located 3.5km to the east.

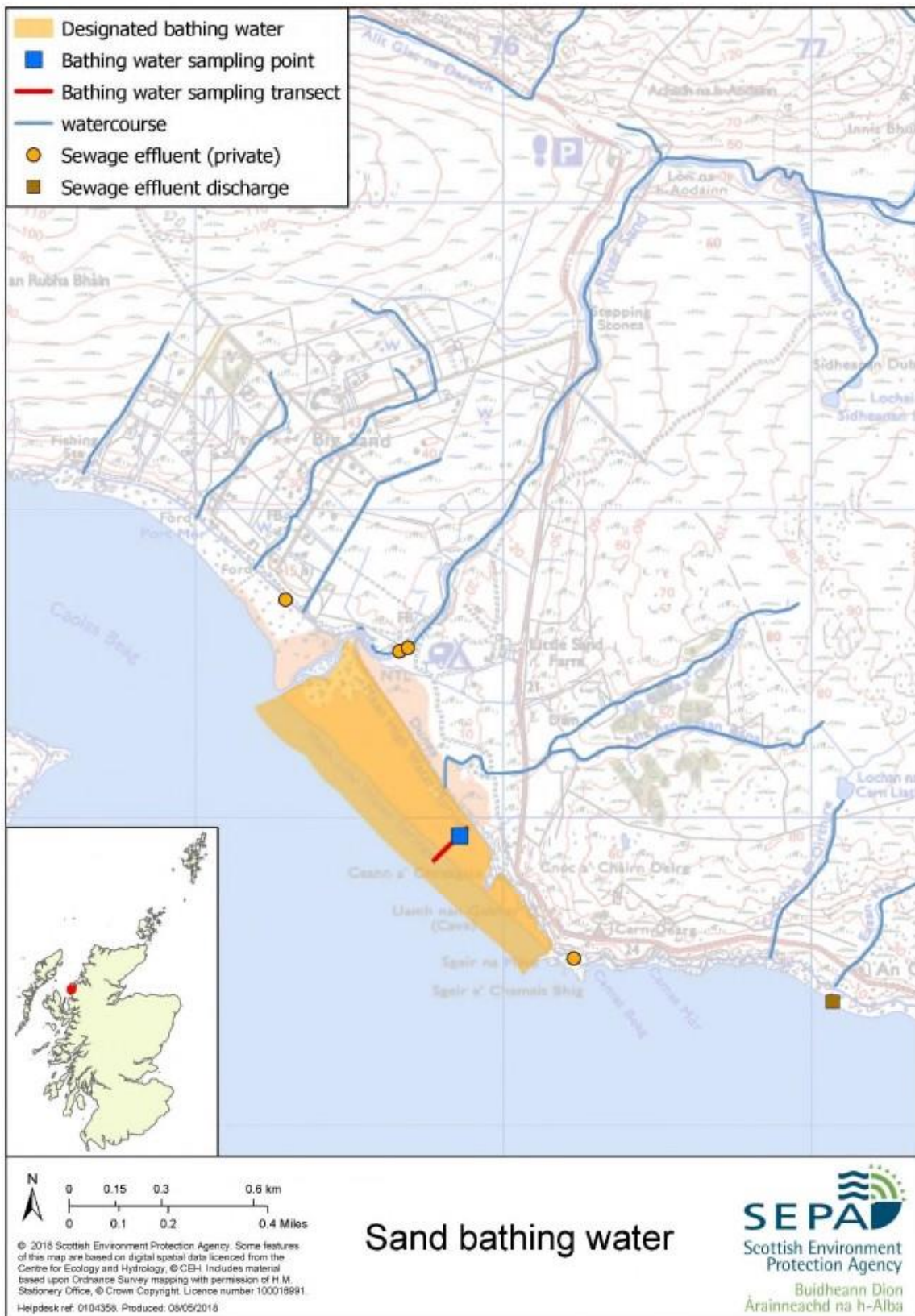
Risks to water quality

Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that there are no significant pollution inputs directly to this bathing water under normal weather situations.

The River Sand receives one secondary treated sewage effluent discharge from the adjacent caravan and camping site.

Although livestock densities within the River Sand catchment are low some animals have unrestricted access to the watercourse. In general, most natural waters will be affected by rainfall. Faecal pollutants are washed from agricultural or urban land into the sea. At some locations, wastewater discharges from public sewerage infrastructure can affect water quality.

Map 1: Sand Beach bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Sand Beach bathing water



Managing bathing water quality

Pollution from agricultural sources

Agriculture does not have a significant impact on this bathing water.

Pollution from public and private sewerage

Scottish Water provides public wastewater collection and treatment services in the village of Gairloch to the east of Sand Beach, but not in the immediately surrounding area of Big Sand, which is served by private systems.

In response to increasing operational challenges, Scottish Water is proposing to replace the existing Sewage Treatment Works at Fhasaich. An independently chaired Stakeholder Liaison Group is being set up in order to identify the best replacement options. Both Scottish Water and SEPA will participate fully in the workings of this group.

Private sewerage discharges to the River Sand and Loch Gairloch include those from a caravan park, youth hostel and homes.

Pollution from urban sources

Diffuse pollution from urban areas does not have a significant impact on this bathing water.

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. Most species common to the UK are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Responding to pollution incidents

Please call SEPA's 24 hour hotline (0800 80 70 60) to report pollution.

The local authority will erect signs to advise beach users of a pollution incident. Information will also be displayed on SEPA's website.

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

Contact details and information sources

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| <p>SEPA Dingwall office</p> <p>Graesser House Fodderty Way Dingwall Business Park Dingwall IV15 9XB 01349 862021 www.sepa.org.uk</p> | <p>The Highland Council</p> <p>Glenurquhart Road Inverness IV3 5NX 01349 886606 service.point@highland.gov.uk www.highland.gov.uk</p> | <p>Keep Scotland Beautiful</p> <p>01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org</p> |
| <p>Scottish Government</p> <p>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: |
|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| 1.0 | May 2018 | |
| 1.1 | April 2020 | |
| 1.2 | May 2023 | |