



***WATER QUALITY  
ON THE EDINBURGH COAST***

# *Water, water everywhere, but is it safe?*

You have a sense of it when you visit the shore or see a river full of algae. BUT ...

**How good is the water quality in the Forth along the Edinburgh shoreline?**

**Is it safe to swim in the sea?**

**Could you safely eat shellfish collected from anywhere along the Edinburgh coast?**

The answer to this last question is publically displayed along the shoreline.



**Let's now consider the other questions.**

# *Water quality is a complex issue*

Scottish Water and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) are responsible for various aspects of water quality – coastal water in rivers, the water in your tap and waste water treatment.

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) was introduced in 2000 to establish systems to manage Europe's water environment - rivers, lochs, estuaries and coastal waters. The WFD adopts a broad, holistic approach to assessing, protecting and improving water bodies so that they meet good ecological status.

**Overall Scotland has a high quality water environment.**

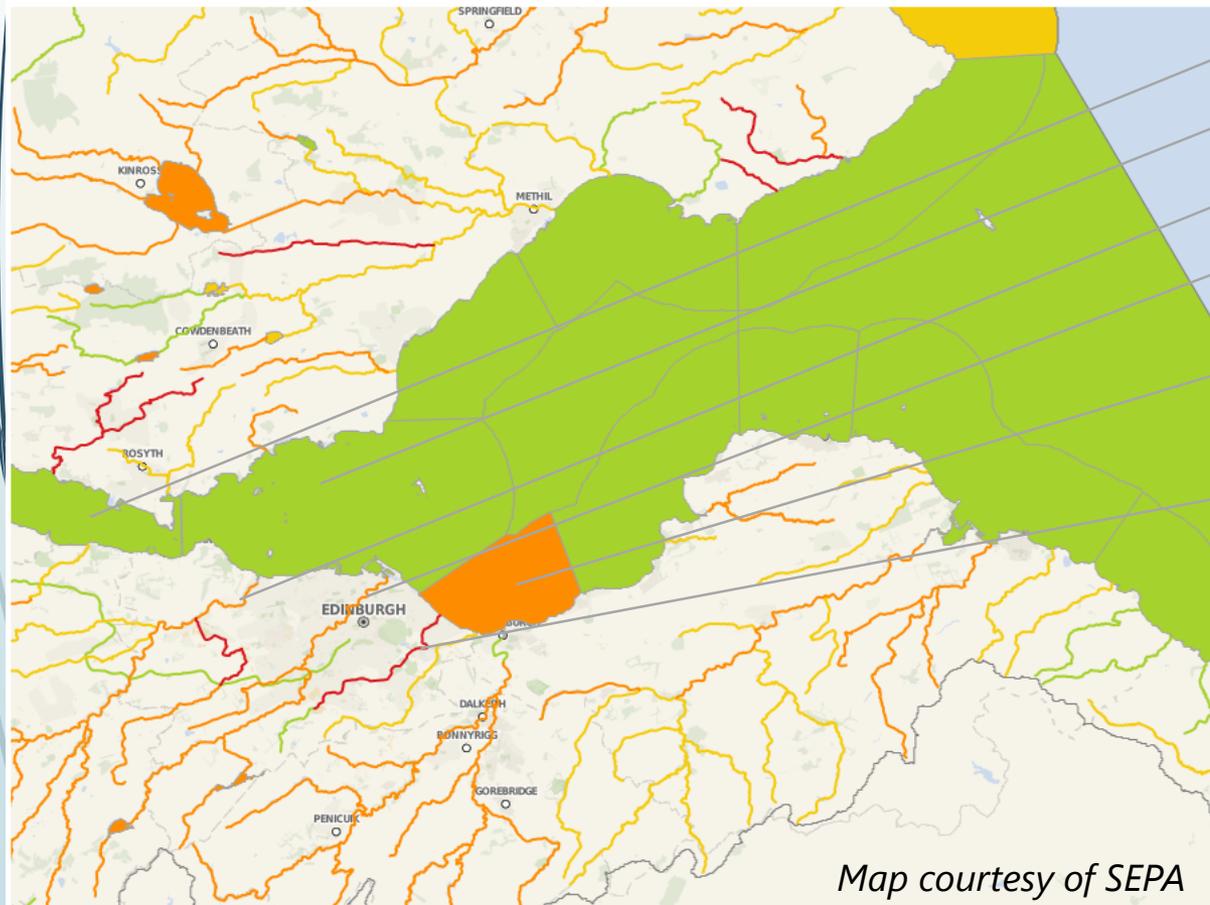
**However some areas are under considerable pressure** from current and past human activity including pollution, alterations to river beds and shorelines, alterations to water levels and flows and the presence of invasive non-native species.

