

# Bathing Water Quality in Ireland

A report for the year 2025



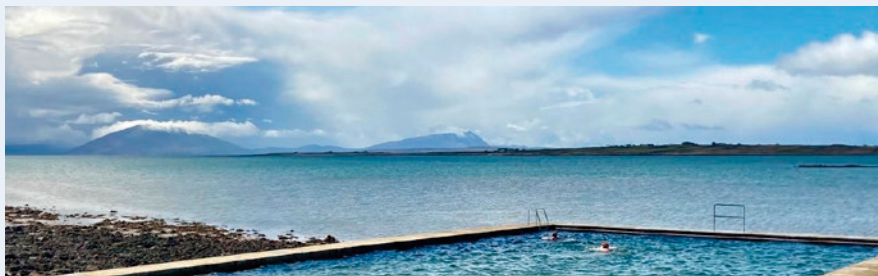
# Key Messages for 2025

## The majority of bathing waters have Excellent or Good water quality

- ▲ 98% of the 153 identified bathing waters met or exceeded the minimum required standard of Sufficient.
- ▲ 120 bathing waters (78%) were classified as Excellent quality, a decrease of two since 2024.
- ▲ One bathing water was classified as Poor (down from two in 2024) and will have swimming restrictions for the 2026 season. This was Dún Laoghaire Baths (Co. Dublin), which was officially identified and classified for the first time in 2025.

## What is impacting bathing waters?

- ▲ Urban wastewater was identified by local authorities as the most common cause of incidents in 2025. Other reported causes included agricultural runoff, contamination from animals and birds, and pollution entering the surface water collection system through misconnections or runoff from urban areas.
- ▲ A higher frequency of intense rainfall events throughout the bathing water season in 2025 compared with 2024 led to almost twice as many bathing water warnings (205 in 2025, up from 113 in 2024). Heavy rainfall can cause wastewater overflows to activate and increase runoff from agricultural land and urban areas, leading to short-term deteriorations in water quality.



Belmullet Shore Road, Co. Mayo

## Protecting our bathing waters

- ▲ More frequent heavy rainfall in 2025 resulted in increased pressure on bathing waters. Further actions to protect bathing water quality will be needed to build climate resilience into the future.
- ▲ Uisce Éireann must continue to improve the operation, management and maintenance of treatment plants and networks that impact on bathing waters.
- ▲ Targeted measures to address agricultural runoff should be prioritised in catchments where local authorities have identified it is as a pressure impacting bathing water quality.

## Before you swim

- ▲ Always check [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie) and the signage at the beach for information on the latest water quality and swimming restrictions.
- ▲ Remember to follow [the 48 hour rule](#) and avoid contact with the water for at least 48 hours after heavy rainfall to protect your health.



Dunmorán Beach, Co. Sligo

# Introduction

This report outlines bathing water quality in Ireland during 2025. Local authorities are responsible for monitoring and managing bathing waters. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assesses bathing water quality information provided by local authorities for the beaches under their management.

Each year, local authorities take samples of bathing waters just before, and during the bathing season. In Ireland, the season currently runs from 1 June to 15 September at a minimum each year. Each local authority determines the season length for the beaches in its area and all beaches had the same minimum season length in 2025. To protect bather health, the EPA classifies water quality at beaches and lakes as Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor. The rolling classification is based upon the most recent four years of microbiological data (E. coli and Intestinal Enterococci).

Our national bathing water website, [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie), provides the latest information on more than 200 bathing waters that are monitored during the bathing season. Swimming in Ireland can be a year-round activity in some locations; however, the classification of bathing water quality relates only to the bathing season.

