

Bathing Water Profile for Loch Morlich

Aviemore, Scotland

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

Description

Loch Morlich bathing water is one of only three inland bathing waters in Scotland. It is situated close to the foot of Cairngorm mountain, approximately 8 km from Aviemore in the Highlands. Loch Morlich is a shallow, freshwater loch surrounded by Glenmore forest. The designated bathing water is a 500 metre long stretch on the eastern side of the loch.

Loch Morlich is a popular location for bathing and other water sport activities, as well as walking and mountain biking.



Site details

Local authority	Highland Council
Year of designation	2008
Water sampling location	NH 97160 09750

Catchment description

The immediate catchment draining into the Loch Morlich bathing water extends to 300 m². The topography of the catchment is very steep and ranges from high hills (maximum elevation 600 metres) in the north-east to an average elevation of 320 metres at the loch side.

The main river in the bathing water catchment is a small unnamed burn which flows directly into the designated bathing water area. Outside of the catchment, the River Luineag and small burns flow into the loch to the south of the designated area.

The catchment draining to Loch Morlich bathing water is rural with coniferous forest the major land use (82%). There is no urban development within the bathing water catchment. Immediately adjacent to the catchment is Glenmore Lodge, a caravan park and a reindeer house. Out of the immediate bathing water catchment, the upland areas in the River Luineag catchment support forestry and hillside recreation activities.

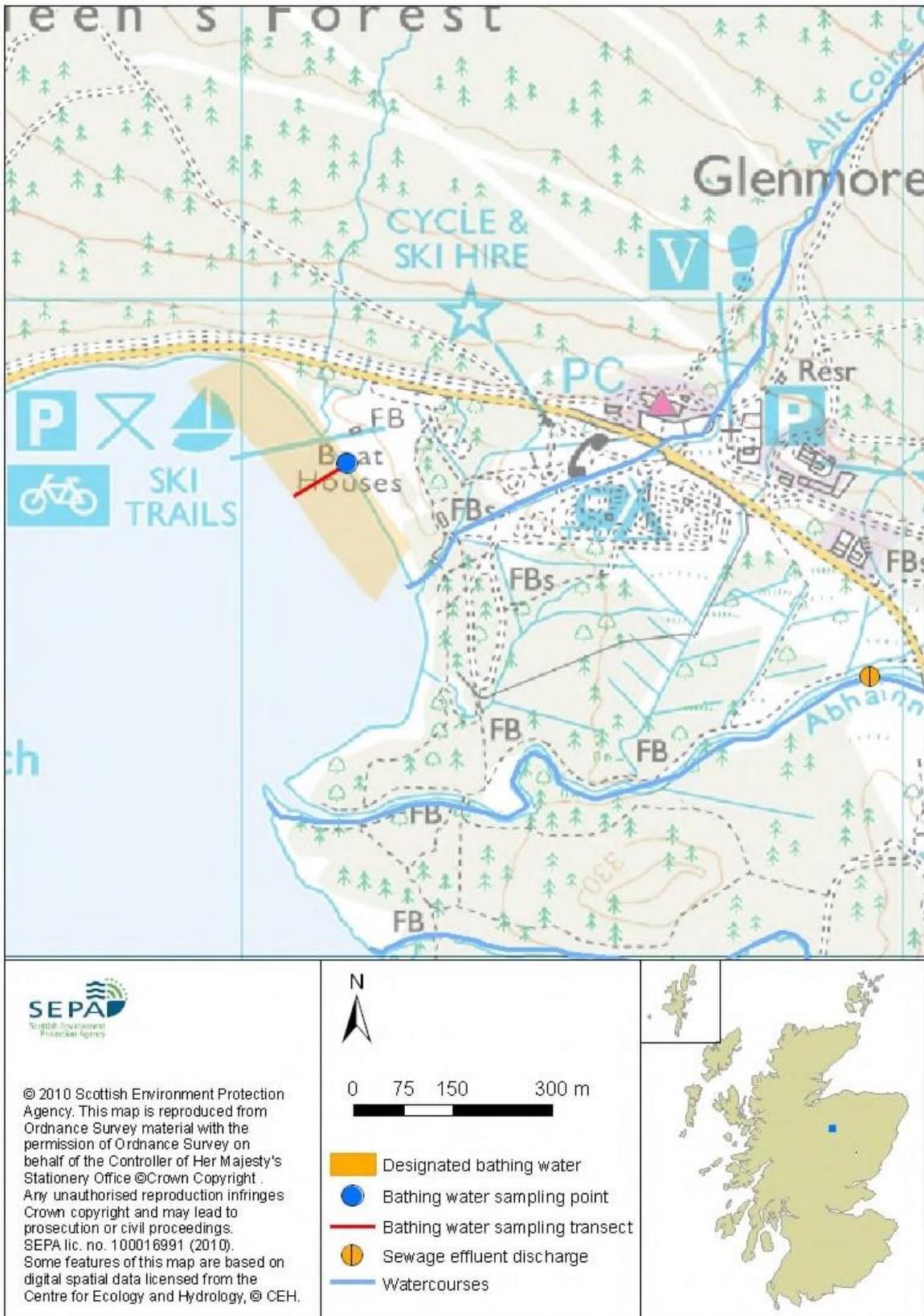
Loch Morlich is located within the Cairngorms National Park and the River Spey Special Area of Conservation. Glenmore Forest, surrounding the loch, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Risks to water quality

