Scotland's bathing waters continue to meet strict environmental standards ahead of new season

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As Scotland sizzles in the early summer sun, and with hundreds of thousands of Scottish families and visitors expected to head to our stunning coastlines for the bathing season (1st June – 15th September), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has revealed that 75 of the country's 86 designated bathing waters (87%) meet strict environmental standards for water quality.

The above assets are available for print, online and broadcast media to use to illustrate this story. Please click through to our media gallery to download them – no registration is required. All related items will be shown on the same page.

- 87% of Scotland's designated bathing waters meet strict environmental water quality standards.
- Water quality data available by 10.00 am every day during the season for 31 bathing water locations on www.bathingwaters.mobi, SEPA's website, via Beachline and live electronic beach signage.
- Partnership projects underway to improve bathing waters including 11 rated as 'poor'.
- Nairn bathing waters achieve the sufficient EU classification for the first time after 2 years of poor rating.

Rating	Number of bathing waters	Percentage
Excellent	25	29
Good	34	39
Sufficient	16	19
Poor	11	13
OVERALL	**86**	**100%**

Ranked as the most beautiful country in the world by Rough Guide, Scotland's natural environment is world-renowned. Its beaches range from remote, unspoilt Hebridean sands to golden stretches along northern and eastern coves and popular Western shores.

Beach users will have access to real time water quality information from across Scotland's designated beaches thanks to SEPA scientists who sample and combine with state-of-the-art weather data to provide daily bathing water forecasts throughout the three and a half months. These are available at 31 bathing water locations by 10am every morning through:

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's stunning environment and we are committed to ensuring all of Scotland's designated bathing waters meet water quality standards.

"Having achieved the highest rate of compliance since the new Bathing Water Directive began we are already seeing many of our priority projects having a positive impact. Both Nairn sites, which have passed for the first time since 2015, have made good progress through working with partners and communities to coordinate activities and identify actions to address water quality challenges.

"Working with partners, we're continuing our focus on bathing waters rated as 'poor', with tailored improvement plans prepared by SEPA. These projects will result in major improvements to bathing water quality in the future and should see improvements over the coming season."

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

"Protecting and improving our bathing waters is crucial for our environment, for local economies which rely on beach tourism and for people who will be able to enjoy our seaside resorts and beaches over the summer months.

"Partnership working between SEPA, Scottish Water, local authorities, the farming sector, and communities is vital to achieving better results and I am pleased to see that this work has helped to drive forward improvements this season."

A Scottish Water spokeswoman said:

"We are pleased to see the continued improvement in bathing water performance. Scottish Water has undertaken significant investment in partnership with SEPA in recent years to support bathing water quality.

"We are committed to delivering investment where our assets are found to be compromising quality. We continue to work with SEPA and a range of agencies, local authorities, beach users and other relevant organisations to improve bathing water quality where required.

"People can help by ensuring that they only flush the right things down toilets – the three Ps: pee, poo and paper – to avoid causing blockages to drains and sewers which can cause pollution on beaches."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

2018 results in full

Highland and Islands
(8 excellent, 4 good, 4 sufficient,
0 poor)

Achmelvich	Excellent
Dores	Good
Dornoch	Excellent

Dunnet	Excellent
Ettrick Bay	Good
Findhorn	Good
Gairloch Beach	Excellent
Ganavan	Excellent
Loch Morlich	Excellent
Lossiemouth (East)	Sufficient
Machrihanish	Excellent
Nairn (Central)	Sufficient
Nairn (East)	Sufficient
Rosemarkie	Good
Sand Beach	Excellent
Thurso	Sufficient

Lothian, mid Scotland and Fife
(8 excellent, 5 good, 1 sufficient, 3 poor)

