

Bathing Water Profile for Millport Bay

Great Cumbrae, Scotland

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

Millport Bay bathing water is located at Millport on southern end of the island of Great Cumbrae between Marine Parade in the east and Knox's Port pier in the west.

The shore is divided by rocky outcrops into two smaller bays (Newtown Bay and Kames Bay). Kames Bay is a sandy beach and Newtown Bay is a shingle beach.

The beaches are prized by locals and tourists alike for the stunning views as well as offering numerous intertidal pools and the famed Crocodile Rock.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 20–200 metres at the widest point (Kames Bay).



Photograph provided courtesy of North Ayrshire Council

Site details

Local authority	North Ayrshire Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NS 16598 54917

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the bathing water extends to 4 km². The area immediately surrounding the bathing water is between 5 metres and 35 metres above sea level, and the highest point in the catchment is in the north and has an elevation of 127 metres.

The area is predominantly rural (88%) with agriculture the major land use. The main agricultural activity in the catchment is dairy farming. Approximately 11% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The only population centre on the island is Millport.

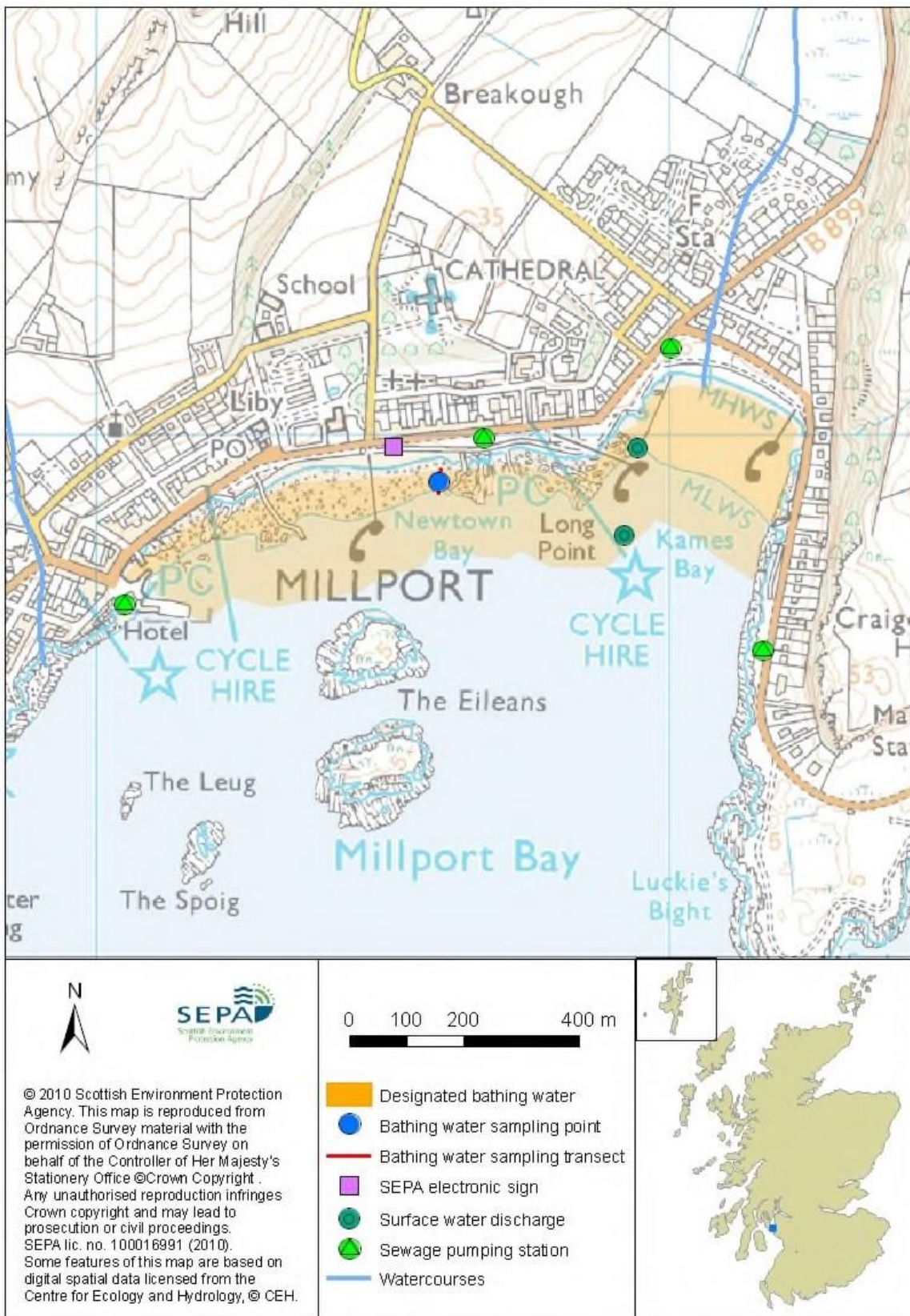
The only water courses within the bathing water catchment are the Mill Burn and an unnamed burn which flow into Kames Bay. There are no protected areas in the bathing water catchment.

