

EA: Water Quality

Bathing Water Quality

in England and Wales, 1999

A Summary Report



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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EA: Water Quality - Box 2



ENVIRONMENT
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Bathing Water Quality in

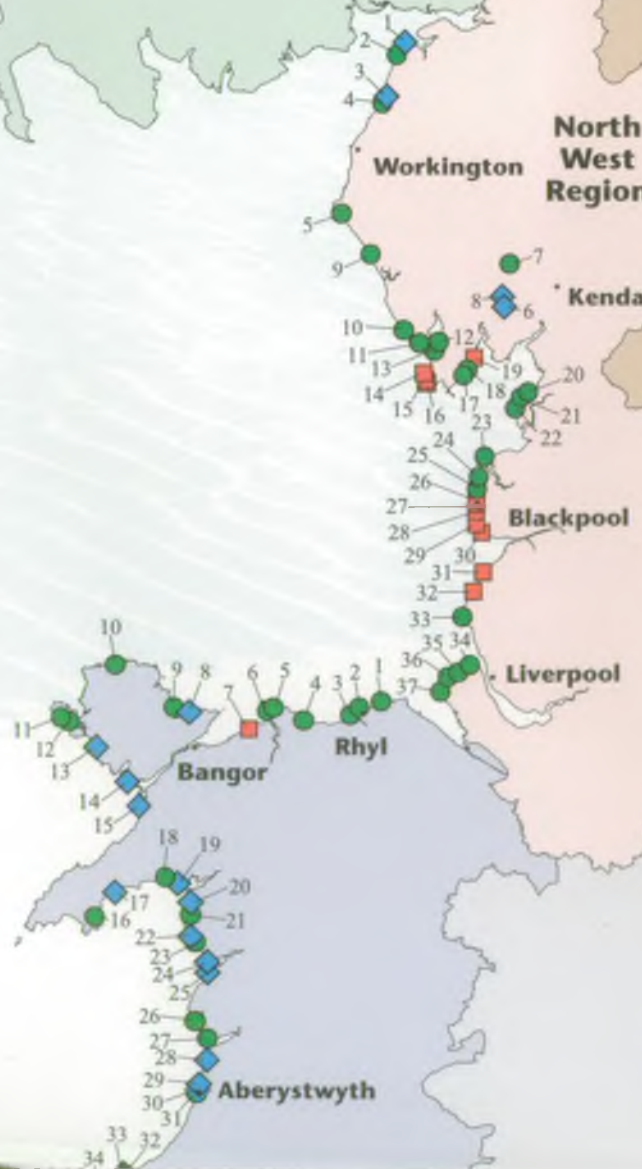
North West Region

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ◆ 1 Skinburness | ● 20 Morecambe North |
| ● 2 Silloth | ● 21 Morecambe South |
| ◆ 3 Allonby | ● 22 Heysham Half Moon Bay |
| ● 4 Allonby South | ● 23 Fleetwood |
| ● 5 St Bees | ● 24 Cleveleys |
| ◆ 6 Windermere, Fellfoot | ● 25 Bispham |
| ● 7 Windermere, Millerground Landing | ■ 26 Blackpool North |
| ◆ 8 Windermere, Lakeside YMCA | ■ 27 Blackpool Central |
| ● 9 Seascale | ■ 28 Blackpool South |
| ● 10 Silecroft | ■ 29 St Annes North |
| ● 11 Haverigg | ■ 30 St Annes |
| ● 12 Askam-in-Furness | ■ 31 Southport |
| ● 13 Roan Head | ■ 32 Ainsdale |
| ■ 14 Walney West Shore | ● 33 Formby |
| ■ 15 Walney Sandy Gap | ● 34 New Brighton |
| ■ 16 Walney Biggar Bank | ● 35 Moreton |
| ● 17 Newbiggin | ● 36 Meols |
| ● 18 Aldingham | ● 37 West Kirby |
| ■ 19 Bardsea | |

