


Bathing water profile:

Saltcoats/Ardrossan

<p>Bathing water: Saltcoats/Ardrossan</p>	
<p>EC bathing water ID number: UKS7616049</p>	
<p>Location of bathing water: UK/Scotland/North Ayrshire (Map1)</p>	
<p>Year of designation: 1987</p>	
<p>Photograph provided courtesy of North Ayrshire Council</p>	
<p>Bathing water description</p> <p>Saltcoats/Ardrossan bathing water is a 1 km stretch of sandy beach that lies between the towns of Ardrossan and Saltcoats on the North Ayrshire coast. There are rocky areas at Bath Rocks in the north-west and at the former boating ponds in the south-east. The nearby island of Arran can be seen to the west of the bathing water. The bathing water is also known locally as South Beach. It was designated as a bathing water in 1987.</p> <p>During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–390 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see: http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/</p> <p>Our monitoring point for taking water quality samples is located at the western end of the designated area (Grid Ref NS 23453 41997) as shown on Map 1.</p>	
<p>Monitoring water quality</p> <p>Please visit our website¹ for details of the current EU water quality classification and recent results for this bathing water.</p> <p>During the bathing season (1 June to 15 September), designated bathing waters are monitored by SEPA for faecal indicators (bacteria) and classified according to the levels of these indicators in the water. The European standards used to classify bathing waters arise from recommendations made by the World</p>	

¹ <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/>

Health Organisation and are linked to human health. More information on bathing water monitoring, health and classification can be found on our [website](#)².

Risks to water quality

In general, most natural waters will be affected to some extent during and following rainfall as pollutant loads may be increased due to run-off from agricultural or urban land in the catchment. In addition, at some locations waste water discharges from combined sewer overflows, which then drain into the bathing water and can reduce water quality.

Faecal pollutants can come from human sewage, farming activities and livestock (e.g. cattle, sheep), industrial processes, surface water urban drainage, domestic animals (e.g. dogs) and wildlife (e.g. birds) and can enter bathing waters via:

- direct discharges into the marine environment at, or in the vicinity of, the beach;
- the freshwater network draining into a bathing water, which can be prone to elevated bacterial levels as a result of diffuse pollution and/or point source inputs upstream.

The potential relevant pollution sources at, or near, this bathing water are highlighted on Map 1.

The principal risks and sources of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from combined sewage overflows, treated sewage effluent and agricultural run-off. These events are expected to last 1–2 days depending on the duration of the rainfall.

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

Bathing is not advisable during or following (one or two days after) rainfall. Bathing or swimming after storms, floods or heavy rainfall should be avoided as the risk of illness following short term water pollution is increased.

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Marine waters are not at risk of overproduction of cyanobacteria.

Algae

Current information suggests that this bathing water is not at risk of overproduction 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 the summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Although there are a few stinging species common to the UK, most are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Daily water quality forecasts

Saltcoats/Ardrossan (South Beach) bathing water is part of our daily water quality prediction and signage network.

Throughout the bathing season we display daily water quality predictions on the electronic message sign (Map 1). These water quality predictions are also available on our [website](#)³ or via the Beachline phone number (08452 30 30 98).

2

<http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/SamplingResults.aspx>

³ <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

Map 1: Saltcoats/Ardrossan bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Saltcoats/Ardrrossan (bathing water)



Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Saltcoats/Ardrossan bathing water extends to 9 km². The area varies in elevation from the hills in the north/north-west (maximum elevation 370 metres) to lowlands around the towns of Saltcoats and Ardrossan (elevation 0– 60 metres) along the coast.

The catchment is predominantly rural (68%) with agriculture the major land use. There are several dairy farms in the catchment and the surrounding fields are used for grazing and for growing grass for silage. Slurry is used as a fertiliser in the silage fields. The area immediately surrounding the bathing water is mainly urban (30% of the catchment) and comprises of the towns of Saltcoats and Ardrossan which are situated along the coastline. Outside of the catchment, the town of Stevenston is about 1 km to the south of the bathing water.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 392 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

The main water course draining the catchment is the Stanley Burn which flows discharges into the Firth of Clyde at the designated bathing water midway along the beach at Burn Road (see Map 2).

We recently used new DNA tracing techniques to help us identify whether sources of faecal pollution are human or animal. In 2009, this method was used at Saltcoats/Ardrossan and at sites in the river catchment which enabled us to target further investigations and identify appropriate courses of corrective action. Results indicate both human and animal sources are likely to be affecting bathing water quality.

Horse Isle, an RSPB nature reserve home to nationally important bird populations such as Herring Gulls and Lesser Black Backed Gulls (Map 2), is to the north-west of the bathing water.

Measures to improve bathing water quality

High quality bathing waters are important so that people can enjoy Scotland's environment safely. They are also important for Scotland's tourism industry.

Recent years have seen considerable improvements in Scotland's bathing water quality, not least due to substantial investment in the sewerage system. SEPA and our partners are fully committed to continuing to improve bathing water quality.

Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

Diffuse pollution from agricultural sources is normally the result of cumulative inputs of pollutants from several different sources on farms within the catchments draining to the bathing water. Consequently, tackling diffuse agricultural pollution requires concerted action across catchments. We will ensure this by working with farmers to raise awareness about the requirement to prevent and reduce pollution, and to help them identify appropriate actions for doing so.

To help co-ordinate our work to encourage and ensure action, SEPA participate in the [Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group](#)⁴ (DPMAG), which is a partnership of relevant authorities, land manager representatives and voluntary organisations.

