

Finnish bathing water quality in 2018



Finland 

June 2019

Photo: © Peter Kristensen/EEA



Bathing Water Quality in the Season 2018

Finland

Under the provisions of the [Bathing Water Directive](#), more than 21 000 bathing waters are monitored in Europe each season. The monitoring data and other information regarding bathing water management are reported to the European Environment Agency by 30 reporting countries in Europe, to be assessed for the annual European report and more detailed national reports.

1. BWD reporting in the season 2018

In the season 2018, Finland identified and reported **301 bathing waters**, which is 1.4% of all bathing waters in Europe. One bathing water in Finland has been newly identified for the season 2018. Two bathing waters reported in the preceding seasons have not been reported any more in 2018.

Bathing waters of Finland in the season 2018		Bathing water quality in the season 2018	
Total reported	301	Excellent	255 (84.7%)
Coastal	76	Good	20 (6.6%)
Inland	225	Sufficient	7 (2.3%)
		Poor	1 (0.3%)
Total reported samples	1255	Not classified	18 (6%)

The bathing waters are quality classified according to the two microbiological parameters (Escherichia coli and Intestinal enterococci) defined in the Bathing Water Directive. 93.7% of reported bathing waters are in line with the minimum quality standards of the Directive, thus classified “sufficient” or better. One bathing water is of “poor” quality.

More detailed information on bathing waters of Finland is available at the national bathing water portal <http://www.valvira.fi/ymparistoterveys/terveydensuojelu/uimavesi>.

2. BWD monitoring

Each bathing water that is identified by the reporting country needs to have a monitoring calendar established before the bathing season. The monitoring calendar requirements can be summarised as follows: (1) a pre-season sample is to be taken shortly before the start of each bathing season; (2) no fewer than four (alternatively, three for specific cases) samples are to be taken and analysed per bathing season; and (3) an interval between sampling dates never exceeds one month.

From the reported data, the assessment also designates effective implementation of the monitoring calendar. In Finland, monitoring calendar for 2018 was not implemented at one bathing water.

Table 1: Bathing waters in 2018 according to implementation of the monitoring calendar

	Count	Share of total [%]
Monitoring calendar implemented A bathing water satisfies monitoring calendar conditions listed above.	300	99.70%
Monitoring calendar not implemented A bathing water does not satisfy monitoring calendar conditions listed above. They may be quality-classified if enough samples are available in the last assessment period.	1	0.30%

In addition to the monitoring calendar, management specifics of the last assessment period of four years are also assessed. The status primarily indicates whether the complete dataset of four seasons is available, but also points out the reasons as to why the bathing waters do not have the complete last assessment period dataset. The latter may indicate developing conditions at the site – most importantly, whether the bathing water has been newly identified within the period, or any changes have occurred that are likely to affect the classification of the bathing water.

Table 2: Management specifics in the last assessment period of 2015–2018

	Count	Share of total [%]
Continuously monitored A bathing water has been monitored in each bathing season in the last assessment period.	294	97.70%
Newly identified A bathing water was identified for the first time within the last assessment period. Such status is assigned until the complete four-year dataset is available, i.e. for three years after the first reporting.	3	1%
Quality changes A bathing water was subject to changes described in BWD Art. 4.4 within the last assessment period. Such status is assigned until the complete four-year dataset of samples taken after changes took effect is available.	2	0.70%
Monitoring gap A bathing water was not monitored for at least one season in the last assessment period. No quality	2	0.70%

classification is made if no samples are reported for the most recent season.		
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3. Bathing water quality

3.1 Coastal bathing waters

Coastal bathing waters are situated on the sea or transitional water coastline, with respective parameter thresholds defined in Annex I of the Directive. They are subject to more strict thresholds than the inland bathing waters. Quality trend in Finland for the period 1990–2018 if historical data are available is shown in Figure 1. Count of bathing waters by quality class for the last assessment period 2015–2018 is given in Annex I.

