

## Ballyhornan – Bathing Water Profile

Ballyhornan Beach, County Down, Northern Ireland



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*Bathing Water Profiles are designed to help the public make an informed choice before bathing, providing detailed information on the physical characteristics of each bathing water as well as assessing the pollution risk to each site. They are a requirement of The Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 and are reviewed in line with these regulations.*

Historical and Current bathing water compliance classifications for Ballyhornan can be found at – [Bathing Water Compliance](#)

**There is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48hrs after heavy or prolonged rainfall.**

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**Description** Ballyhornan bathing water is located on the Lecale Peninsula in County Down. The bathing water area, which is approximately 250m in length, is comprised of sand with a rocky outcrop at the southernmost end and is located at the southern end of Ballyhornan Bay. The village of Ballyhornan, with residential housing and a car park, is directly to the west and south of the bathing water. Housing previously utilised by the Royal Air Force and now either owner occupied, privately rented or used as holiday accommodation makes up a good portion of the residential properties in the area south of the bathing water. Ballyhornan Bay is approximately 1km in length, and backed by sand dunes, a main road and agricultural land to the north, with a few farms in the vicinity of the beach. The catchment area for the bathing water is mainly improved grassland with arable farming. The bathing area is within the following designated sites: Strangford Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest, Strangford Lough Special Area for Conservation, Strangford Lough Special Protected Area, Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Strangford Lough RAMSAR site, all of which afford the area environmental protection.

**Site Details** Local council area – Newry Mourne and Down District Council

Year of designation – 2018

Water sampling location – Lat 54.30160, Long -5.55266

### **Potential Pollution and measures to reduce impact on bathing water:**

The potential sources of pollution have been split into three categories; wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges, wastewater systems in urban areas and rural source pollution, including agriculture. DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division work with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and other departments to identify and resolve sources of pollution.

### **Wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges.**

There is one wastewater treatment works approximately 0.6km to the south of Ballyhornan bathing water. The wastewater from the Ballyhornan area is pumped to this works for treatment.

### **Wastewater systems in urban areas.**

Ballyhornan bathing water does not have a large urban area and therefore may not be affected by this source of diffuse pollution. However, the nearby residential area of Ballyhornan village has the potential to effect water quality during and after periods of prolonged or heavy rainfall.

In the event of prolonged/heavy rainfall the wastewater system may become overwhelmed leading to an overflow/discharge of wastewater. **This is why there is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48 hours after prolonged/heavy rainfall.**

The collection and treatment of wastewater has the potential to cause pollution as all combined collection systems are designed to overflow in periods of extreme wet weather or following failure of the system. This prevents overflows into residential properties. Within the Ballyhornan area there are a number of wastewater pumping stations and associated emergency overflows, highlighted on Map 1.

There is also the potential for misconnections between the sewer system and surface drains, which may allow untreated wastewater to enter the water environment. Misconnections are not obvious, but when these become apparent NIEA pursues them as pollution incidents.

### **Rural source pollution – agriculture**

The catchment area of Ballyhornan bathing water is predominately improved grassland, along with arable farming. Areas within the catchment where agriculture is the dominant land use may be subject to inputs from chemical fertilisers and organic wastes. Prolonged periods of rainfall can cause surface runoff of these organic wastes, such as animal slurries, contributing to the bacteria content in the water environment.

Septic tanks also have the potential to cause localised pollution, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is impacting Ballyhornan bathing water.

### **Other potential sources of pollution.**

- Dogs
- Horses
- Litter
- Fly tipping

### Management measures:

The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, take an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. River Basin Management Plans (RPMP) are produced which detail all of Northern Ireland's water quality objectives and a programme of measures to achieve these objectives. Within these 'Programme of Measures' in each River Basin Management Plan are a number of measures which relate directly to the protection of bathing waters.

Ballyhornan bathing water is located in the North Eastern River Basin District. You can find more information about the North Eastern River Basin Management Plan below:

[Draft 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan for Northern Ireland 2021-2027](#)

Within the River Basin Management Plan programme of measures there are several schemes to address sources of pollution:

- Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) 2019-2022
- Knowledge Advisory Service (KAS)
- Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS)
- Soil Nutrient Health Scheme (SNHS)

### **Macro-algae, phytoplankton, and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)**

Ballyhornan bathing water is not at risk of proliferation of macro-algae, phytoplankton, or cyanobacteria (blue-green algae).

### **What should I do if I see a pollution incident?**

If you see a water pollution incident, you should immediately contact NIEA through the **24 hr** Emergency Water Pollution Hotline:

**Phone: 0800 807060**

When a pollution incident is reported or pollution is found to be affecting the water quality of a bathing water, an immediate investigation is instigated. All possible sources of pollution are checked. In addition, a resample will be collected to monitor whether the beach is still polluted. Bathing waters may be closed (by local authority or controlling body) until the water quality has improved and levels of bacteria are within mandatory standards.