The Scottish Government has also brought together nine public bodies to form [Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services](#)⁵ (SEARS). This partnership will contribute to implementing plans for tackling diffuse pollution by providing co-ordinated education and advice to rural land managers.

Additional targeted efforts will be made to improve management of diffuse pollution within catchments identified as 'priority' catchments. These are catchments where the scale of the pollution reduction needed will require planned and targeted actions to be identified and discussed with farmers concerned. Assistance will be given in these areas to identify pollution hotspots, and one-to-one advice will be provided on following the agricultural codes of good practice, which in themselves lead to compliance with these regulations. Action in priority catchments will be phased.

Work began in the Ayrshire Priority Catchments in 2010 to identify pollution risk hotspots. Since then the work to raise awareness of diffuse pollution risks and implement measures to reduce these risks has been carried out in this catchment. Measures including; provision of buffer strips between agricultural activity and

⁴ www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning/diffuse_pollution_mag.aspx

⁵ www.sears.scotland.gov.uk

watercourses; increasing slurry storage facilities to enable more efficient use of fertilisers; reducing run off from farm steadings and land; preventing livestock access to rivers and burns and the provision of alternative livestock watering can all help to reduce the risk of faecal bacteria entering watercourses and reaching our bathing beaches. Re-visits to rural land managers to check compliance with relevant regulations will continue in 2016.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

Most waste water collection and treatment services in Scotland are provided by Scottish Water. It has invested substantially in waste water collection and treatment provision over recent years to protect public health and the environment. Public investments in the sewerage network and in treatment works will continue to be co-ordinated through the national investment and planning process for Scottish Water, known as 'Quality and Standards'.

Improvements to the sewerage system have led to a significant reduction in the level of faecal indicators in the Saltcoats/Ardrossan bathing water under normal conditions. Saltcoats/Ardrossan beach was formerly heavily influenced by sewage from coastal discharges, but the construction of sewage treatment works at Stevenson Point has resulted in much improved monitoring results for this bathing water under normal conditions.

Improvements were made to Saltcoats Sewage Pumping Station in 2014 as it was found not to be operating correctly. Investigations have been ongoing into sewer flooding to determine if any improvements can be made in this area.

There are two combined sewer overflows which can discharge weak sewage into the Stanley Burn. These overflows, together with diffuse urban and agricultural drainage, contribute to the bacterial load carried by the burn. Currently most of the bacterial pollution affecting the water quality at the bathing water is carried by the Stanley Burn.

A recent Scottish Water study identified a number of cross connections between the foul and surface water drainage networks which were impacting on water quality in the Stanley Burn. Scottish Water ensured that remedial works were carried out and this has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of the surface water discharges to the Stanley Burn.

Intervention work to remove cross connections of foul sewage into the Saltcoats and Ardrossan surface water network have been completed

There are no authorised private discharges that are considered to pose a threat to the water quality of this bathing water.

Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources

Urban diffuse source pollution comes from rainwater falling onto urban areas (roads, pavements, yards and roofs) becoming contaminated with pollutants on those areas, washing into surface water drains and discharging from those drains to the water environment.

Tackling this type of pollution requires substantial changes in the way urban areas are drained, and efforts to reduce the quantity of pollutants deposited on urban surfaces. Since the mid 1990s, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) have increasingly been used to drain new developments. They are designed to avoid pollution of the water environment and include permeable surfaces that allow infiltration of rainwater into the ground, slowing the rate at which it drains to the water environment and trapping and breaking down pollutants. Artificial ponds or wetlands provide a final stage of treatment. Local authorities, Scottish Water and SEPA are working together to co-ordinate efforts to tackle pollution from diffuse urban sources, incorporating SUDS into local plans and encouraging partner organisations to retrofit SUDS where possible.

The Stanley Burn, which flows into the bay at the bathing water, is affected by surface water run-off from the urban area through which it runs.

Responding to pollution incidents

Although rare, pollution incidents affecting bathing water quality can happen. Pollution incidents tend to be unpredictable, for example a slurry spill or sewage network failure, and can result in elevated levels of faecal indicators.

To report a possible pollution incident please use our 24 hour pollution hotline (0800 807060). In response

we 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.

Whenever our routine sampling of bathing waters identifies elevated levels of faecal indicators there is an immediate response to check all relevant potential sources and major discharges in the immediate catchment, as well as our hydrometric information to determine whether the levels may be due to high river flows. Follow-up microbiology sampling is also undertaken of the bathing water and local water courses.

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](#)⁶.

Other pollutants at the beach may include plastics and litter. Beach users are encouraged to use the bins provided or to take litter home. Beach cleaning and litter clean-up is maintained for this bathing water by North Ayrshire Council.

Contact details and sources of more information

SEPA Ayr office

31 Miller Road
Ayr
Ayrshire
KA7 2AX
01292 294000
www.sepa.org.uk

North Ayrshire Council

Cunninghame House
Irvine
KA12 8EE
0845 603 0590
contactus@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Pollution Hotline

0800 80 70 60
24 hours per day, 7 days per week

Keep Scotland Beautiful

01786 471333
beach@ksbscotland.org.uk
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
0131 244 0396
egcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters

Further information about the condition of our water environment and the actions needed to deliver improvement can be found in:

- the Scotland river basin management plan
www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx

the Clyde area management plan <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/clyde/>

Good Beach Guide: www.goodbeachguide.co.uk

Blue Flag and Seaside Awards: www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/coastal

Version Control

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.1	April 2013	
1.2	April 2014	
1.3	April 2015	
1.4	March 2016	

⁶<http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

