

## Bathing Water Profile for Dornoch

Dornoch, Scotland

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

### Description

Dornoch bathing water is located on the Dornoch Firth. It is a 4 km long beach which stretches from rocky outcrops at its northern end to the headland, which juts out into southern end of the Dornoch Firth.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–600 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water.

For local tide information see:

<http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>

The beach at Dornoch is a popular destination for visitors and locals.

### Site details

Local authority	Highland Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NH 80500 89400



### Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Dornoch bathing water extends to 9 km<sup>2</sup>. The catchment varies in topography from hills in the west to low-lying plains along the coast. The main river in the catchment is the Dornoch Burn which flows into the bathing water at the midpoint of the bay.

The area is predominantly rural (96%) with agriculture the major land use. Of the rural area, 55% is grassland, 24% woodland and 15% arable agriculture. The area supports mixed farming. Approximately 4% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The main population centre is the town of Dornoch, which is situated within 1 km of the bathing water. Population density outside of the town is generally low. The area also includes some intensive and large-scale commercial and industrial activity in Dornoch and Tain.

There are a few protected areas partially within the bathing water catchment including two Special Areas of Conservation and a Ramsar site. Dornoch Bay is of international importance for aggregations of birds. The bird population have the potential to affect water quality at the bathing area.

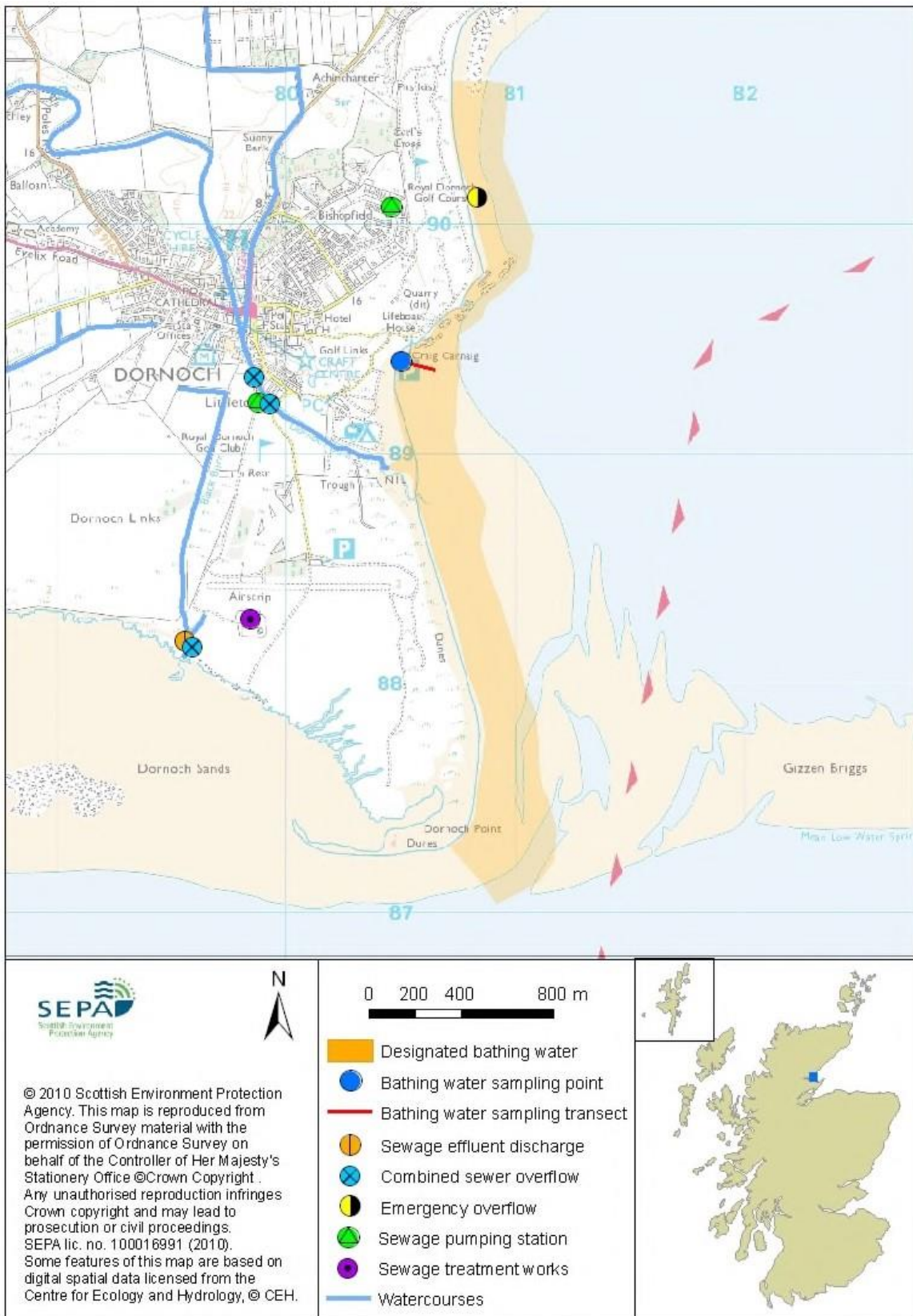
### Risks to water quality

The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from surface water urban drainage and combined sewer overflows.

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.**

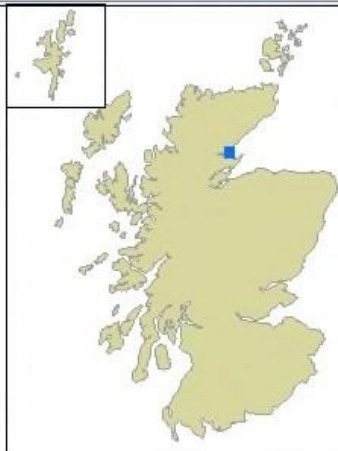
Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can originate from human or animal sources.

