



# WESTERN BEACH BATHING WATER PROFILE



Western Beach is a sandy beach located in the North West part of Gibraltar on the verge of the border with Spain. Adjacent to the beach lies Gibraltar Airport and there is also a small military residential estate behind the beach.

During high and low tides the approximate distance to the water's edge can vary from 40–42 metres. The sandy beach slopes gently towards the water. For local tide information see:

[http://www.gibraltarport.com/tidal\\_gauge.cfm](http://www.gibraltarport.com/tidal_gauge.cfm)

# Eastern Beach Bathing Water Profile

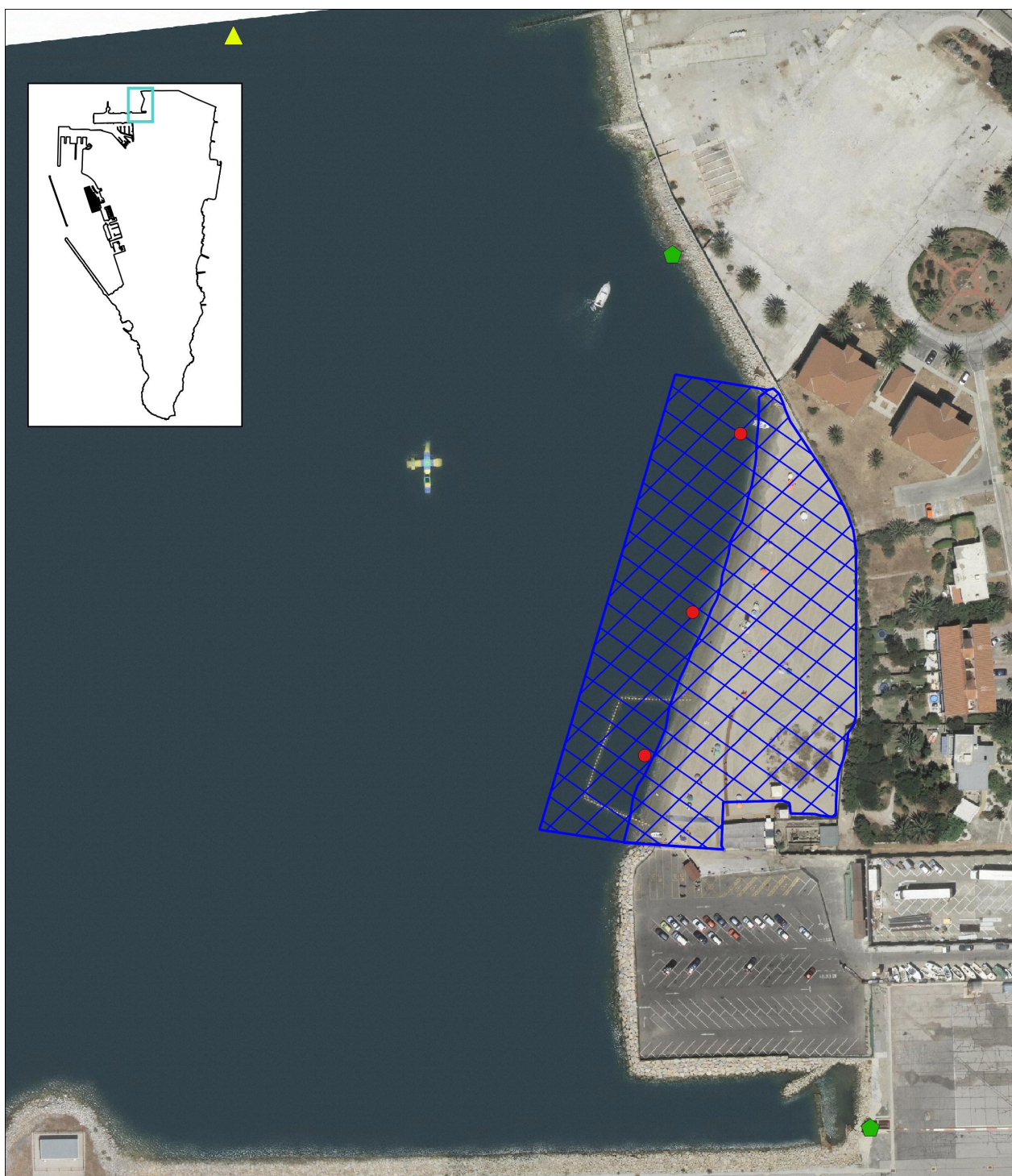
Government of Gibraltar  
Department of the Environment

*Table 1. General description of Western Beach & monitoring point*

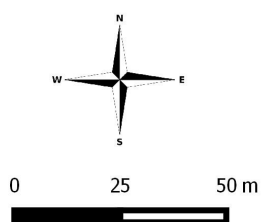
NAME OF THE PARAMETER	
<b>Bathing Water ID</b>	UKGIB60
<b>Bathing Water Name</b>	Western Beach
<b>Short Bathing Water Name</b>	Western Beach
<b>Name of the competent authority</b>	Department the Environment & Climate Change
<b>Contact information of the competent authority</b>	Tel: (00350) 200 48450 Email: info.environment@gibraltar.gov.gi
<b>Bathing water profile last reviewed on</b>	1st August 2016
<b>Next review of Bathing water profile</b>	1st August 2018
<b>Reasons for review</b>	Directive requires bathing water classified as poor to be reviewed every 2 years.
<b>Beach publicly or privately operated</b>	Publicly operated
<b>Member state</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Province, Region, etc.</b>	Gibraltar
<b>Municipality</b>	Gibraltar
<b>Name of the river, lake, transitional water or coastal</b>	Gibraltar
<b>Location within member state</b>	See Figure 1
<b>Pair of coordinates of the monitoring point</b>	Long: 28° 84'59" Lat: 400° 35'06" Long: 28° 84'73" Lat: 400° 35'56" Long: 28° 84'45" Lat: 400° 34'61"
<b>Frame of reference for the coordinates</b>	WGS84

The chosen monitoring point at Western beach is illustrated in Figure 1. The representative point is located in the middle of the beach although bathers frequent the entirety of the length of the bathing area demarcated. Known sources of pollution originate from the North of Western beach making the chosen point the ideal monitoring location.