The WFD introduced a system of river basin management planning to help tackle these pressures and in December 2015 (SEPA) published the second round of River Basin Management Plans which build on those issued in 2009.

The Edinburgh part of the shoreline is divided into a number of units as described in the following pages.

# So how good (or bad) is our water?

The map below shows the overall conditions of surface waters in 2014



River Forth Estuary **GOOD**

Kinghorn to Leith docks **GOOD**

River Almond **POOR**

Water of Leith **POOR**

Leith docks to Port Seton **POOR**

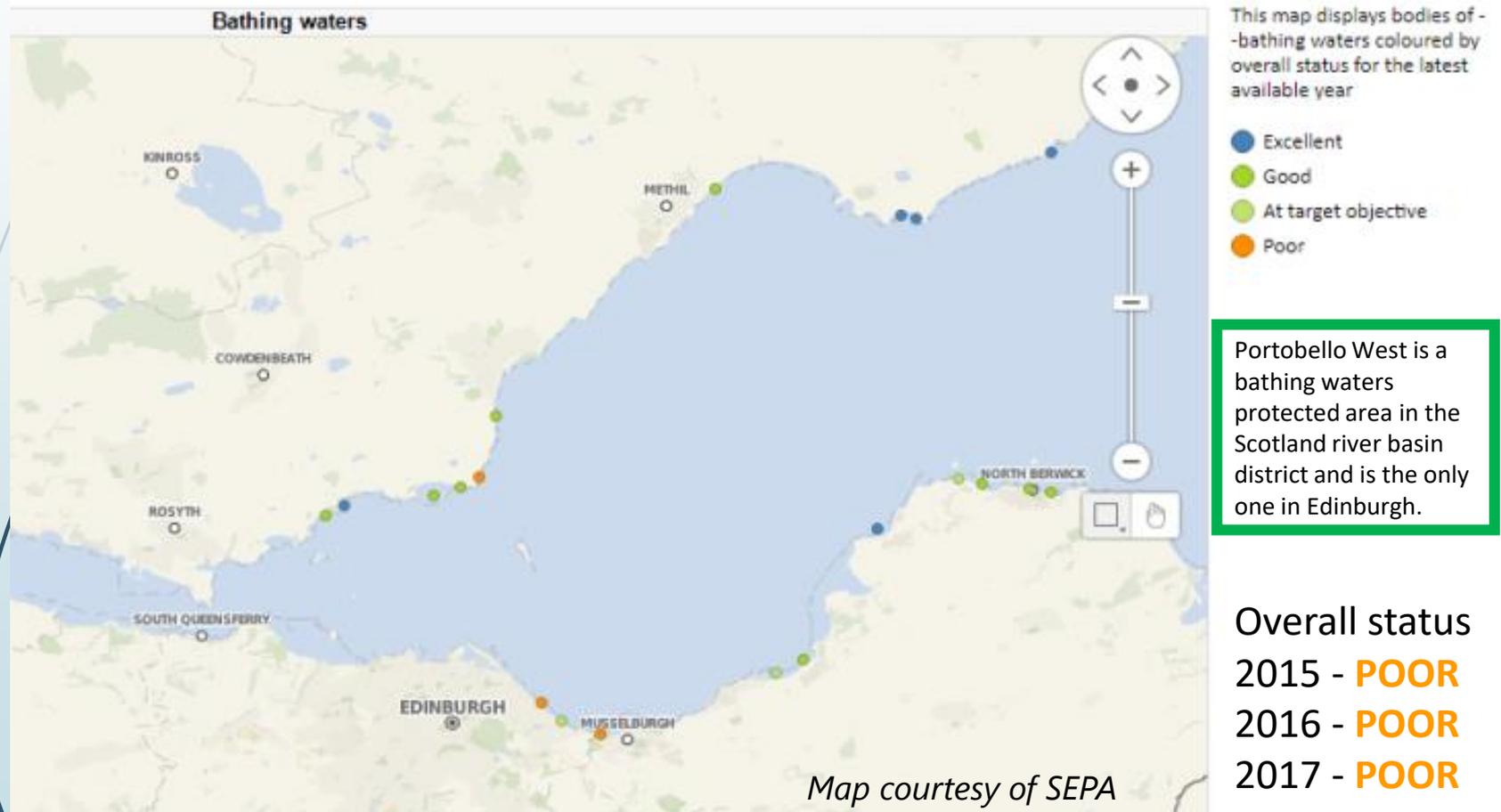
Figgate Burn **BAD**

Condition

- High
- Good
- Moderate
- Poor
- Bad

# What about swimming?

The overall status of designated bathing waters in Edinburgh is shown in the map below.



