


Bathing water profile:

Seton Sands

<p>Bathing water: Seton Sands</p>	
<p>EC bathing water ID number: UKS7616051</p>	
<p>Location of bathing water: UK/Scotland/East Lothian (Map1)</p>	
<p>Year of designation: 1999</p>	
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<p>Bathing water description</p> <p>Seton Sands bathing water is located to the east of the small towns of Cockenzie and Port Seton and to the north-west of Longniddry. The long beach (about 2.2 km in length) slopes gently towards the water (Map 1). The beach is made up of sand and rocks and is popular with recreational users for pastimes such as horse riding, windsurfing and canoeing. The eastern edge of the bathing water joins a second designated bathing water: Longniddry. It was designated as a bathing water in 1999.</p> <p>During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0-500 metres. 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 eastern end of the designated area (Grid Ref NT 42738 76251) 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</p>	

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

European standards used to classify bathing waters arise from recommendations made by the World 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 source of wet weather-driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from combined sewer overflows. These events are expected to last 1–2 days depending on the duration of the rainfall and may result in elevated bacteria levels compared to dry conditions.

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

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 excessive growth of macroalgae (seaweed) or phytoplankton.

Jellyfish

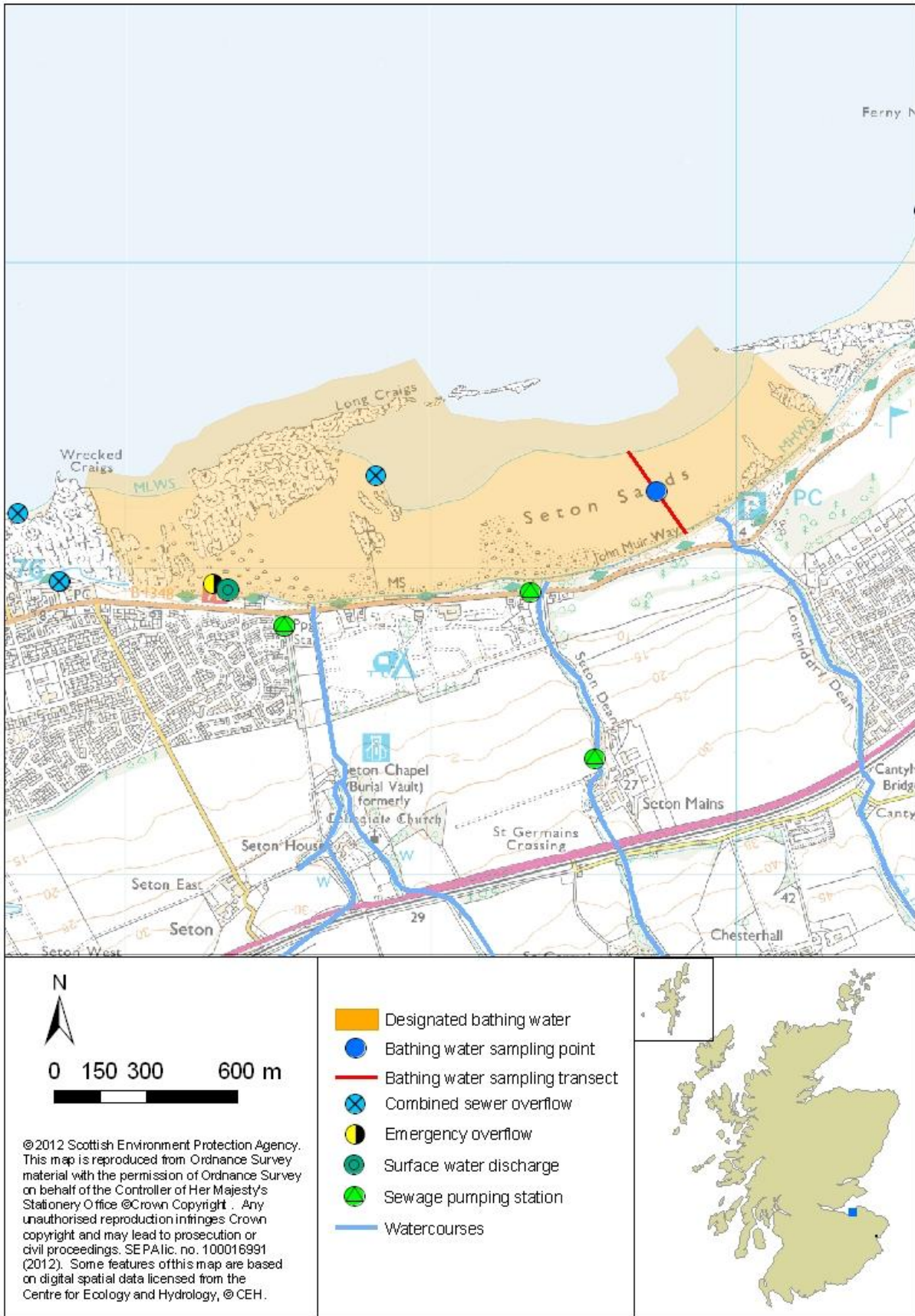
There is a possibility of increased numbers of jellyfish in the water during the summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Although there are a few stinging species common to the UK, most are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Daily water quality forecasts

