

Water Scarcity Report

09th September 2021



HEADLINES

Wick remains at Significant Scarcity for the seventh consecutive week. Thurso and Orkney are still at Moderate Scarcity. Several areas in the Highlands have been raised to Early Warning.

The Ythan catchment has also raised to Moderate Scarcity.

North Ayrshire remains in Moderate Scarcity, with more southern catchments returning to Alert level.

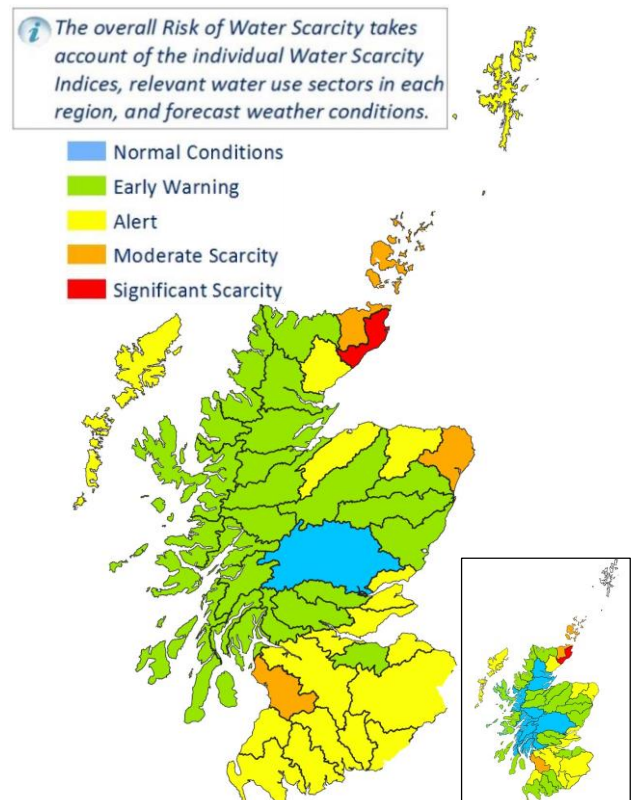
Data is now available to put Shetland at Alert for water scarcity.

Situation Summary

Another dry week has led to further decline in water resources across the country.

Ground conditions have steadily become drier over the past three weeks and soil conditions are now exceptionally dry in Orkney and the north-east Highlands. Many coastal areas around the country are also very dry.

Some rainfall is expected in most regions this week but it is unlikely to be sufficient to lead to any long-term recovery. A significant rainfall deficit has built up this summer which will take a long time to offset.



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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.

Much of the Highlands has been put at Early Warning this week, with higher levels remaining in the north-east Highlands.

Data is now available to put Shetland at Alert for current water scarcity but expected rainfall totals are highest there this week so should bring some relief.

North Ayrshire remains at Moderate Scarcity. All other catchments in the south of the country are now at Alert level, with the exception of the Almond catchment which has remained at Early Warning.

In the northeast the Ythan catchment has been raised a level to Moderate Scarcity, and Findhorn has also raised a level to Alert.

SEPA is monitoring the situation closely 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 \(SEPA\)](#).

Advice for water users

Scottish Water are asking customers to use water wisely in and around their homes. More information can be found on the Scottish Water website <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Save-Water>

Farmers and Managers of golf courses irrigating in the Alert and Moderate areas are urged, 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.

- Consider whether you could switch to using groundwater rather than river water if conditions worsen. If you would need a new borehole to do this, your local SEPA office will be able to help and advise.

For the most up to date advice please see: [Advice for abstractors](#).