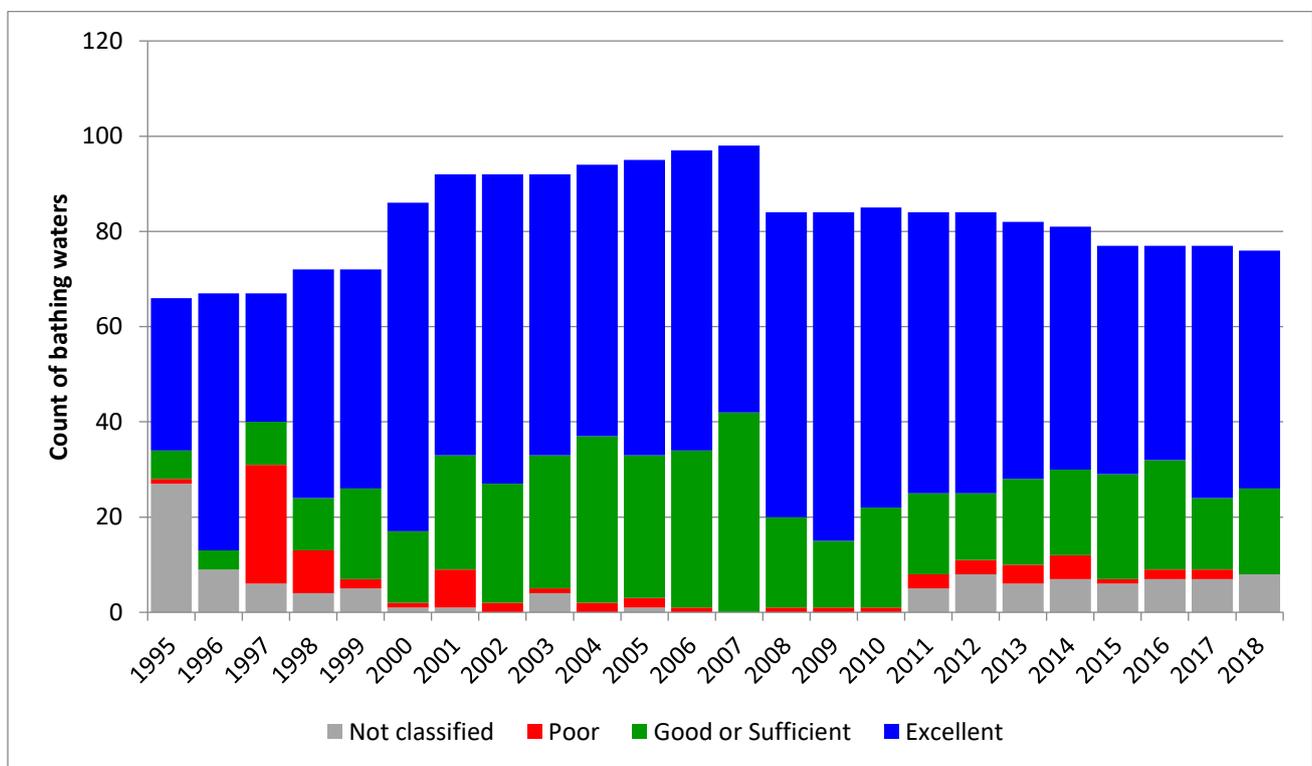


Figure 1: Trend of coastal bathing water quality in Finland. Notes: Each column represents an absolute count of bathing waters in the season. Quality classes “good” and “sufficient” are merged for comparability with classification of the preceding Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC.

3.2 Inland bathing waters

Inland bathing waters are situated at rivers and lakes, featuring fresh water and with respective parameter thresholds defined in Annex I of the Directive. Quality trend in Finland for the period 1990–2018 if historical data are available is shown in Figure 2. Count of bathing waters by quality class for the last assessment period 2015–2018 is given in Annex I.

