

# Bathing Water Profile for Eyemouth

Eyemouth, Scotland

Current water classification is **Poor**.

Today's water quality forecast <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>



## Description

The bathing water is situated next to Eyemouth town in the Scottish Borders. It is a small, shallow sandy bay of about 0.3 km in length. The beach is popular with families during the summer months.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–100 metres. For local tide information see:

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



## Site details

Local authority	Scottish Borders Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NT 94463 64524
EC bathing water ID	UKS7616022

## Catchment description

A catchment area of 120 km<sup>2</sup> drains into Eyemouth bathing water. The main rivers in the bathing water catchment are the Eye Water, Ale Water, Horn Burn and the North Burn.

Agriculture is the major land use in the catchment. The upland areas are almost exclusively livestock rearing areas whereas the lower parts of the catchment include more arable farming. The catchment includes the urban area of Eyemouth town.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 296 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

## Risks to water quality

This bathing water is subject to short term pollution when heavy rainfall washes bacteria into the sea. Pollution risks include agricultural run-off and combined sewer overflows. These are highlighted on Map 1.

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.**

DNA tracing indicates that human sources and animal sources are contributing to faecal pollution of the bathing water.

Map 1: Eyemouth bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Eyemouth bathing water



## **Daily water quality forecasts**

Water quality is forecast on a daily basis during the bathing season (1 June to 15 September). The forecasts indicate that water quality is either acceptable or poor. Warnings against bathing are advised when poor water quality is forecast. This is because there is an increased risk to bathers' health from water pollution.

Forecasts are communicated via an electronic message sign at the beach, SEPA's website, mobile website and Beachline (08452 30 30 98). 17 warnings advising against bathing were issued for this bathing water last year.

## **Improving bathing water quality**

### **Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources**

Diffuse pollution from agricultural sources is the result of cumulative inputs of pollutants to rivers and streams.

Farm visits in the Eye Water catchment began in 2011. These visits looked to identify diffuse pollution sources. Incidences of livestock entering watercourses was recorded. Mitigation measures were agreed with land managers to address this. Farm revisits took place in 2014 to check that measures were implemented. Large areas along watercourses were fenced off from livestock and alternative water sources provided for them.

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

Scottish Water provides most waste water collection and treatment services in Scotland. A significant source of faecal contamination was removed from the Eye Water when Scottish Water began pumping sewage from Ayton to Eyemouth sewage treatment works.

Scottish Water has carried out investigations into misconnections on the North Burn. Misconnections occur when wastewater or sewage from a property is connected to a surface water drain which then pollutes a river or stream. Scottish Water undertook detailed investigations on the North Burn in 2017 although these have not identified any further issues with the surface water drainage system.

An earlier Scottish Water study into all assets in the bathing water catchment indicated that no further improvement to their sewerage assets is required in relation to Eyemouth bathing water.

Eyemouth Freezers Limited discharges trade effluent to the North Sea via a pipeline from their factory to a long sea outfall. SEPA is satisfied that the discharge is unlikely to impact on the marine environment.

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

Urban diffuse source pollution comes from contaminated rainwater discharging to rivers and streams. SEPA, local authorities and Scottish Water are working together to tackle urban diffuse pollution. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) have been incorporated into local plans and partner organisations have been encouraged to retrofit SUDS where possible.

Following discussions with SEPA, road gully cleaning operations have been improved by Scottish Borders Council. This helps to prevent polluting substances from entering the 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. 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 807060) 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. Further sampling of the bathing water and related rivers and streams is undertaken.

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

### Contact details and information sources

<b>SEPA Galashiels office</b> Burnbrae Mossilee Road Galashiels Borders TD1 1NF 01896 754797 <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a>	<b>Scottish Borders Council</b> Council Headquarters Newtown St. Boswells Melrose TD6 0SA 0300 100 1800 <a href="http://www.scotborders.gov.uk">www.scotborders.gov.uk</a>	<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>
<b>Scottish Government</b> Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 <a href="mailto:egcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk">egcat@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>		

<b>Version number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Next review due:</b>
1.3	March 2013	
1.4	April 2014	
1.5	April 2015	
1.6	May 2016	
1.7	May 2017	
1.8	June 2018	
1.9	March 2019	