Water abstractors with concerns about meeting licence conditions or wishing to discuss contingency measures should get in touch at the following e-mail address

WaterScarcity@sepa.org.uk

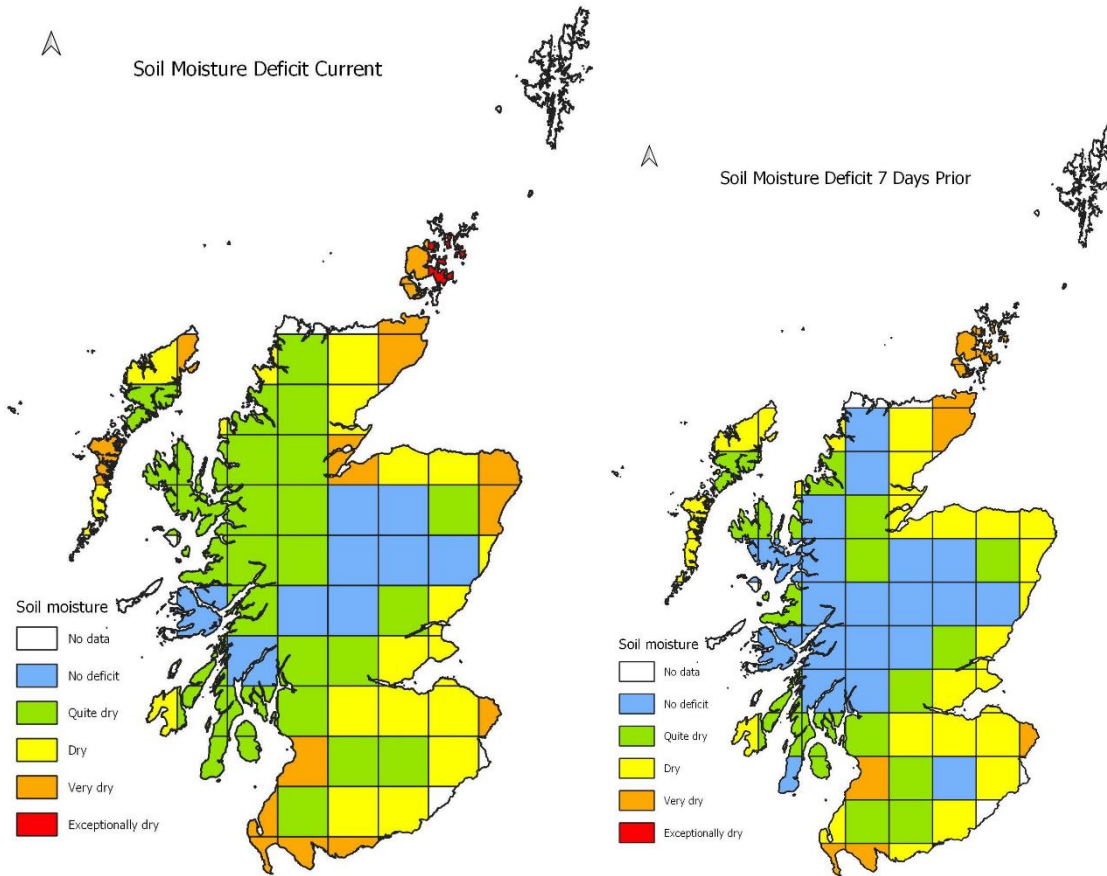
Weather forecast (09/09/21)

Rain or showers on Thursday and Friday. Some of the showers will be heavy and perhaps thundery. Rain mainly affecting the north and northwest on Saturday. Mainly dry on Sunday and Monday.

Current forecasts suggest an unsettled period is possible later in September with a return to drier conditions following that. However, confidence in the forecast is relatively low at this time of year.

At a seasonal timescale, models suggest that Autumn is more likely to be dry than wet, with more than double the chance of higher than average temperatures.

Further details are available in the following figures:



These maps depict the current latest Soil Moisture Deficit (08th September 2021) and seven days prior for comparison. Based on the MORECS data obtained from the Met Office.



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.

