


# Bathing water profile:

## Ettrick Bay

<p><b>Bathing water:</b> Ettrick Bay</p>	
<p><b>EC bathing water ID number:</b> UKS7616021</p>	
<p><b>Location of bathing water:</b> UK/Scotland/Argyll and Bute (Map1)</p>	
<p><b>Year of designation:</b> 1999</p>	
<p><b>Bathing water description</b></p> <p>Ettrick Bay bathing water is a relatively wide, sandy bay of about 1.7 km in length. It is situated on the west coast of the Isle of Bute. The nearest town is Rothesay, which is about 4 km away on the east coast of the island. It was designated as a bathing water in 1999.</p> <p>The beach is primarily composed of coarse sand and is popular with locals and visitors. The beach offers spectacular views of nearby Arran.</p> <p>During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–500 metres, although small strips of water are usually present on the beach when the tide is out. For local tide information see: <a href="http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/">http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/</a></p> <p>Our monitoring point for taking water quality samples is located midway along the designated area (Grid Ref NS 03724 66058) as shown on Map 1.</p>	
<p><b>Monitoring water quality</b></p> <p>Please visit our <a href="http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/">website</a><sup>1</sup> 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>	

<sup>1</sup> <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](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## 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, storm 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.

There are no direct discharges to this bathing water, however riverine input should be considered a potential source of pollution as the surrounding area is farmed intensively and run-off may enter the bathing water via nearby streams.

The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from agricultural run-off. These events are expected to last 1–2 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 potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can at times originate from animal sources.

Bathing is not advisable during or following (1 to 2 days after) rainfall. Bathing or swimming after storms, floods or heavy rainfall should be avoided as the risk of illness following short term water pollution is increased.

## Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Marine waters are not at risk of overproduction of cyanobacteria.

## 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 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

Ettrick Bay bathing water is part of our daily water quality prediction and signage network.

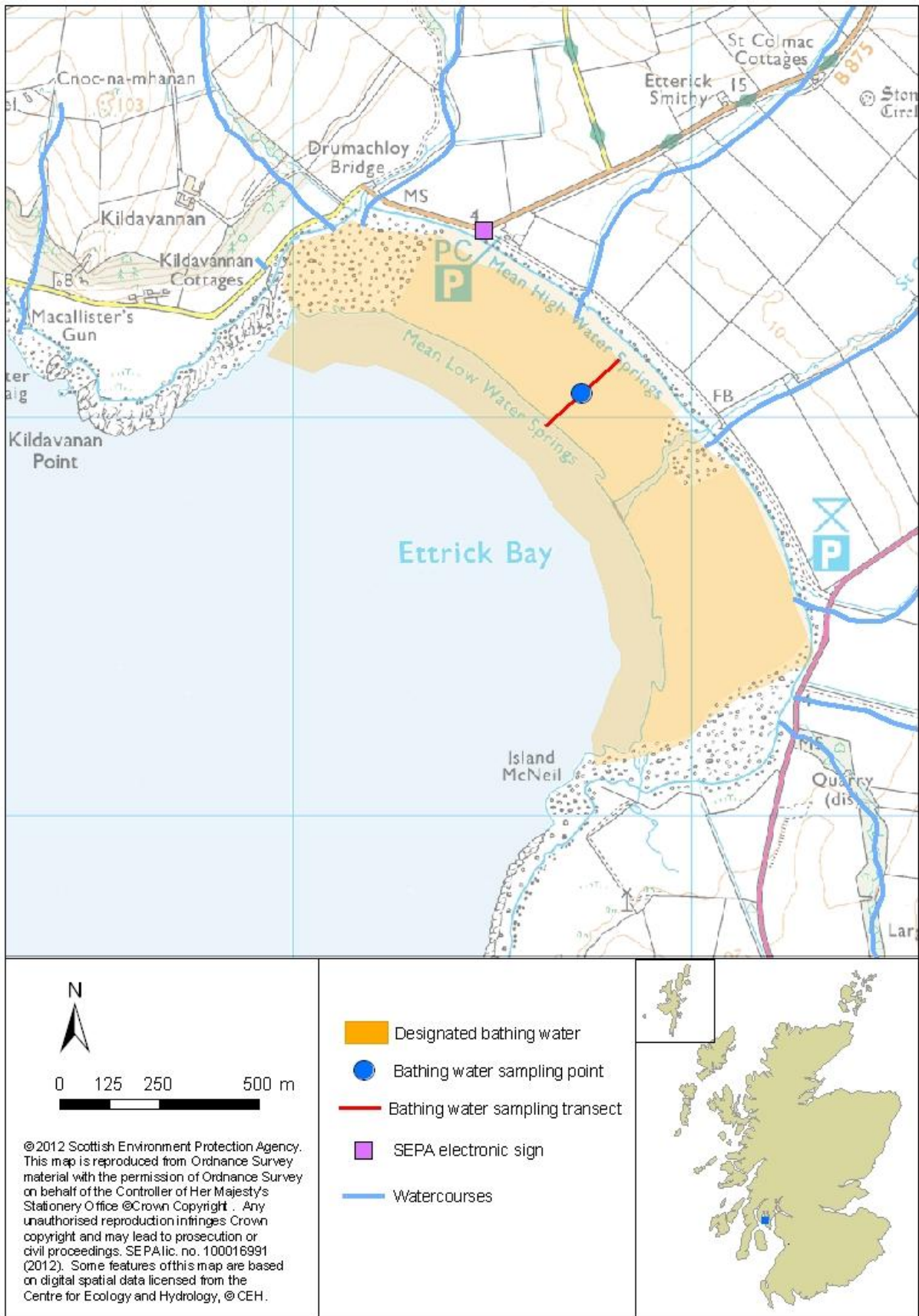
Throughout the bathing season we display daily water quality predictions on the electronic message sign (Map 1). These water quality predictions are also available on our [website](#)<sup>3</sup> or via the Beachline phone number (08452 30 30 98).