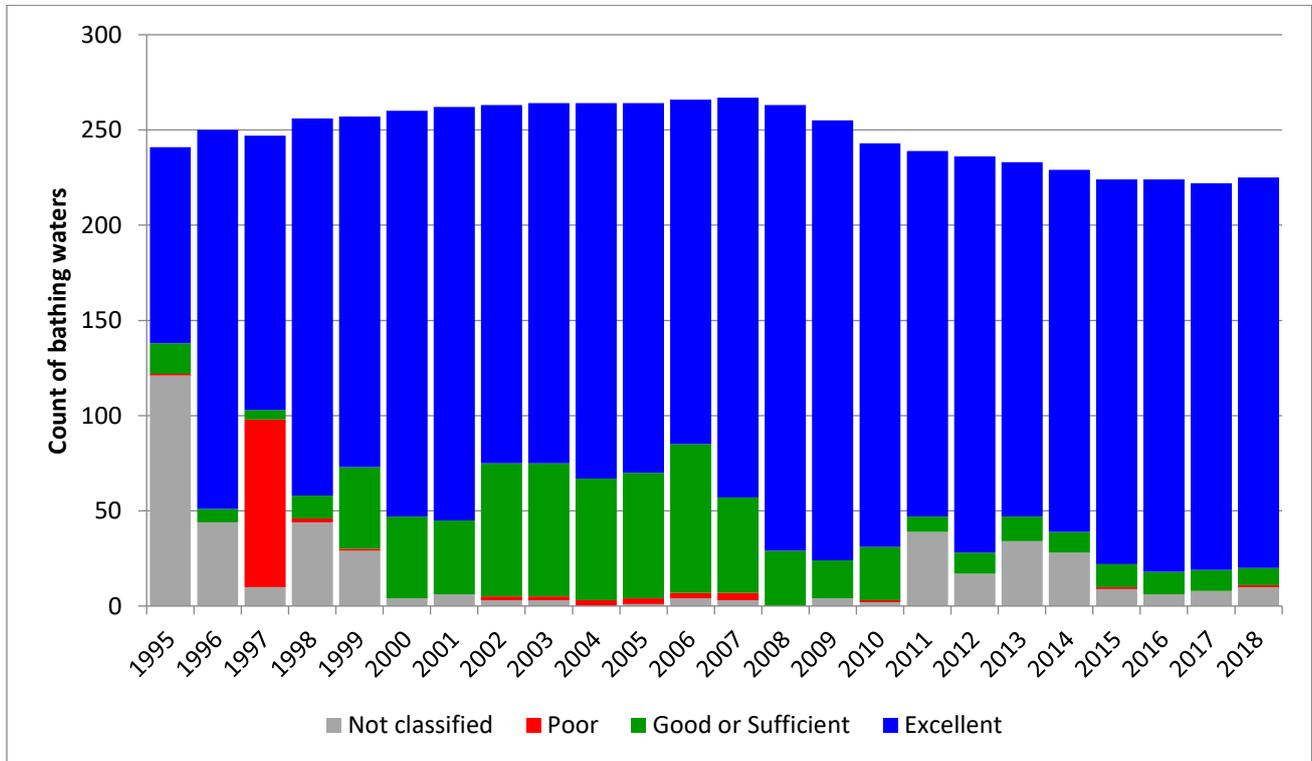


Figure 2: Trend of inland bathing water quality in Finland. Notes: Each column represents an absolute count of bathing waters in the season. Quality classes “good” and “sufficient” are merged for comparability with classification of the preceding Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC.

4. Bathing water management in Finland

In addition to monitoring data, reporting countries also provide information on bathing water management in the country. The information is used to exchange good practices, discuss issues on the European level, and understand the specifics of implementation of the Directive.

Health protection authorities within municipalities are responsible to monitor bathing water quality in Finland. Besides measurement of bacteria indicating faecal contamination, bathing waters are also inspected for cyanobacteria and blue-green algae. Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) controls and coordinates municipal health protection authorities, research methods etc. supervises municipal health protection authorities in controlling compliance with the Health Protection Act. The objective of the Act is to maintain and promote the health of people. In addition, it is aimed at preventing, reducing and removing factors in the environment that might present health hazards. THL (National Institute for Health and Welfare) is responsible for health-related issues, research and reporting under the BWD.

General information including information on quality, legislation, monitoring and assessment is available at the Bathing water section of Valvira webpage at:

<https://www.valvira.fi/ymparistoterveys/terveydensuojelu/uimavesi>

During the bathing season, the beach manager, in collaboration with the municipal health protection authority, must be informed on many issues both on the website and on the beach. Bathing water profiles are prepared and include the quality class of the beach, the description of the characteristics of bathing water and the environment and the results of the research on water quality.

At several bathing waters, because of increased concentration of *E. coli* or intestinal enterococci or occurrence of cyanobacteria, additional information was given to the public (including warning and advice against bathing at the bathing site, on the Internet, social media and in local newspaper), additional monitoring was carried out and in some cases managements measures were taken to find out the reason for the increased microbial numbers and to improve the quality of bathing water (such as additional sampling and monitoring including storm water samples, investigations of household sewers and renovation of the beach area and the bottom of the shore, etc.).