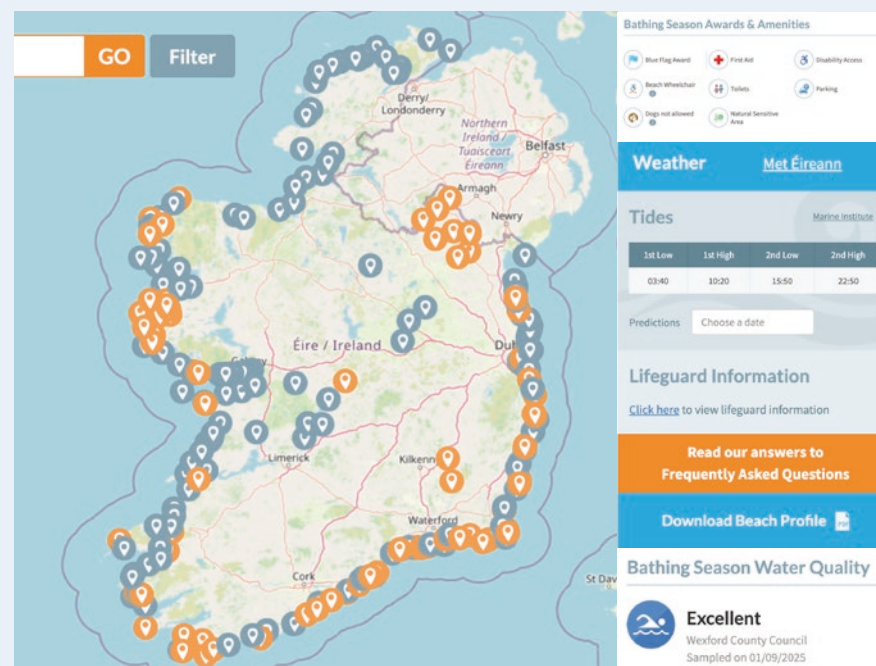
## Identification of Bathing Waters

In 2025, 153 identified bathing waters were monitored and managed under the Bathing Water Regulations in Ireland, an increase of two from 2024. The public can propose new bathing waters to local authorities for identification each year. Local authorities consider several factors when identifying bathing waters, including water quality, level of use, safety, access and facilities.

Contact your local authority to find out how to participate. Further guidance is available on [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie).

Belmullet Tidal Pool (Co. Mayo) and Dún Laoghaire Baths (Co. Dublin) were newly identified in 2025. Dún Laoghaire Baths had sufficient qualifying samples to be classified for the first time in 2025. Belmullet Tidal Pool requires at least one more season of sampling to receive a classification.

One bathing water, Coolmaine (Co. Cork) did not receive a classification in 2025 as no sampling was carried out on health and safety grounds. This beach has been risk assessed by the local authority and Water Safety Ireland and has been deemed unsafe for swimming and sampling due to shifting channels causing a risk. Coolmaine will be removed from the list of identified bathing waters in 2026.



Visit [beaches.ie](http://beaches.ie) for access to Ireland's bathing water information

# Bathing Water Quality in 2025

In 2025, of the 153 identified bathing waters assessed, 150 (98%) met or exceeded the minimum required standard of Sufficient. A total of 120 bathing waters (78%) were of Excellent quality, a decrease from 122 (81%) in 2024. One bathing water did not meet the minimum standard (Dún Laoghaire Baths) and was classified as Poor. This bathing water will have a season long restriction notice “advice not to swim” in place for 2026.

Overall, summer 2025 experienced higher rainfall than 2024. Several periods of heavy rain from June to August led to an increase in incidents reporting nationally.

This highlights the need to build climate resilience into the management of pollution from pressures driven by heavy rainfall, including overflows from urban wastewater systems and runoff from agricultural land and urban areas. It also emphasises the need for the Local Authorities as the beach managers, to have strong systems in place to warn bathers when there may be risks to public health.

**Table 1: Changes in bathing water classification between 2024 and 2025**

Classification	Number of bathing waters in 2024	Number of bathing waters in 2025
Excellent	122	120
Good	19	23
Sufficient	4	7
Poor	2	1
New/changes/unclassified	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>153</b>

