

Bathing Water Profile for Stonehaven

Stonehaven, 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

Stonehaven bathing water is situated adjacent to the town of Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire. Stonehaven town is fronted by a half-moon bay made up of sandy beaches and a harbour. The designated bathing water encompasses an approximately 1 km stretch of this bay. The designated area is bound by the outflow of the River Carron and the harbour area jetty to the south, and rocky outcrops to the north.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 0–160 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water.



Site details

Local authority	Aberdeenshire Council
Year of designation	1999
Water sampling location	NO 87650 85820

Catchment description

The catchment draining into the Stonehaven bathing water extends to 117 km². The catchment varies in topography from high ground (maximum elevation 400 metres) in the west to the low-lying areas (average elevation 5 metres) along the coast. The main rivers in the bathing water catchment are the River Carron and River Cowie. These rivers drain into the Stonehaven bathing water.

The area is predominantly rural (97%) with agriculture the major land use. The River Carron catchment is predominantly agricultural with mixed farming whereas the River Cowie catchment is predominantly forested. Approximately 2% of the bathing water catchment is urban, with the main population centre, Stonehaven, within 100 metres of the bathing water. There is some industrial activity next to the lower reaches of the River Cowie.

There is one Site of Scientific Interest partially within the bathing water catchment (Map 2). This designation is not expected to impact on the Stonehaven bathing water quality.

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 gulls.

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 at times originate from human or animal sources.

Map 1: Stonehaven bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Stonehaven 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 Kincardine and Angus coastal rivers which could impact on the bathing beach during and following heavy rain.

Farm visits started in the Kincardine and Angus priority catchment in 2014 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 catchment. SEPA will continue to work with the farmers 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 to the local sewerage system have led to the removal of continuous sewage discharges in and around the bathing water. Since 2008, sewage effluent from Stonehaven has been connected to the main Aberdeen treatment plant for secondary treatment and disposal via the long sea outfall at Nigg Bay.

There are several combined sewer outfalls in Stonehaven town that intermittently discharge into the lower Rivers Carron and Cowie. Improvements have been made to the main combined sewage outfall and screening is now in place.

Septic tank inputs may also be contributing to bacteria levels in the water courses and bathing water.

Improving pollution from diffuse urban sources

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

The River Cowie, which discharges into Stonehaven bathing water, is known to be affected by surface water run-off from urban industrial areas through which it runs. It therefore potentially affects the bathing water quality.

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 Aberdeenshire Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA office SEPA Aberdeen office Inverdee House Baxter Street Torry Aberdeen AB11 9QA 01224 266600 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Woodhill House Westburn Road Aberdeen Aberdeenshire AB16 5GB 08456 081207 www.aberdeenshire.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>		

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1.1	April 2013	
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1.3	June 2015	
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