

Bathing Water Profile for Nairn (East)

Nairn, 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

Nairn (East) bathing water is situated on the Moray Firth, next to the town of Nairn, in the Highland region. It is a relatively wide bay, about 1 km long.

Nairn is a popular seaside resort. As well as families, the beach is also popular with a variety of water sports enthusiasts, including sailors, windsurfers and kite surfers.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–160 metres. The beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



Site details

Local authority	Highland Council
Year of designation	1987
Water sampling location	NH 89106 57461

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Nairn (East) bathing water extends to 338 km². The area varies in topography from high mountains in the south-west to low-lying areas along the coast.

River Nairn is the main river in the bathing water catchment. It bisects the Nairn (East) and Nairn (Central) bathing waters. Prevailing currents tend to carry freshwater from the River Nairn eastwards towards Nairn (East) bathing water.

Land use in the River Nairn catchment is largely agricultural. There is intensively farmed arable land in the lower catchment with rough pasture and livestock farming more common further inland. Approximately 1% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The main population centre is the town of Nairn. Population outside of Nairn is mainly concentrated in nearby villages. The area also includes some intensive and large-scale commercial and industrial activity.

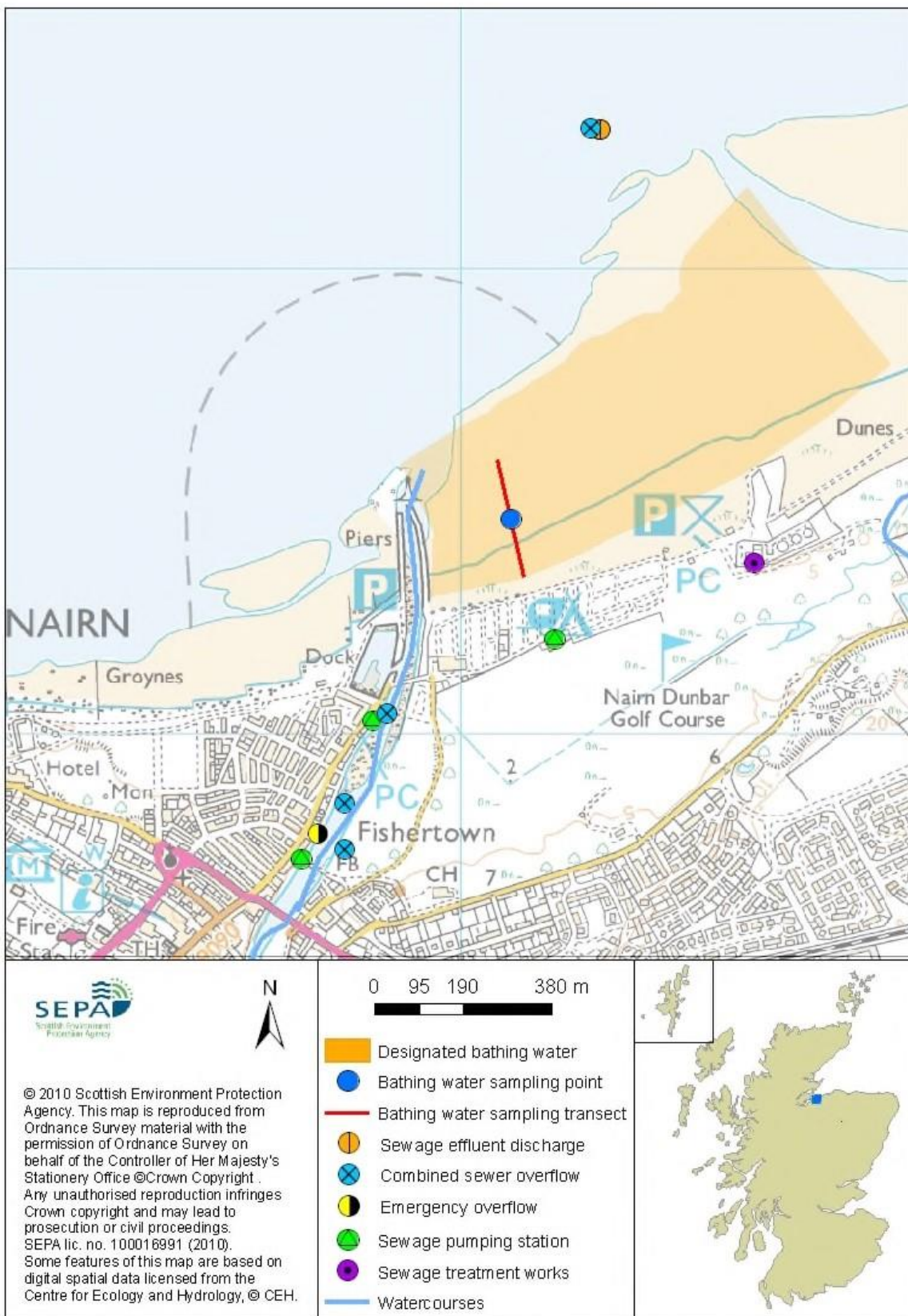
Risks to water quality

The principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from surface water urban drainage, agricultural run-off, combined sewer overflows and treated sewage effluent.