Environment Agency Wales

- 1 Prestatyn
- 2 Rhyl
- 3 Kinmel Bay (Sandy Cove)
- 4 Colwyn Bay
- 5 Llandudno North Shore
- 6 Llandudno West Shore
- 7 Penmaenmawr
- ◆ 8 Llanddona
- 9 Benllech
- 10 Cemaes
- 11 Porth Dafarch
- 12 Trearddur Bay
- ◆ 13 Rhosneigr
- ◆ 14 Llanddwyn
- ◆ 15 Morfa Dinlle
- 16 Abersoch
- ◆ 17 Pwllheli
- 18 Criccieth
- ◆ 19 Morfa Bychan
- ◆ 20 Harlech
- 21 Llandanwg
- ◆ 22 Dyffryn (Llanendwyn)
- 23 Tal-y-Bont
- ◆ 24 Barmouth
- 25 Fairbourne
- 26 Tywyn
- 27 Aberdyfi
- ◆ 28 Borth
- ◆ 29 Clarach South
- ◆ 30 Aberystwyth North
- 31 Aberystwyth South
- 32 Traeth Gwyn New Quay
- ◆ 33 Newquay Harbour
- 34 Llangrannog
- ◆ 35 Tresaith
- ◆ 36 Aberporth
- ◆ 37 Poppit Sands
- ◆ 38 Newport
- ◆ 39 Whitesands
- ◆ 40 Caerfai
- ◆ 41 Newgale
- ◆ 42 Broadhaven
- ◆ 43 Marloes
- ◆ 44 Broadhaven South
- ◆ 45 Freshwater East *
- ◆ 46 Manorbier
- ◆ 47 Lydstep
- ◆ 48 Tenby South
- ◆ 49 Castle Beach, Tenby *
- 50 Tenby North
- 51 Saundersfoot
- ◆ 52 Amroth
- ◆ 53 Pendine
- ◆ 54 Pembrey
- ◆ 55 Rhossili
- ◆ 56 Port Eynon Bay
- ◆ 57 Oxwich Bay
- ◆ 58 Caswell Bay
- ◆ 59 Langland Bay
- ◆ 60 Llanstadde Bay

- ◆ Bathing waters which meet the guideline coliform and faecal streptococci standards are indicated by a blue diamond.
- Those which met the mandatory coliform standards are indicated by a green circle.
- Those which did not meet the mandatory coliform standards are indicated by a red square.
- Those where the bathing water has been closed for a year due to health and safety reasons (eg.unstable cliffs) are indicated by a black circle.
- * New bathing waters for the 1999 bathing season are indicated by an asterisk in the text boxes.



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1. Introduction

1.1 The role of the Environment Agency

As the competent authority for England and Wales, the Agency plays an important part in the implementation of the EC Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC). Under the directions given in May 1992 and notices given in May 1992 and February 1996 by the Secretary of State, the Agency is required to sample and analyse bathing waters in accordance with the requirements of the Directive. The results are reported annually to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). The DETR uses these data to assess compliance of individual bathing waters and transmits the results annually to the European Commission.

The Agency also has statutory duties and powers under the Water Resources Act 1991 to regulate discharges to controlled waters with respect to relevant water quality objectives. For bathing waters, water quality objectives were set out in the Bathing Water (Classification) Regulations 1991 (SI 91/1597), which came into force in August 1991 (DoE, 1991).

The results of the 1999 bathing water quality survey in England and Wales are also available on the Agency's interactive internet site. Details of compliance on individual bathing waters are shown on the Agency's World Wide Web site at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>. Sample results will continue to be updated over the course of the 2000 bathing season. The Agency compiles data from the annual sampling programme via its National Centre for Environmental Data and Surveillance in Bath, and the reports are prepared by the Environmental Strategy Directorate as part of its role in assessing the state of the environment and the pressures placed upon it.

1.2 Identified bathing waters for the 1999 season

In 1999 there were 463 coastal bathing waters identified in England and Wales for the purposes of the Directive, five more than the 1998 bathing season. A single bathing water was de-designated at Alnmouth, in the Agency's North East Region on safety grounds. The new identified coastal bathing waters are indicated on the map of England and Wales. During the 1999 season, nine inland bathing waters were monitored in England and Wales.

2. The 1999 EC Identified Bathing Water Quality Survey

2.1 Sampling and analysis

The bathing season in England and Wales runs from 15 May to 30 September and sampling commences two weeks before the start of the season. Agency policy is that 20 samples are taken at regular intervals throughout the season at each site. All samples are taken at predetermined points off the beach of the identified bathing

water where the daily average density of bathers is at its highest. Samples are normally taken at a water depth of one metre and 30cm below the water's surface.

The results of the analyses of samples taken in the 1999 bathing season have been supplied to DETR for publication in the 1999 *DETR Report to Parliament*. Twenty samples were taken for coliform and faecal streptococci analysis at each bathing water (except for Runswick Bay in North East Region and Redgate Beach in South West Region - see below). A minimum of two samples are analysed for enteroviruses at those bathing waters that failed the mandatory coliform standards during the 1998 season or that failed the coliform standards in 1999. All coliform counts were confirmed using the methods set out in the *Manual of Standard Methods for Microbiological Analysis* (NRA 1992b).

2.2 Survey results: compliance with Directive

The mandatory coliform standards given in the Directive that are generally used to assess compliance require there to be no more than 10,000 total coliforms per 100ml and no more than 2,000 faecal coliforms per 100ml. For a bathing water to comply, 95 per cent of samples taken must meet these standards.

The more stringent guideline coliform and faecal streptococci standards given in the Directive are as follows: 80 per cent of samples must not contain more than 500 total coliforms or 100 faecal coliforms per 100ml and 90 per cent of samples must not contain more than 100 faecal streptococci per 100ml.