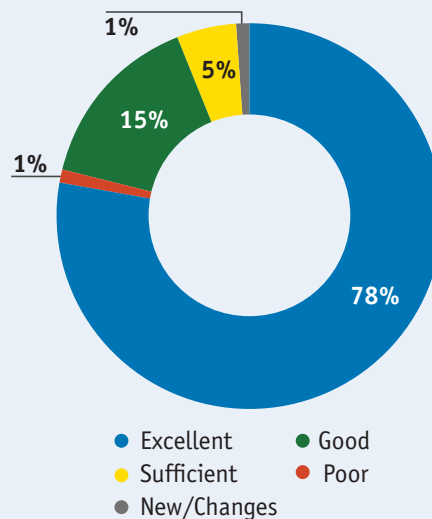
## Pollution incidents

In 2025, the EPA was notified of 79 pollution incidents that resulted in the temporary closure of bathing waters, up from 34 in 2024. The majority were due to the presence of E.Coli and/or Intestinal Enterococci in sample results (32 incidents). Bathing waters were also closed as a precaution following overflows in the sewer network (47 incidents).

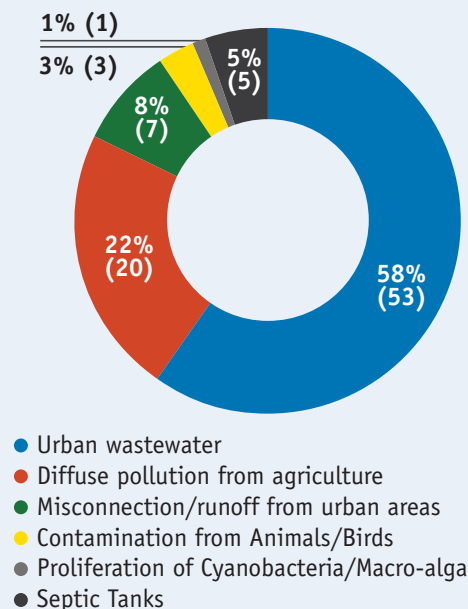
## Prior warnings of potential pollution events

When heavy rainfall is forecast, many local authorities display a notice giving a ‘prior warning’ of potential pollution events to protect bathers’ health. In 2025, there were 126 ‘prior warning’ notices, 47 more than in 2024. 67% of these were reported during June and August, which had the most incidences of heavy rainfall during the 2025 bathing season.

