

Bathing water results 2011 – The United Kingdom

1. Reporting and assessment

This report gives a general overview of bathing water quality in the United Kingdom during the 2011 bathing season.

The United Kingdom reported 13 parameters under the Directive 76/160/EEC (1 Total coliforms, 2 Faecal coliforms, 3 Faecal streptococci, 4 Salmonella, 5 Enteroviruses, 6 pH, 7 Colour, 8 Mineral oils, 9 Surface-active substances, 10 Phenols, 11 Transparency, 12 Dissolved oxygen, 13 Tarry residues).

The parameters to be taken into account for assessment according to the assessment rules of the Directive 76/160/EEC are microbiological (1 Total coliforms, 2 Faecal coliforms) and physico-chemical (8 Mineral oils, 9 Surface-active substances reacting with methylene blue, 10 Phenols (phenol indices)).

The bathing waters are classified in the following categories:

- Compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the five parameters (class CI);
- Compliant with mandatory and more stringent guide values of the Directive for the five parameters (class CG);
- Not compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the five parameters (class NC);
- Banned or closed (temporarily or throughout the season) (class B);
- Insufficiently sampled (class NF);
- Not sampled (class NS).

2. Length of bathing season and number of bathing waters

The season started on 15 May or 1 June and ended on 15 or 30 September 2011 for both coastal and inland bathing waters. In Gibraltar, the bathing season lasted 205 days, from 11 April to 1 November 2011, for coastal bathing waters.

A total of 617 bathing waters were reported in the United Kingdom during the 2011 bathing season, of which 605 were coastal bathing waters (524) or in estuaries (81) and 12 were inland bathing waters (0 on rivers; 12 on lakes). Eight coastal and no inland bathing waters were added to the list. The number of inland bathing waters is very low compared to the coastal bathing waters reported because there is a tradition in the UK of swimming in the sea.

With 617 reported bathing waters the United Kingdom accounts for about 2.9 % of the reported bathing waters of the European Union.

3. Bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in the United Kingdom for the period 1990-2010 as reported in the past reporting years and for the bathing season of 2011 are presented in Figure 1. The previous reports are available on the European Commission's bathing water quality website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html; Water/ Bathing Water/ 2005-2011 reports) and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>; reports for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 bathing seasons).

The graphs show, for coastal and inland bathing waters separately:

- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the guide values (class CG, blue line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the mandatory values (class CI, green line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that do not comply with the mandatory values (class NC, red line);

- The percentage of bathing waters that are banned or closed (temporarily or throughout the season) (class B, grey line).

Table 1 shows the same information in absolute numbers and in percentages for coastal, inland and all bathing waters from 2008 on. The numbers and percentages of insufficiently sampled or not sampled bathing waters are also presented.

A map given in Appendix 1 shows the location and quality of the bathing waters.

Coastal bathing waters

In the United Kingdom, 97.4 % of the coastal bathing waters met the mandatory values in 2011. This is an increase of 0.6 % compared to the previous year. The rate of compliance with the guide values increased from 82.2 % to 83.3 %. A total of 14 bathing waters (2.3 %) were non-compliant with the mandatory values compared to 16 in 2010, which is a decrease of 0.4 %. Two bathing waters (0.3 %) were closed during the bathing season compared to three (0.5 %) in 2010.