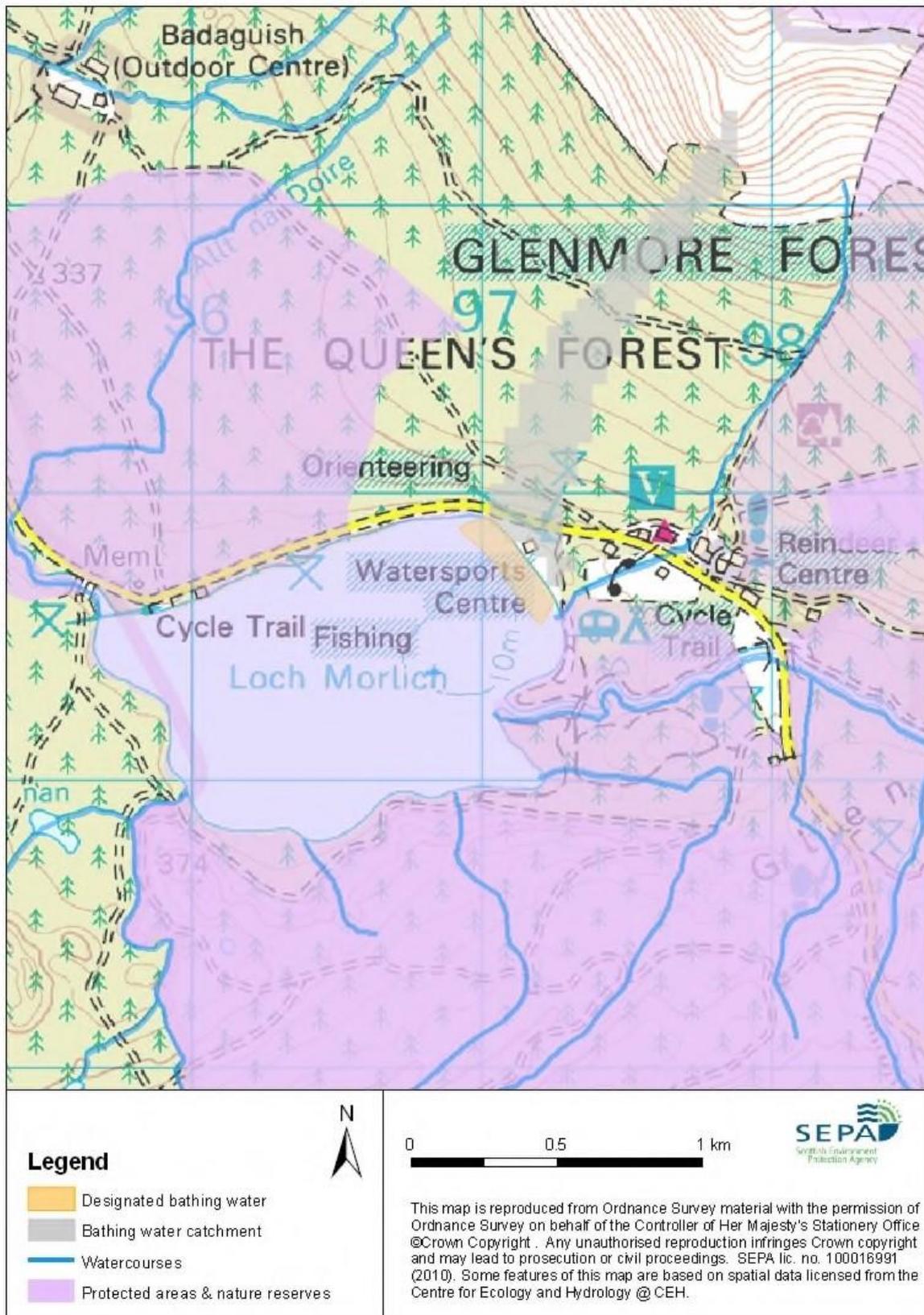
The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from treated sewage effluent.

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.**

Map 1: Loch Morlich bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Loch Morlich 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.

Work to address diffuse pollution in the catchment is expected to be completed by 2027. The bathing water catchment lies within the Spey catchment where work with land managers will take place.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

Glenmore sewage treatment works discharges to the Allt Mor watercourse.

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

In certain weather conditions, particularly warm still weather, algal blooms can form on the Loch. Sometimes the blooms are formed of blue-green algae which can be harmful if swallowed and may cause skin rashes. If a blue-green algal bloom occurs the public shall be informed and advised not to bathe through signage at the loch and through the relevant local media.

Algae

Current information suggests that this bathing water is not at risk of an overproduction of filamentous algae or phytoplankton. Any such bloom, whilst unsightly, is believed to be no risk to human health although fish kills may occur.

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 Highland Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Elgin office 28 Perimeter Road Pinefield Elgin IV30 6AF 01343 547663 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>Highland Council Glenurquhart Road Inverness IV3 5NX 01349 886606 service.point@highland.gov.uk www.highland.gov.uk</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org</p>
<p>Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 egcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</p>		
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