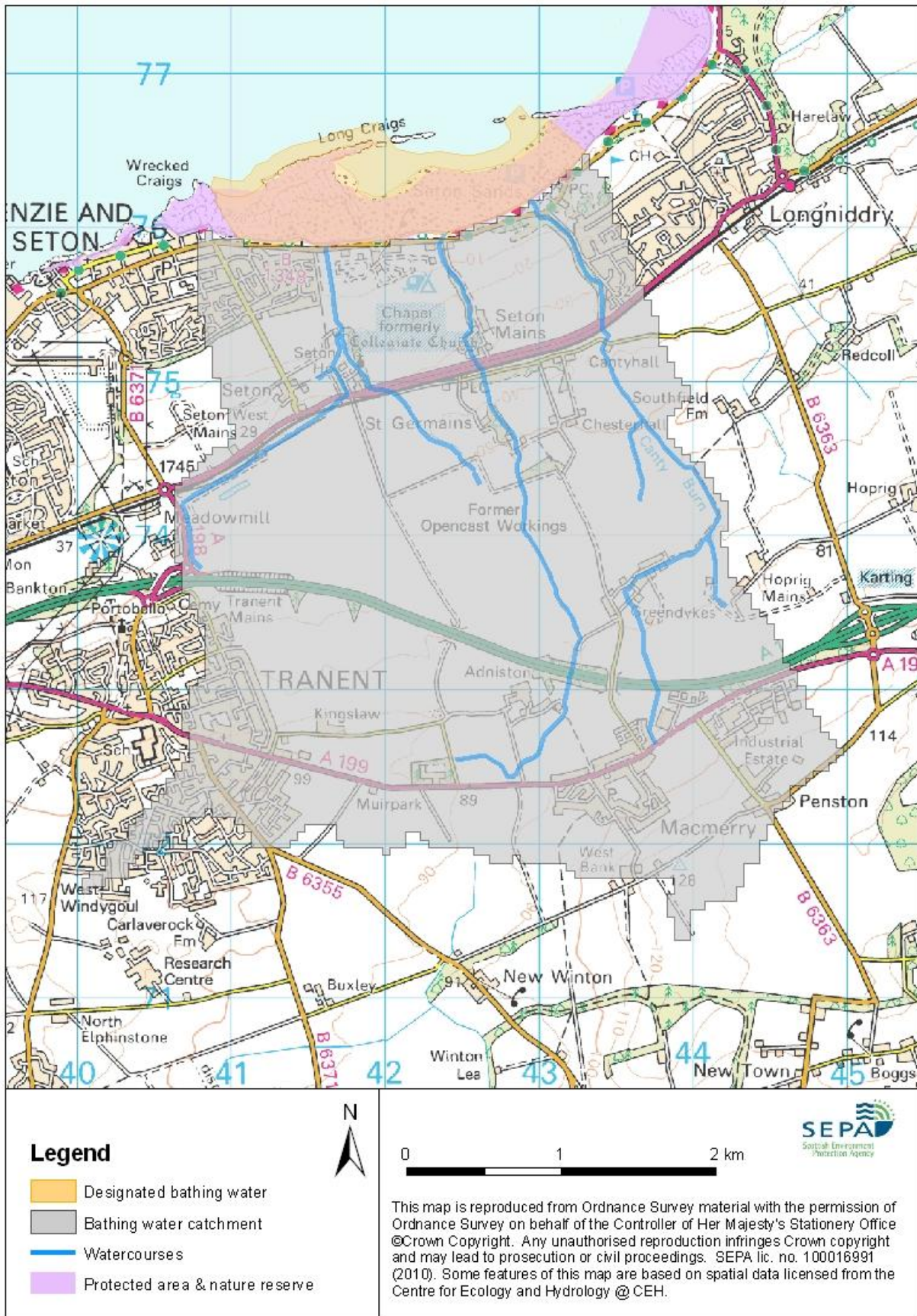
Seton Sands bathing water is not part of our signage network. Daily water quality predictions are not currently required for this bathing water.

² <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/SamplingResults.aspx>

Map 1: Seton Sands bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Seton Sands bathing water



Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Seton Sands bathing water extends to 14.5 km². The area is predominantly rural (78%) with arable agriculture the major land use. Approximately 17% of the bathing water catchment is urban. There are a number of settlements (Cockenzie, Port Seton, Tranent, Longniddry) either fully or partially within the catchment.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 296 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

The main water course within the bathing water catchment is the Seton Burn. The Canty Burn flows past the western extent of the town of Longniddry and into the eastern end of the bathing water.

The Firth of Forth is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Ramsar site and contains Special Protection Areas due to the internationally important bird populations that it supports. These protected areas have the potential to influence water quality at the bathing water due to the large numbers of birds, the droppings from which contain faecal bacteria. For more information on these protected areas see Scottish Natural Heritage's [information service website](#)³.

The catchment of the Lothian and Borders area was designated as a surface water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone in 2002.

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

Agriculture is not considered to have a significant effect on this bathing water.

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'.

In 2002, a new rising main was laid to convey sewage from Longniddry to Edinburgh sewage treatment works. The existing works at Longniddry was converted to a transfer pumping station, designed not to discharge more than three times per bathing season.

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.

Diffuse urban pollution is not considered to impact this bathing water.

³ www.snh.org.uk/snhi

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](#)⁴.

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 East Lothian Council.

Contact details and sources of more information

SEPA Edinburgh office

Clearwater House
Heriot Watt Research Park
Avenue North
Riccarton
Edinburgh
EH14 4AP
0131 449 7296
www.sepa.org.uk

East Lothian Council

John Muir House
Haddington
East Lothian
EH41 3HA
01620 827827
customerservices@eastlothian.gov.uk
www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Pollution Hotline

0800 80 70 60
24 hours per day, seven 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
eqcat@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 <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>
- the Forth area management plan <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/forth/>

The Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide: www.goodbeachguide.co.uk

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

⁴ <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

Version Control		
Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.1	May 2012	
1.2	March 2014	
1.3	June 2015	