

Bathing Water Profile for Saltcoats/Ardrossan

Saltcoats, 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

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.

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.



Photograph provided courtesy of North Ayrshire Council

Site details

Local authority	North Ayrshire Council
Year of designation	1987
Water sampling location	NS 23453 41997

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. 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, Stevenston town is about 1 km to the south of the bathing water.

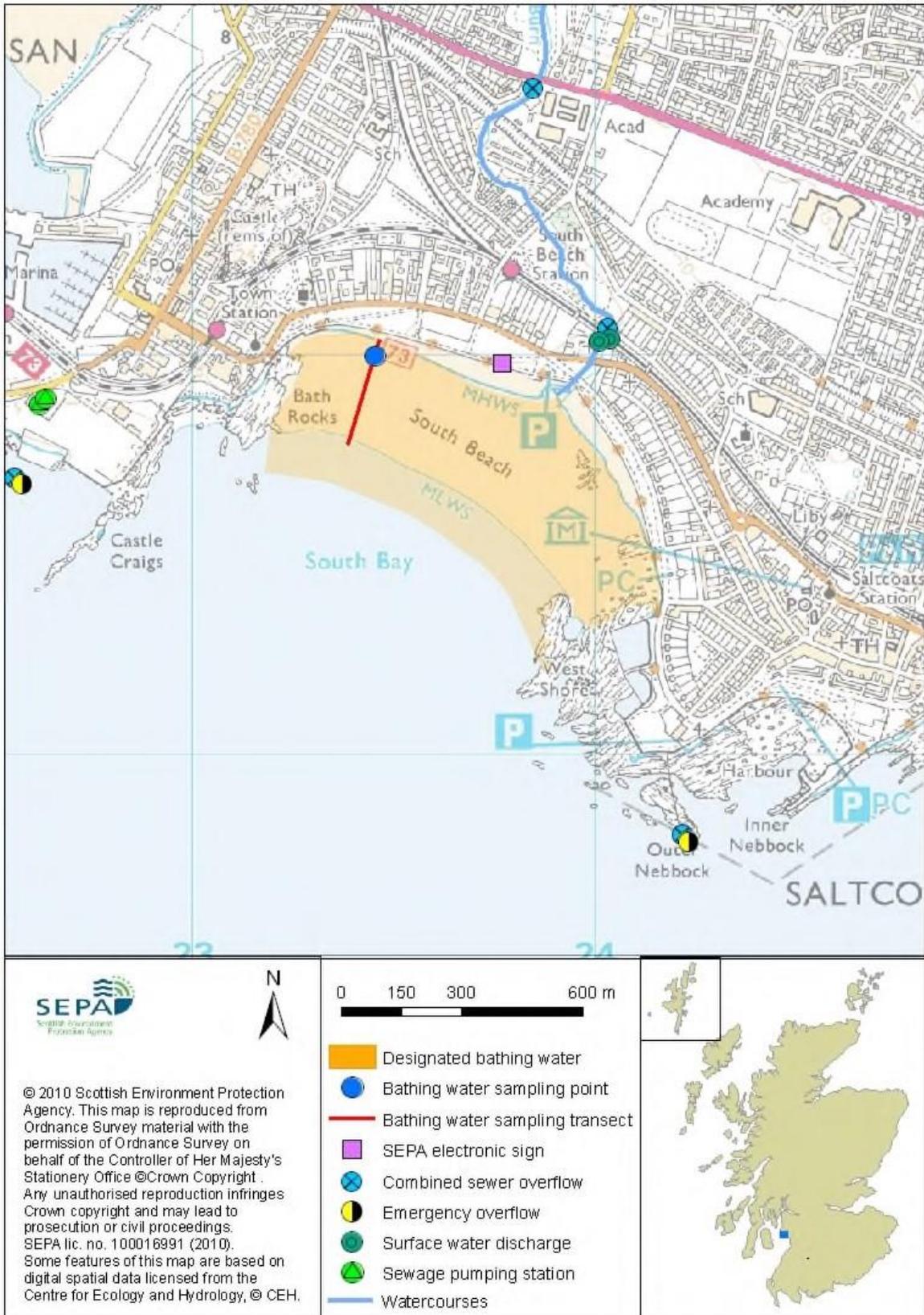
Risks to water quality

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.

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 and animal sources.

Map 1: Saltcoats/Ardrossan bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Saltcoats/Ardrossan 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 Stanley Burn and other small rural tributaries, which could impact on the bathing beach during and following heavy rain.

Farm visits started in the North Ayrshire Coastal priority catchment in 2013 and are ongoing. These visits look to identify diffuse pollution sources and pathways. Mitigation measures have been 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.

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.

Combined sewer overflows, together with diffuse urban and agricultural drainage, contribute to the bacterial load carried by the Stanley Burn. Most of the bacterial pollution affecting the bathing water quality is carried by the burn.

A recent Scottish Water study identified a number of misconnections between the foul and surface water drainage networks which were impacting on water quality in the Stanley Burn. Remedial works were carried out to reduce contamination of the surface water discharges to the burn.

Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources

Urban diffuse source pollution comes from contaminated rainwater discharging to rivers and streams.

The Stanley Burn is affected by surface water run-off from the urban area through which it runs.

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.

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 North Ayrshire Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Ayr office</p> <p>31 Miller Road Ayr Ayrshire KA7 2AX 01292 294000 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>North Ayrshire Council</p> <p>Cunninghame House Irvine KA12 8EE 0845 603 0590 contactus@north-ayrshire.gov.uk www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful</p> <p>01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org</p>
<p>Scottish Government</p> <p>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:
1.1	April 2013	
1.2	April 2014	
1.3	April 2015	
1.4	March 2016	
1.5	April 2020	
1.6	May 2022	
1.7	May 2023	