

## Millisle – Bathing Water Profile

Millisle 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 Millisle 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** Millisle bathing water is located on the Ards Peninsula in North Down. It is approximately 1.8km in length and comprised mainly of sand. A purpose-built man-made lagoon with an adjoining children’s paddling pool is at the northern end of the bathing water, both of which are refreshed with seawater every high tide. Facilities within the vicinity of the bathing water include extensive caravan parks, public toilets, car parks, slipways, a jetty, a pier, picnic areas and an open play area. Two rivers enter the bathing water, the Mill Burn and the Ballyrolly Burn. The immediate catchment is urban, with Millisle village located at the northern end of the bathing water, however, the wider catchment contains predominately improved grassland and arable farming.

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

Year of designation – 1988

Water sampling location – Lat 54.60861, Long -5.52726

### **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 Millisle is pumped to the North Down and Ards Wastewater treatment works which provides secondary treatment with UV disinfection during the bathing season. The treated effluent is discharged 600m offshore, to the north east of Brigg’s Rock, approximately 9km away from this bathing water.

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

Millisle sewerage system, which underwent a major upgrade in 2018, is part of an extensive network serving the greater Bangor (North Down and Ards) area. Urbanisation associated with Millisle, and

the conurbation of nearby Bangor is a potential source of pollution, especially during 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 Millisle area there are several 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 Millisle bathing water is predominately grassland 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.

### **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.

Millisle 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)**

Millisle 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.

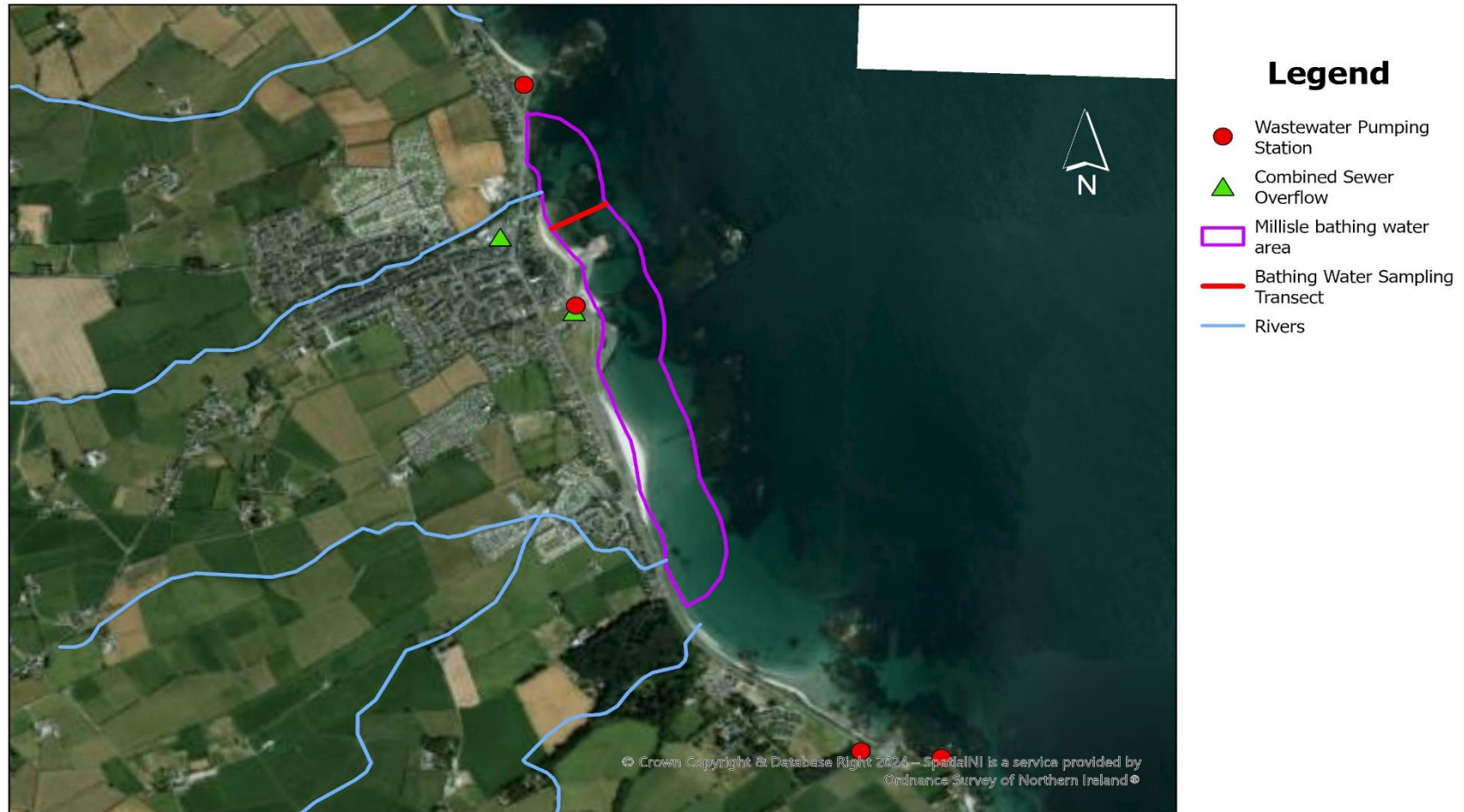
### **Contact details**

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)  
Phone: 0300 013 3333  
Website: [Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

Map 1 Millisle Bathing Water



1:30,000

0 0.28 0.55 1.1 1.65 2.2 Kilometres