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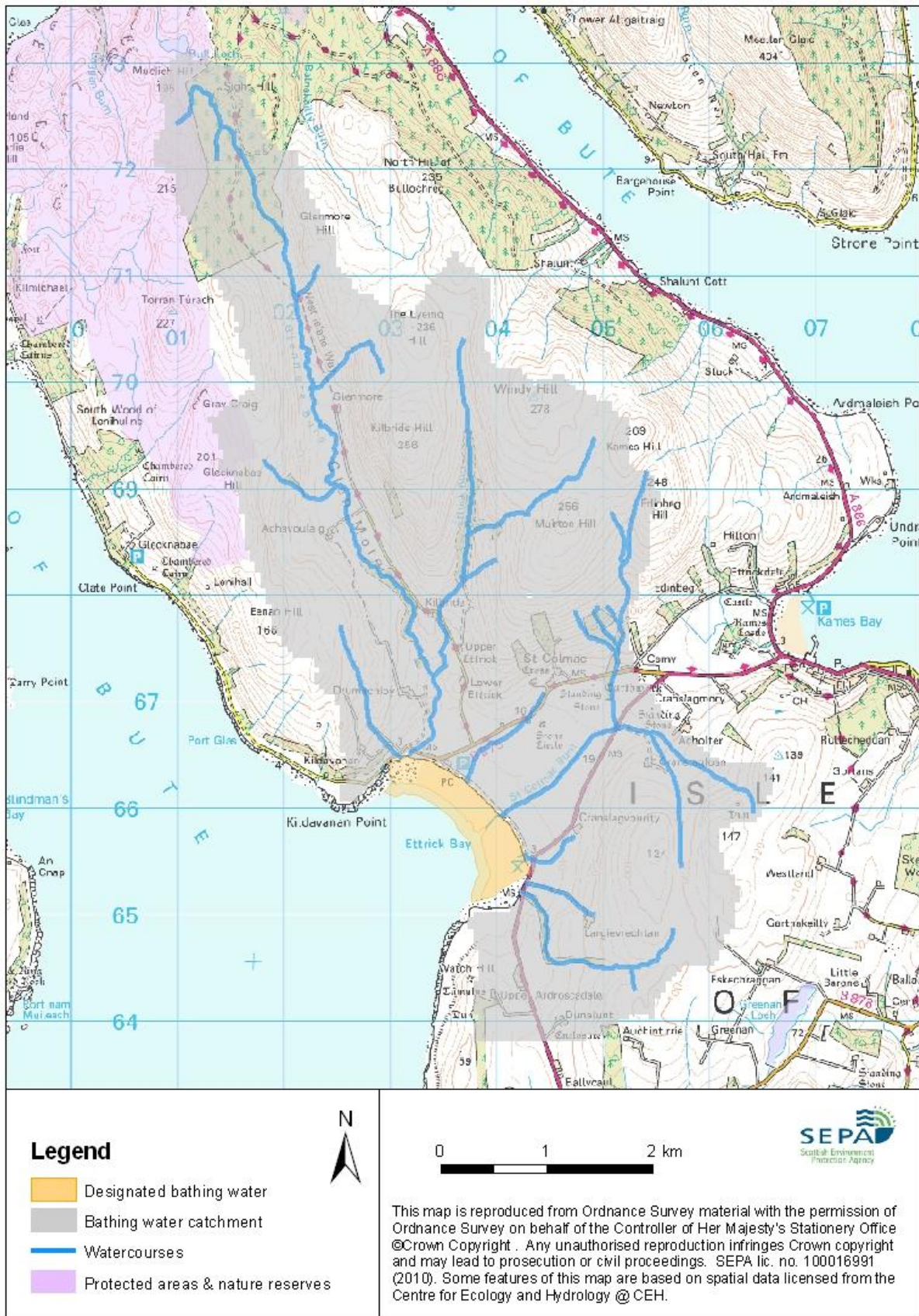
<sup>2</sup> <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/SamplingResults.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

**Map 1: Ettrick Bay bathing water**



Map 2: Catchment draining into Ettrick Bay bathing water



## Catchment description

The catchment draining into the bathing water extends to 22.5 km<sup>2</sup>. This hilly catchment surrounds the bathing water and a series of peaks can be seen from the beach. The highest of the peaks is Windy Hill in the north, which stands at 278 metres.

