


Bathing water profile:

Achmelvich

<p>Bathing water: Achmelvich</p>	
<p>EC bathing water ID number: UKS7616066</p>	
<p>Location of bathing water: UK/Scotland/Highland (Map1)</p>	
<p>Year of designation: 2008</p>	
<p>Bathing water description</p> <p>The Achmelvich bathing water is in a small, shallow bay, about 200 metres long, situated on the west coast of the Highlands. It is adjacent to a small but popular campsite and caravan park which overlooks the beach. It is located three miles northwest of Lochinver (Map 1). It was designated as a bathing water in 2008.</p> <p>During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 200–250 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/</p> <p>Despite difficult road access, the area is popular with tourists, especially during the summer months. The white sandy beach and clean water quality attract those interested in the outdoors and water sports with water-skiing, windsurfing and coasteering being popular on the beach.</p> <p>Our monitoring point for taking water quality samples is located at the mid-point of the designated area (Grid Ref NC 05560 24940) as shown on Map 1.</p>	
<p>Monitoring water quality</p> <p>Please visit our website¹ for details of the current EU water quality classification and recent results for this bathing water.</p> <p>During the bathing season (1 June to 15 September), designated bathing waters are monitored by SEPA for faecal indicators (bacteria) and classified according to the levels of these indicators in the water. The European standards used to classify bathing waters arise from recommendations made by the World</p>	

¹ <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/>

Health Organisation and are linked to human health. More information on bathing water monitoring, health and classification can be found on our [website](#)².

Risks to water quality

In general, most natural waters will be affected to some extent during and following rainfall as pollutant loads may be increased due to run-off from agricultural or urban land in the catchment. In addition, at some locations waste water discharges from combined sewer overflows, which then drain into the bathing water and can reduce water quality.

Faecal pollutants can come from human sewage, farming activities and livestock (e.g. cattle, sheep), industrial processes, surface water urban drainage, domestic animals (e.g. dogs) and wildlife (e.g. birds) and can enter bathing waters via:

- direct discharges into the marine environment at, or in the vicinity of, the beach;
- the freshwater network draining into a bathing water, which can be prone to elevated bacterial levels as a result of diffuse pollution and/or point source inputs upstream.

The potential relevant pollution sources at, or near, this bathing water are highlighted on Map 1.

The principal risk and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water is from agricultural runoff. These events are expected to last one or two days depending on the duration of the rainfall and may result in elevated bacteria levels compared to dry conditions.

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

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Marine waters are not at risk of excessive production of cyanobacteria.

Algae

Current information suggests that this bathing water is not at risk of excessive production of macroalgae or phytoplankton.

