

## Bathing Water Profile for Cullen Bay

Cullen, Scotland

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

### Description

Cullen Bay bathing water is an attractive sandy beach approximately 1km in length, situated on the north coast of Moray. It lies between the villages of Cullen and Portknockie and is backed by Cullen Links golf course.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 20–110 metres. For local tide information see: <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



### Site details

Local authority	Moray Council
Year of designation	1987
Water sampling location	NJ 50320 67499

### Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Cullen Bay bathing water extends to 54 km<sup>2</sup>. The area varies in topography from gentle hills to low-lying plains along the coast.

The main river within the bathing water catchment is Deskford Burn which flows into the sea at the eastern end of the bay.

The area is predominantly rural (99%) with agriculture the major land use. Of the agricultural areas, 35% is given over to arable farming and 23% to grassland. In general, the arable areas are located in the lower catchment with livestock farming further inland. The rest of the rural area is woodland (38%).

Approximately 1% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The main population centres are the coastal villages of Cullen and Portknockie, situated 1 km east and west from the bathing water, respectively. Population density outside of the villages is generally low.

### Risks to water quality

The principal risks and source 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.

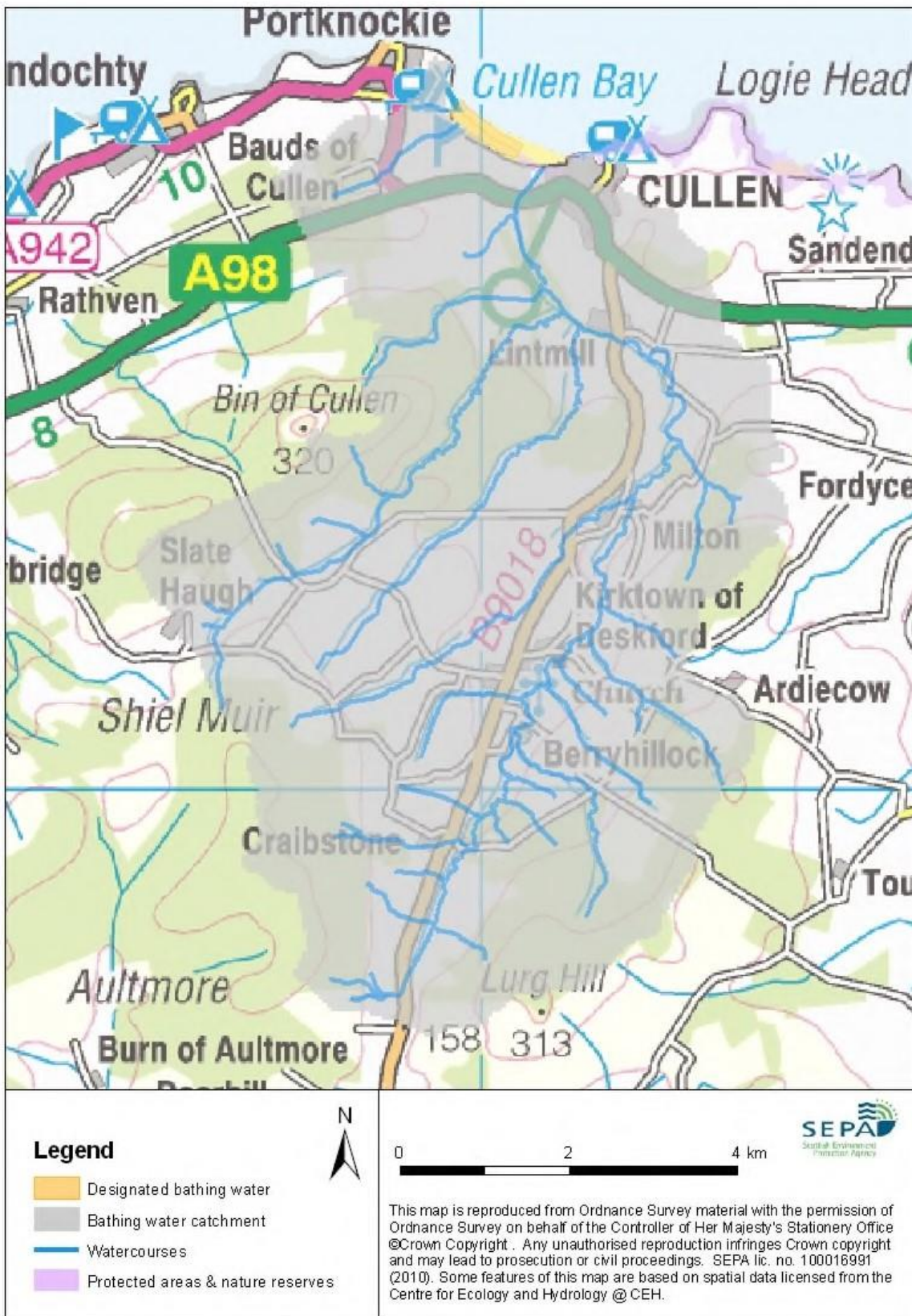
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

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

Map 1: Cullen Bay bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Cullen Bay bathing water



## **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.

Work to address diffuse pollution in the catchment is expected to be completed by 2027. The bathing water catchment lies within the Banff Coastal catchment where work with land managers will take place.

### **Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges**

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

Cullen Bay bathing water has benefited from substantial improvements to the surrounding sewerage system. Sewage is transferred to Buckie sewage treatment works from Cullen. The only remaining nearby discharge is a combined sewage overflow from Cullen pumping station.

Septic tanks serving the communities of Lintmill and Deskford discharge to the Deskford Burn inland from the bathing water. These discharges pose a minimal risk to bathing water quality at Cullen Bay.

### **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 Moray Council for this bathing water.

## Contact details and information sources

<p><b>SEPA Elgin office</b> 28 Perimeter Road Pinefield Elgin IV30 6AF 01343 547663 <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Moray Council</b> Council Office High Street Elgin Moray IV30 1BX 01343 543451 <a href="mailto:hotline@moray.gov.uk">hotline@moray.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.moray.gov.uk">www.moray.gov.uk</a></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.keepsotlandbeautiful.org">www.keepsotlandbeautiful.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> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</a></p>		
<b>Version number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Next review due:</b>
1.0	September 2010	
1.1	March 2014	
1.2	June 2015	
1.3	April 2020	
1.4	May 2023	