# Bathing water profile – North Berwick (Milsey Bay)

[Bathing water classification](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/ViewResults.aspx?id=4584)

## Bathing water description

The North Berwick (Milsey Bay) bathing water is northeast of North Berwick in East Lothian. The sandy beach is approximately 1.1km long. The beach offers spectacular views of nearby Bass Rock. The area is popular with families. There is a small paddling area which retains water whilst the tide is out. The nearby Scottish Seabird Centre also attracts many visitors. Depending on the tide, the distance to the water’s edge can vary from 0–170 metres.

Site details:

* Local authority: East Lothian Council
* Year of designation: 1987
* Water sampling location: NT 56211 85327

## 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 catchment draining into the North Berwick (Milsey Bay) bathing water extends to 2.3 km2. Land use is a mixture of rural and urban. The rural area is a combination of arable agriculture and grassland. The town of North Berwick is the main population centre in the catchment.

The Mill Burn is the only river in the catchment. It drains into the bathing water.

There are several protected areas within or near the bathing water or catchment. This includes two Special Protection Areas, two Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a Ramsar site.

## Map 1: North Berwick (Milsey Bay) bathing water



## Map 2: Catchment draining into North Berwick (Milsey Bay) bathing water



# 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 North Berwick is treated at North Berwick sewage treatment works before being discharged to the Firth of Forth via a long sea outfall to the East of North Berwick.

There is a combined sewer overflow (CSO) to the west and east of the bathing water. These may discharge and impact the bathing water during heavy rainfall.

## 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/)

[East Lothian Council](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210560/your_council/12319/contact_us)

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