Jellyfish

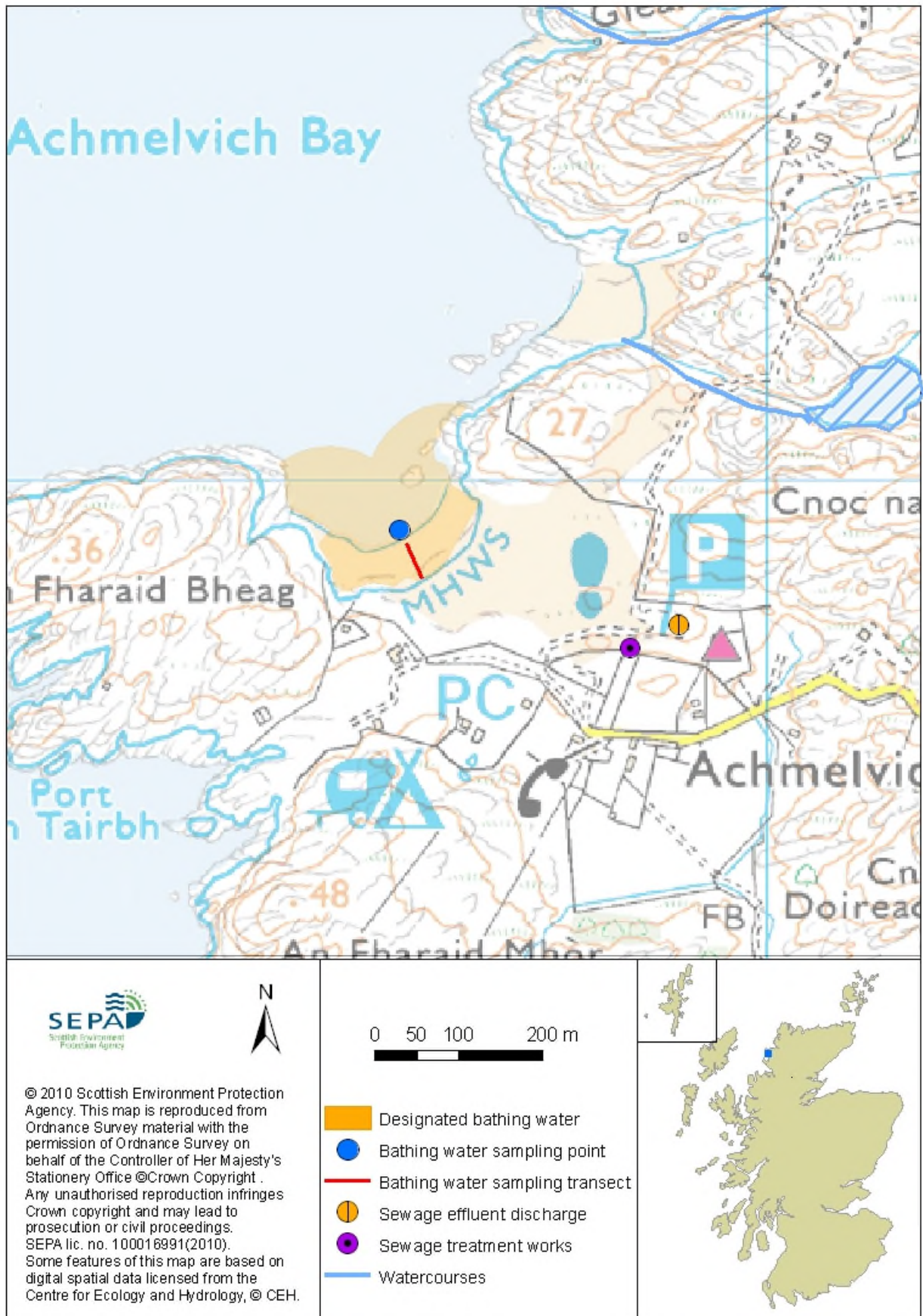
There is a possibility of increased numbers of jellyfish in the water during the summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Although there are a few stinging species common to the UK, most are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Daily water quality forecasts

Achmelvich bathing water is not part of our signage network. Daily water quality predictions are not currently required for this bathing water.

² <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/SamplingResults.aspx>

Map 1: Achmelvich bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Achmelvich bathing water



Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Achmelvich bathing water extends to about 500 m². The catchment is low-lying, ranging from plains along the coast (average elevation of 5 meters) to low hills (maximum elevation 60 metres) in the south-east.

The area is predominantly rural (96%) with agriculture the major land use. The agricultural area is a mixture of grassland and heath. There are numerous crofts in the area which support sheep farming. There is no urban development within the bathing water catchment and the population density is generally very low. During the summer months there can be a high influx of day visitors and residential tourists to the area.

Outwith the bathing water catchment, the main urban area is the small town of Lochinver, located three miles to the south-west of the bathing water.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 350 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

There are no main rivers or small burns within the bathing water catchment. However, there are a few drainage ditches in the catchment which drain directly into the bathing water.

There are no protected areas within the bathing water catchment.

Measures to improve bathing water quality

High quality bathing waters are important so that people can enjoy Scotland's environment safely. They are also important for Scotland's tourism industry.

