

HEADLINE

Moderate Scarcity is still in place in Argyll, the Western Isles, and the north-west of the country. This has also extended into South Argyll since last week.

An Alert remains in place of a risk of water scarcity everywhere else except the Northern Isles and south Scotland, which have an Early Warning in place.

Situation summary

River levels are still extremely low across western Scotland, particularly in the north-west. Further evidence of environmental impacts and impacts on private water supplies have been reported and therefore a Moderate Scarcity level has been set for this area. Some rainfall is forecast for the north-west in the week ahead but it is not yet clear how much this will ease the situation.

Ground conditions have improved in the north-east following rainfall this week and river levels are currently relatively high, but will likely fall quickly in any further dry period due to the low groundwater levels in the region, so the Alert level remains in place.

Ground conditions have become drier in the Borders and south-west and river levels have continued to fall with some now at very low levels.

Advice for water users

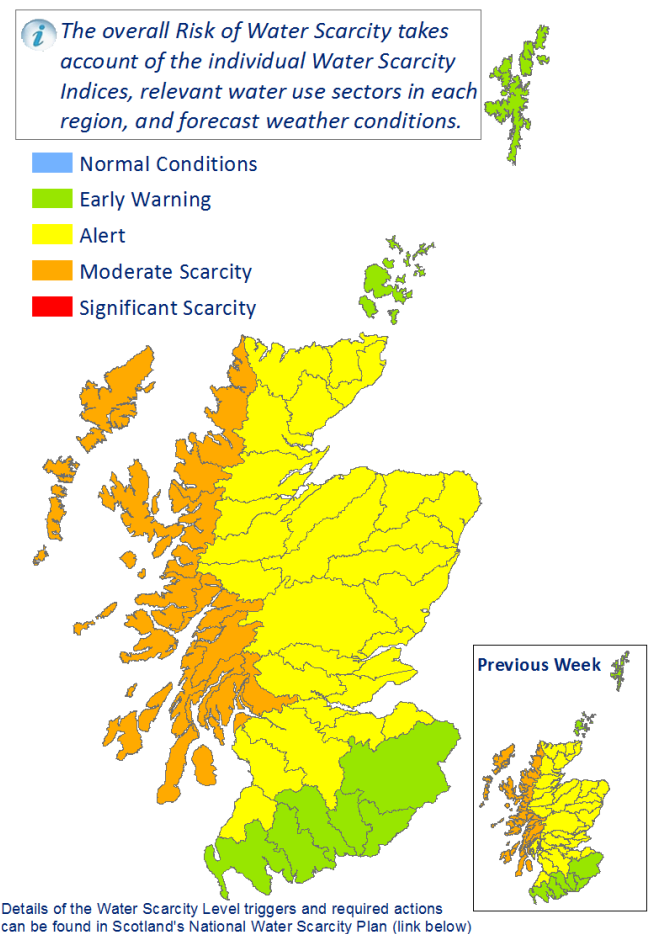
Water sources used for irrigating farm land are at risk of becoming limited in all areas of Scotland, with the exception of the south region. We are urging farmers in these areas, especially if taking water from burns and small rivers, to:

- Only irrigate when, and only as much as, absolutely necessary;
- Make sure irrigation equipment isn't leaking;
- Try to irrigate at night to reduce evaporation losses;
- Explore how you and your neighbours in the same river catchment could avoid irrigating at the same time;

Managers of golf courses in these parts of the country are asked to do the same.

SEPA are monitoring the situation closely and coordinating steps to manage water resources in line with [Scotland's National Water Scarcity Plan](#).

Figure 1: Current Water Scarcity Level



General and sector specific advice for abstractors is available: [Advice for abstractors](#). Water abstractors with concerns about meeting licence conditions or wishing to discuss contingency measures should [contact their local SEPA office](#).

Rainfall forecast (Source: Met Office 24/05/2019)

Mainly dry Friday, then some patchy rain pushing in from the west on Saturday, becoming persistent in the north-west later. Occasionally heavy rain soon clearing to showers on Sunday. Showers or longer outbreaks of rain on Monday.

The longer-term outlook is uncertain. For May-June-July as a whole, the chances of above- and below-average precipitation across the UK are similar. On balance, drier-than-average conditions are marginally more likely. For further details on the seasonal forecast see the latest 3-month outlook summaries at <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/contingency-planners/index>.

