

Spanish bathing water quality in 2017



Spain 

May 2018

Photo: © Peter Kristensen/EEA

BWD Report For the Bathing Season 2017

Spain

The report gives a general overview of information acquired from the reported data, based on provisions of the Bathing Water Directive¹. The reporting process is described below, as well as state and trends of bathing water quality in Spain.

1. BWD reporting in the season 2017

In the 2017 bathing season, 2219 bathing waters have been reported in Spain. For each bathing water, five groups of parameters have been delivered²:

- *identification data* – including name, location, coastal, inland or transitional type of bathing water and availability to bathers;
- *seasonal data* – including season start and end, national quality classification in the recent season, potential management measures and changes that are likely to affect the classification of the bathing water;
- *monitoring results* – disaggregated numerical values of two microbiological parameters – intestinal enterococci and Escherichia coli (also known as E. coli), recorded at each water sample taken;
- *abnormal situation periods* – periods of an event or combination of events impacting on bathing water quality, during which monitoring calendar may be suspended; reporting is optional;
- *short-term pollution periods* – measurable events of microbiological contamination; reporting is optional.

Bathing waters of Spain in 2017	
Total reported	2219
Coastal	1960
Inland	259
Max season period	124 / 303 days
Coastal	1 Feb to 30 Nov
Inland	15 May to 15 Sep
Samples taken	23629
Share of bathing waters with good or excellent water quality	94 %
Reporting under Directive 2006/7/EC since	2008

The authorities of Spain report data according to the new BWD (2006/7/EC) since the season 2008.

Altogether, **2219 bathing waters** have been reported – 10.2% of all bathing waters in Europe. 35 bathing waters have been newly reported in the recent season. 88% of bathing waters in Spain are of coastal type; the other 12% are inland. **23629 samples** were taken at bathing waters throughout the season – 11 per bathing water on average.

¹ Directive BWD 2006/7/EC, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:064:0037:0051:EN:PDF>

² See the BWD Data Dictionary for detailed explanations: <http://dd.eionet.europa.eu/datasets/3294#tables>

The maximum bathing season period was from 1 February to 30 November for coastal bathing waters, i.e. 303 days altogether. Maximum inland bathing season period was from 15 May to 15 September, i.e. 124 days. Season duration varies depending on the bathing water.

Detailed information on bathing waters is available from national portal at <https://nayadeciudadano.msssi.es/Splayas/ciudadano/indexCiudadanoAction.do>.

2. Assessment methodology³

During the bathing season, water samples are taken and analysed for two bacteria, *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci which may indicate the presence of pollution, usually originating in sewage, livestock waste, bird faeces etc. The results of the analysis are used to assess the quality of the bathing waters concerned and to provide information to the public on the quality of water in the bathing sites concerned.

The monitoring requirements under the Directive are:

- taking a pre-season sample (taken shortly before the start of the bathing season) ⁴;
- a minimum of four samples per season⁵;
- a minimum of one sample per month⁶.

If these rules are satisfied, the bathing water is categorised as 'sampling frequency satisfied'. If not all monitoring requirements are fulfilled the bathing water is categorised as 'not enough samples'. 97.8% of bathing waters met the described monitoring requirements set by the Directive, while the rest did not satisfy monitoring requirements for different reasons: being new; having changed environmental conditions that might affect water quality classification; closed; not monitored due to legal issues, physical inaccessibility to the site etc. Table 1 shows the statistics of bathing waters according to monitoring requirements.

Table 1: Bathing waters in 2017 according to compliance with BWD monitoring provisions

	Count	Share of total [%]
BWs with sampling frequency satisfied (and are not new, are not subject to changes or were not closed in 2017) These bathing waters have been monitored according to provisions and have complete dataset from the last assessment period. They have been quality-classified (excellent, good, sufficient, poor).	2171	97.8%
BWs with sampling frequency not satisfied (and are not new, are not subject to changes or were not closed in 2017) These bathing waters exist throughout the last assessment period but have not been monitored throughout the period according to provisions for	7	0.3%

³ The methodology used by the EC and the EEA is described here, while results of assessment by national authorities may differ in individual cases.

⁴ A pre-season sample is taken into a sum of samples per season.

⁵ Three samples are sufficient if the season does not exceed eight weeks or the region is subject to special geographical constraints.

⁶ If, for any reason, it is not possible to take the sample at the scheduled date, a delay of four extra days is allowed. Thus, the interval between two samples should not exceed 31 + 4 days.

various individual reasons. They may be quality-classified if there is an adequate volume of samples available for credible classification.		
BWs that are new, subject to changes or closed in 2017 These bathing waters do not have complete dataset for the last assessment period because they are new, have been subject to changes (that are likely to affect the classification of the bathing water) or have been closed. They cannot be quality-classified.	41	1.8%
Total number of bathing waters in 2017	2219	100%

Bathing waters where sampling frequency was not satisfied can still be quality assessed if at least four samples per season (three samples if the season does not exceed eight weeks or the region is subject to special geographical constraints) are available and equally distributed throughout the season. Assessment of bathing water quality is possible when the bathing water sample dataset is available for four consecutive seasons. Bathing waters are accordingly classified to one of the bathing water quality classes (excellent, good, sufficient, or poor).