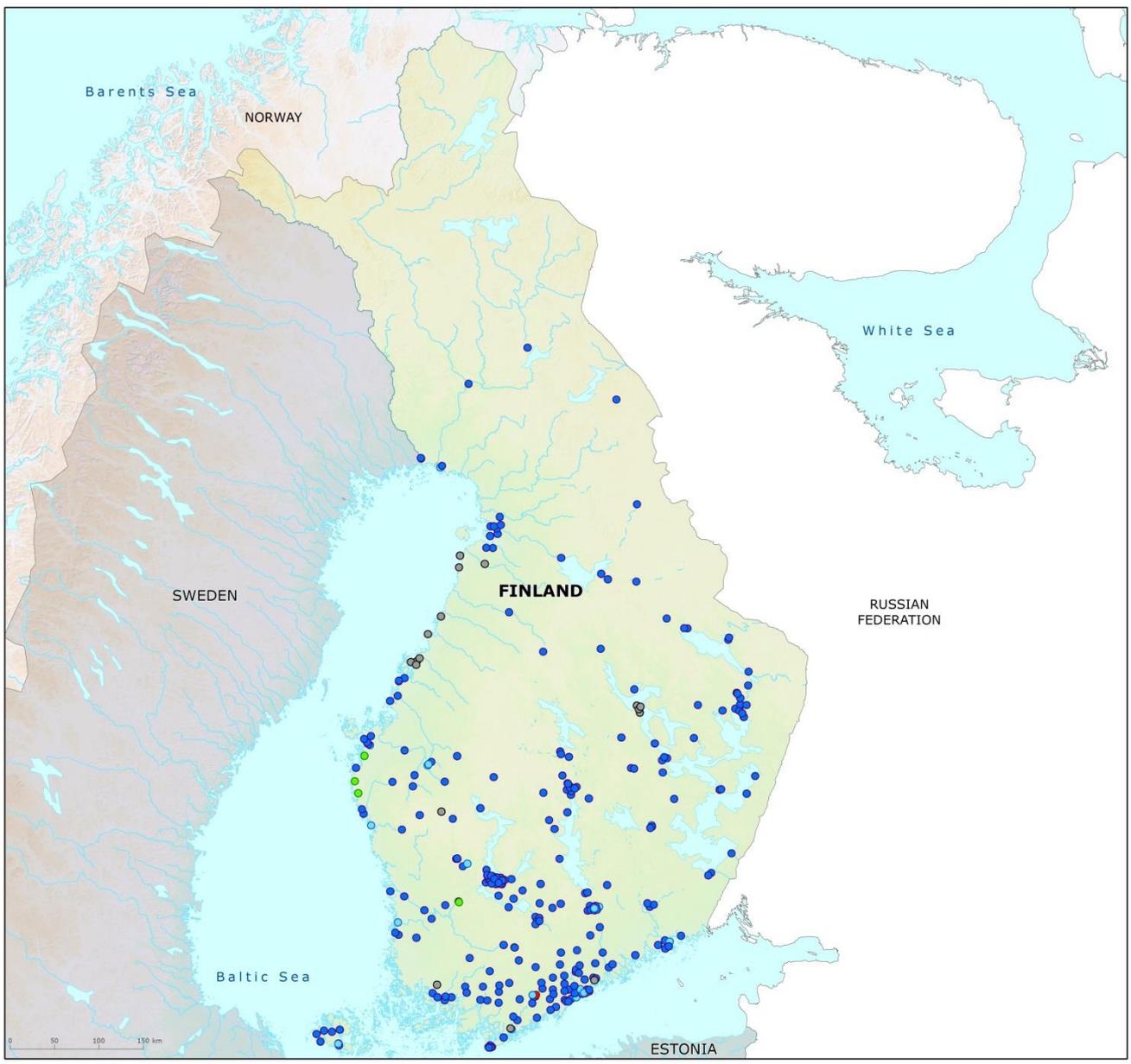
Annex I Bathing water quality in Finland in 2015–2018

Table 3: Bathing water quality by water category and season

		Total count of bathing waters	Excellent		Good		Sufficient		Poor		Not classified	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Coastal	2015	77	48	62.3	17	22.1	5	6.5	1	1.3	6	7.8
	2016	77	45	58.4	17	22.1	6	7.8	2	2.6	7	9.1
	2017	77	53	68.8	11	14.3	4	5.2	2	2.6	7	9.1
	2018	76	50	65.8	12	15.8	6	7.9	0	0.0	8	10.5
Inland	2015	224	202	90.2	11	4.9	1	0.4	1	0.4	9	4.0
	2016	224	206	92.0	11	4.9	1	0.4	0	0.0	6	2.7
	2017	222	203	91.4	10	4.5	1	0.5	0	0.0	8	3.6
	2018	225	205	91.1	8	3.6	1	0.4	1	0.4	10	4.4
Total	2015	301	250	83.1	28	9.3	6	2.0	2	0.7	15	5.0
	2016	301	251	83.4	28	9.3	7	2.3	2	0.7	13	4.3
	2017	299	256	85.6	21	7.0	5	1.7	2	0.7	15	5.0
	2018	301	255	84.7	20	6.6	7	2.3	1	0.3	18	6.0

Annex II Bathing water quality map

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2018 bathing season in Finland



Bathing water quality

- Excellent water quality
- Good water quality
- Sufficient water quality
- Poor water quality
- Quality classification not possible
- No data
- Outside data coverage (data available, not presented on the map)

Source: National boundaries: EEA; Large rivers and lakes: EEA, WFD Article 3; Bathing waters data and coordinates: Finnish authorities; Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM): EEA.