

Former Bathing Water - Profile for Fisherrow Sands

Musselburgh, Scotland

At end of 2019 this location has been poor for 5 consecutive seasons and, as required by the Regulations, is no longer regarded as a designated bathing water. General advice against bathing applies at this location.

Although, the water quality frequently meets bathing water quality standards, the classification is based on the previous 4 years' results, some of which have been impacted by pollution following heavy rainfall.

SEPA shall continue to deliver the focused improvement plan with our regulated operators and partner organisations so that Fisherrow Sands can regain a bathing water classification in the near future.

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

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	East Lothian Council
Year of designation	2013
Water sampling location	NT 3320 7310
Bathing water ID	UKS7616089

Catchment description

A catchment area of 26.7 km² 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.

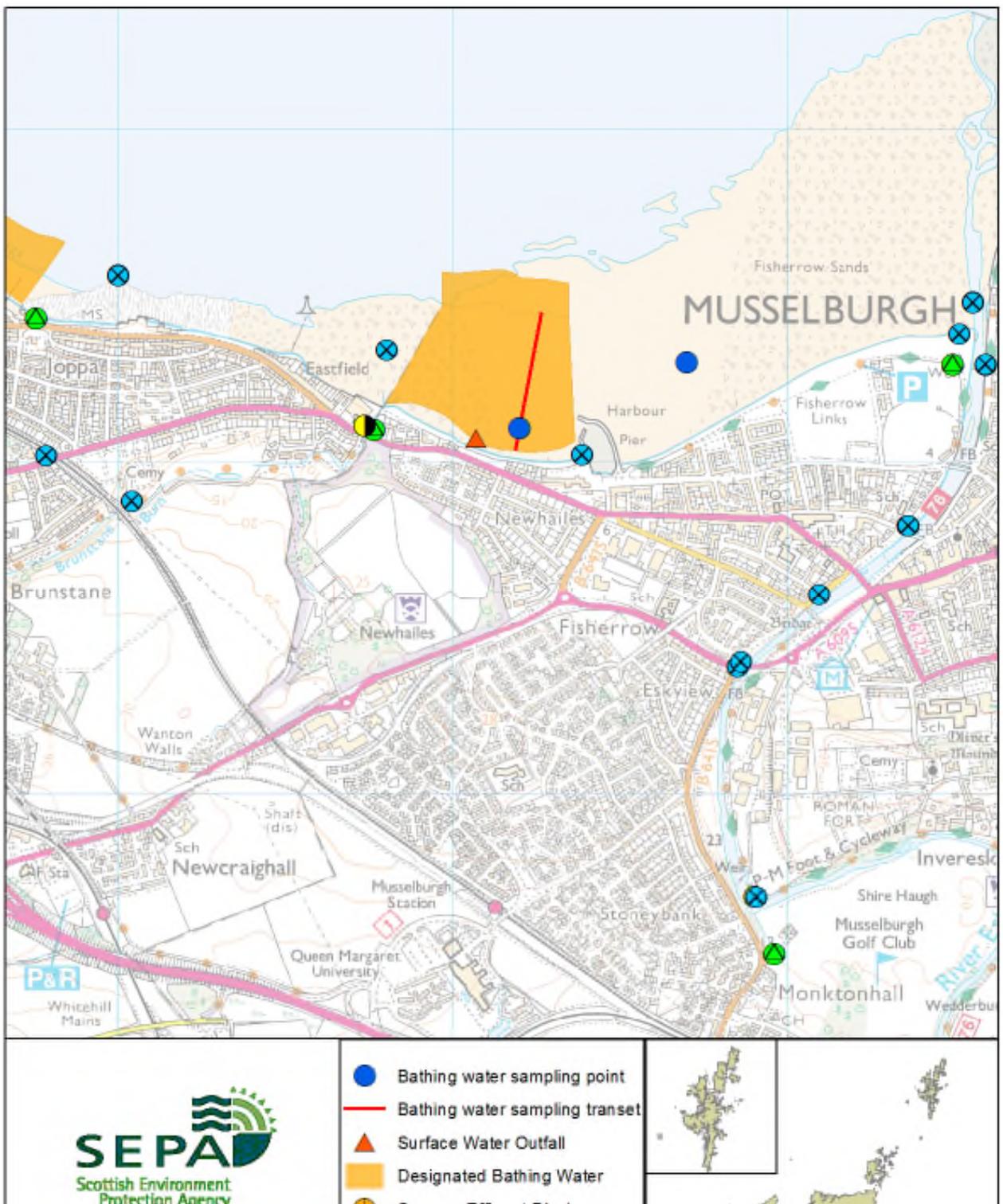
Risks to water quality

This bathing water is subject to short term pollution when heavy rainfall occurs. Pollution risks include storm water sewage and surface water drainage. These are highlighted on Map 1.