During the 1999 bathing season, 461 identified coastal bathing waters were examined in England and Wales. The number of bathing waters complying with the Directive, as determined by the DETR on the basis of the coliform parameters, was 422, that is to say, 91.5 per cent. This is an increase of 1.1 per cent compared with the results of the 1998 survey. Runswick Bay in North East Region and Redgate Beach in South West Region were closed for the season due to safety considerations and no sampling could take place. These bathing waters have not been included in the assessment and therefore percentage compliance has been calculated for a total of 461 bathing waters. All but one of the nine inland bathing waters complied with the coliform parameters, giving a compliance percentage of 88.9 per cent.

Table 1 gives details of the numbers and percentages of coastal bathing waters complying with the mandatory standards of the Directive in 1999 by Agency region. The changes in the number of bathing waters complying between 1998 and 1999 are also given.

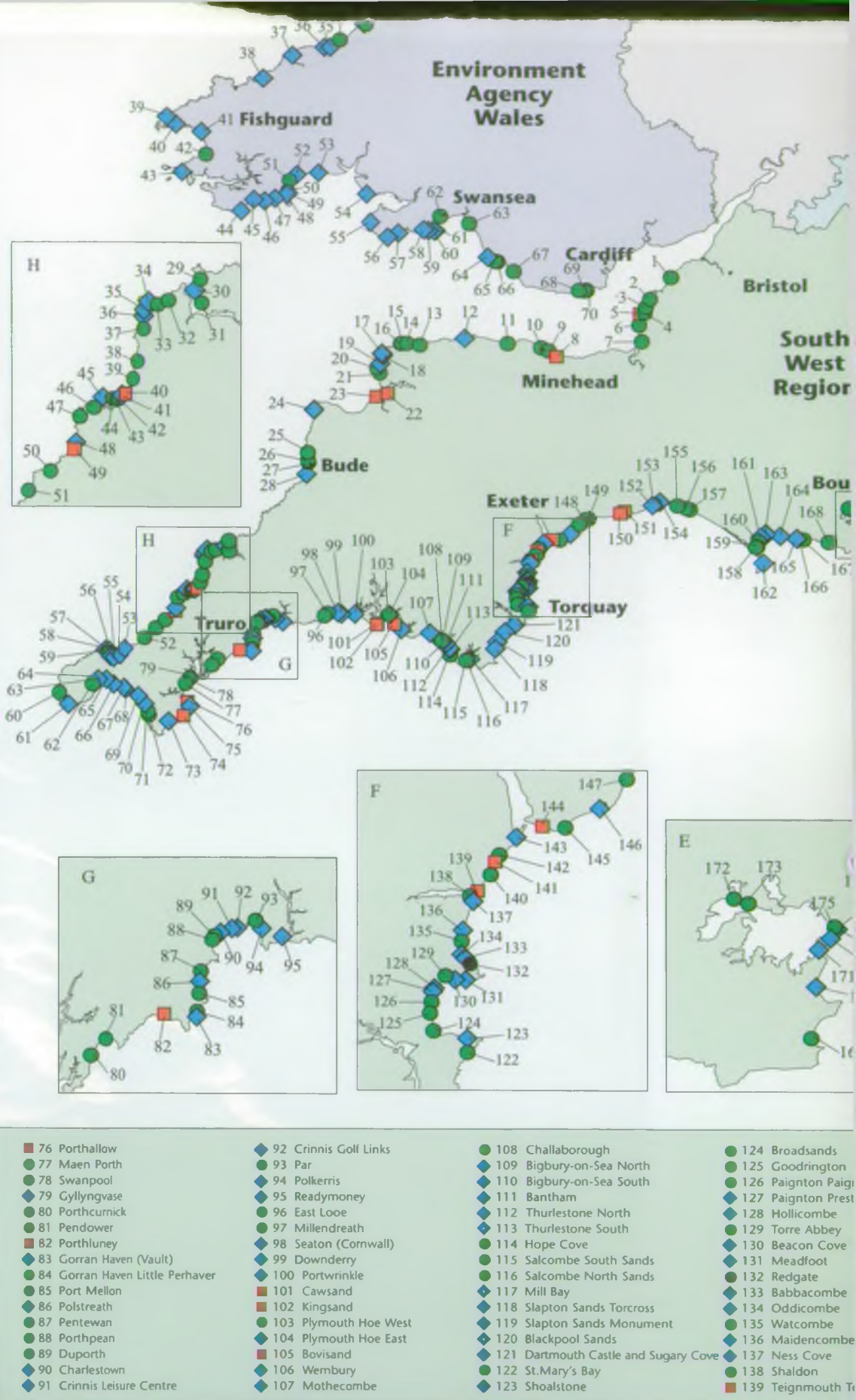
The number of coastal bathing waters during the 1999 season complying with the more stringent guideline standards in the Directive was 185, or 40.1 per cent. This represents an increase of 2.7 per cent compared with the results of the 1998 survey.

