

For the future of our environment

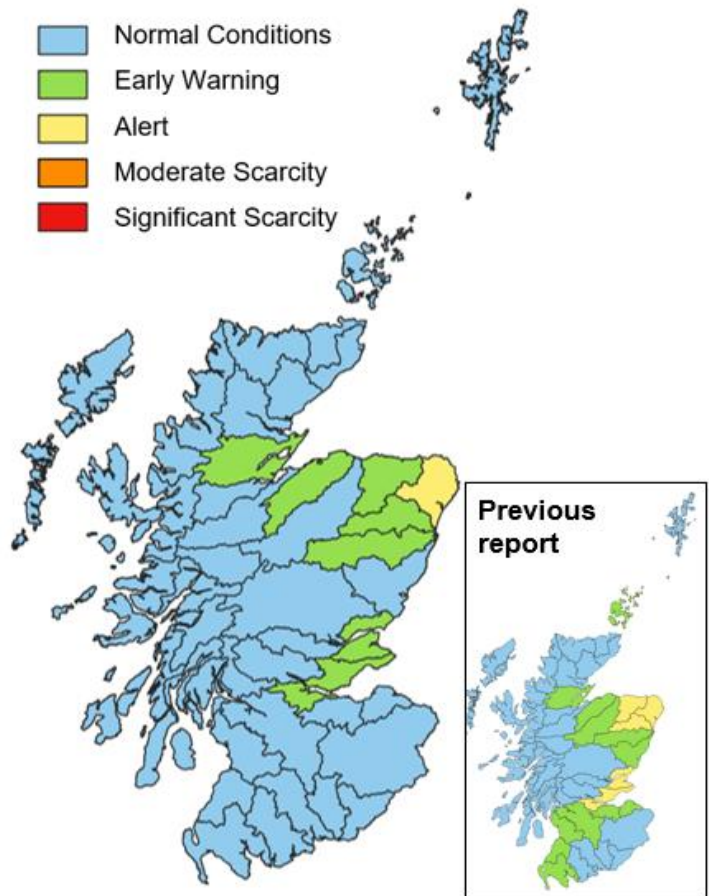
Water Scarcity Report

22nd September 2023

There has been widespread recovery across the country due to heavy rainfall throughout the week.

Water scarcity levels - This week

- Normal Conditions
- Early Warning
- Alert
- Moderate Scarcity
- Significant Scarcity



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[Accessible version of national water scarcity map](#)



The overall risk of water scarcity takes account of the individual water scarcity indices, relevant water use, sectors in each region, and forecast weather conditions. The areas shown in this map represent major river catchments. Details on how levels are set and actions required can be found in SEPA's [National Water Scarcity Plan](#).

Situation Summary

The past week has seen heavy rain across most of the country leading to a widespread recovery particularly in the south-west and central belt where most areas have returned to normal conditions. The north-east has also seen some recovery, but the lower rainfall in parts of coastal Aberdeenshire means that an Alert for water scarcity remains in place for the River Ythan catchment area.

In the wider north-east, the River Don and River Deveron have each recovered from Alert to Early Warning level, following the rainfall. The River Spey and Esk catchment have also seen improvement, recovering to Normal Conditions. However, Early Warnings remain in place for the River Conon and River Findhorn, as well as the River Dee catchment.

In the central belt, the Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay areas have recovered to Early Warning level, as the heavy rain has led to wetter ground conditions and higher river flows.

A similar situation in the south-west sees the removal of all the Early Warnings in this region. In Orkney, conditions have recovered to normal.

Further heavy rain is forecast for some of those areas for which Early Warnings remain. This is likely to see more areas returning to normal in the coming week. However, the current forecast suggests less rain is likely in the River Ythan catchment area, so the Alert in this area may persist for longer.

SEPA is monitoring the situation and coordinating steps to manage water resources in line with Scotland's National Water Scarcity Plan which is available on SEPA's website:

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/water-scarcity/>.

You can help us by reporting any evidence you see of water scarcity. For details of information that would be useful to us and where to send it see: [Water scarcity in your area | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#).

Weather forecast (20/09/2023)

Showers on Friday, then mainly dry on Saturday. Rain or showers on Sunday and Monday, heavy and persistent at times.