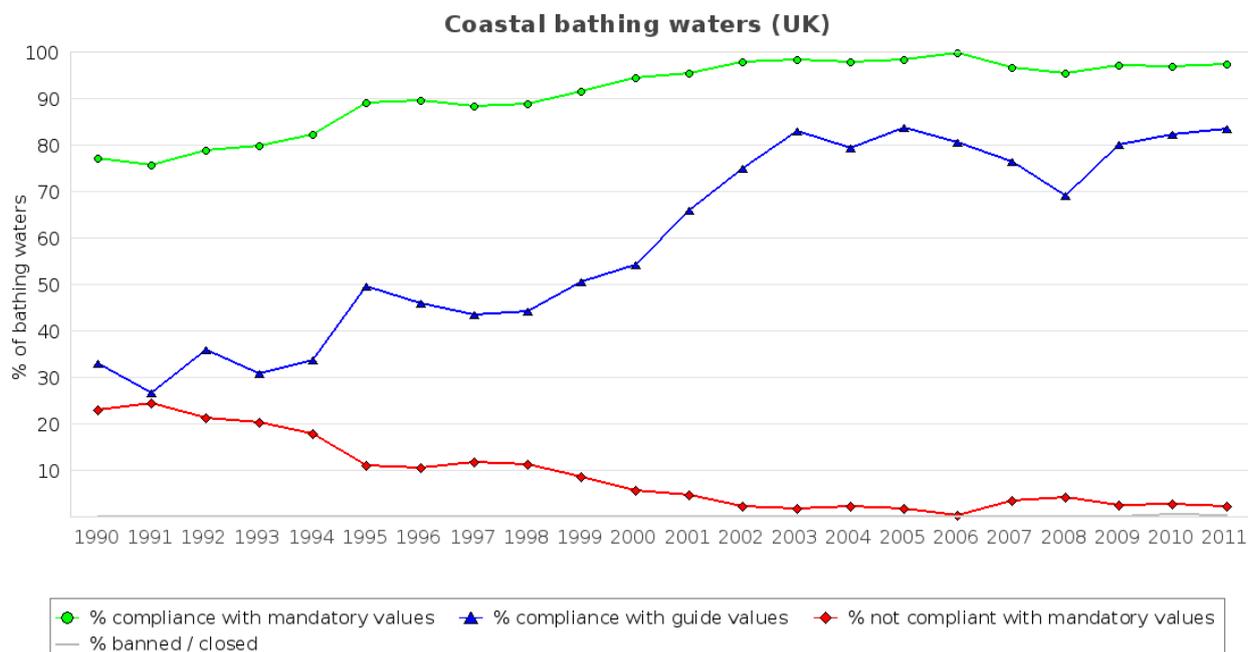
For comparison since the start of the reporting please see Figure 1.

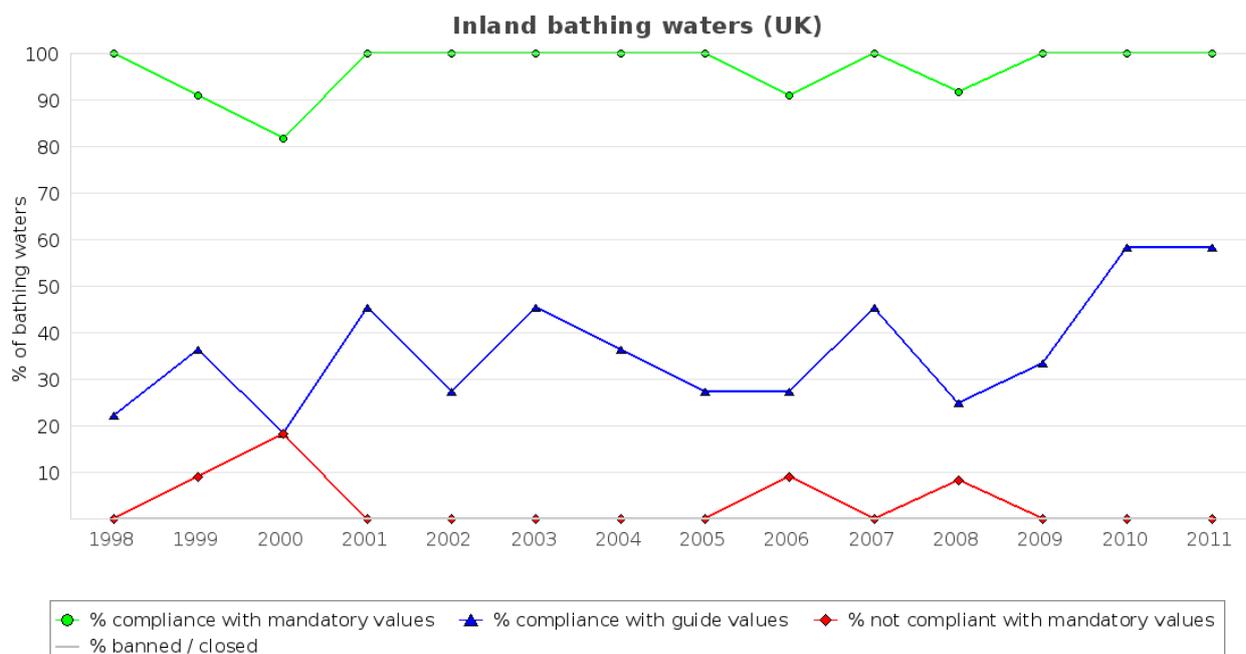
Inland bathing waters

All inland bathing waters met the mandatory values in 2011, the same as in the previous year. The rate of compliance with the guide values remained the same (58.3 %). No bathing waters (0.0 %) had to be closed during the bathing season, the same as in 2010.