Table 2 gives details of the numbers and percentages of coastal bathing waters complying with the guideline standards of the Directive in 1999 by Agency region. The changes in the number of bathing waters complying between 1998 and 1999 are also given.

- 61 Bracelet Bay
- 62 Swansea Bay
- 63 Aberafan
- 64 Rest Bay Porthcawl
- 65 Sandy Bay Porthcawl
- 66 Trecco Bay Porthcawl
- 67 Southerndown
- 68 Cold Knap Barry
- 69 Whitmore Bay Barry
- 70 Jacksons Bay Barry

South West Region

- 1 Clevedon Beach
- 2 Weston-s-Mare Sand Bay
- 3 Weston Main
- 4 Weston-s-Mare Uphill Slipway
- 5 Brean
- 6 Berrow North of Unity Farm
- 7 Burnham Jetty
- 8 Blue Anchor West
- 9 Dunster North West
- 10 Minehead Terminus
- 11 Porlock Weir
- 12 Lynmouth
- 13 Combe Martin
- 14 Ilfracombe Hele
- 15 Ilfracombe Capstone (Wildersmouth)
- 16 Ilfracombe Tunnels Beach
- 17 Barricane Bay, Woolacombe *
- 18 Woolacombe Village
- 19 Woolacombe Putsborough
- 20 Croyde Bay
- 21 Saunton Sands
- 22 Instow
- 23 Westward Ho!
- 24 Hartland Quay
- 25 Bude Sandy Mouth
- 26 Bude Crooklets
- 27 Bude Summerleaze
- 28 Widemouth Sand
- 29 Polzeath
- 30 Daymer Bay
- 31 Rock
- 32 Trevone Bay
- 33 Harlyn Bay
- 34 Mother Ivey's Bay
- 35 Constantine Bay
- 36 Treyarnon Bay
- 37 Porthcothan
- 38 Mawgan Porth
- 39 Watergate
- 40 Porth
- 41 Lusty Glaze
- 42 Tolcarne
- 43 Great Western
- 44 Towan
- 45 Fistral
- 46 Crantock
- 47 Holywell Bay
- 48 Perranporth Penhale Sands
- 49 Perranporth Village End
- 50 Trevaunance Cove
- 51 Porthtowan
- 52 Portreath
- 53 The Towans (Godrevy)
- 54 The Towans (Hayle)
- 55 Carbis Bay Porth Kidney Sands
- 56 Carbis Bay Station Beach
- 57 Porthminster
- 58 Porth Cwidden
- 59 Porthmeor
- 60 Sennen
- 61 Porthcurno
- 62 Mounts Bay Wherry Town
- 63 Mounts Bay Penzance
- 64 Mounts Bay Heliport
- 65 Mounts Bay Little Holgus
- 66 Perran Sands
- 67 Praa Sands West
- 68 Praa Sands East
- 69 Porthleven West
- 70 Gunwalloe Cove
- 71 Poldhu Cove
- 72 Pollurian Cove
- 73 Kennack Sands
- 74 Coverack
- 75 Porthoustock
- 76 Porthallow
- 77 Maen Porth
- 78 Swanpool
- 79 Gyllyngvase
- 80 Porthcurnick
- 81 Pendower
- 82 Porthluney
- 83 Gorran Haven (Vault)
- 84 Gorran Haven Little Perhaver
- 85 Port Mellon
- 86 Polstreath
- 87 Pentewan
- 88 Porthpean
- 89 Duporth
- 90 Charlestown
- 91 Crinnis Leisure Centre
- 92 Crinnis Golf Links
- 93 Par
- 94 Polkerris
- 95 Readymoney
- 96 East Looe
- 97 Millendreath
- 98 Seaton (Cornwall)
- 99 Downderry
- 100 Portwrinkle
- 101 Cawsand
- 102 Kingsand
- 103 Plymouth Hoe West
- 104 Plymouth Hoe East
- 105 Bovisand
- 106 Wembury
- 107 Mothecombe
- 108 Challaborough
- 109 Bigbury-on-Sea North
- 110 Bigbury-on-Sea South
- 111 Bantham
- 112 Thurlestone North
- 113 Thurlestone South
- 114 Hope Cove
- 115 Salcombe South Sands
- 116 Salcombe North Sands
- 117 Mill Bay
- 118 Slapton Sands Torcross
- 119 Slapton Sands Monument
- 120 Blackpool Sands
- 121 Dartmouth Castle and Sugary Cove
- 122 St.Mary's Bay
- 123 Shoalstone
- 124 Broadsands
- 125 Goodrington
- 126 Paignton Paignton
- 127 Paignton Prest
- 128 Hollicombe
- 129 Torre Abbey
- 130 Beacon Cove
- 131 Meadfoot
- 132 Redgate
- 133 Babbacombe
- 134 Oddicombe
- 135 Watcombe
- 136 Maidencombe
- 137 Ness Cove
- 138 Shaldon
- 139 Teignmouth T