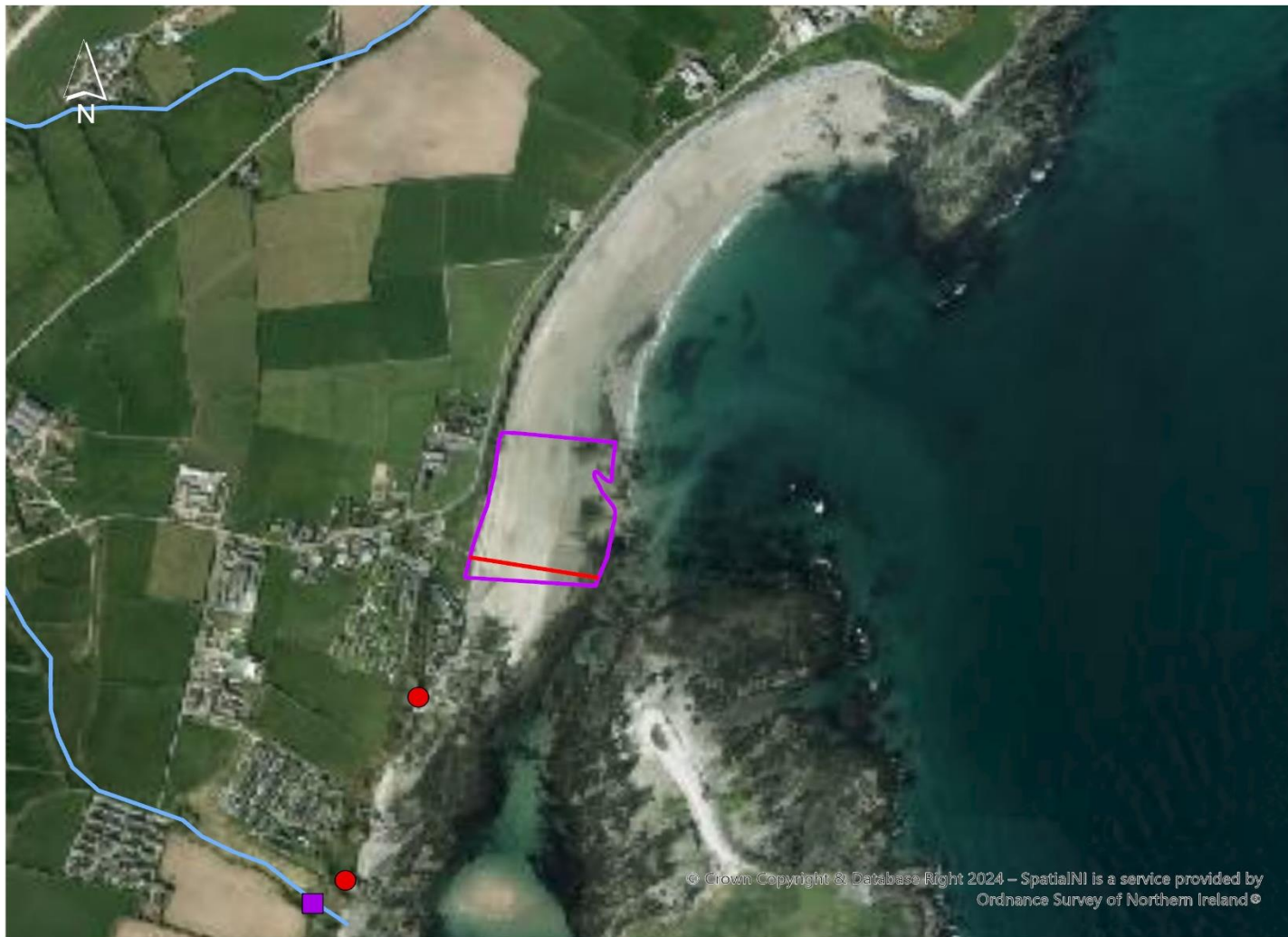
### **Contact details**

For general information about bathing waters:

**DAERA** Marine and Fisheries Division  
17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn, BT28 3AL  
Email: [Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk)  
Website: [DAERA Bathing Water Quality](#)

**Local Authority** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
Address: Downpatrick Office: Downshire Civic Centre, Ardglass Road, BT30 6GQ  
Newry Office: Monaghan Row, Newry, BT35 8DJ  
Email: [info@mnandd.org](mailto:info@mnandd.org)  
Phone: 0330 137 4000  
Website: [Home - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council](#)

Map 1 Ballyhornan Bathing Water



### Legend

- Wastewater Pumping Station
- Wastewater Treatment Works
- Rivers
- Ballyhornan Bathing Water
- Bathing Water Sampling Transect

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