

Portmuck – Bathing Water Profile

Portmuck Harbour, 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 Portmuck 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 within Portmuck Harbour, the beach is approximately 150m in length and comprised of a mixture of sand and pebbles, with a rocky shoreline at the western end of the bathing water. It is backed by a sea wall and partially enclosed by a small harbour at the eastern end. Amenities include a car park, public toilets, and a few picnic tables. There is one access road down to the site. Although the immediate catchment area for this bathing water is rural, there are also several residential properties in the area. There is a minor river which occasionally discharges onto Portmuck beach having passed predominately through agricultural land.

Portmuck is located in an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). A tombolo, a bar that extends outward from the shore, between the Isle of Muck and the mainland can be seen and is the only such feature on the open coast of Northern Ireland

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

Year of designation – 2025

Water sampling location – Lat 54.84762, Long -5.72760

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.

There is a wastewater treatment works approximately 1km from the bathing water which receives secondary treatment and discharges into the Irish Sea.

Wastewater systems in urban areas.

Portmuck bathing water is located in a rural area. There is no municipal wastewater system.

Rural source pollution – agriculture

The catchment area of Portmuck bathing water consists mainly of arable and horticultural land. 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 Portmuck 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.

Portmuck 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)

Portmuck 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.

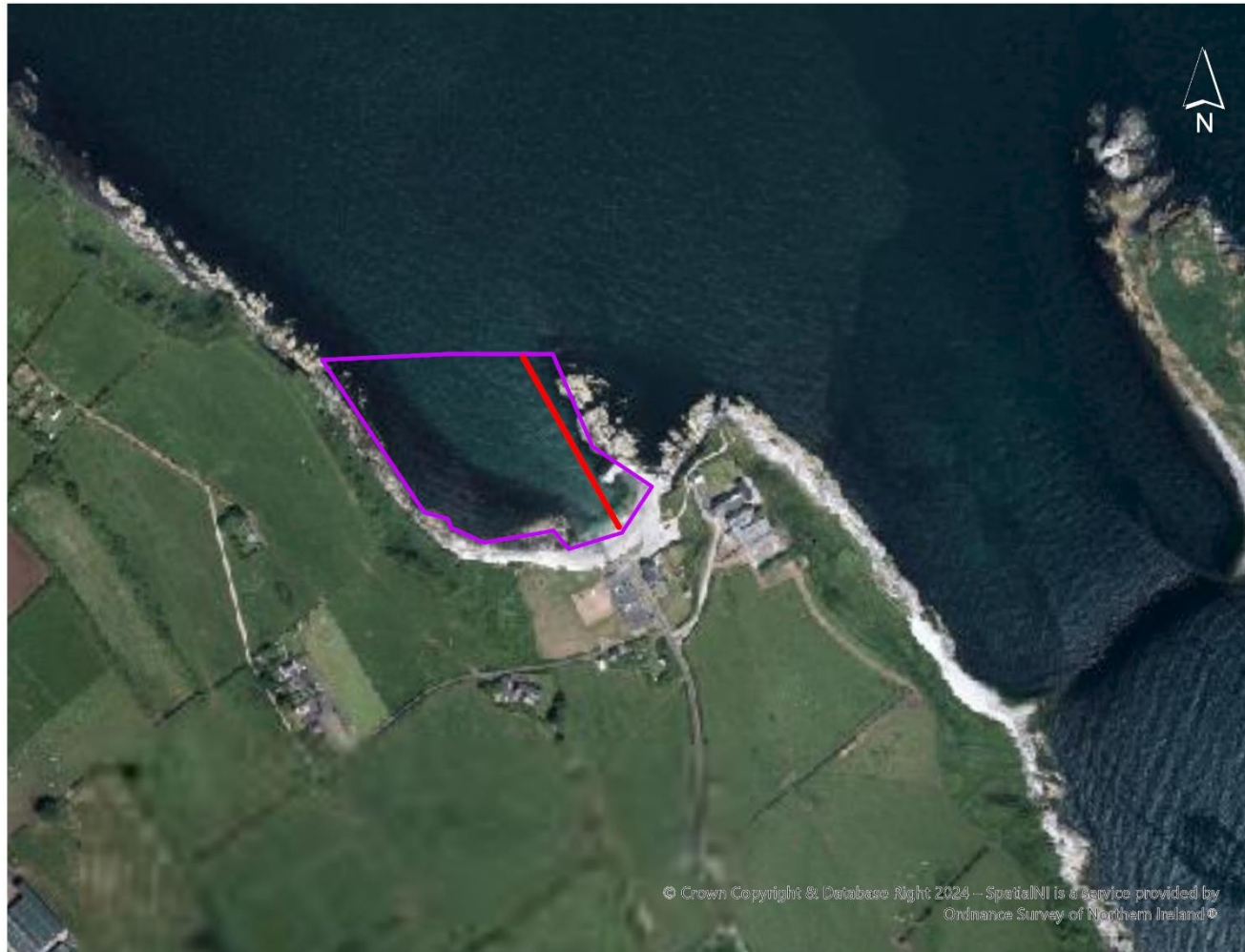
Contact details

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
Website: [DAERA Bathing Water Quality](#)

Local Authority Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Address: 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 Portmuck Bathing Water



- Legend**
- Bathing Water Sampling Transect
 - Portmuck bathing water area

1:8,000