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Table 1 - 1999 EC Identified coastal bathing waters - mandatory compliance

Agency region	No. of bathing waters	Complying		Non-complying		No. of compliant waters compared with 1998
		No.	%	No.	%	
Anglian	36	34	94.4	2	5.6	-2
North East	55	52	94.5	3	5.5	+5
North West	34	23	67.6	11	32.4	+2
Southern	79	74	93.7	5	6.3	-1
South West	184	167	90.8	17	9.2	0
Thames	3	3	100.0	0	0.0	0
Wales	70	69	98.6	1	1.4	+5
TOTAL	461	422	91.5	40	8.5	+9

Table 2 - 1999 EC Identified coastal bathing waters - guideline compliance

Agency region	No. of bathing waters	Complying		Non-complying		No. of compliant waters compared with 1998
		No.	%	No.	%	
Anglian	36	18	50.0	18	50.0	+1
North East	55	5	9.1	50	90.9	+3
North West	34	2	5.9	32	94.1	+1
Southern	79	38	48.1	41	51.9	0
South West	184	83	45.1	101	54.9	-5
Thames	3	0	0.0	3	100.0	0
Wales	70	39	55.7	31	44.3	+14
TOTAL	461	185	40.1	276	59.9	+14

2.2.1 Abnormal weather waiver

Article 5.2 of the Directive states that deviations from imperative and guideline standards shall not be taken into consideration in compliance calculations "... when they are the result of floods, other natural disasters or abnormal weather conditions."

There is no official definition of what constitutes abnormal weather, but the DETR has advised that generally a one-in-five-year storm event can be regarded as exceptional weather, that is a storm which is statistically likely to occur only once in every five years. The amount of rainfall that equates to a one-in-five-year event depends on the prevailing weather in a specific location. In 1999, the Environment Agency applied 12 abnormal weather waivers following exceptionally heavy rainfall. Six of these waivers concerned exceeding mandatory coliform standards (Bembridge, Ryde, Ventnor, Seaton (Devon), Newgale, Broadhaven Central), and six concerned exceeding guideline bacterial standards

(Seagrove, St Helens, Whitecliff Bay, Shoebury East, Thorpe Bay, Westcliff). Consequently these sample results were excluded from compliance assessment. The Agency also recommended that two abnormal weather waiver applications for exceeding mandatory standards should be rejected. A single bathing water, Ventnor, passed the Directive as a result of an abnormal weather waiver.

2.3 Water quality trends

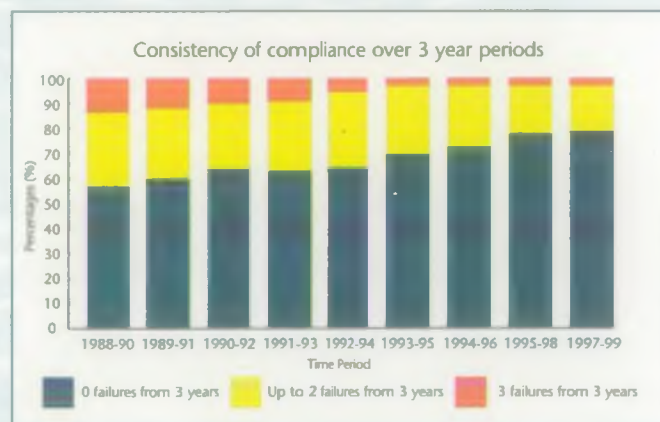
During the 1999 bathing season, 17 previously compliant bathing waters became non-compliant for the first time in several seasons. It has always been the case that a number of bathing waters pass the Directive's mandatory coliform standards in one year and fail the next (or vice versa). This is due to the inherent variability of the data collected over the bathing season and the way in which compliance is assessed as a "pass/fail" on the basis of 20 samples. The laws of chance can therefore play a significant part in determining the overall compliance level, as can weather conditions that affect bacterial die-off.

