

Bathing Water Profile for Portobello (Central)

Portobello, 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

The Portobello (Central) bathing water is situated at Portobello, on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The designated area is approximately 1.4 km long. The beach comprises a long stretch of sand and an associated promenade. The area is popular with dog walkers and families and there is an abundance of restaurants and cafés along the front.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 20–310 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water.

For local tide information see:
<http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>



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Site details	Local authority	City of Edinburgh Council
	Year of designation	1999
	Water sampling location	NT 31296 73847

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Portobello (Central) bathing water extends to 32 km². Land use in area is the split between urban (49%) and rural (49%) uses, with the remaining land being predominantly coastal. The main urban areas within the catchment are the town of Portobello and the south of Edinburgh city.

The main river within the bathing water catchment is the Braid Burn (also known locally as the Figgate Burn) which flows into the sea between the Portobello (West) and Portobello (Central) bathing waters.

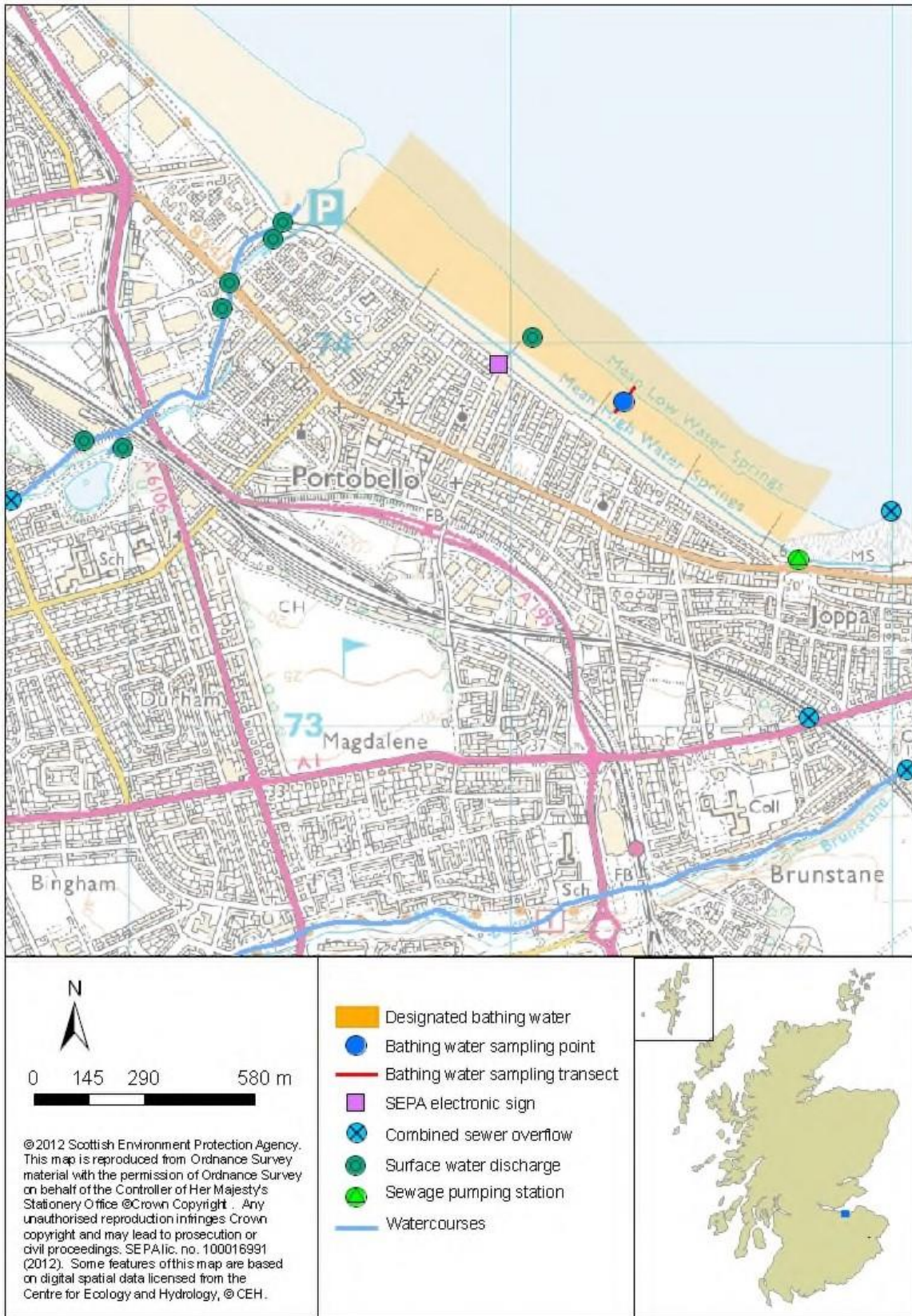
Risks to water quality

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

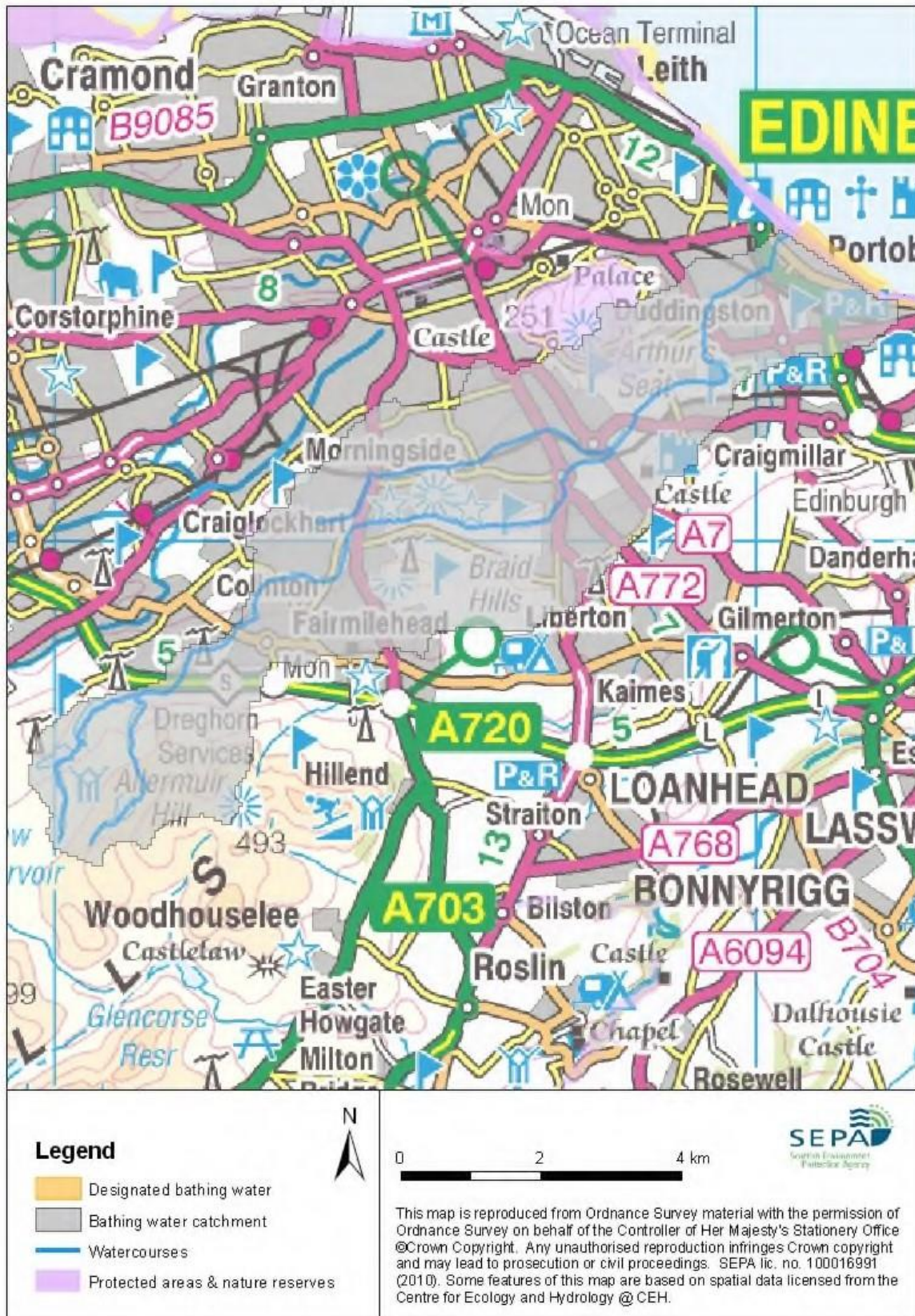
There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. **Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.**

Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can originate from human sources.

Map 1: Portobello (Central) bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Portobello (Central) 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 pollution from sewage and other discharges