For comparison since the start of the reporting please see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Results of bathing water quality in the United Kingdom from 1990 to 2011





Note: Data until 2008 is available in the previous reports at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html; Water/Bathing Water/ 2005-2011 reports.

Table 1: Results of bathing water quality in the United Kingdom from 2008 to 2011

UK												
		Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide and mandatory values*		Compliance with mandatory values		Not compliant		Banned/closed		Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	
			number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Coastal bathing waters	2008	596	412	69.1	569	95.5	24	4.0	0	0.0	3	0.5
	2009	596	477	80.0	579	97.1	14	2.3	0	0.0	3	0.5
	2010	596	490	82.2	577	96.8	16	2.7	3	0.5	0	0.0
	2011	605	504	83.3	589	97.4	14	2.3	2	0.3	0	0.0
Inland bathing waters	2008	12	3	25.0	11	91.7	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2009	12	4	33.3	12	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2010	12	7	58.3	12	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011	12	7	58.3	12	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
All bathing waters	2008	608	415	68.3	580	95.4	25	4.1	0	0.0	3	0.5
	2009	608	481	79.1	591	97.2	14	2.3	0	0.0	3	0.5
	2010	608	497	81.7	589	96.9	16	2.6	3	0.5	0	0.0
	2011	617	511	82.8	601	97.4	14	2.3	2	0.3	0	0.0

*Bathing waters which were compliant with the guide values were also compliant with the mandatory values.

In 2008 and 2009, three bathing waters were not sampled. These were all closures because of access problems and engineering work.

4. Important information as provided by the United Kingdom authorities

The United Kingdom authorities have reported for some bathing waters additional information (Table 2). Additional information is also provided in two separate documents

(http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/bathing/envtw7zcg/Updated_Supplementary_file_UK.doc,
http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/bathing/envtvmag/UK_General_Information_2011.doc;
restricted access to public).

A list of bathing waters including reasons for changes has been already reported in accordance with the Directive 2006/7/EC

(http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/nbwd/envtczrg/UK_bathing_waters_2011_season.xls).

Table 2: Information on management measures for the 2011 season as reported by the United Kingdom authorities

Unique Identification Code of Bathing water	Commune	Name of Bathing Water	Type of Water	Management Measures
UKD4200 42500	BLACKPOOL	BLACKPOOL NORTH	Sea water	Closed to the public during 2011. Water quality could not be sampled. It has been closed because of a major engineering project on the seafront.
UKJ2203 14700	LEWES	NEWHAVEN	Sea water	Closed to the public during 2011. Water quality could not be sampled. It has been closed by the private owner and the Town Council has taken legal action to try to enforce its reopening. There has been no final decision about Newhaven and it remains closed.

In 2011 the United Kingdom authorities provided the links to profiles for the UK bathing waters:

- England and Wales: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/127626.aspx>
- Scotland: http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/bathing_waters/bathing_water_profiles.aspx
- Northern Ireland: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/quality/bathingqualityni/bathing_water_profiles.htm
- Gibraltar: <http://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/environment/environment#publications>

5. More information on bathing water quality in Europe

Of the more than 21 000 bathing areas monitored throughout the European Union in 2011, two thirds were in coastal waters and the rest in rivers and lakes. The largest numbers of coastal bathing waters can be found in Italy, Greece, France and Spain, while Germany and France have the highest numbers of inland bathing waters.

