Bathing Water Profile for Fisherrow Sands

Musselburgh, Scotland

Current water classification is **Poor**.

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

Description

Fisherrow Sands bathing water is a relatively small area of sandy beach. It is situated in between the town of Musselburgh and the Joppa area of Edinburgh. The bathing water is adjacent to Fisherrow Harbour and southwest of the mouth of the River Esk.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0 to 500m. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/index.aspx.

Site details		
	Local authority	City of Edinburgh Council
	Year of designation	2013
	Water sampling location	NT 3320 7310
	EC bathing water ID	UKS7616089

Catchment description

A catchment area of 26.7 km^2 drains into Fisherrow Sands bathing water. The catchment varies in topography from hills in the southwest to low-lying land along the coast.

The main river within the bathing water catchment is the Brunstane/Niddrie Burn, which is derived from several smaller burns and tributaries. The River Esk enters the Firth of Forth east of the bathing water.

The area is a mix of rural and urban land. The main population centres are Musselburgh and Portobello.

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

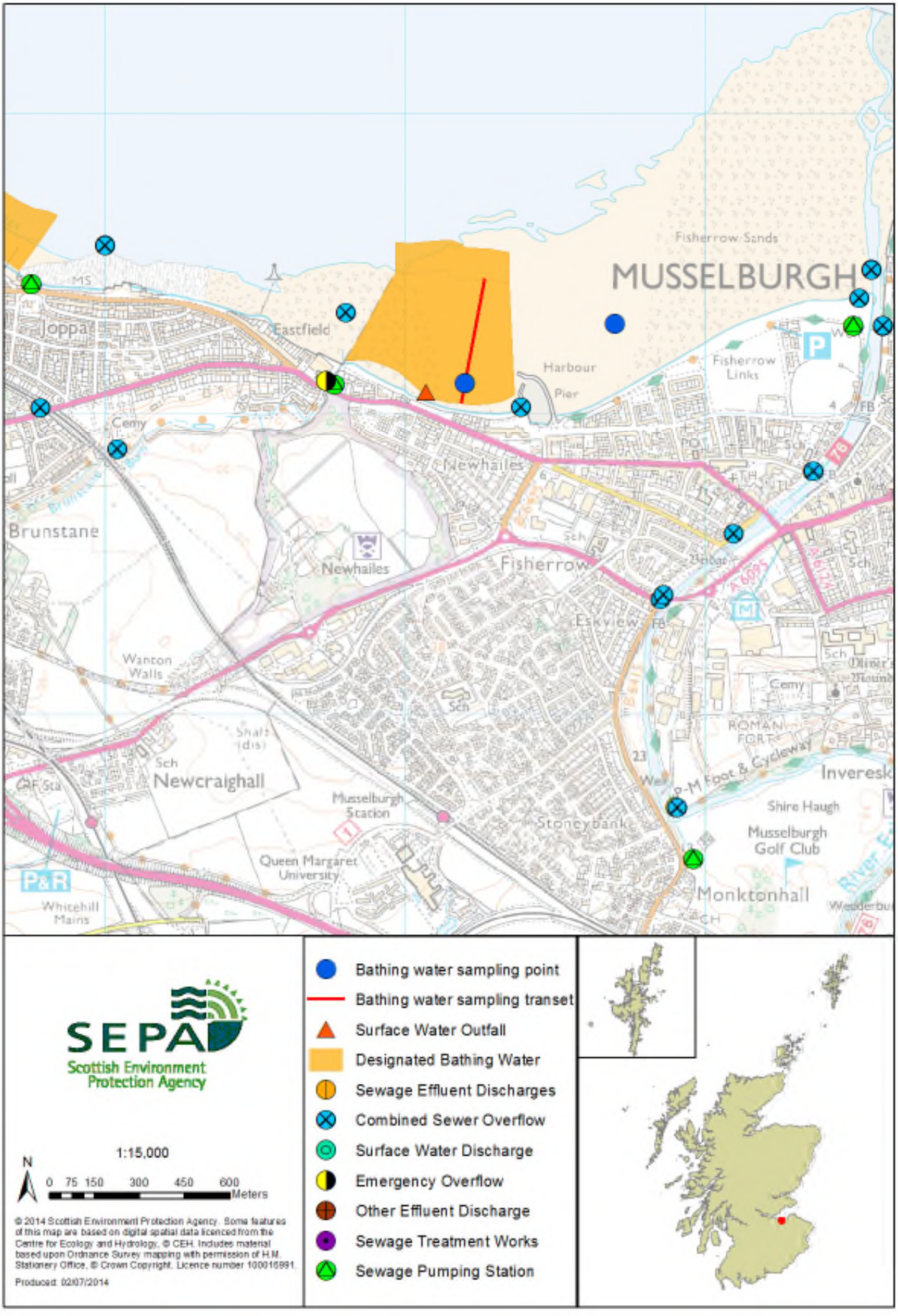
Risks to water quality

This bathing water is subject to short term pollution when heavy rainfall washes faecal material into the sea. Pollution risks include storm water sewage and surface water drainage. These are highlighted on Map 1.