Recent years have seen considerable improvements in Scotland's bathing water quality, not least due to substantial investment in the sewerage system. SEPA and our partners are fully committed to continuing to improve bathing water quality.

Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

Diffuse pollution from agricultural sources is normally the result of cumulative inputs of pollutants from several different sources on farms within the catchments draining to the bathing water. Consequently, tackling diffuse agricultural pollution requires concerted action across catchments. We will ensure this by working with farmers to raise awareness about the requirement to prevent and reduce pollution, and to help them identify appropriate actions for doing so.

To help co-ordinate our work to encourage and ensure action, SEPA participate in the [Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group](#)³ (DPMAG), which is a partnership of relevant authorities, land manager representatives and voluntary organisations.

The Scottish Government has also brought together nine public bodies to form [Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services](#)⁴ (SEARS). This partnership will contribute to implementing plans for tackling diffuse pollution by providing co-ordinated education and advice to rural land managers.

Additional targeted efforts will be made to improve management of diffuse pollution within catchments identified as 'priority' catchments. These are catchments where the scale of the pollution reduction needed will require planned and targeted actions to be identified and discussed with farmers concerned. Assistance will be given in these areas to identify pollution hotspots, and one-to-one advice will be provided on following the agricultural codes of good practice, which in themselves lead to compliance with these regulations. Action in priority catchments will be phased.

There are no large farms in the Achmelvich bathing water catchment, although there are many crofts supporting sheep farming in the area. Pollution from agricultural run-off is thought to occur in the small unnamed burn to the north of the bathing water and could potentially affect bathing water quality. The Achmelvich bathing water catchment is within the Minch Coastal priority catchment. Work to address diffuse pollution issues in this catchment is expected to be completed by 2027.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

There are no significant discharges to the Achmelvich bathing water. A caravan park with private septic tank discharges effluent to a soakaway. We have assessed the risk to the water environment from the

³ <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/dpmag/>

⁴ www.sears.scotland.gov.uk

impact of this discharge and it is not thought to pose a potential risk to the bathing water quality.

We are aware there are several septic tanks within the catchment. They are thought to pose a minimal risk to bathing water quality under normal operating conditions. However, they pose a potential threat if they are not maintained to the manufacturer's specifications.

Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources

Due to its remote location, Achmelvich bathing water is not affected by surface water run-off from urban areas.

Responding to pollution incidents

Although rare, pollution incidents affecting bathing water quality can happen. Pollution incidents tend to be unpredictable, for example a slurry spill or sewage network failure, and can result in elevated levels of faecal indicators.

To report a possible pollution incident please use our 24 hour pollution hotline (0800 807060). In response we 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.

Whenever our routine sampling of bathing waters identifies elevated levels of faecal indicators there is an immediate response to check all relevant potential sources and major discharges in the immediate catchment, as well as our hydrometric information to determine whether the levels may be due to high river flows. Follow-up microbiology sampling is also undertaken of the bathing water and local water courses.

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](#)⁵.

Other pollutants at the beach may include plastics and litter. Beach users are encouraged to use the bins provided or to take litter home. Beach cleaning and litter clean-up is maintained for this bathing water by the Highland Council.

Contact details and sources of more information

SEPA Dingwall office

Graesser House
Fodderty Way
Dingwall Business Park
Dingwall
IV15 9XB
01349 862021
www.sepa.org.uk

Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX
01349 886606
service.point@highland.gov.uk
www.highland.gov.uk

Pollution Hotline

0800 8070 60
24 hours per day, seven days per week

Keep Scotland Beautiful

01786 471333
beach@ksbscotland.org.uk
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.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

⁵ <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

Further information about the condition of our water environment and the actions needed to deliver improvement can be found in:

- the Scotland river basin management plan <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>
- the North Highland area management plan <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/north-highland/>

Good Beach Guide: www.goodbeachguide.co.uk

Blue Flag and Seaside Awards: www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/coastal

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1.0	September 2010	
1.1	March 2014	
1.2	June 2015	
1.3	March 2016	