The classification is based on pre-defined percentile values for microbiological enumerations, limiting the classes given in Annex I of the Directive. The Directive defines different limit values for coastal and inland waters.

Quality assessment is not possible for all bathing waters. In these cases, they are instead classified as either:

- not enough samples⁷;
- new⁸;
- changes⁹;
- closed¹⁰.

3. Bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in Spain throughout the past period are presented in Figure 1 (for coastal bathing waters) and Figure 2 (for inland bathing waters). The previous reports are available on the European Commission's bathing water quality website¹¹ and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website¹².

⁷ Not enough samples have been provided throughout the last assessment period (the last four bathing seasons or, when applicable, the period specified in Article 4.2 or 4.4).

⁸ Classification not yet possible because bathing water is newly identified and a complete set of samples is not yet available.

⁹ Classification is not yet possible after changes that are likely to affect the classification of the bathing water.

¹⁰ Bathing water is closed temporarily or throughout the bathing season.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html

¹² <http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>

3.1 Coastal bathing waters

In Spain, 98.4% of all existing coastal bathing waters met at least sufficient water quality standards in 2017. See Appendix 1 for numeric data.

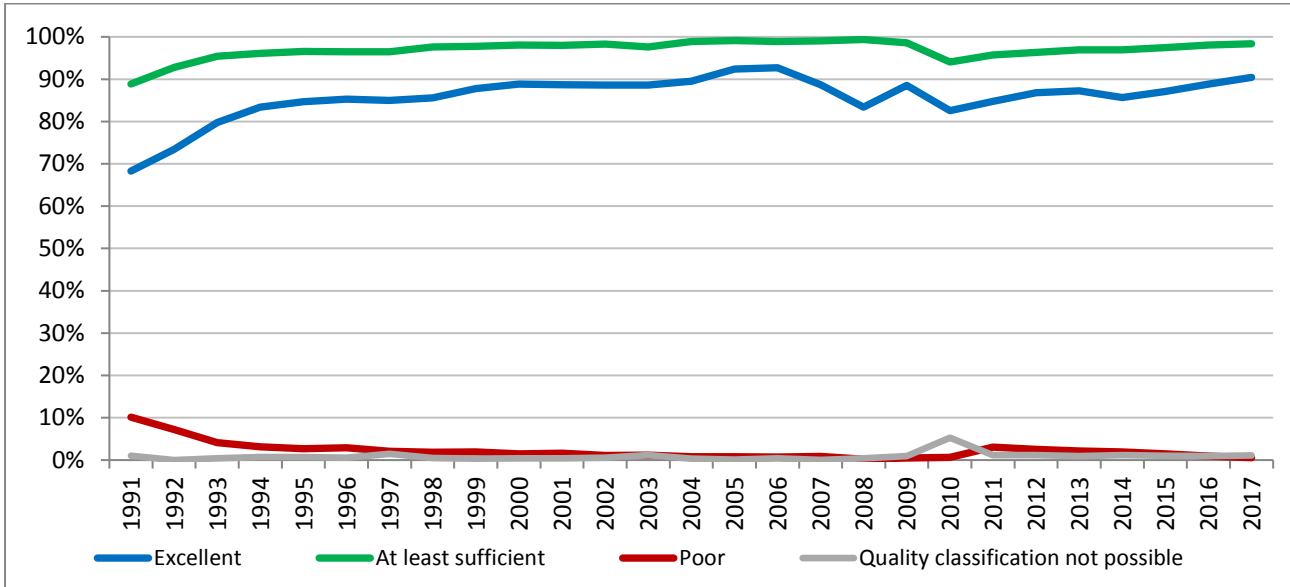


Figure 1: Coastal bathing water quality trend in Spain. Note: the “At least sufficient” class also includes bathing waters of “Excellent” quality class, the sum of shares is therefore not 100%.

3.2 Inland bathing waters

79.2% of all existing inland bathing waters were of at least sufficient water quality in 2017. See Appendix 1 for numeric data.