Map 1: Dornoch bathing water



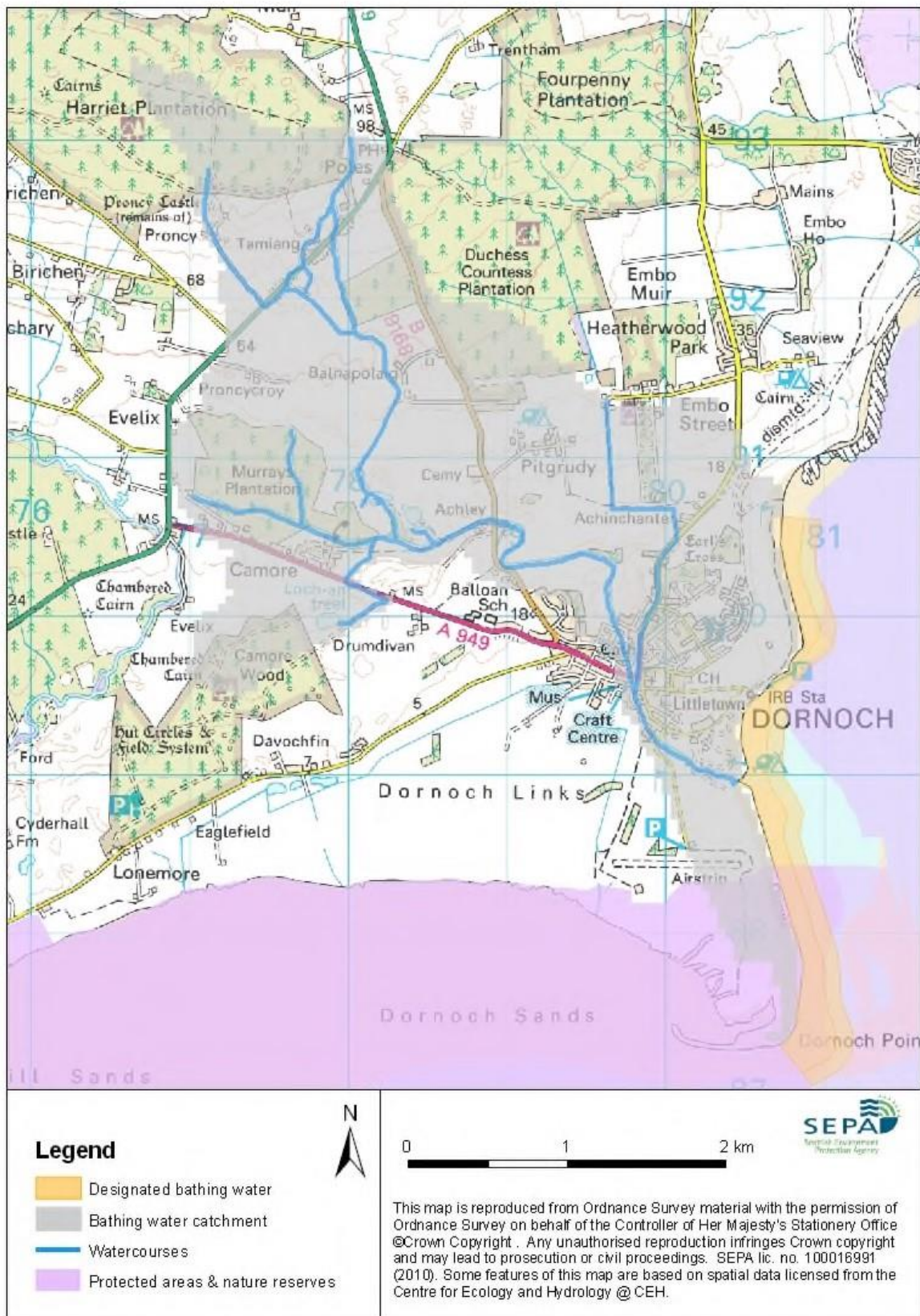
0 200 400 800 m

- Designated bathing water
- Bathing water sampling point
- Bathing water sampling transect
- Sewage effluent discharge
- Combined sewer overflow
- Emergency overflow
- Sewage pumping station
- Sewage treatment works
- Watercourses



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Map 2: Catchment draining into Dornoch 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.

The catchment draining to Dornoch bathing water is within the Dornoch coastal catchment. Work to address diffuse pollution issues in this catchment is expected to be completed by 2027.

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

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

Dornoch sewage treatment works include ultraviolet disinfection of the effluent prior to discharge.

Dornoch sewerage network has several intermittent discharges to the Dornoch Burn comprising of combined sewer overflows and emergency overflows. Under wet weather conditions or pumping station malfunction these overflows may discharge and pose a potential risk to water quality at the beach.

There are no other significant discharges within the beach catchment area. The cumulative effects from private septic tanks in the area could potentially affect the bathing water quality.

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

**Contact details and information sources**

<p><b>SEPA Dingwall office</b></p> <p>Graesser House Fodderty Way Dingwall Business Park Dingwall IV15 9XB 01349 862021 <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Highland Council</b></p> <p>Glenurquhart Road Inverness IV3 5NX 01349 886606 <a href="mailto:service.point@highland.gov.uk">service.point@highland.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk">www.highland.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Keep Scotland Beautiful</b></p> <p>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></p> <p>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>		
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1.0	September 2010	
1.1	May 2014	
1.2	June 2015	
1.3	April 2020	
1.4	May 2023	