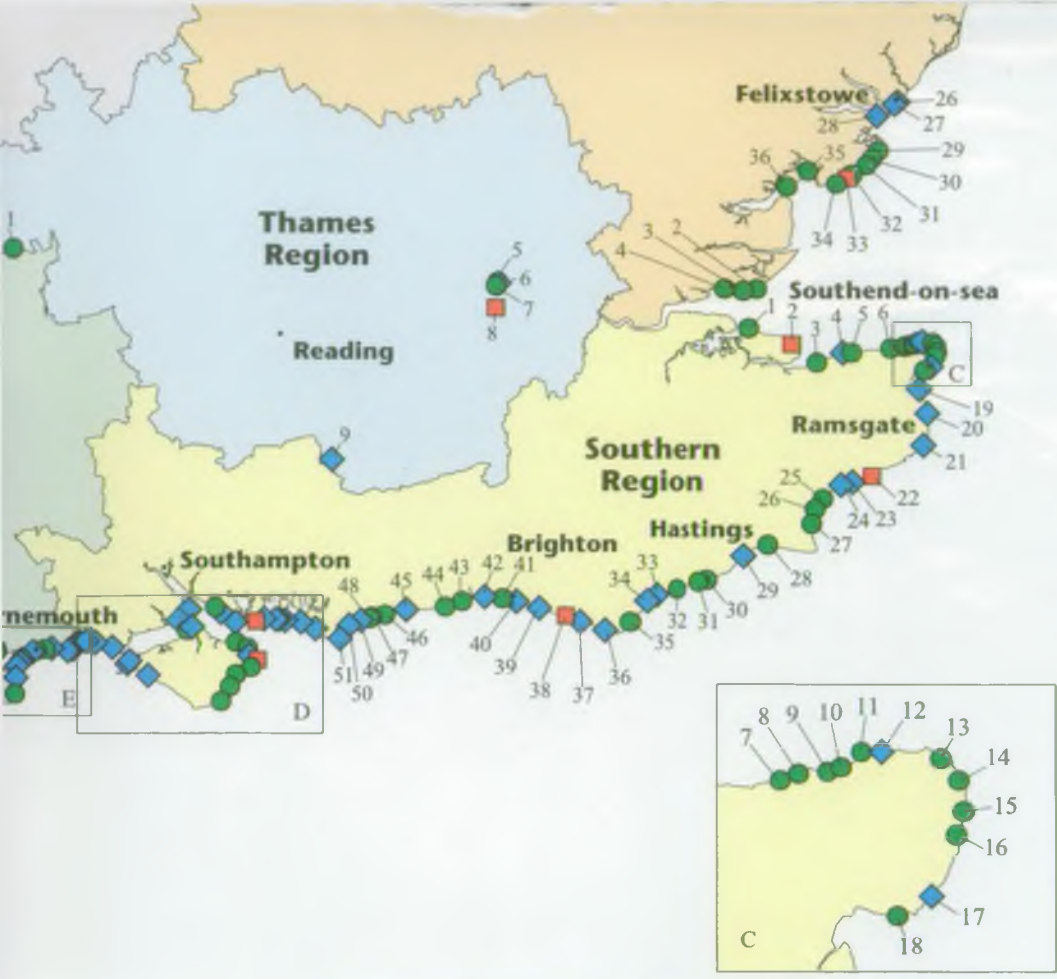
The variability in compliance is demonstrated by examining the number of bathing waters failing to meet the Directive standards in three, two, one or none of the previous three seasons. Figure 1 illustrates this for each three-year period since 1988.

It can be seen that a certain percentage of bathing waters (18.7 per cent for the period 1997-1999) switch between compliance and non-compliance and the real cause of this (whether due to volatility of the compliance assessment methods used in the Directive or real change in water quality) is difficult to determine. However, the figures indicate that this group of bathing waters has decreased in recent years.

Figure 1 also illustrates that the trend of increased consistency of compliance continues. The percentage of bathing waters complying each year from 1997-1999 now stands at 79 per cent and has risen markedly from the 57 per cent attained during 1988-1990. The percentage of bathing waters consistently failing has also been reduced to 2.25 per cent from 13 per cent. This indicates that the trend is for individual bathing waters to become more consistently compliant.

Figure 1



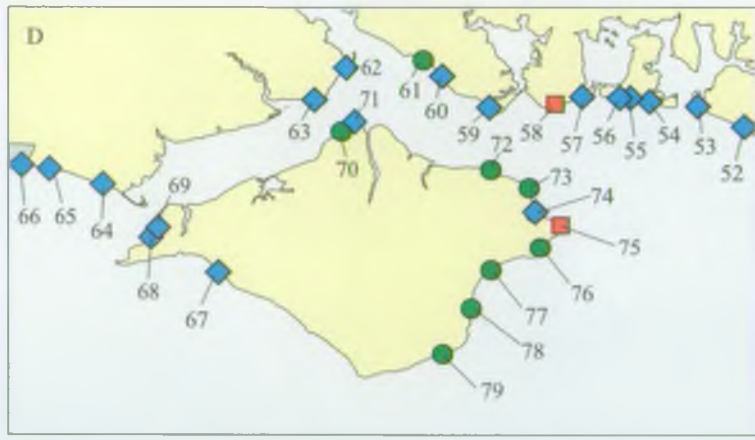
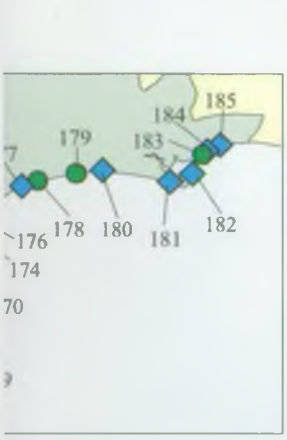