Next week, confidence reduces, however further areas of low pressure are likely to move towards the UK. Temperatures are likely to be generally above average.

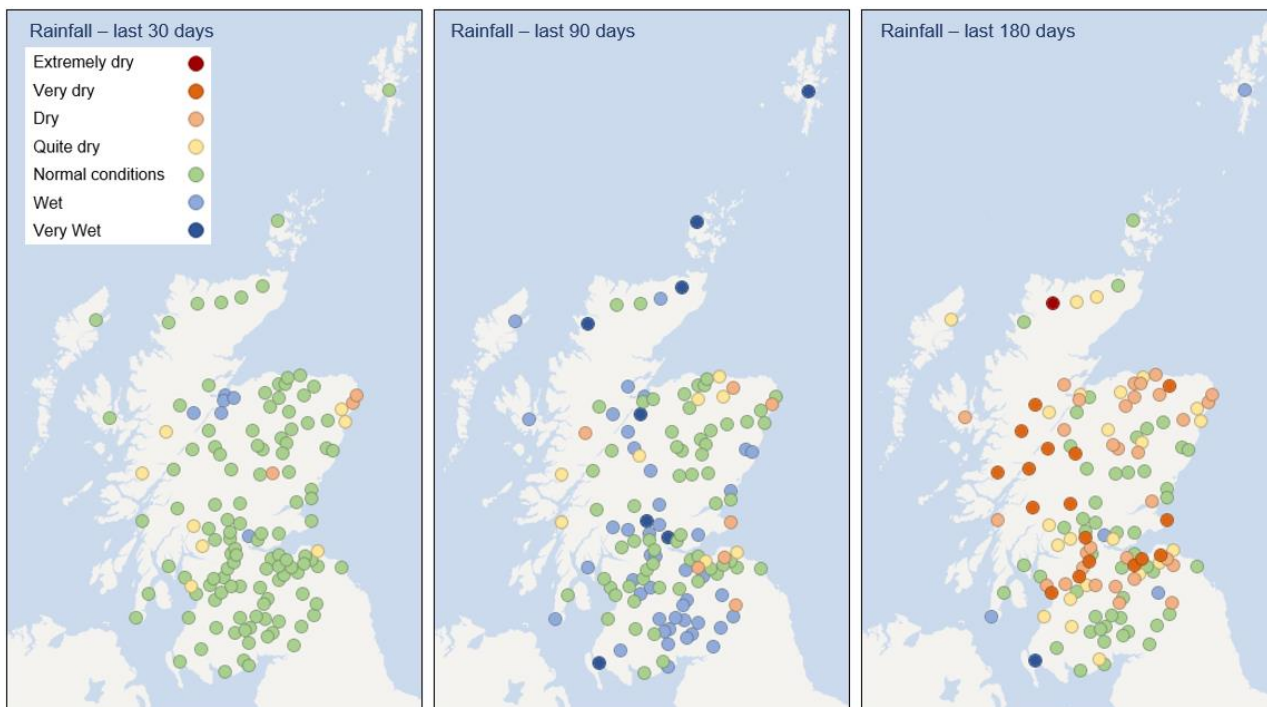
The current outlook for the September – November period indicates that near-average conditions are most likely, with wetter or drier conditions overall no more likely than usual. However, the chance of the period being warmer than average is higher than normal.

