

Bathing Water Profile

We have produced a profile for each European designated bathing water in England and Wales. The profile gives information about the bathing water including any improvements made to provide better water quality for bathers. Bathing water profiles are a requirement of the revised Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC and supporting regulations.

All bathing water profiles will be reviewed and updated by May 2013. If you wish to [comment on the profile](#) please send an email to bwpsw@environment-agency.gov.uk between 24 March and 30 September 2012.

Swanage Central, Dorset, England



The image above shows the European designated bathing water located at Swanage Central, Dorset, England



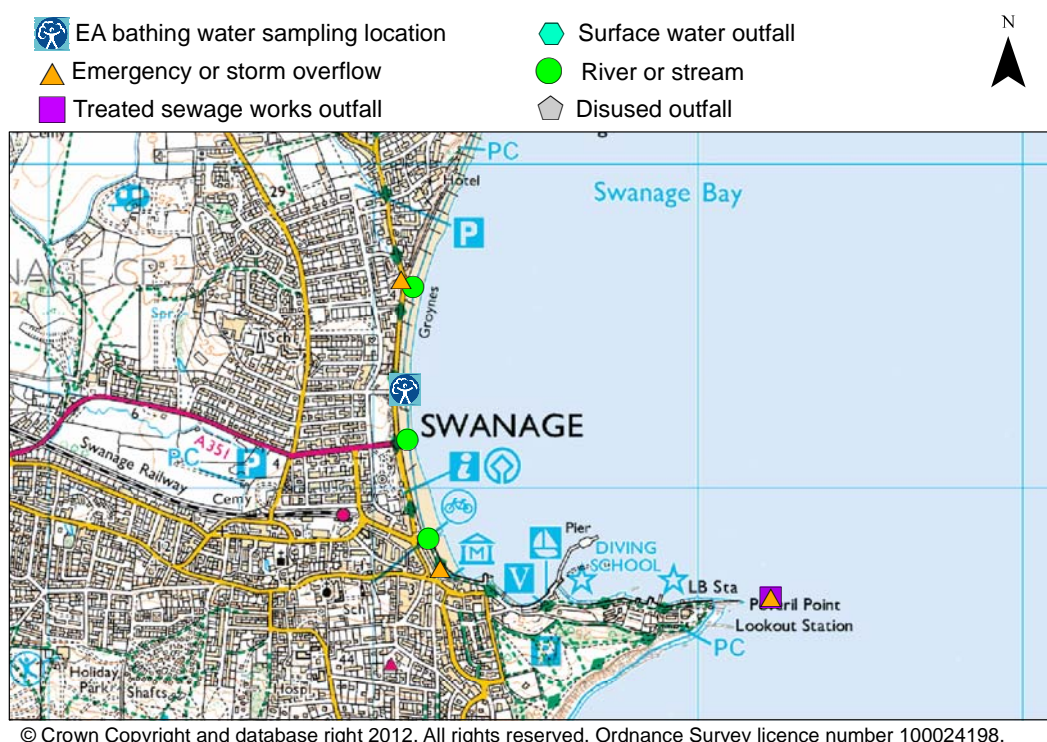
Designation details under the current Bathing Water Directive (76/1160/EEC)

Local Authority: **Purbeck District Council**

- Environment Agency Region: South West
- Year designated: 1988

The Environment Agency monitors and assesses bathing water quality at each designated bathing water in England & Wales annually between May and September. The [monitoring results and annual compliance are all published on the Environment Agency website via our interactive map service.](#)

Bathing water map



Bathing water description

Swanage Central is within Swanage Bay on the Dorset coast. It is a sandy beach resort, approximately 960 metres wide surrounded by hills, and close to the promenade and town.



customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Catchment map

-  Surface water catchment boundary
-  EA bathing water sampling location

Sampling locations close together may share a catchment



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Catchment description

The catchment surrounding Swanage Central is approximately 1,800 hectares and includes the small and very steep catchment of the Swan Brook and Ulwell Stream.

The Swan Brook is approximately five and a half kilometres long (including tributaries) and flows to the southeast across the Isle of Purbeck to Swanage. It splits into two watercourses that are channelled underground through the town. One channel is piped under the beach and enters the sea 460m north of our monitoring point, and the other flows across the beach 160m to the south. The Ulwell Stream is approximately two and a half kilometres long and flows from Nine Barrow Down south to Swanage Bay 250m north of our monitoring point.

The catchment is mostly agricultural, with around 20 farms.

