# Bathing water profile - Findhorn

[Bathing water classification](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/ViewResults.aspx?id=301895)

## Bathing water description

Findhorn bathing water is in the Moray Firth next to the village of Findhorn. It is a 1.5 km sandy beach that slopes gently towards the water. It sits at the western end of the sweeping Burghead Bay. The beach is backed by dunes, a caravan site, and the Findhorn Bay Nature Reserve. Depending on the tide, the distance to the water’s edge can vary from 0–370 metres. The beach is prized for its unspoilt golden sands. It is popular with wildlife and water sports enthusiasts.

Site details:

* Local authority: Moray Council
* Year of designation: 2008
* Water sampling location: NJ 03560 64940

## Risks to water quality

This bathing water is at risk of short term pollution following heavy rainfall. Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall due to the risk to bathers’ health from water pollution.

Pollution risks include those from agricultural run-off and sewer overflows.

## Catchment description

The Findhorn bathing water catchment extends to only 300 m2 and is low-lying. The area is mainly sand dunes (52%) and vegetated shingle. Approximately 7% of the catchment is urban. The main population centre is the village of Findhorn, 1 km from the bathing water. Outside the catchment, the area supports mixed farming, with more livestock than arable in the lower River Findhorn area. Other nearby population centres include the towns of Forres and Kinloss as well as RAF Kinloss.

There are no major rivers within the bathing water catchment. However, near the catchment area, the River Findhorn, Bolmack Burn, Muckle Burn, Mosset Burn and Kinloss Burn flow into Findhorn Bay.

## Map 1: Findhorn bathing water

A section of ordinance survey map showing the designated bathing water area highlighted in yellow. 
The map shows the location of the bathing water sampling point and nearby watercourses as well as any relevant Scottish Water assets and discharges.


## Map 2: Catchment draining into Findhorn bathing water

A section of ordinance survey map showing the designated bathing water area highlighted in yellow and it's drainage catchment outlined in red. 
The map shows the watercourses within the catchment as well as any relevant Scottish Water assets.


# Improving bathing water quality

## Sewage

[Scottish Water](https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Your-Waste-Water) provides most waste water collection and treatment services in Scotland.

Sewage from Cullen is treated at Buckie sewage treatment works. Cullen pumping station has a combined sewage overflow which discharges 700m to the west of the bathing water.

Septic tanks serving the communities of Lintmill and Deskford discharge to the Deskford Burn inland from the bathing water. These discharges pose a minimal risk to bathing water quality at Cullen Bay.

## Agriculture

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 impact Findhorn bathing water given that the area supports both livestock and arable farming. Work to address diffuse pollution issues in this catchment is expected to be completed by 2027.

## Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), algae and jellyfish

Marine waters are not at risk of cyanobacteria overproduction. This bathing water is not at risk of excessive growth of macroalgae (seaweed) or phytoplankton.

The possibility of increased jellyfish numbers in the water during summer months is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Most species common to the UK are harmless; the Marine Conservation Society advises to ‘look but don’t touch’.

## Pollution incidents

Pollution can be reported [via our website online form](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/environmentalevents) or by calling our 24 hours a day Pollution Hotline number **0800 80 70 60**

If pollution is reported to us, or identified by our routine water quality monitoring program, we will investigate and where necessary work with others to remediate. We may contact other relevant organisations including the local authority, that local health board, Scottish Water and Scottish Ministers.

If there is a risk to human health the local authority is responsible for placing signs at the bathing water. Information will also be available on our website.

Everyone can help to keep the bathing water clean:

* If you visit the beach with your dog clear up any fouling
* Don’t leave litter or feed birds - this encourages unnatural behaviour, and they can pollute the water
* At home, don’t flush wipes or other inappropriate items as these can block pipes and cause sewage spills

## Contact details and information sources

[SEPA bathing waters homepage](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/)

[SEPA rainfall data](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/rainfall/)

[Scottish Government protected waters homepage](https://www.gov.scot/policies/water/protected-waters/)

[Moray Council](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_100047.html)

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