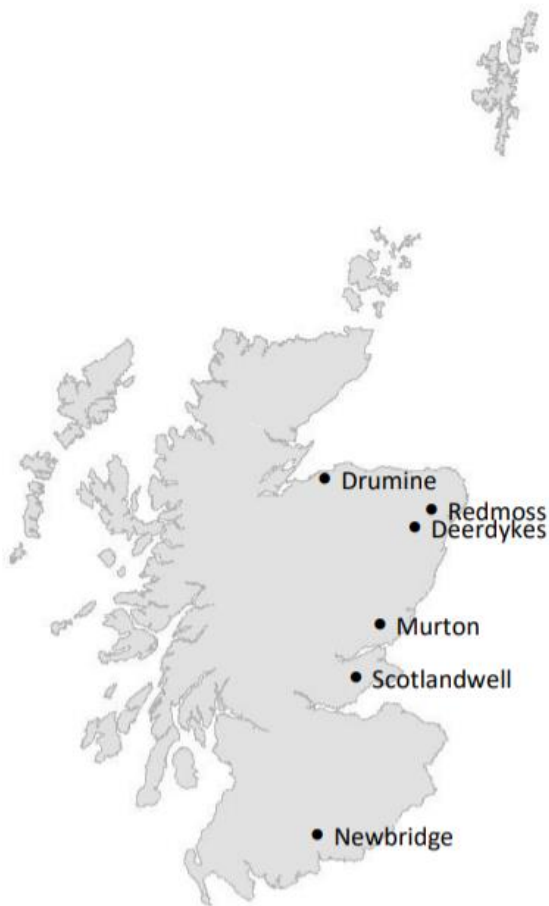
07th September 2021

Groundwater levels in the north-east are now low for the time of year and continuing to fall.

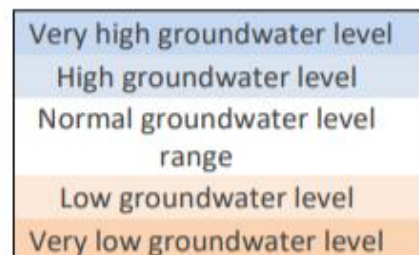
Groundwater levels in other areas are also falling but remain within the normal or high range for the time of year.