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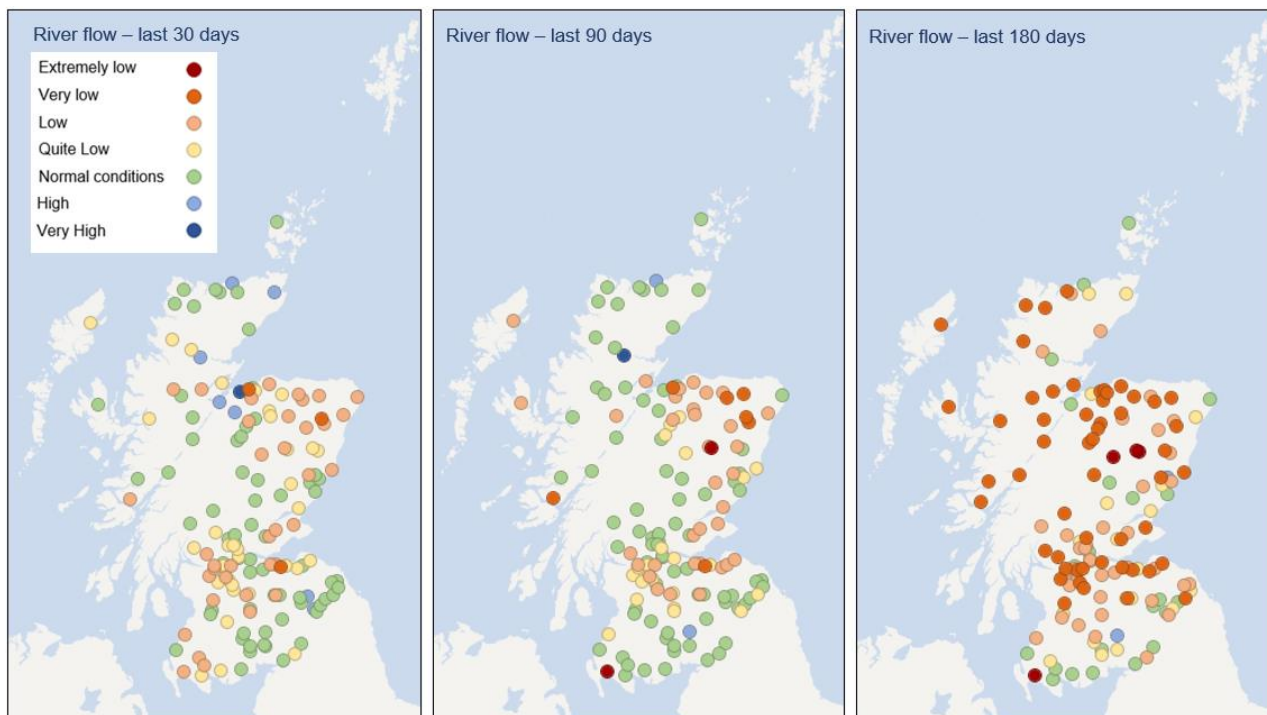
Supporting information

Rainfall and river flows:

These maps show rainfall (top row) and river flow (bottom row) relative to the long-term average, for this time of year, over 30 days, 90 days and 180 days.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors



