

## Bathing Water Profile for Fraserburgh (Philorth)

Fraserburgh, Scotland

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

### Description

Fraserburgh (Philorth) bathing water is located on the north coast of Aberdeenshire. It is close to the town of Fraserburgh and adjacent to the Waters of Philorth nature reserve. It is an extensive sandy beach, about 2 km long and backed by a considerable dune system.

The beach is a popular recreational, surfing and windsurfing area.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–130 metres. The beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see:

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



### Site details

Local authority	Aberdeenshire Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NK 02120 65050

### Catchment description

The catchment draining into this bathing water extends to 66 km<sup>2</sup>. The catchment varies in topography from higher hills in the west and south to the low-lying plains along the coast.

The main river in the bathing water catchment is the Water of Philorth, which flows into to the east of the bathing area.

The catchment is predominantly rural (98%), with agriculture the major land use. The agricultural land is split between arable farming (53%) and grassland (34%). Approximately 1% of the bathing water catchment is urban: the main population centre is the coastal town of Fraserburgh, situated approximately 1.5 km west of the bathing water. Population density outside the town is generally low and centred around many small villages.

### Risks to water quality

The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from agricultural run-off.

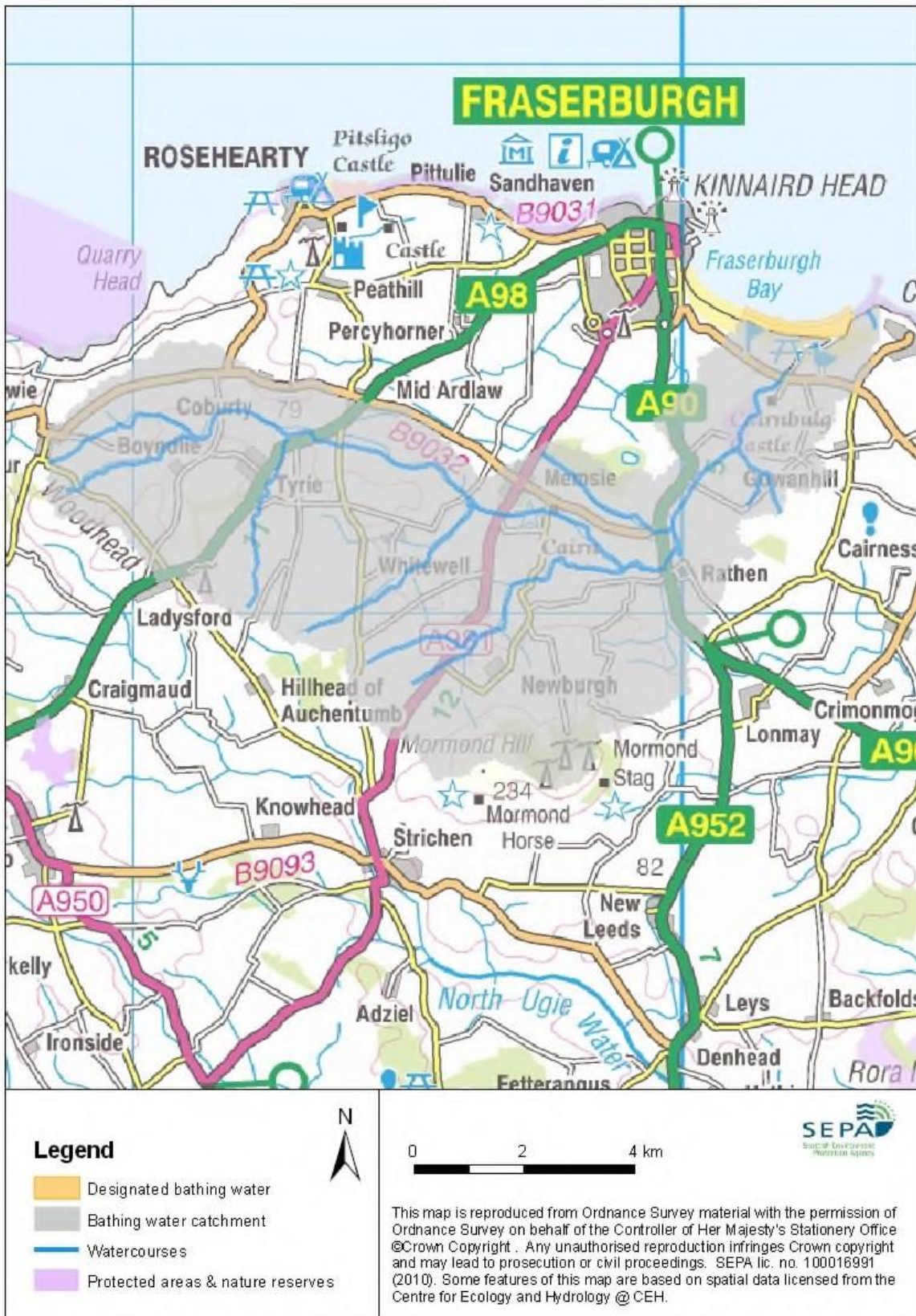
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

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: Fraserburgh (Philorth) bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Fraserburgh (Philorth) 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.

There is potential for agricultural diffuse pollution to occur in the Water of Philorth which could impact on the bathing beach following heavy rain. Farm visits in this area were undertaken as part of the Buchan Coastal priority catchment campaign during 2015. These visits looked to identify diffuse pollution sources and pathways. Mitigation measures to reduce the risk of bacterial pollution on water quality were agreed with land managers.

SEPA has observed significant changes in land management practice within the catchments. SEPA will continue to work with the farmers in these catchments to reduce the risk of pollution to the bathing water.

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

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

Sewage is pumped to Fraserburgh works where it undergoes treatment prior to being discharged. Fraserburgh sewage treatment works is not a potential threat to the bathing water quality at Fraserburgh (Philorth).

There are many septic tank discharges from the Rathen and Memsie settlements that cumulatively could affect 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 Aberdeenshire Council for this bathing water.

## Contact details and information sources

<b>SEPA Fraserburgh office</b> Shaw House Mid Street Fraserburgh AB43 9JN 01346 510502 <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b> Woodhill House Westburn Road Aberdeen Aberdeenshire AB16 5GB 08456 081207 <a href="http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk">www.aberdeenshire.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: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>		
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