

Carnlough – Bathing Water Profile

Carnlough beach, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

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 Carnlough can be found at – [Bathing Water Compliance](#)

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

Description Located on the County Antrim coast this bathing water is approximately 1.5km in length and composed mainly of sand, although there are rocks and pebbles at both the northern and southern ends. Most of the bathing water is backed by a sea wall and public road, but the southern end is backed by open vegetation and grass. Carnlough, a small coastal village with a small harbour, is located on the northern end of the bathing water. Facilities within the vicinity of the bathing water include a car park, caravan parks and recreational facilities such as a picnic area and a children’s play park. Two rivers flow into the bathing area: the Carnlough River at the northern end and the Glencloy River towards the southern end. The surrounding catchment area consists of improved grassland and neutral grass with dwarf heath and other grass types.

Site Details Local council area – Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Year of designation – 2006

Water sampling location – Lat 54.98885, Long -5.99222

Potential Pollution and measures to reduce impact on site:

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.

Wastewater from Carnlough is pumped to Glenarm where it is discharged through a screened long sea outfall more than 4km to the south east end of the bathing water.

Wastewater systems in urban areas.

Carnlough village and the caravan parks located near the bathing water, are potential sources of pollution, especially during or after periods of prolonged 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 Carnlough area there are a number of combined sewer overflows (CSO), emergency overflows and wastewater pumping stations with 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 Carnlough bathing water, through which the Carnlough and Glencloy Rivers flow, has a significant amount of improved grassland. 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 Carnlough.

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.

Carlough 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)

Carnlough 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 pollution is reported or found to be affecting the water quality of a bathing water, an immediate investigation is instigated. All possible sources of pollution are checked and the bathing water is monitored until the effects of the incident have passed. During this time, bathing waters may be temporarily closed (by local authority or controlling body) until the water quality has improved and levels of bacteria are within mandatory standards.

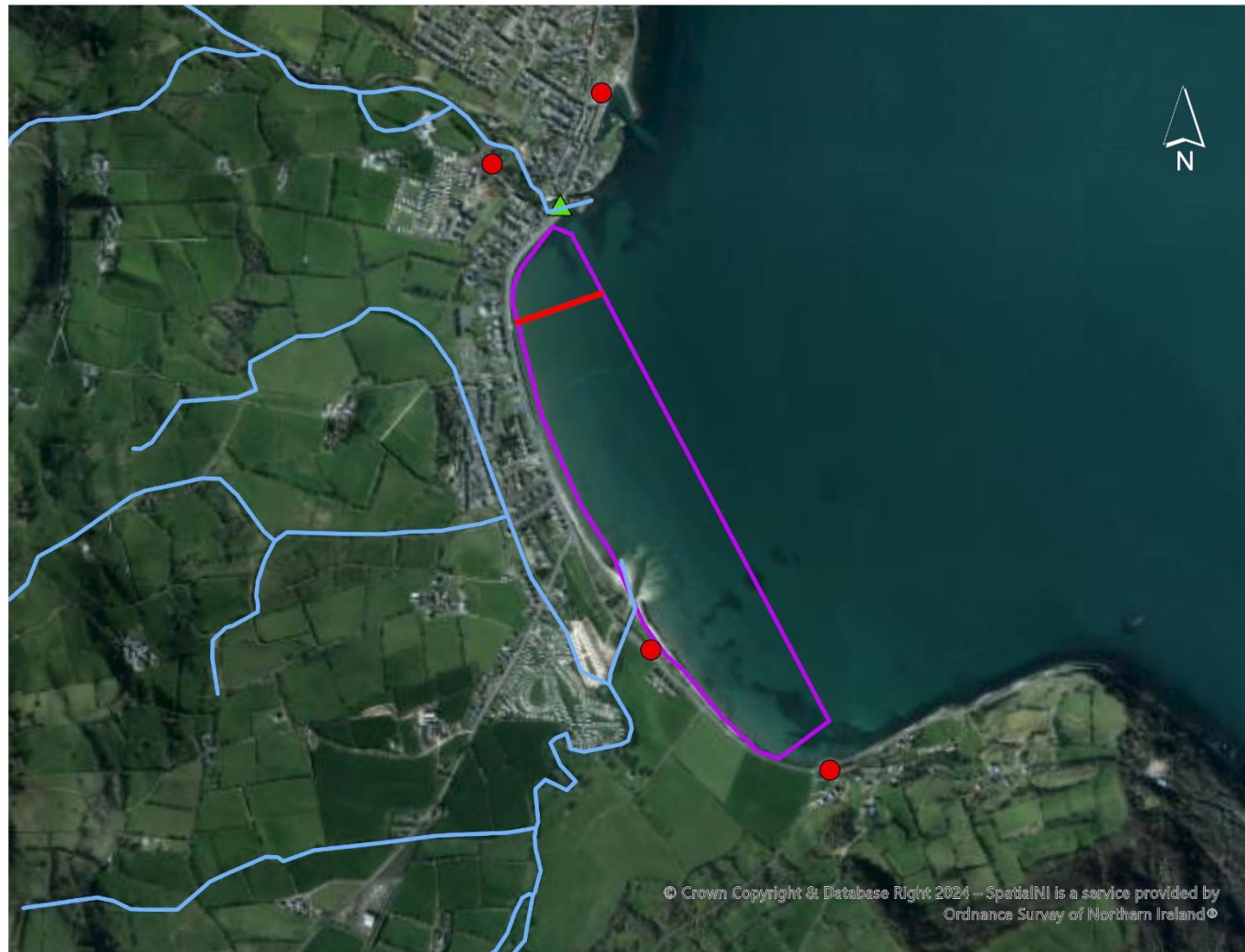
Contact details

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
Website: [DAERA Bathing Water Quality](#)

Local Authority Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Address: Head Office, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ
Email: enquiries@midandeastantrim.gov.uk
Phone: 0300 124 5000
Website: [Mid and East Antrim Borough Council](#)

Map 1 Carnlough Bathing Water



Legend

- Wastewater Pumping Station
- ▲ Combined Sewer Overflow
- Carnlough bathing water area
- Bathing Water Sampling Transect
- Rivers

© Crown Copyright & Database Right 2024 – SpatialNI is a service provided by Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland

1:25,000

0 0.23 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Kilometres