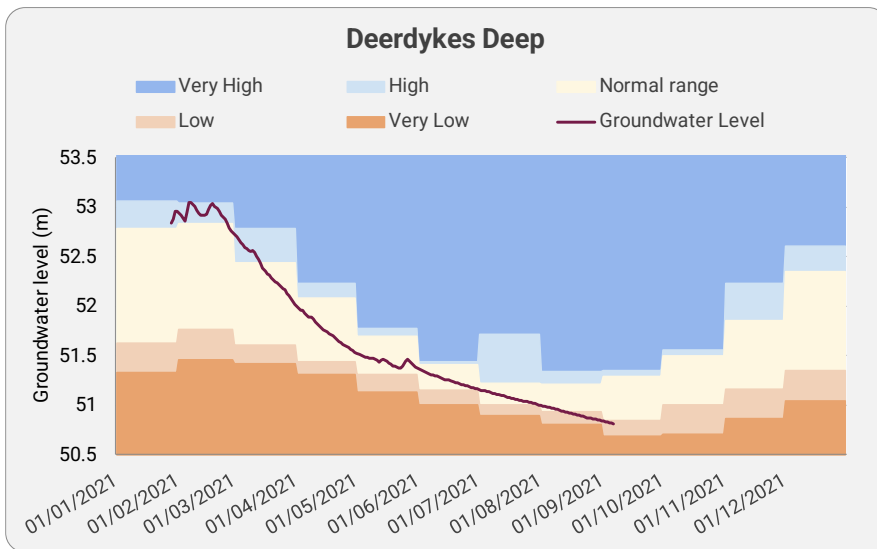
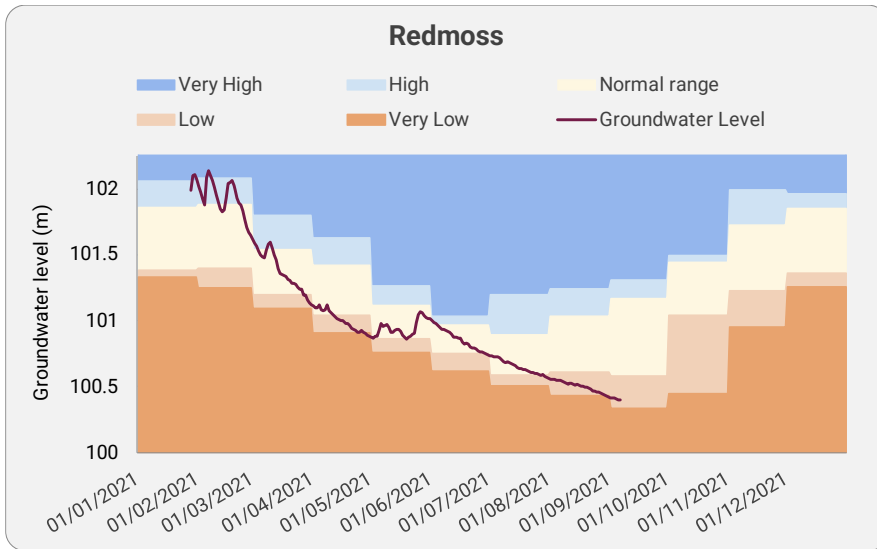
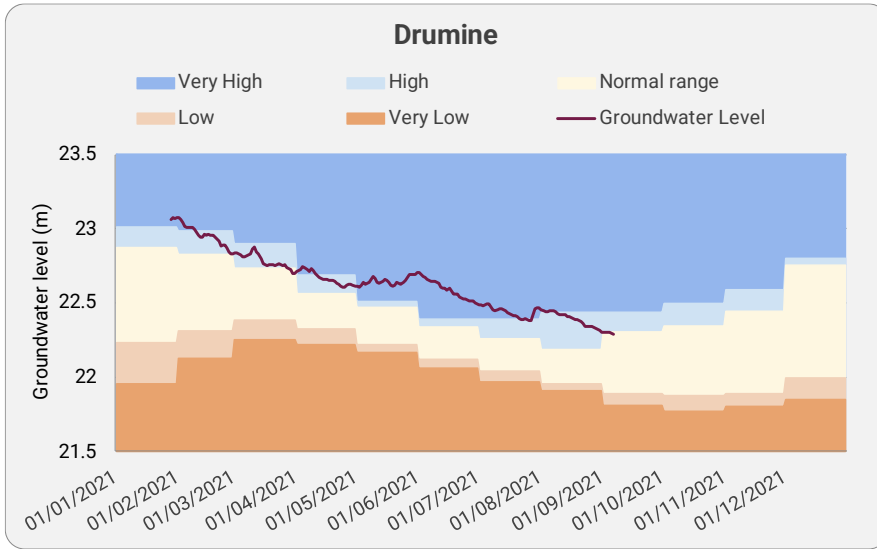
We have up to date data for 11 groundwater level monitoring sites, spread across the east and south-west of the country, giving a good picture of the current situation.