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

The main combined sewer overflows which can impact the water quality at Portobello (Central) include those discharging to the Braid Burn and Joppa CSO.

Whilst the Fillyside outfall primarily affects Portobello (West), the reduction of spills since July 2019 (by remediating a valve at Nantwich Drive CSO to increase the pass forward flow to Seafield sewage treatment works for treatment) is likely to further improve performance at Portobello Central.

In November 2019 four dual manholes upstream of the Braid Valley surface water outfall, which spilled to the Braid Burn if blocked, were sealed.

In 2021 the Coal Authority appointed consultants to look at high-level options to remove the mine water from the Scottish Water network in the region of Joppa pumping station. Removing mine water from the network will reduce the number and length of spills from the Joppa pumping station CSO. A planned way forward has now been agreed in principle.

A Scottish Government funded misconnection study took place May 2019 to August 2021. Four misconnections were identified and rectified in the nearby catchment area. Improvement works to rectify issues identified within the network included removal of sewer blockages, remediating fractured pipes and significant sewer cleaning.

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 City of Edinburgh Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

SEPA Edinburgh office 231 Corstorphine Rd Edinburgh EH12 7AT 0131 449 7296 www.sepa.org.uk	City of Edinburgh Council City Chambers High Street Edinburgh EH1 1YJ 0131 200 2300 www.edinburgh.gov.uk	Keep Scotland Beautiful 01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org
Scottish Government Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters		

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.2	April 2013	
1.3	April 2014	
1.4	June 2015	
1.5	April 2020	
1.6	May 2022	
1.7	May 2023	