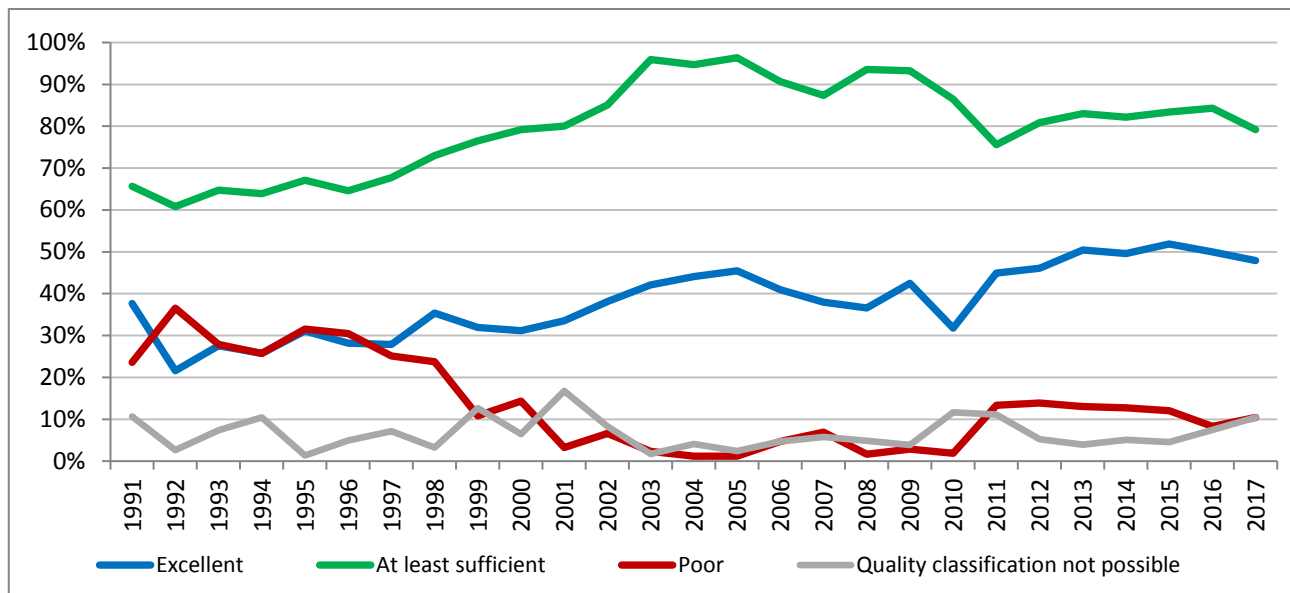


Figure 2: Inland bathing water quality trend in Spain. Note: the “At least sufficient” class also includes bathing waters of “Excellent” quality class, the sum of shares is therefore not 100%.

4. Information regarding management and other issues

In the season 2017, there were 122 short-term pollutions in Spain, at 103 different bathing waters; and 12 abnormal situations reported.

There were waste water treatment infrastructure developments in recent years. The waste water treatment plant in the north of the Ría de Ares and south of the Ría de Ferrol has started operating in July 2014; another waste water treatment plant has started operating in the area of San Ciprian in May 2015. Other specific management measures in Spain include repairs of wells in the sewer system; completion of works to improve the drainage of the Río Canedo in May 2015; completion of works in the arenal in September 2014, in the vicinity of the Beach of Playa de Penedo; paving and improvement of municipal facilities at Playa de Sada Las Delicias; sanitation works, and other works, sometimes requesting closing the bathing water for use. In some cases the bathing waters remained closed as the maintenance work and changes in the infrastructure necessary for its proper functioning were not carried out (e.g. Piscina fluvial del rio Ribera Salada).

5. Bathing water quality assessment presentation in online viewers

The European bathing water legislation focuses on sound management of bathing waters, greater public participation and improved information dissemination. More on the bathing and other water legislation can be found on the European Commission's website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index_en.htm.

The bathing water section of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) which is accessible at the EEA bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/interactive/bathing/state-of-bathing-waters>) allows users to view the bathing water quality at more than 21 000 coastal and inland sites across Europe. The WISE bathing water quality data viewer combines text and graphical visualisation, providing a quick overview of the bathing water's locations and achieved quality. Having access to bathing water information, citizens are encouraged to make full use of it and participate with their comments.

Appendix 1: Results of bathing water quality in Spain from 2014 to 2017

Table 2: Bathing waters in the season 2017 according to quality

		Total number of bathing waters	Excellent quality		At least sufficient quality		Poor quality		Quality classification not possible: not enough samples /new bathing waters/bathing waters subject to changes/closed	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Coastal	2014	1942	1663	85.6	1882	96.9	37	1.9	23	1.2
	2015	1948	1696	87.1	1899	97.5	29	1.5	20	1.0
	2016	1949	1732	88.9	1912	98.1	19	1.0	18	0.9
	2017	1960	1773	90.5	1929	98.4	11	0.6	20	1.0
Inland	2014	236	117	49.6	194	82.2	30	12.7	12	5.1
	2015	241	125	51.9	201	83.4	29	12.0	11	4.6
	2016	242	121	50.0	204	84.3	20	8.3	18	7.4
	2017	259	124	47.9	205	79.2	27	10.4	27	10.4
Total	2014	2178	1780	81.7	2076	95.3	67	3.1	35	1.6
	2015	2189	1821	83.2	2100	95.9	58	2.6	31	1.4
	2016	2191	1853	84.6	2116	96.6	39	1.8	36	1.6
	2017	2219	1897	85.5	2134	96.2	38	1.7	47	2.1

Note: the class "At least sufficient" also includes bathing waters which are of excellent quality, the sum of shares is therefore not 100%.

Appendix 2: Bathing water quality map

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2017 bathing season in Spain



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