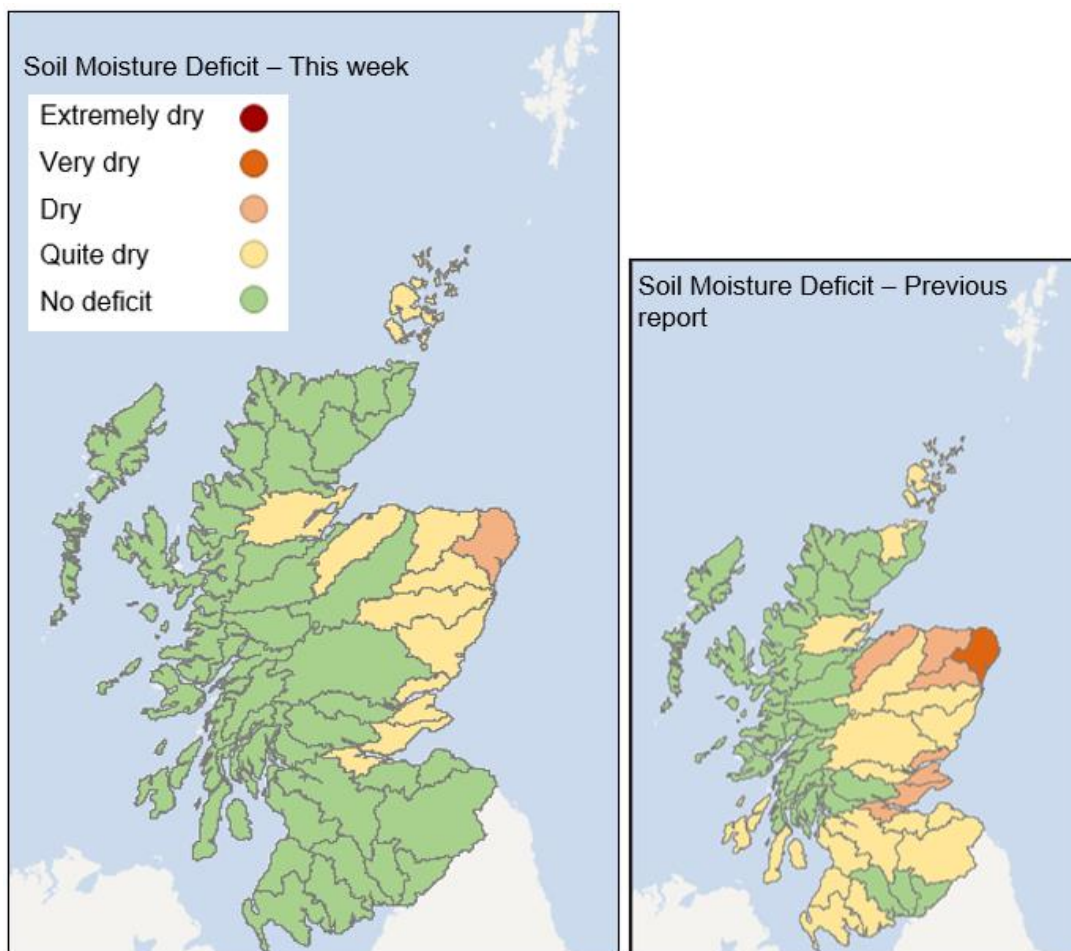
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Since mid-August, rainfall conditions have been widely Normal, though an area of coastal Aberdeenshire has been Quite Dry to Dry. Over the past three to six months, conditions have been mixed with long-term Dry conditions across parts of the central belt, the Highlands, Moray and Aberdeenshire.

Since mid-August, river flows have been mixed for this time of year, with Low flows more prevalent in Moray, Aberdeenshire, the central belt and the south-west. Over the past three to six months, conditions have been mixed with long-term Very Low flows in most areas other than Caithness and Sutherland, Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders.

Soil moisture deficit:

These maps show this week’s soil moisture deficit, alongside those previously reported for comparison. This is obtained from the Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System (MORECS), no data is available for Shetland.

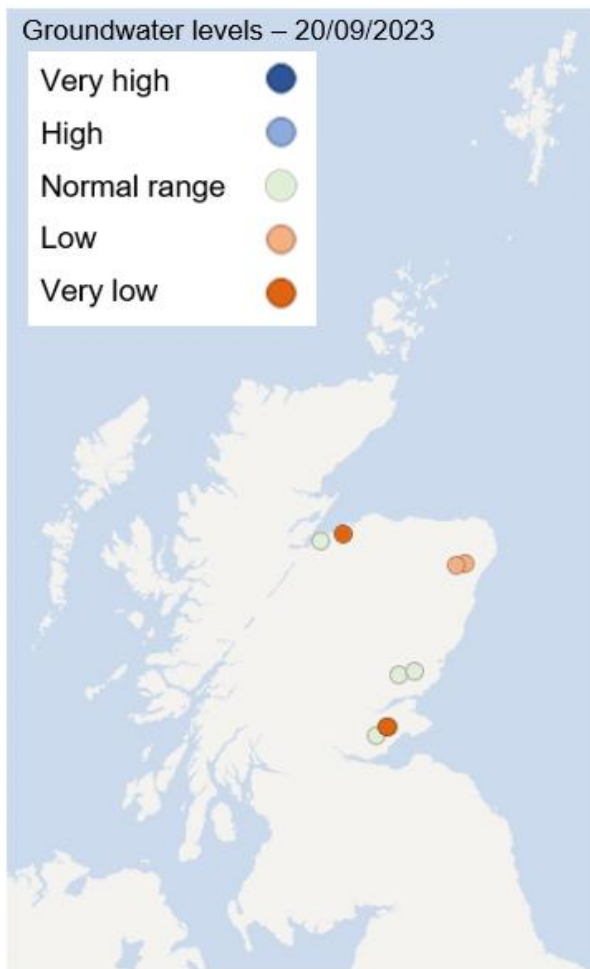


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Ground conditions are currently showing No Deficit across most of the country. In parts of the east and north-east, as well as in Orkney, ground conditions are Quite Dry, with part of Aberdeenshire remaining Dry.