Further details on the current situation are provided in the following figures:

21/05/2019

Precipitation Indices

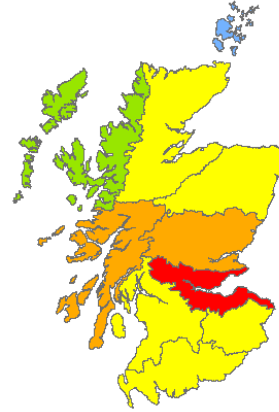
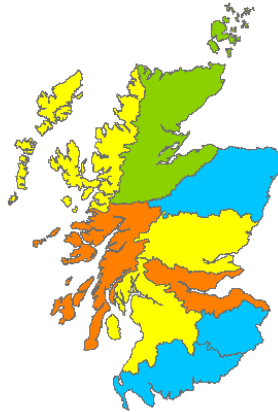
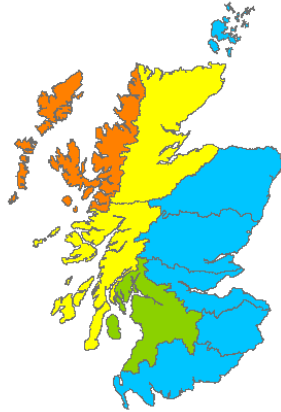
Rainfall over the past 30 days



Rainfall over the past 90 days



Rainfall over the past 180 days

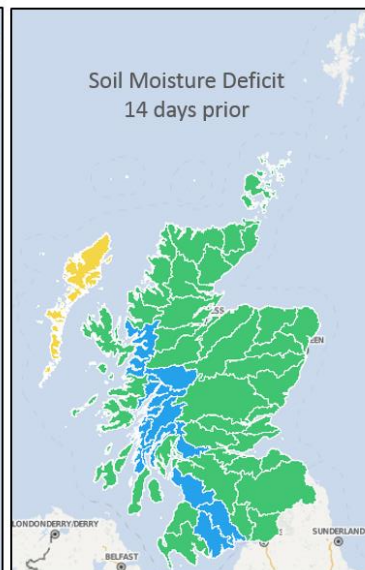
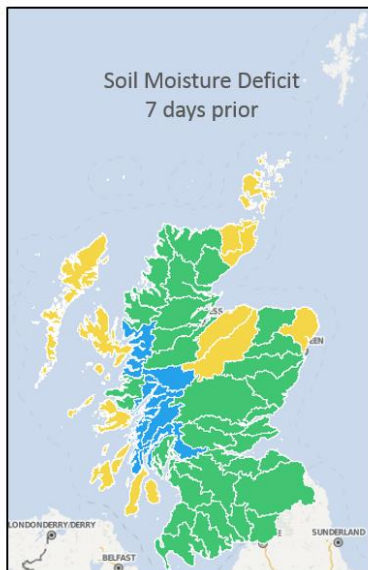
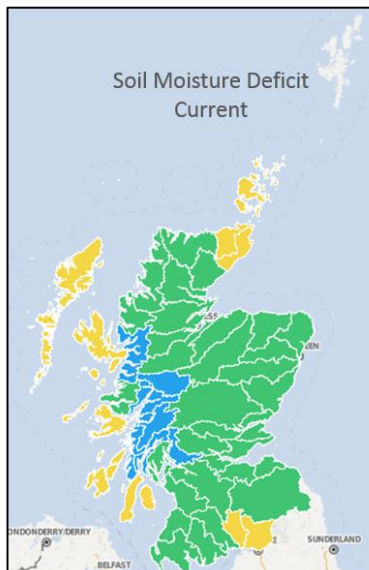


i These maps show how low current rainfall totals are for this time of year, relative to historical averages, over the past 30, 90 and 180 days.

- Normal conditions
- Quite dry
- Dry
- Very dry
- Exceptionally dry

22/05/2019

Soil Moisture Deficit



i These maps depict the latest Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD) data * and the SMD 7 and 14 days prior.

