# Bathing water profile – Elie (Ruby Bay)

[Bathing water classification](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/ViewResults.aspx?id=10962)

## Bathing water description

Elie (Ruby Bay) bathing water is on the north coast of the Firth of Forth. It is a sheltered, sandy bay of around 0.3 km length. The bay is a popular place to view wildlife and birds. Depending on the tide, the distance to the water’s edge can vary from 0–200 metres. The beach slopes gently towards the water.

Site details:

* Local authority: Fife Council
* Year of designation: 1999
* Water sampling location: NT 49500 99500

## 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 sewer overflows.

## Catchment description

The Elie (Ruby Bay) bathing water catchment extends to 0.1 km2. The area is mainly rural (86%) with grassland the major land use. Approximately 14% of the catchment is urban. There are no main population centres in the catchment. Population density is generally low. There are no major rivers within the catchment.

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within or near the bathing water or catchment. Firth of Forth is an SSSI for internationally important bird populations. Kilconquhar Loch is an SSSI for birds and habitat. These bird populations may potentially influence bathing water quality.

## Map 1: Elie (Ruby Bay) 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 Elie (Ruby Bay) 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.

Elie sewage treatment works has a septic tank and a long sea outfall to the Firth of Forth. Scottish Water has carried out improvement works at South Street, Earlsferry and Harbour pumping stations.

## Agriculture

There are no impacts from agriculture affecting this bathing water.

## 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/)

[Fife Council](https://www.fife.gov.uk/contact-us)

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language, please contact SEPA by emailing [equalities@sepa.org.uk](mailto:equalities@sepa.org.uk)

If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL), the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter, enabling you to communicate with us using sign language. [contactscotland-bsl.org](http://contactscotland-bsl.org/)