The area is predominantly rural (99%) with agriculture the major land use. The upland areas support mixed sheep and beef farming while the lowlands are used for intensive dairy farming. The areas of land next to the bathing water are used primarily for silage production and growing crops. The population in the catchment is very low as it does not include a town. The nearest town outside of the catchment is Rothesay, although a small community exists around Kames Bay to the east of the bathing water.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 392 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

The main rivers within the bathing water catchment are the Glenmore Burn, Ettrick Burn, Drumachloy Burn and St Colmac Burn. Several small tributaries also enter the bathing water (Map 2).

The north end of the Bute Site of Special Scientific Interest lies to the north west of the bathing water catchment (Map 2). See Scottish Natural Heritage's [information service website](#)<sup>4</sup> for more information. There are no other 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](#)<sup>5</sup> (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](#)<sup>6</sup> (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.

Pollution from agricultural run-off is thought to occur in five of the eight water courses discharging to or adjacent to the Ettrick Bay bathing water. The Ettrick Bay catchment is part of the Isle of Bute priority catchment. Work in this catchment is due to be completed between 2015 and 2021.

### Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

Most waste water collection and treatment services in Scotland are provided by Scottish Water. It has invested substantially in waste water collection and treatment provision over recent years to protect public

<sup>4</sup> [www.snh.org.uk/snhi](http://www.snh.org.uk/snhi)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/dpmag/>

<sup>6</sup> [www.sears.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.sears.scotland.gov.uk)

health and the environment. Public investments in the sewerage network and in treatment works will continue to be co-ordinated through the national investment and planning process for Scottish Water, known as 'Quality and Standards'. In this catchment there is no risk to bathing water quality from Scottish Water assets.

There are a small number of private septic tank discharges within the bathing water catchment which include the public conveniences adjacent to the beach. The new sewage system at the local tea room has been installed and is fully operational with the discharge now going to soakaway.

There are no other significant discharges within the vicinity of the beach.

### **Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources**

Urban diffuse source pollution comes from rainwater falling onto urban areas (roads, pavements, yards and roofs) becoming contaminated with pollutants on those areas, washing into surface water drains and discharging from those drains to the water environment.

Tackling this type of pollution requires substantial changes in the way urban areas are drained, and efforts to reduce the quantity of pollutants deposited on urban surfaces. Since the mid 1990s, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) have increasingly been used to drain new developments. They are designed to avoid pollution of the water environment and include permeable surfaces that allow infiltration of rainwater into the ground, slowing the rate at which it drains to the water environment and trapping and breaking down pollutants. Artificial ponds or wetlands provide a final stage of treatment. Local authorities, Scottish Water and SEPA are working together to co-ordinate efforts to tackle pollution from diffuse urban sources, incorporating SUDS into local plans and encouraging partner organisations to retrofit SUDS where possible.

Ettrick Bay bathing water is not impacted by surface water run-off from urban sources.

### **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](#)<sup>7</sup>.

Other pollutants at the beach may include plastics and litter. Beach users are encouraged to use the bins provided or to take litter home. Ettrick Bay litter bins are emptied by Argyll and Bute Council, whilst regular beach cleans are undertaken by Beachwatch Bute, a voluntary organisation currently supported by the Council.

<sup>7</sup> <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

## Contact details and sources of more information

### SEPA Lochgilphead office

Kilbrandon House  
Manse Brae  
Lochgilphead  
Argyll  
PA31 8QX  
01546 602876  
[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

### Argyll and Bute Council

Kilmory  
Lochgilphead  
Argyll  
PA31 8RT  
01546 602127  
[enquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)

### Pollution Hotline

0800 80 70 60  
24 hours per day, 7 days per week

### Beachwatch Bute

[www.isle-of-bute.org.uk/bwb/](http://www.isle-of-bute.org.uk/bwb/)  
07767 795969

### Keep Scotland Beautiful

01786 471333  
[beach@ksbscotland.org.uk](mailto:beach@ksbscotland.org.uk)  
[www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org)

### Scottish Government

Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ  
0131 244 0396  
[eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters)

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 Clyde area management plan <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/clyde/>

The Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide: [www.goodbeachguide.co.uk](http://www.goodbeachguide.co.uk)  
Blue Flag and Seaside Awards: [www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/coastal](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/coastal)

Version Control		
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1.2	April 2013	
1.3	March 2014	
1.4	June 2015	