Thames Region

- 1 Cotswolds Water Park Lake
- 2 Shoebury East
- 3 Southend Thorpe Bay
- 4 Southend Westcliff Bay
- 5 Hampstead Heath (Ladies Pond)
- 6 Hampstead Heath (Mens Pond)
- 7 Hampstead Heath (Mixed Pond)
- 8 The Serpentine - Hyde Park
- ◆ 9 Frensham Great Pond

Southern Region

- 1 Sheerness
- 2 Leysdown
- 3 West Beach
- ◆ 4 Herne Bay Central *
- 5 Herne Bay
- 6 Minnis Bay
- 7 Westgate Bay
- 8 St Mildred's Bay
- 9 Westbrook Bay
- 10 Margate The Bay
- 11 Margate Fulsam Rock
- ◆ 12 Walpole Bay
- 13 Botany Bay
- 14 Joss Bay
- 15 Stone Bay
- 16 Broadstairs
- ◆ 17 Ramsgate Main Sands
- 18 Ramsgate
- ◆ 19 Sandwich Bay
- ◆ 20 Deal Castle
- ◆ 21 St Margaret's Bay
- 22 Folkestone
- ◆ 23 Sandgate
- ◆ 24 Hythe
- 25 Dymchurch
- 26 St Mary's Bay
- 27 Littlestone
- 28 Camber
- 29 Winchelsea
- 30 Hastings
- 31 St Leonards
- 32 Bexhill
- ◆ 33 Norman's Bay
- ◆ 34 Pevensy Bay
- 35 Eastbourne
- ◆ 36 Birling Gap
- ◆ 37 Seaford
- 38 Newhaven
- ◆ 39 Saltdean
- ◆ 40 Brighton
- 41 Hove
- 42 Southwick
- 43 South Lancing
- 44 Worthing
- 45 Littlehampton
- 46 Middleton-on-sea
- 47 Felpham
- 48 Bognor Regis East *
- ◆ 49 Bognor Regis
- ◆ 50 Pagham
- ◆ 51 Selsey
- ◆ 52 Bracklesham Bay
- ◆ 53 West Wittering
- ◆ 54 West of Eastoke
- ◆ 55 West Beachlands
- ◆ 56 West Hayling
- ◆ 57 Eastney
- 58 Southsea
- ◆ 59 Stokes Bay
- ◆ 60 Lee-on-Solent
- 61 Hillhead
- ◆ 62 Calshot
- ◆ 63 Lepe
- ◆ 64 Milford-on-sea
- ◆ 65 Christchurch Bay
- ◆ 66 Highcliffe
- ◆ 67 Compton Bay
- ◆ 68 Totland Bay
- ◆ 69 Colwell Bay
- ◆ 70 Gumard
- ◆ 71 Cowes
- 72 Ryde
- ◆ 73 Seagrove
- ◆ 74 St Helens
- 75 Bembridge
- 76 Whitecliff Bay
- 77 Sandown
- 78 Shanklin
- 79 Ventnor