Groundwater levels:

This map shows groundwater levels compared to the long-term record at each station. Groundwater levels are updated fortnightly and reported as above (high) or below (low) the typical (normal) level for the calendar month. Groundwater level trend bands are specific to each station and based on the long-term (minimum 10 years) record of mean monthly level values recorded at individual stations.



Groundwater levels at sites in the north are mostly low and very low for the time of year, and levels in parts of Fife are still very low for the time of year after reaching their seasonal low earlier in the year than usual. However, levels in the Angus area remain within the normal range for the time of year.

Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors



Natural water storage

In each river catchment there is some degree of natural water storage, which can maintain river flows even when it is not raining. This natural water storage is mainly held in lochs and groundwater. When storage has been depleted it will take a lot of rainfall for levels to recover.

River flow, rainfall and groundwater level data can be accessed via SEPA's [time series data service](#) (API). SEPA's live data are subject to ongoing quality control and periodic review.

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language please either contact SEPA by telephone on 03000 99 66 99 or by email to equalities@sepa.org.uk

If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling you to communicate with us using sign language.

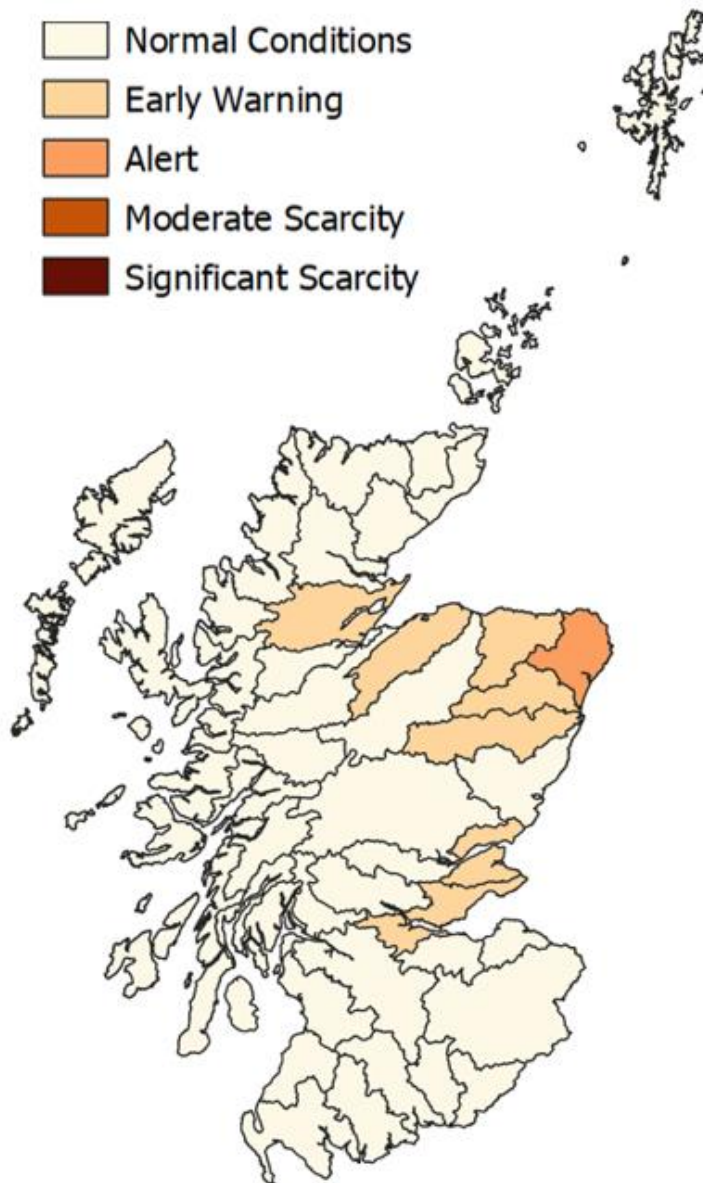
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)