# *It's complex to fix*

River Almond  
(Maitland Bridge  
to Cramond)

Designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on an airport or major transport route and the drainage of agricultural land.

Leith Docks to  
Port Seton

The Water of Leith

The Figgate Burn

Designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact from an increased risk of subsidence or flooding.

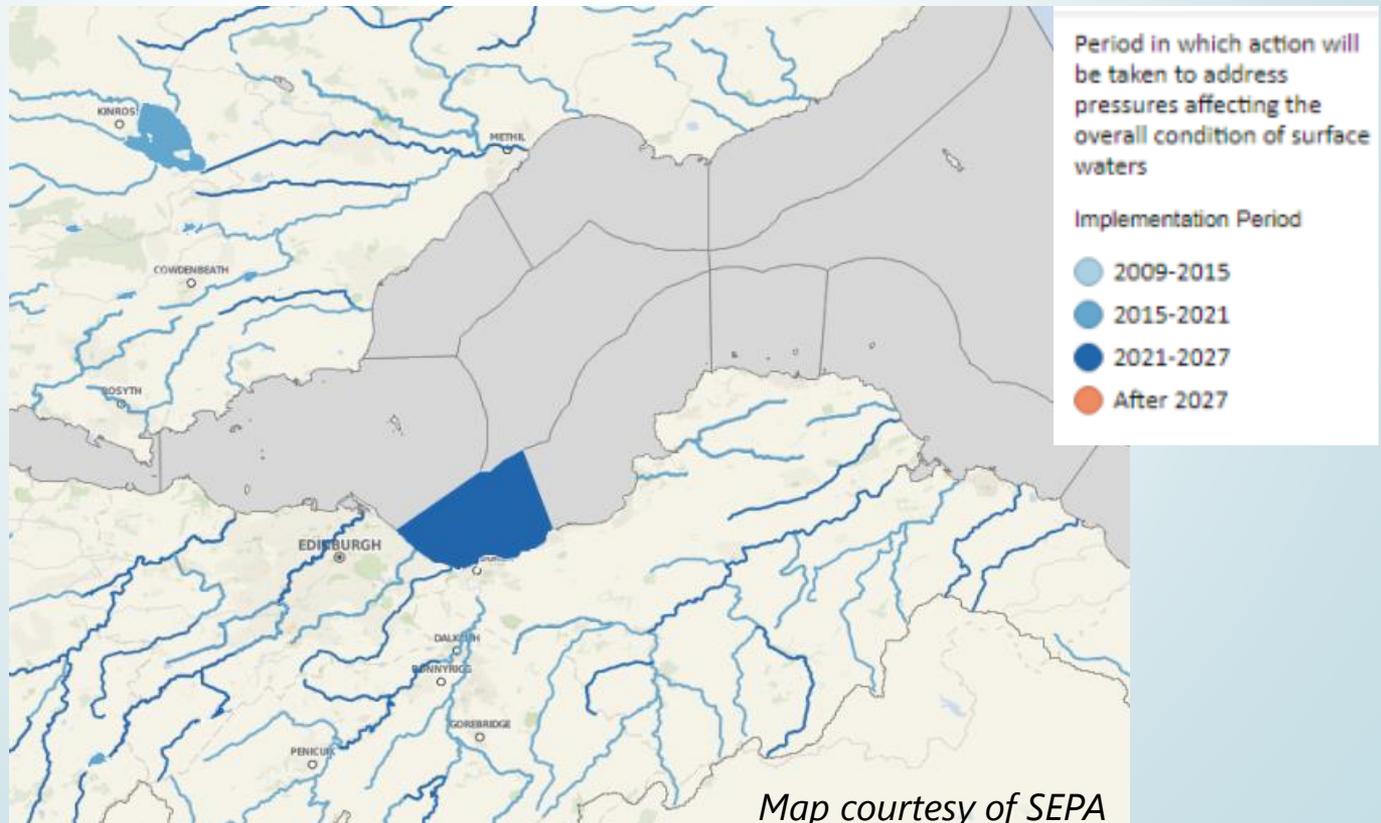
# But we can take action ...