Risks to water quality

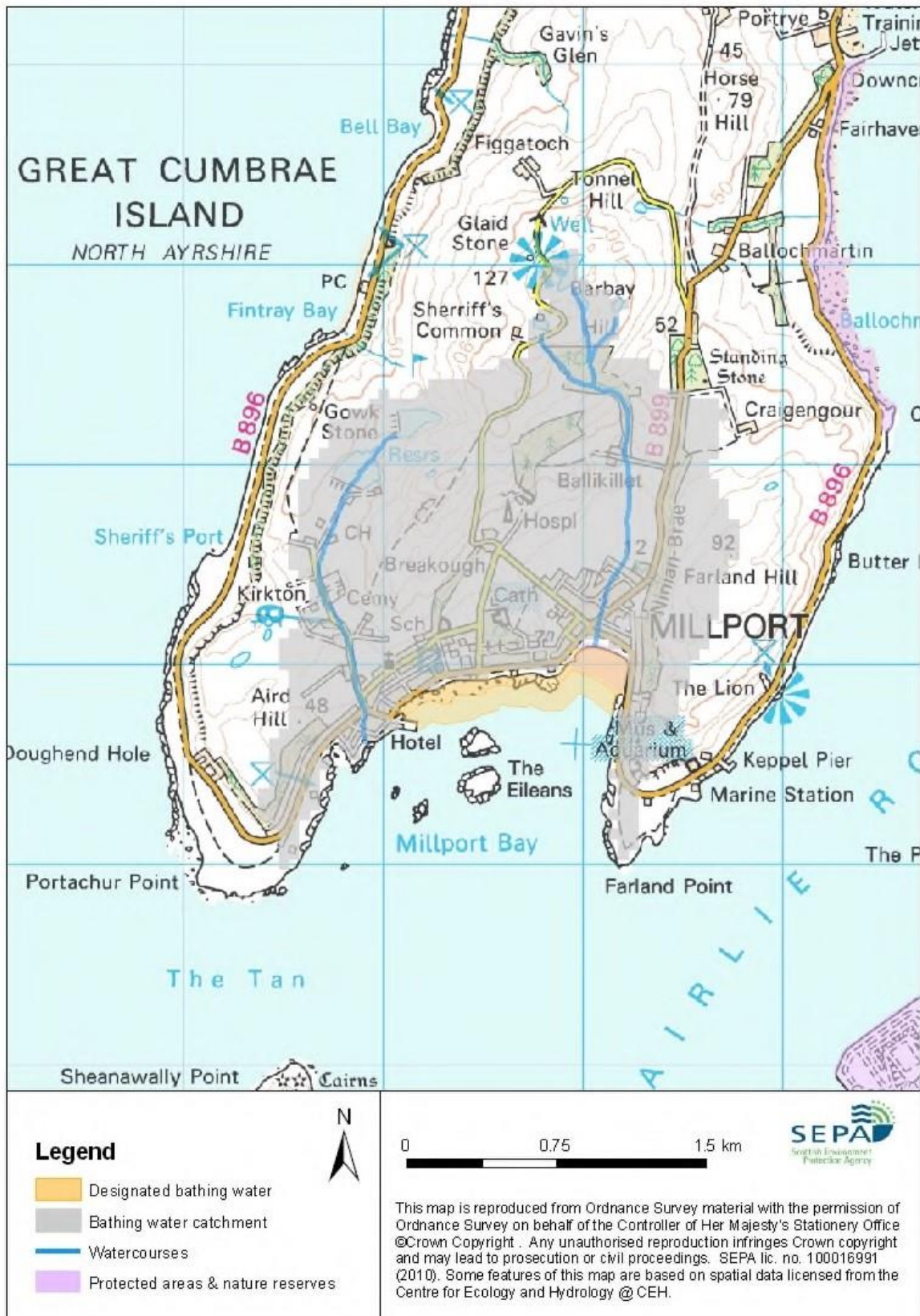
The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from overflows from the sewerage system, urban drainage and agricultural run-off.

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.**

Map 1: Millport Bay bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Millport Bay bathing water



Daily water quality forecasts Water quality is forecast on a daily basis during the bathing water season (1 June to 15 September). The forecasts indicate 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 electronic message signs at the beach, SEPA's website, mobile website and Beachline (08452 30 30 98).

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 are a few farms in the catchment which drain into the bathing water. Targeted efforts have been made to improve management of diffuse pollution with farms operating in a compliant manner. SEPA will continue to engage with farmers and the NFUS to remind them of good practice when applying slurries and manures and grazing livestock.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

During 2014 some improvements were made to the sewage pumping stations in Millport to improve operational reliability.

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.

The Mill Burn and an unnamed burn at Kames Bay may be affected by surface water run-off from Millport town. Any impact is localised and is not thought to significantly affect the quality of 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. However, at any time of the year and particularly after storms, a considerable amount of seaweed can become stranded on the beach. Under the right conditions accumulated seaweed can rot producing grey/black fluid. The rotting seaweed can also generate offensive odours. This is an entirely natural process.

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 North Ayrshire Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Ayr office 31 Miller Road Ayr Ayrshire KA7 2AX 01292 294000 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>North Ayrshire Council Cunninghame House Irvine KA12 8EE 0845 603 0590 contactus@north-ayrshire.gov.uk www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org</p>
<p>Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</p>		
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