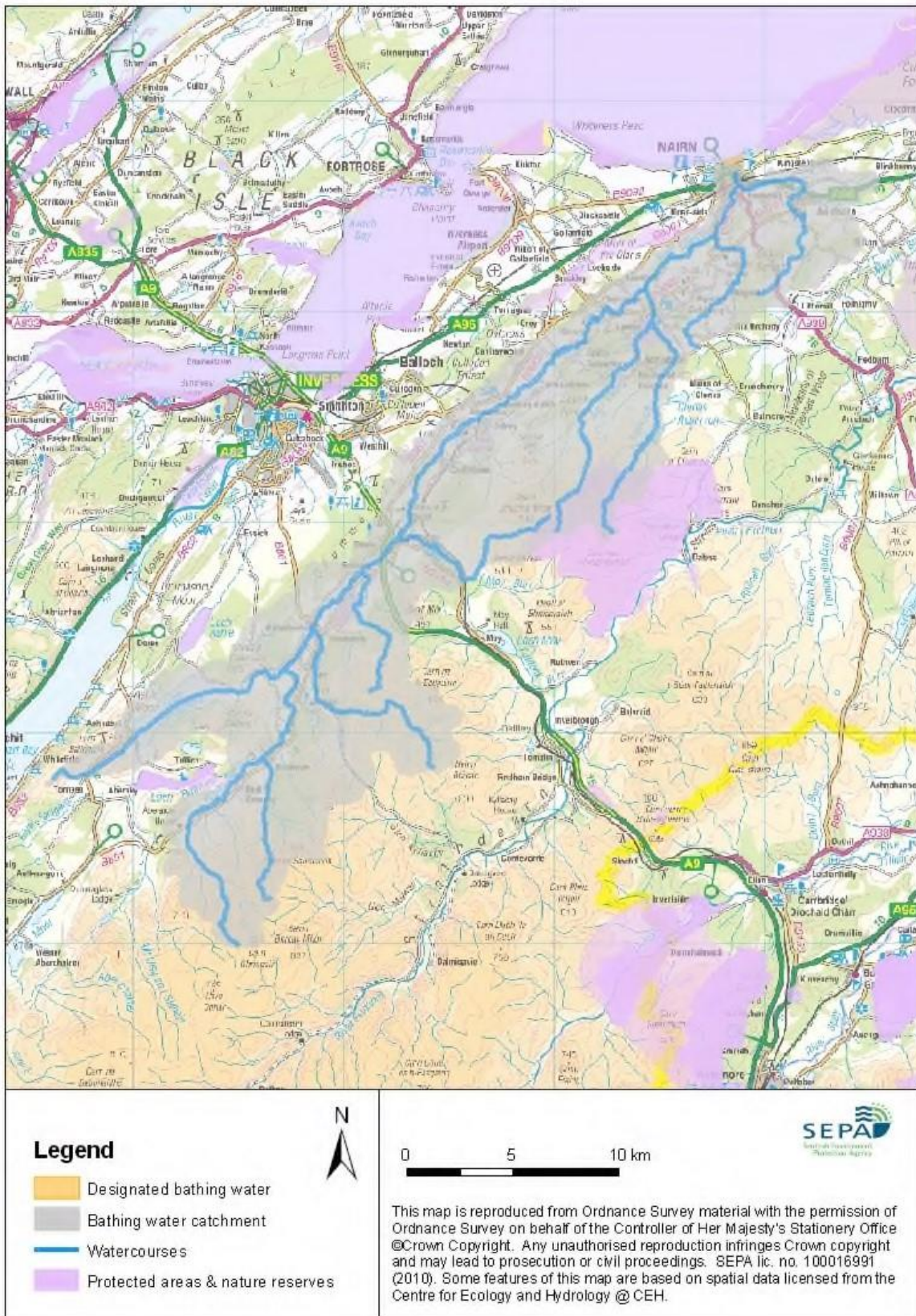
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

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: Nairn (East) bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Nairn (East) 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 (03000 996699).

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 River Nairn Burn, which could impact on the bathing beach following heavy rain. Farm visits in this area were undertaken as part of the River Nairn priority catchment campaign in 2016. These visits looked to identify diffuse pollution sources and pathways. Mitigation measures were agreed with land managers to reduce the risk of bacterial pollution on water quality.

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.

Nairn sewage treatment works discharges final effluent to sea below the low water mark, directly out from the Nairn (East) bathing water. In 2004, due to concerns over bacterial loadings in the River Nairn, more stringent conditions requiring disinfection of the final effluent were placed on the discharges from four sewage treatment works into the river. As a consequence, disinfection systems were installed at Croy and Cawdor sewage treatment works and Sunnyside sewage treatment works was connected to Allanfean waste water treatment works removing the effluent discharge from Sunnyside to the River Nairn. The continuous discharge from the Meikle Geddes/Brackla septic tank was stopped and sewage from the area pumped to the Cawdor works for treatment.

There are several combined sewer overflow discharge points to the River Nairn in its tidal reaches. The system served by these combined sewer overflows has been modelled by Scottish Water and storage facilities upgraded to improve these intermittent discharges and decrease the frequency of their operation.

Scottish Water has recently undertaken a study of Nairn (East) bathing water to determine whether asset improvements are required to meet the revised Bathing Waters Directive standards. The study has concluded that improvements to Scottish Water assets are not required.

There are many private septic tank discharges to the River Nairn which cumulatively could potentially have an influence on the bathing water quality during periods of wet weather. In order to protect the bathing water, we are unlikely to grant consents for any further septic tank discharges to the lower reaches of the River Nairn, where connection to the public sewer is an option.

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 River Nairn is known to be affected by surface water run-off from Nairn town. SEPA are monitoring the potential impact from surface water run-off on 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 Highland Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Dingwall office Graesser House Fodderty Way Dingwall Business Park Dingwall IV15 9XB 01349 862021 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 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</p>		

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.0	September 2010	
1.1	April 2014	
1.2	June 2015	
1.3	May 2016	
1.4	May 2017	
1.5	April 2020	
1.6	May 2023	