Action is already planned and underway to improve the water status, over the next 10 years. For the most concerning areas action is planned:

**Figgate Burn 2015 – 2021**

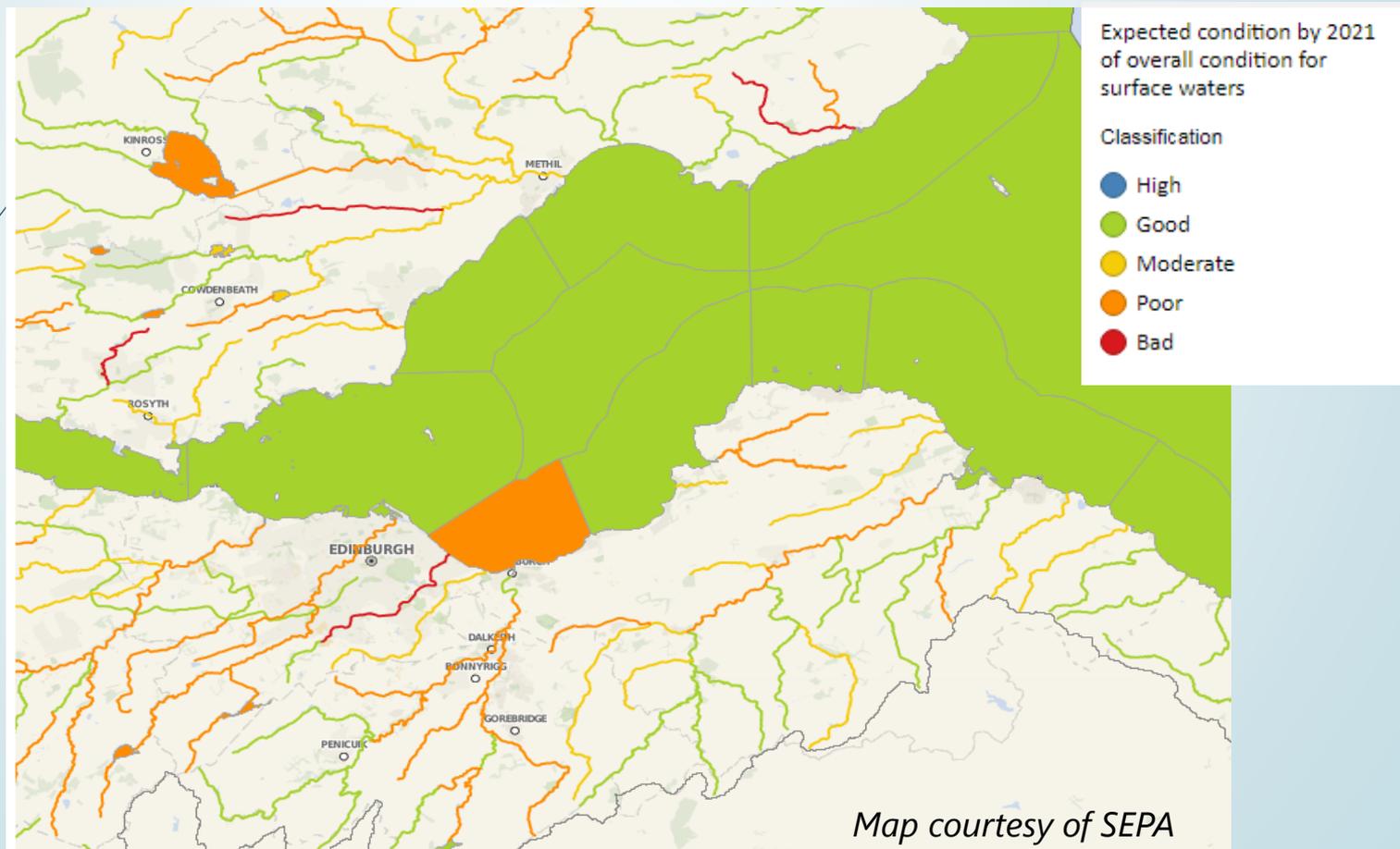
**River Almond 2021 -2027**

The map below shows the period in which action will be taken to address pressures affecting condition



# Looking forward ...

By 2021 what will the expected condition of surface waters be?





*More information is available on the SEPA website:*

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/data-visualisation/water-environment-hub/>

*Water Environment Hub and Classification Hub.*