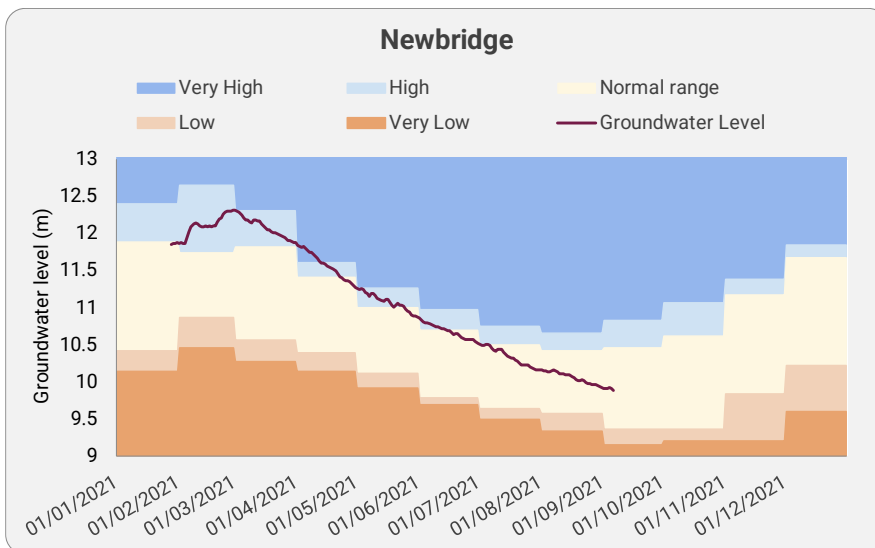
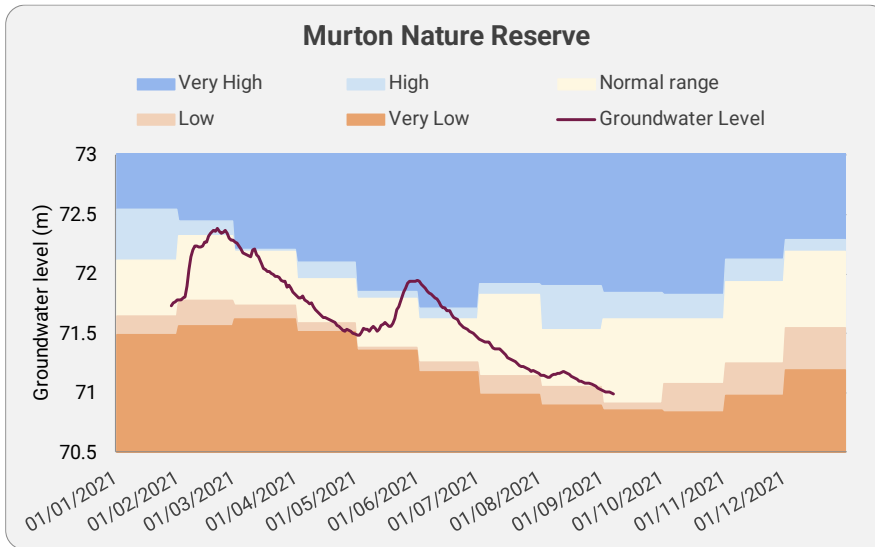
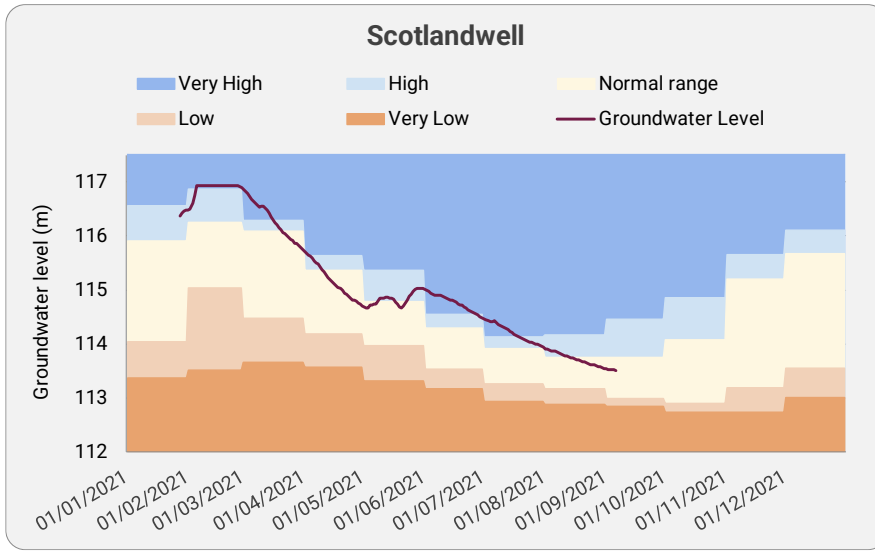
Loch level data is not currently available.



The following charts show the trend in groundwater level (GWL) since start of the year at selected monitoring sites (see map above). The black line shows the recorded groundwater level. This is plotted over level trend bands, which are based on the long-term record of mean monthly level values.







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

www.sepa.org.uk

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