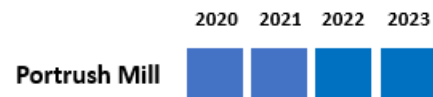


Portrush Mill – Bathing Water Profile

Portrush Mill (West Strand), County Antrim, Northern Ireland



Key: ● Excellent ● Good ● Sufficient ● Poor

Current bathing water classification

[Bathing Water Classifications](#)

There are currently no daily water quality predictions (forecasts) available at Portrush Mill.

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

Description Portrush Mill bathing water is a very popular tourist destination located on the north coast of Northern Ireland. The beach is approximately 0.9km in length, comprised predominantly of sand and bounded by a high cement wall, upon which the promenade runs. There is a large car park and toilet facilities adjacent to the bathing water. The immediate catchment for this bathing water is urban, however areas of improved grassland and arable horticulture can be found further inland. There is one minor river that flows across Portrush Mill bathing water, travelling through both urban and agricultural areas, and subject to bacterial influences from a number of sources.

Site Details Local council area – Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Year of designation – 1988

Water sampling location – Lat 55.20540, Long -6.65625

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 NIEA and other departments to identify and resolve sources of pollution.

Wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges.

There is a major wastewater treatment facility between Portrush and Portstewart with an outfall approximately 1km off the coast of Portstewart. The treated wastewater outfall is approximately 3.5km to the west of Portrush Mill bathing water. The works treats wastewater from the wider Portrush, Portstewart, Castlerock and Coleraine areas.

Wastewater systems in urban areas.

Portrush Mill is a popular seaside location attracting large numbers of visitors during the summer season. This urbanisation 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 Portrush area there are combined sewer overflows (CSO), emergency overflows and wastewater pumping stations with associated emergency overflows, highlighted on Map 1.

There is potential for misconnections between the sewer system and surface drains, which may allow untreated wastewater to enter the water environment. When these become apparent, NIEA pursues them as pollution incidents.

Rural source pollution – agriculture

Although Portrush Mill bathing water's immediate catchment is mainly urban, further inland the catchment consists of improved grassland with neutral grass and arable horticulture. Areas within the catchment where agriculture is the dominant land use may be subject to inputs from chemical fertilizers 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 localized pollution, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is impacting Portrush Mill.

Other potential sources of pollution.

- Dogs
- Horses
- Litter
- Fly tipping

Management measures:

You can find more information about Northern Ireland's water quality objectives and the protection of bathing waters in the Neagh Bann River Basin Management Plan, see below:

[Draft 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan for Northern Ireland 2021-2027 0.PDF \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

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)

Portrush Mill bathing water may be subject to the presence of Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). Blue-green algal blooms which form in Lough Neagh can be transported via the River Bann and affect the bathing water at Portrush Mill. Blue-green algae can be toxic, and harmful if swallowed and may cause skin rashes. If the presence of blue-green algae is confirmed the public shall be informed, and if levels exceed health guidelines the public will be advised not to bathe through signage at the bathing water and through relevant local media posts. More information can

be found at [Blue-Green Algae Infographic | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

What should I do if I see a pollution incident?

If you see a water pollution incident, you should immediately contact NIEA through the [Emergency Water Pollution Hotline](#), which is operated **24 hours**.

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 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Address: Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY
Email: info@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 28 7034 7034
Website: [Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council](#)

Map 1. Portrush Mill Bathing Water