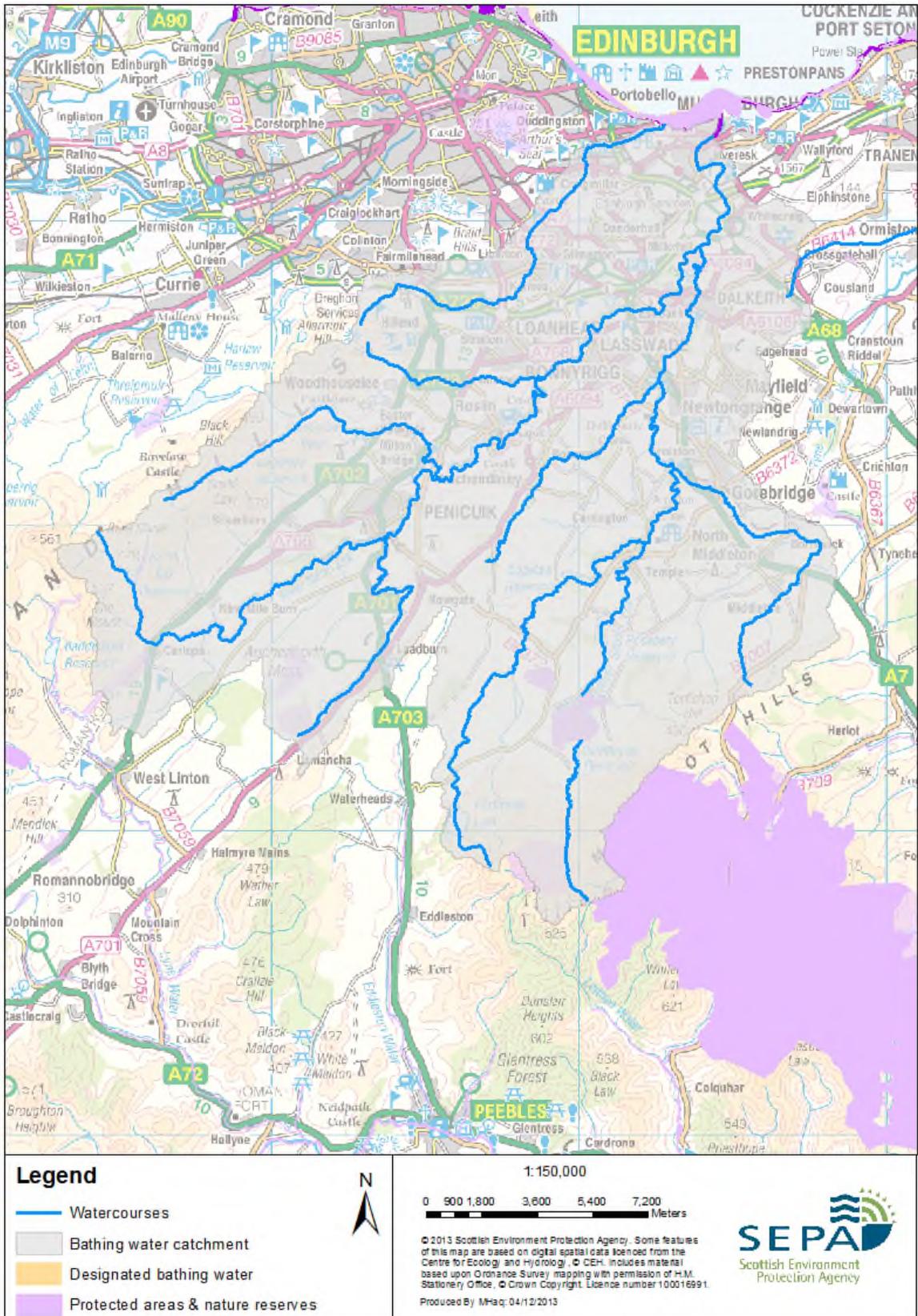
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

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 (03000 996699).

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 enter 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.

Measures to address occasional residential and commercial foul drainage misconnections are progressing.

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 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. 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 East Lothian Council for this bathing water.

Keep Scotland Beautiful "My Beach Your Beach" campaign to help keep beaches and bathing waters clean for all to enjoy is underway at his location.

Contact details and information sources

SEPA Edinburgh office Silvan House 3rd Floor 231 Corstorphine Road Edinburgh EH12 7AT 0131 449 7296 www.sepa.org.uk	East Lothian Council John Muir House Brewery Park Haddington East Lothian EH41 3HA 01620 827827 https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk	Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org
Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 egcat@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	
1.7	April 2020	