During recent years, including the 2011 bathing season, majority of Member States have adjusted their monitoring programmes to meet the requirements of the new bathing water directive (2006/7/EC). Luxembourg was the first country to report under this Directive in 2007. Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden started to report under the new directive in 2008. Malta and the Netherlands started to report in 2009. Austria, Belgium - Walloon Region, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia reported under the new directive for the first time in 2010, while Belgium - Flemish Region, Bulgaria, Ireland and Poland reported under this Directive for the first time in 2011. Historical data of two microbiological parameters, *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci were sent by Sweden (2005-2007), Luxembourg (2006), Malta (2006-2008), Belgium - Walloon Region (2007-2009), Belgium - Flemish Region (2008-2010), Greece (2007-2009), Hungary (2007) and Portugal (2007-2009).

Three non-EU countries, Croatia, Montenegro and Switzerland have reported monitoring results under the new directive. Croatia and Switzerland started to report in 2009, while Montenegro reported for the first time in 2010. Switzerland sent data on *Escherichia coli* for all bathing waters but only for some data on intestinal enterococci.

For the 2011 season, bathing water quality has been assessed under the new bathing water directive in 16 European countries. This is 13 more than for 2010 bathing season. Only three countries - the Czech Republic, Romania and the United Kingdom - are still assessed under the old bathing water directive. Eleven countries are assessed under the transition period rules.

Overall in 2011, 92.1 % of bathing waters in the EU met the minimum water quality standards set by the bathing water directives. Bathing water quality increased at 0.6 % of sites in 2011 compared to 2010. The proportion of bathing waters with excellent quality (or complying with the more stringent guide values) increased by 3.5 percentage points compared to 2010, reaching 77.1 %. The share of non-compliant bathing waters was 1.8 %, which was a 0.1 percentage point increase from 2010. In 2011, 207 bathing waters were banned or closed (1 %), which was 57 more than in the 2010 bathing season.

More information on bathing water quality in the European Member States, including the EU summary report, the reports for 27 Member States, Croatia, Montenegro and Switzerland, can be found on the European Commission's bathing water quality website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html) and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website

(<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>). The Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia (IWRS), a partner in the EEA European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters (ETC/ICM) has produced the reports for the bathing seasons from the 2008 bathing season on. Countries have collaborated in the assessment of bathing water quality and supplied additional information when needed.

Interactive information on bathing water quality

The bathing water section of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), which is accessible at the EEA bathing water website, allows users to view the bathing water quality at more than 22 000 coastal beaches and inland sites across Europe. Users can check bathing water quality on an interactive map or can download data for a selected country or region and make comparisons with previous years.

The WISE map viewer (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/interactive/bathing>) is an online map viewer for visualising European spatial water data. It includes a lot of interactive layers, allowing water themes to be visualised at different scales. Broad resolutions display the aggregated data by Member State. At finer resolutions the locations of monitoring stations are displayed.

The WISE bathing water quality data viewer (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/bathing-water-data-viewer>) combines text and graphical visualisation, providing a quick check on locations and statistics on the quality of coastal and inland bathing waters. It also documents how bathing waters have changed throughout Europe in recent years and provides a full summary of Europe's bathing water quality. Users can search information at three spatial levels - country, region and province - and observe specific bathing water locations on Google Earth, Google maps or Bing maps.

The Eye on Earth - Water Watch application (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/explore-interactive-maps/eye-on-earth>) allows users to zoom in on a section of the coast, riverbank or lake, both in street map or, where available, bird's eye viewing formats. A 'traffic-light' indicator (red, amber, green) of bathing water quality, based on the official bathing water data, is put alongside the ratings of people who have visited the bathing site, including any comments added by users. For historical data Water Watch uses a simplified index of bathing water quality data. The Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland (one municipality), Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, England and Wales were also sending near real time information on bathing water quality to the Eye on Earth application. The bathing water quality for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Scotland and Northern Ireland was also presented on the Eye on Earth - Water Watch.

National and local information on bathing water quality

In order to make information to the public more effective, all EU countries have national or local web portals with detailed information for each bathing water. Websites generally include a map search function and public access to the monitoring results both in real time and for previous seasons.

Information on EU bathing water legislation

EU Member States will have to comply with the stricter and more ambitious requirements laid out in Directive 2006/7/EC by 2015 at the latest. The new legislation requires more effective monitoring and management of bathing waters, greater public participation and improved information dissemination. By March 2011 Member States have to have established bathing water profiles. More on the new legislation can be found on the European Commission's websites and on <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:064:0037:0051:EN:PDF>.

Appendix 1

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2011 bathing season in the United Kingdom