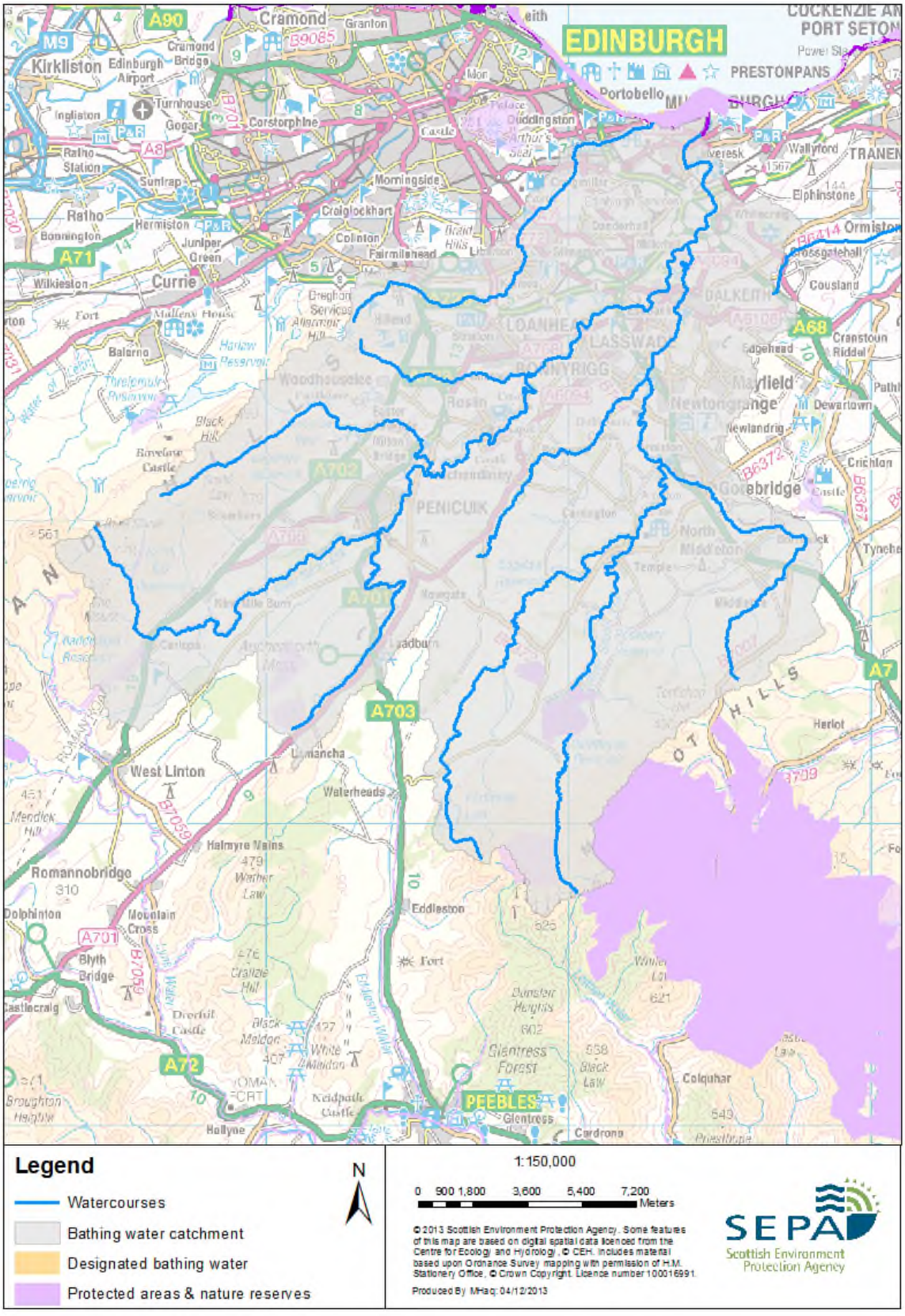
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

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

Map 1: Fisherrow Sands bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Fisherrow Sands 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). 20 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. Agricultural activities in the River Esk catchment may have an impact on this bathing water.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

There are intermittent discharges to the Brunstane Burn which enters the bathing water. They are Eastfield Sewage Pumping Station and Portobello Cemetery combined sewer overflow. There are two licensed combined sewer overflow discharges to the beach itself.

A number of combined sewer overflows and emergency overflows discharge into the River Esk.

A Scottish Water study determined that some of their assets are impacting water quality at Fisherrow. Options are being developed to address these.

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.

Brunstane Burn is known to be impacted by surface water run-off from the urban area through which it runs.

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 City of Edinburgh Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

SEPA Edinburgh office Clearwater House Heriot Watt Research Park Avenue North Riccarton Edinburgh EH14 4AP 0131 449 7296 www.sepa.org.uk	**City of Edinburgh Council** City Chambers High Street Edinburgh EH1 1YJ 0131 200 2300 www.edinburgh.gov.uk	**Keep Scotland Beautiful** 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepscotlandbeautiful.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		

Version number:	**Date:**	**Next review due:**
1.0	March 2014	
1.1	August 2014	

1.2	June 2015	
1.3	May 2016	
1.4	June 2016	
1.5	June 2018	
1.6	March 2019	