

Donaghadee – Bathing Water Profile

Donaghadee, County Down, 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 Donaghadee 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

Donaghadee bathing water is approximately 200m in length and is comprised of a mixture of sand and pebbles with a rocky shoreline at the northern end and enclosed by a harbour wall at the southern end. A seawall with promenade and seats, a major road and the town of Donaghadee surround the bathing area. A small carpark and boat yard are found at the northern end of the bathing water, a children’s play park is located central to the bathing water, and a larger carpark and toilet facilities are located at the southern end. The town itself has extensive amenity facilities including car parks and toilets. Inland from the urbanised coastal strip, the land usage is mainly arable farming and horticulture with pockets of natural grassland. There is a small river which flows across the middle of the bathing area.

Site Details Local council area – Ards and North Down Borough Council

Year of designation – 2025

Water sampling location – Lat 54.64332, Long -5.53663

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 Donaghadee is pumped to the North Down Wastewater Treatment Works which is approximately 1.5kms from the bathing water. The works provides secondary treatment with UV disinfection during the bathing season and discharges into Outer Belfast Lough 5.5kms from the bathing water.

Wastewater systems in urban areas.

The urbanisation associated with the adjacent town of Donaghadee is a potential source of pollution, especially during 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 a general advice not to bathe during or up to 2 days 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 Donaghadee area there are combined sewer overflows (CSO) 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.

Land cover within the catchment area of Donaghadee bathing water is mainly arable and horticulture. 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 Donaghadee 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.

Donaghadee 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 plans 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)

Donaghadee bathing water is not at risk of a 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council
Address: City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, BT20 4BT
Email: enquiries@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Phone: 0300 013 3333
Website: [Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

Map 1 Donaghadee Bathing Water



Legend

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

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