**Bathing water quality in Ireland in 2025**

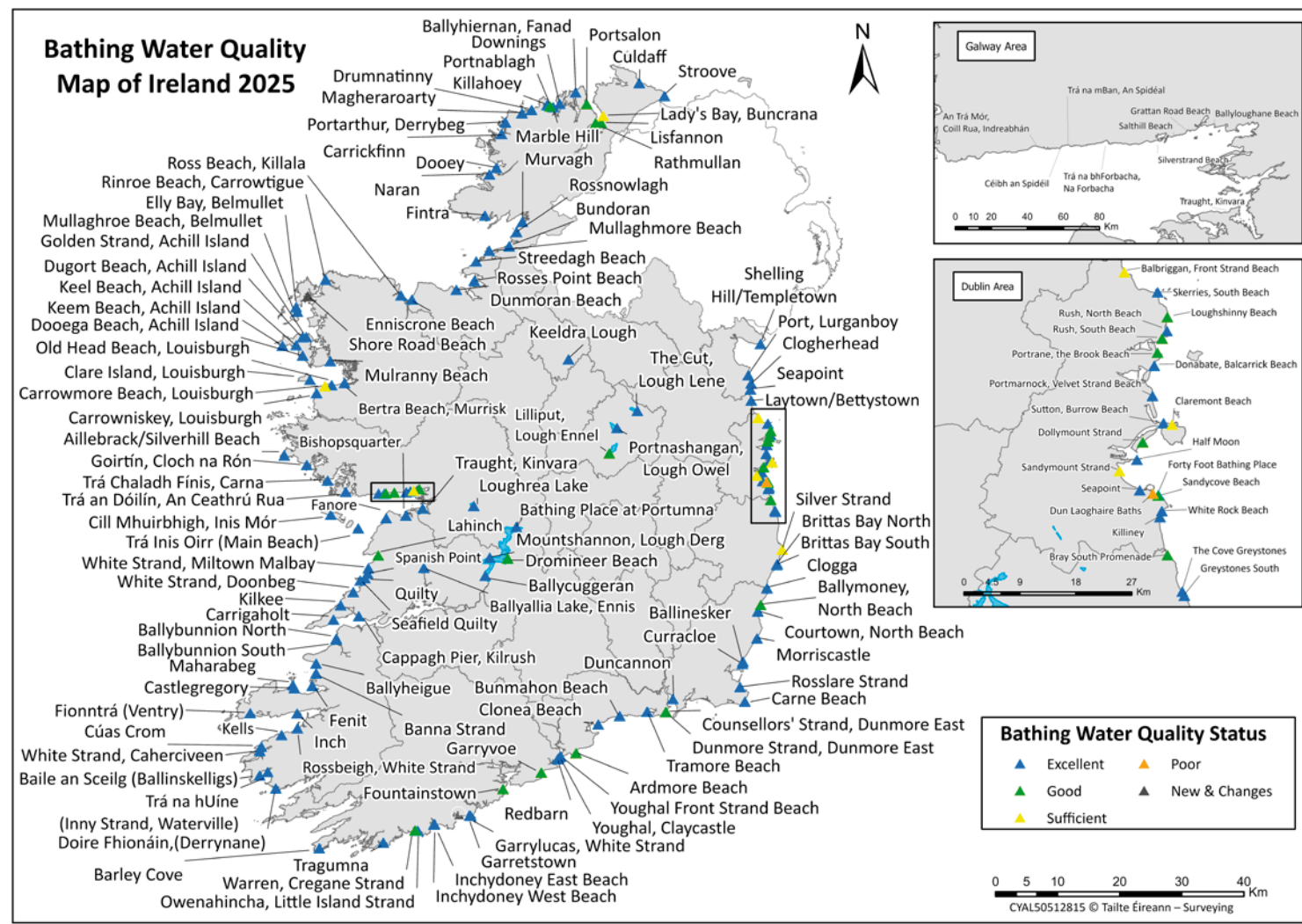


**Likely causes of reported incidents in 2025**



# Bathing Water Quality Map of Ireland 2025

Interactive maps with details on individual beaches can be viewed at [beaches.ie](https://www.beaches.ie)



[Bathing Water Classifications for 2022 to 2025](#)

# Bathing Waters with Poor Water Quality

One bathing water (DLR Baths) was classified as having Poor water quality in 2025, one fewer than in 2024. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has an ongoing management plan in place to address issues at this bathing water. More information can be found on the relevant bathing water page at [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie).

## Dún Laoghaire Baths (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council)

Dún Laoghaire Baths was first identified as a bathing water in 2025, although monitoring has been carried out in this location since 2023. 16 samples were taken in 2025, 14 of which were Excellent and two were Poor quality. The main sources of pollution at this bathing water are sewage overflows which contaminate the bathing water, and dog fouling left on the beach.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is a member of Dublin Bay Bathing Water Taskforce which was established in 2019 to help identify and address pollution sources impacting on bathing water quality in Dublin Bay. The council are also involved in a major research project (Acclimatize II) to identify sources of pollution impacting the bathing water quality in the Dublin bay area.

The 'Leave only Paw Prints' initiative, and subsequent social media campaign, continue to raise awareness of the impact of dog fouling on bathing water quality. The Council are working with Uisce Éireann to implement measures that provide timely notifications of overflow events and, in the medium to long term, to mitigate the number and volume of overflows. This work will be ongoing.