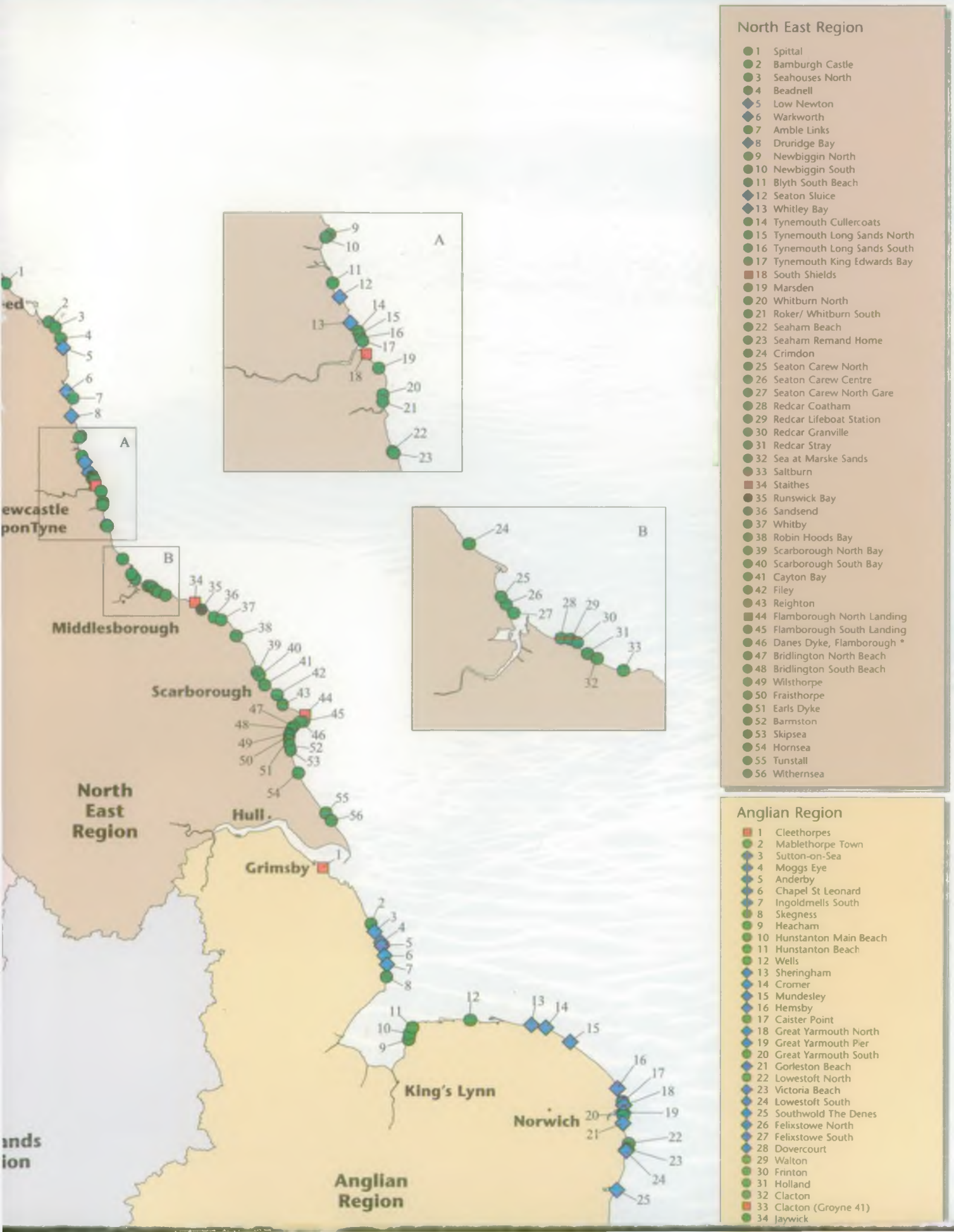
- 140 Teignmouth Holcombe
- 141 Dawlish Coryton Cove
- 142 Dawlish Town
- ◆ 143 Dawlish Warren
- 144 Exmouth
- 145 Sandy Bay
- ◆ 146 Budleigh Salterton
- 147 Ladram Bay
- 148 Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder
- 149 Sidmouth Town
- 150 Beer
- 151 Seaton (Devon)
- ◆ 152 Lyme Regis Cobb
- 153 Lyme Regis Church Beach
- 154 Charmouth West
- 155 Seaton
- 156 Eypemouth
- 157 West Bay (West)
- 158 Portland Harbour Sandfoot Castle
- 159 Portland Harbour Castle Cove
- 160 Weymouth Central
- ◆ 161 Weymouth Lodmoor
- ◆ 162 Church Ope Cove
- ◆ 163 Bowleaze Cove
- ◆ 164 Ringstead Bay
- ◆ 165 Durdle Door West
- ◆ 166 Durdle Door East
- 167 Lulworth Cove
- 168 Kimmeridge Bay
- 169 Swanage Central
- ◆ 170 Studland Knoll House
- ◆ 171 Shell Bay North
- 172 Poole Harbour Rockley Sands
- 173 Poole Harbour Lake
- ◆ 174 Poole Sandbanks Car Park
- ◆ 175 Poole Harbour Sandbanks
- ◆ 176 Poole Shore Road Sandbanks
- ◆ 177 Bournemouth Durley Chine
- 178 Bournemouth Pier
- 179 Bournemouth Boscombe Pier
- ◆ 180 Bournemouth Fisherman's Walk
- ◆ 181 Bournemouth Hengistbury East
- ◆ 182 Christchurch Mudeford Sandbank East
- ◆ 183 Christchurch Avon Beach
- ◆ 184 Christchurch Friar's Cliff
- ◆ 185 Christchurch Highcliffe Castle

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England and Wales, 1999



3. Agency Actions

The Agency will continue to investigate possible sources of contamination at all non-compliant bathing waters with a view to controlling them where statutory powers allow. Actions will focus on the need to:

- deliver compliance with standards according to agreed timescales for outstanding improvement schemes;
- examine options for upgrading coastal sewerage systems where combined sewer overflows (CSOs) continue to cause problems;
- target additional investment to achieve guideline standards where this can be justified through an analysis of costs and benefits;
- continue to assess what can be done to prevent pollution from diffuse sources that results in failure to meet the standards;
- instigate research programmes to address long-term water-quality problems.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTACTS:

The Environment Agency delivers a service to its customers, with the emphasis on authority and accountability at the most local level possible. It aims to be cost-effective and efficient and to offer the best service and value for money.

Head Office is responsible for overall policy and relationships with national bodies including Government.

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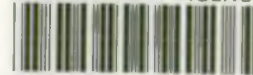
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