- No Deficit
- Quite Dry
- Dry
- Very Dry
- Exceptionally Dry

*MORECS data obtained from MetOffice

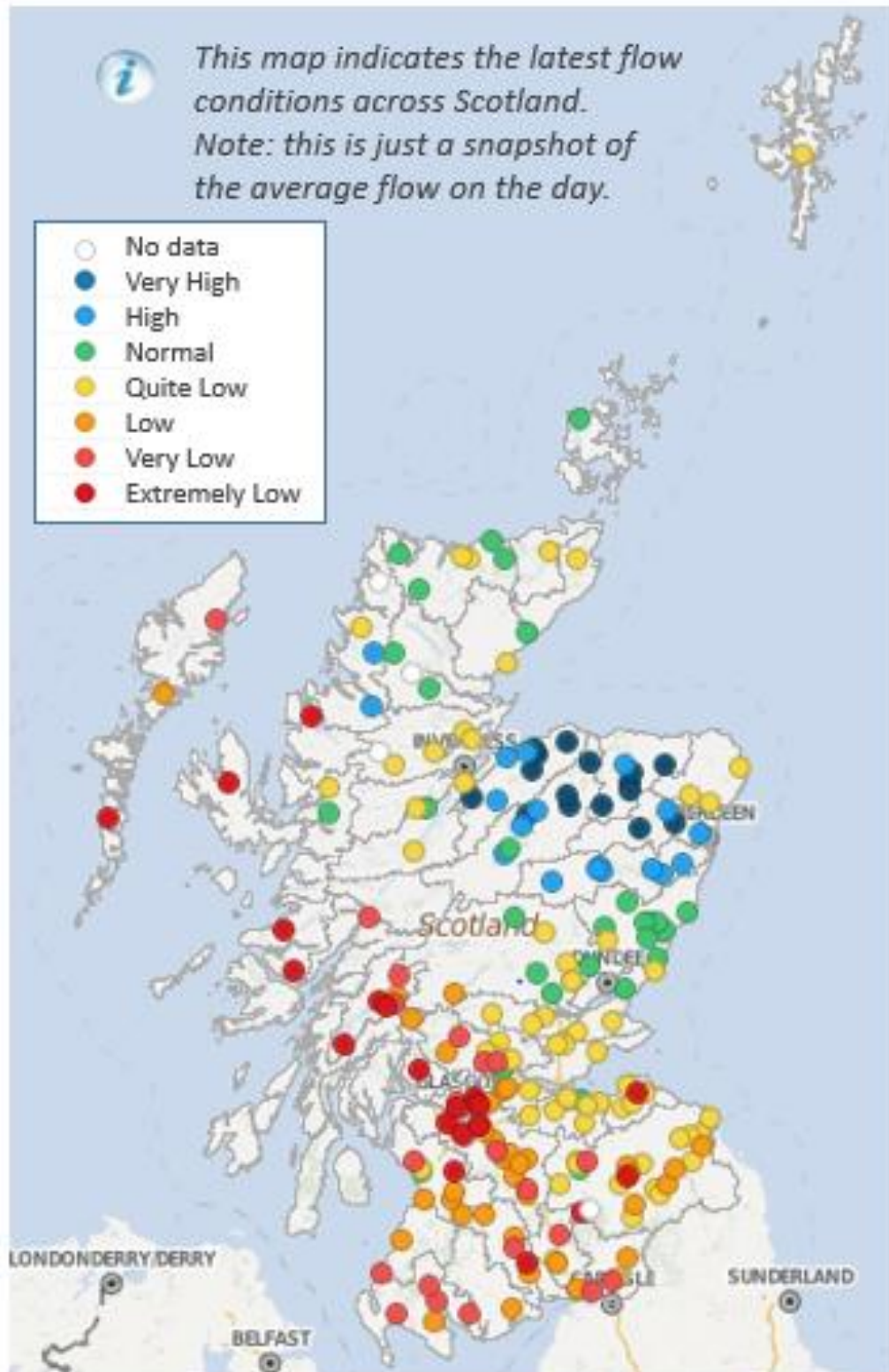
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Current Flow Conditions



This map indicates the latest flow conditions across Scotland.

Note: this is just a snapshot of the average flow on the day.





Natural water storage situation

In each river catchment there is some degree of 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 natural storage has been depleted it will take a lot of rainfall for levels to recover.

Please note that the map below does not reflect conditions in managed water supply reservoirs.



North-west

Loch levels

Loch levels in the north-west are low for the time of year following the relatively dry conditions and lack of winter recharge.



East

Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels along the east coast are still very low for the time of year compared to the long-term record (see the graphs below as an example).

South-west

Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels in this region are average for this time of year.



These charts show the trend in groundwater and loch levels since autumn 2018 at selected monitoring sites in the northeast (see map above). The white zone represents the observed range in the long-term record. The black line shows the actual groundwater level and the dashed line is the long-term average trend.

Record high groundwater level
Normal groundwater level range
Record low groundwater level