Sandymount Strand, Co. Dublin


## Improvements to bathing waters that were previously Poor

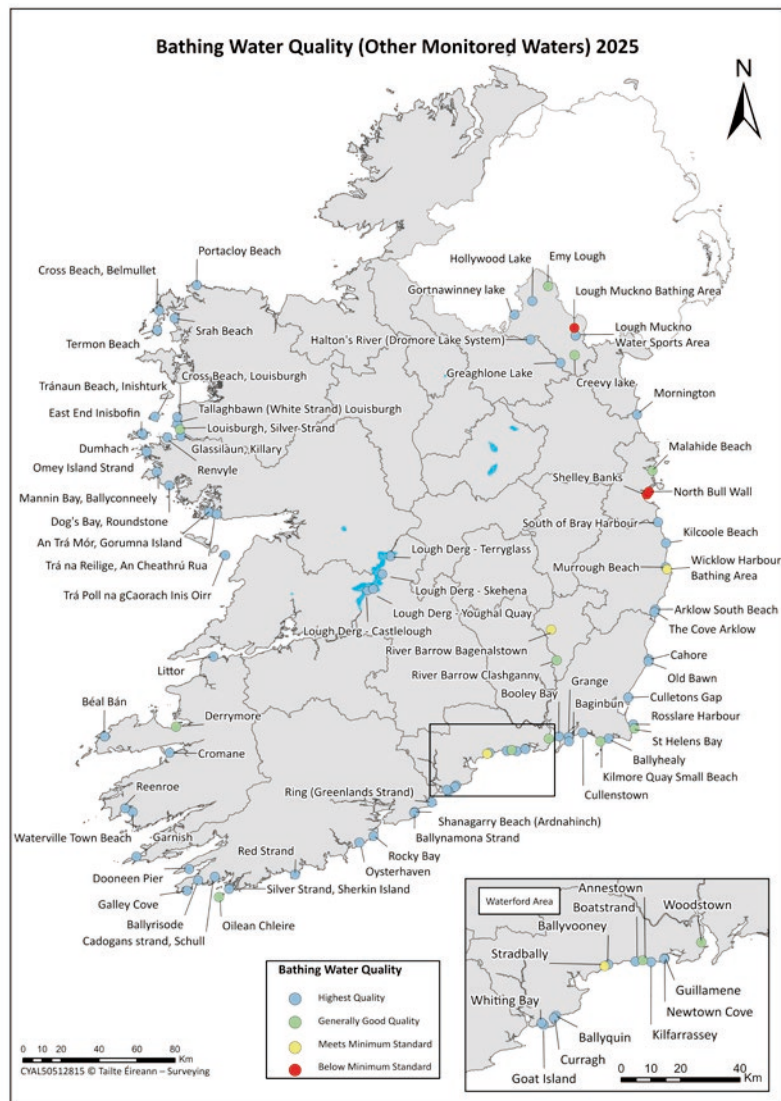
Two beaches, Sandymount Strand (Dublin City Council) and Lady's Bay, Buncrana (Donegal County Council), previously had Poor water quality. Special Management Plans were put in place to identify and fix pollution problems. The local authorities have reported that the efforts carried out in 2024 have been successful, and both beaches showed improvements in sample results. Both beaches received a Sufficient water quality classification for the 2025 season. Swimming restrictions have now been lifted, and regular testing is ongoing.

At Lady's Bay, Buncrana, Uisce Éireann undertook a major upgrade of the collection system to improve performance and increase storage capacity for wastewater collected during periods of heavy rainfall. All samples taken during the 2025 season met or exceeded minimum quality criteria.

At Sandymount Strand, significant ongoing work is being carried out to identify and resolve misconnections from domestic plumbing systems linked directly to watercourses, and sewage overflows, which contaminate streams flowing to the bathing water. Programmes to identify and resolve misconnections are ongoing by the local authority. Uisce Éireann has made significant improvements to the wastewater network, and further work is continuing to address urban wastewater pressures. Dog fouling left on the beach is also a common issue. The 'Leave only Paw Prints' initiative is also active in Sandymount. As a result, there were no Poor quality sample results in 2025.

# Bathing Water Quality – Other Monitored Waters 2025

Interactive maps with details on individual beaches can be viewed at 



## Other Monitored Waters

‘Other monitored waters’ is a term that applies to generally smaller and less frequented beaches that are monitored by local authorities as a public health measure. These beaches are not formally managed under the Bathing Water Regulations. The EPA classify the bathing water quality for other monitored waters where information is available. Water quality information for most of these can be found on [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie).



Silver Strand, Co Mayo



Baginbun, Co. Wexford



The bathing water statistics are certified under the Irish Statistical System Code of Practice which provides the necessary assurance that official statistics produced by Public Sector Bodies are compiled in an objective & independent manner and in accordance with sound statistical & data management principles.

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Cover Photo: Doire Fhionáin (Derrynane), Co. Kerry

Back Cover Photo: Curraclloe Beach, Co. Wexford

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