Aberdour (Silversands)	Excellent
Aberdour Harbour (Black Sands)	Good
Anstruther (Billow Ness)	Excellent
Burntisland	Good
Crail (Roome Bay)	Excellent
Elie (Harbour) and Earlsferry	Excellent
Elie (Ruby Bay)	Excellent
Fisherrow Sands	Poor
Kinghorn (Harbour Beach)	Poor
Kinghorn (Pettycur)	Good
Kingsbarns	Excellent
Kirkcaldy (Seafield)	Good
Leven	Good
Portobello (Central)	Sufficient
Portobello (West)	Poor
St Andrews (East Sands)	Excellent
St Andrews (West Sands)	Excellent

North East Scotland
(4 excellent, 8 good, 4 sufficient, 1 poor)

Aberdeen	Sufficient
Arbroath (West Links)	Good
Balmedie	Excellent
Broughty Ferry	Excellent
Carnoustie	Good
Collieston	Good
Cruden Bay	Poor
Cullen Bay	Sufficient
Fraserburgh (Philorth)	Excellent

Fraserburgh (Tiger Hill)	Sufficient
Inverboyndie	Sufficient
Lunan Bay	Good
Monifieth	Good
Montrose	Excellent
Peterhead (Lido)	Good
Rosehearty	Good
Stonehaven	Good

Solway
(1 excellent, 2 good, 0 sufficient, 4 poor)

Brighouse Bay	Poor
Carrick	Good
Dhoon Bay	Poor
Mossyard	Good
Rockcliffe	Poor
Sandyhills	Poor
Southerness	Excellent

South East Scotland
(3 excellent, 9 good, 2 sufficient, 1 poor)

Broad Sands	Good
Coldingham	Good
Dunbar (Belhaven)	Good
Dunbar (East)	Good
Yellow Craig	Sufficient
Eyemouth	Poor
Gullane	Excellent
Longniddry	Good
North Berwick (Milsey Bay)	Good
North Berwick (West)	Good
Pease Bay	Excellent
Seacliff	Excellent
Seton Sands	Sufficient
Thorntonloch	Good
Whitesands	Good

West Scotland
(1 excellent, 6 good, 5 sufficient, 2 poor)

Ayr (South Beach)	Poor
Culzean	Sufficient
Girvan	Sufficient
Heads of Ayr	Poor
Irvine	Sufficient
Largs (Pencil Beach)	Good
Lunderston Bay	Good

Luss Bay	Sufficient
Maidens	Good
Millport Bay	Excellent
Prestwick	Good
Saltcoats/Ardrossan	Sufficient
Seamill	Good
Troon (South Beach)	Good

The revised Bathing Water Directive

Under the revised Bathing Water Directive:

- classifications are calculated at the end of the 2017 season for display on all beaches at the start of the 2018 season;
- water quality classification applies for the whole season;
- the overall condition of a location is described through bathing water profiles.

Wet weather problems

- Diffuse pollution is the largest pollution pressure on the water environment in Scotland, but it can be difficult to identify and control. The risk of diffuse pollution is worse during rainfall because nutrients, soil, chemicals and faecal bacteria can be washed from land into the surrounding water environment. Single discharge points might not seem to be an issue, but several combined across a whole river catchment can significantly affect water quality, including in EU designated bathing waters. Land and run-off management practices play a pivotal role in diffuse pollution mitigation.
- Another source of pollution at beaches can be combined sewer overflows (CSOs). During heavy rainfall CSOs, which discharge diluted but minimally treated sewage to watercourses and coastal waters, are essential to prevent flooding. However, during extended periods of rain, which are not uncommon in Scotland, the combined effect of CSOs in a catchment can have a negative impact on the water   quality. To minimise the impact of combined sewer overflows on water quality, SEPA imposes conditions requiring sewage litter and debris removal and on the location and frequency of their operation. SEPA continues to work closely with the Scottish Government, Scottish Water and the Water Industry to ensure that planned capital investment programmes aimed at upgrading sewerage infrastructure throughout the country are prioritised to maximise environmental benefits.