Pollution management

Water quality at a bathing water is dependent upon the type and area of land (the catchment) draining to the water and the activities undertaken in that catchment.

It is the Environment Agency's role to drive improvement of water quality at bathing waters that are at risk of failing European standards. The following sections give an indication of potential sources of pollution, conditions under which they may arise and measures put in place to improve water quality.

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Streams and rivers

Streams and rivers are typically affected by human sewage, animal slurry and runoff from roads. The Swan Brook and Ulwell Stream enter the sea at the beach (marked by the green circles on the bathing water map). We have monitored the Swan Brook since 1994, and the Ulwell Stream since 1996.

Working with water companies

History

A re sewerage programme in North Swanage was completed by Wessex Water in 1997. Stormwater storage tanks were built at Ulwell resulting in a significant reduction in the frequency of spills from combined sewer overflows (CSO) to the Ulwell Stream. The construction of a tunnel sewer was completed in March 1999. This resulted in the removal of CSO's to the Swan Brook, and a significant reduction in the spill frequency of other CSOs in the Swanage sewerage catchment.

The Wessex Water sewage treatment scheme for Swanage, which provides secondary treatment and microfiltration, was completed in July 2000.

Sewage treatment works outfalls

Discharges from sewage treatment works have improved substantially in England and Wales since the 1980s.

The outfall from the Swanage sewage treatment works (STW) (marked by a purple square on the bathing water map), discharges to the sea 170m east of Peverill Point. This discharge is designed to protect bathing water quality.

Emergency/storm overflows

The majority of sewers in England and Wales are “combined sewers” and carry both sewage and surface water from roofs and drains. A storm overflow operates during heavy rainfall when the sewerage system becomes overwhelmed by the amount of surface water. The overflow prevents sewage from backing up pipes and flooding properties and gardens. An emergency overflow will only operate infrequently, for example due to pump failure or blockage in the sewerage system.

There is a storm overflow from the Swanage Shore Road (O/S Nursing Home) CSO (marked by an orange triangle on the bathing water map), which discharges to the Ulwell Stream 340m from the beach. There is also a high level emergency/storm overflow from the Swanage STW Tunnel (marked by an orange triangle on the bathing water map), which discharges to the sea at the slipway 550m south of our monitoring point.

There is a storm overflow from the Swanage STW Tunnel at SZ0423078660 (marked by an orange triangle on the bathing water map), discharges to the sea 170m east of Peverill Point.

The operation of the overflows can lead to a drop in bathing water quality.

Working with Local Authorities

Heavy rain falling on pavements and roads often flows into surface water drains or highway drains, ending up in local rivers and, ultimately, the sea. The quality of bathing water may be adversely affected as a result of such events.

The urban area of Swanage immediately behind the beach is served by a combined (surface and sewer) system. There are no outfalls from the system onto the beach. Surface water can flow into the Swan Brook and Ulwell Stream from urban areas and highway drains. This can affect stream water quality, particularly after periods of rainfall.

Misconnections

Wrongly connected domestic waste water pipes can also affect the stream water quality. We have checked the local sewerage system for misconnections. We are working with Wessex Water to identify and rectify any problems.

Modern sewerage systems have two separate systems, one takes foul sewage to sewage treatment, the other takes rainwater runoff through surface water drains to rivers, lakes and the sea. Misconnections occur when waste water pipes are plumbed into surface water drains instead of the foul water sewerage system. This can give rise to pollution when the waste water is discharged directly to the environment through the surface water drain. For example, a washing machine or toilet may be incorrectly plumbed so that it discharges to the surface drain rather than the foul sewage drain.

Algae

Seaweed (macroalgae) and phytoplankton (microscopic algae) are a natural part of the marine and freshwater environment. Below we note whether these have been recorded in quantities sufficient to be a nuisance.

Seaweed (macroalgae)

This bathing water does not have a history of large amounts of seaweed (macroalgae).

Phytoplankton(microscopic algae)

Phytoplankton (microscopic algae) naturally increase in number at certain times of the year. This process is known as a phytoplankton bloom. This bathing water does not have a history of phytoplankton blooms.

Further information

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) establishes a common approach to managing water within the European Community. The environmental objectives for the WFD will be delivered through the actions described in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). Actions identified in the RBMPs for other improvements, also contribute to improvements in bathing water quality. The [River Basin Management Plans are published on the Environment Agency website](#)

[A glossary for this profile is available](#) on the Environment Agency website.

About this document

Written: February 2012

Next update: April 2013

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