*Figure 1. Western beach location, extent, bathing water monitoring point & catchment map.*



## Western Beach Bathing Water & Catchment Map



### Legend

- Bathing Water Monitoring Points
- ⬠ Storm Drain
- ▲ Combined Sewer Overflow
- ▨ Defined Beach Extent



Department of the Environment  
and Climate Change  
HM Government of Gibraltar

*Table 2. Physical and geographical characteristics of Western Beach.*



NAME OF THE PARAMETER	
<b>Description of the beach</b>	≥ muddy ≥ marshy x sandy ≥ rocky
<b>Structure of the riparian Zone</b>	≥ natural x semi-natural ≥ modified
<b>Length of the beach</b>	Approx. 130 meters
<b>Medium depth of the bathing water</b>	2 meters
<b>Maximum depth of the bathing water</b>	6 meters
<b>Bathrooms, showers, toilets</b>	≥ bathrooms x showers (during bathing season) x toilets (during bathing season)
<b>Waste disposal</b>	Waste collection facilities are available at the beach.
<b>Admittance for dogs</b>	Dogs are not allowed on the beach.
<b>Other activities than bathing</b>	Windsurfing (restricted during certain times of the year except outside buoyed area) & sailing.
<b>Maximum daily number of bathers during high season and best weather conditions</b>	600

*Table 3. Name and codes of the river basin district.*

NAME OF THE PARAMETER	
<b>River Basin District ID</b>	UKGIB17
<b>River Basin District Name</b>	Gibraltar
<b>River Basin District SUID</b>	n/a
<b>River Basin District SU Name</b>	n/a
<b>Water Body ID</b>	UKGIB6903
<b>Water Body Name</b>	Gibraltar
<b>National Water Unit ID</b>	n/a
<b>National Water Unit Name</b>	n/a

### *Historical data*

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In Gibraltar the bathing season lasts six and a half months, from the 15<sup>th</sup> of April to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October; although the greatest number of bathers occur during mid-June to mid-September.

Bathing water standards are set in the EC Directive 2006/7/EC. The bathing water monitoring programme is based on weekly samples taken throughout the bathing season. Until recently, Western Beach had always met the mandatory values set by the Bathing Water Directives. Changes in the sewer and drainage infrastructure in Spain have resulted in the beach failing to meet the mandatory values. Recent and historical results of the bathing water programme at Western beach are available online from the Gibraltar Environmental Agency website at:

[http://www.environmental-agency.gi/environmental\\_monitoring.htm](http://www.environmental-agency.gi/environmental_monitoring.htm)

In addition to the requirements of the revised Bathing Water Directive numerous quality elements are being used to assess the status of coastal waters in the immediate vicinity of Western Beach. These quality elements include physical, biological and chemical parameters in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC. A comprehensive overview and results of the monitoring carried out to date is available online from the Department of the Environment and Climate Change' website [<https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/new/water>]. The coastal monitoring programme has been augmented to include the obligations of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC).

### *Identification and assessment of causes of pollution that might affect bathing waters*

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The coastal waters in the vicinity of storm water overflows can see changes in water quality during periods of heavy rainfall especially where these serve as combined sewer overflows. The resultant flows could have an effect on bathing water compliance predominantly due to faecal pollution. The climatic conditions in Gibraltar can be described as Mediterranean/subtropical and therefore periods of heavy rainfall are infrequent during the bathing season in Gibraltar.

The potential relevant pollution sources at, or near, Western Beach are highlighted in Figure 1. There are two storm water drains discharging directly to the sea to the North and South of Western Beach. There is also a combined sewer overflow approximately 100m North of Western Beach in Spain discharging directly into Gibraltar waters. This overflow is continuously discharging untreated sewage and is believed not to be connected to the main trunk sewer in La Linea (Spain). There are no surface watercourses within close proximity of Western Beach.

The principal risk is faecal contamination from the combined sewer overflow in Spain discharging into Gibraltar waters. Pollution events (including short-term pollution events) are being highlighted by the bathing water monitoring programme and can be seen online from the Gibraltar Environmental Agency website [[http://www.environmental-agency.gi/environmental\\_monitoring.htm](http://www.environmental-agency.gi/environmental_monitoring.htm)]. Samples are being taken more frequently in this bathing area due to the severity of the contamination episodes. Should the existing situation remain, the closure of this bathing area will have to be considered.

### *Proliferation of cyanobacteria, macro-algae and/or other marine species*

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Macroalgae and phytoplankton are an integral part of the marine ecosystem. Excess populations can nevertheless result in a deterioration of bathing water quality especially in the case of phytoplankton blooms.

Ongoing monitoring suggests that Western beach is not subject to excess macroalgae or phytoplankton. Phytoplankton numbers do increase naturally during the spring and autumn but not in numbers large enough to be considered as a threat to bathing water quality.

There is a possibility of increased numbers of jellyfish in the water particularly during the summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Although there are a few stinging species common to the Gibraltar, most are harmless and bathers are not allowed to swim when jellyfish numbers pose a risk to bathers.

**About this document:**

This document was produced in August 2016. Any feedback or comments on the profile should be sent to [info.environment@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:info.environment@gibraltar.gov.gi)