

Water Scarcity Report

26th August 2021



HEADLINE

Wick remains at Significant Scarcity for the fifth consecutive week. Thurso and Orkney are still at Moderate Scarcity.

The Outer Hebrides, and parts of southern Scotland including the Tweed, and areas in the northeast remain at Alert.

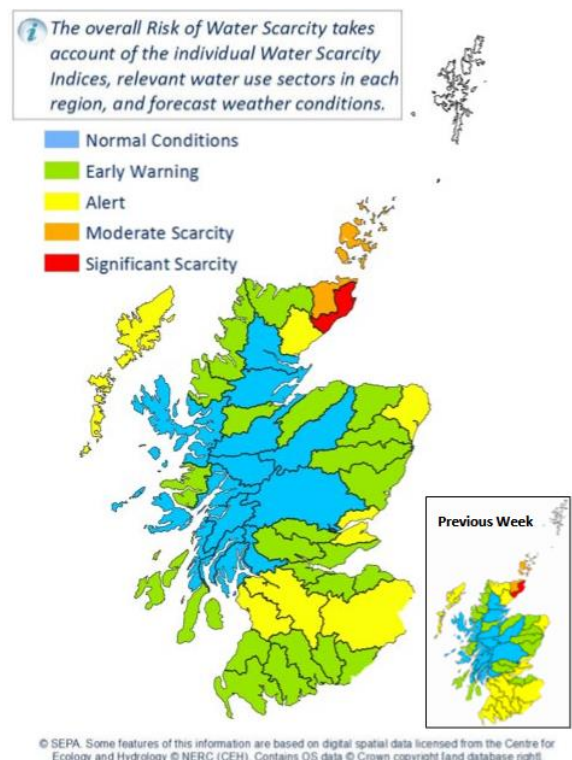
The Naver, Firth of Forth and a large portion of the southwest have recovered to Early Warning.

Situation Summary

Due to sustained very low flows and dry ground conditions, Wick is still at Significant Scarcity and Thurso and Orkney are still at Moderate Scarcity.

The Outer Hebrides, Helmsdale, Ythan (northeast), the Firth of Tay and parts of southern Scotland remain at Alert. In these areas, conditions are likely to deteriorate further as the country enters a spell of dry, warm weather.

There has been limited recovery in the Naver, Firth of Forth and most of the southwest due to recent rainfall. These areas have improved from Alert to Early Warning. However, any improvements to ground conditions or river flows, are likely to be temporary due to the forecast dry weather.



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

Water sources used for irrigating farmland are at risk of becoming limited in the Alert and Moderate areas. 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.
- 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.

Managers of golf courses are asked to do the same.

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

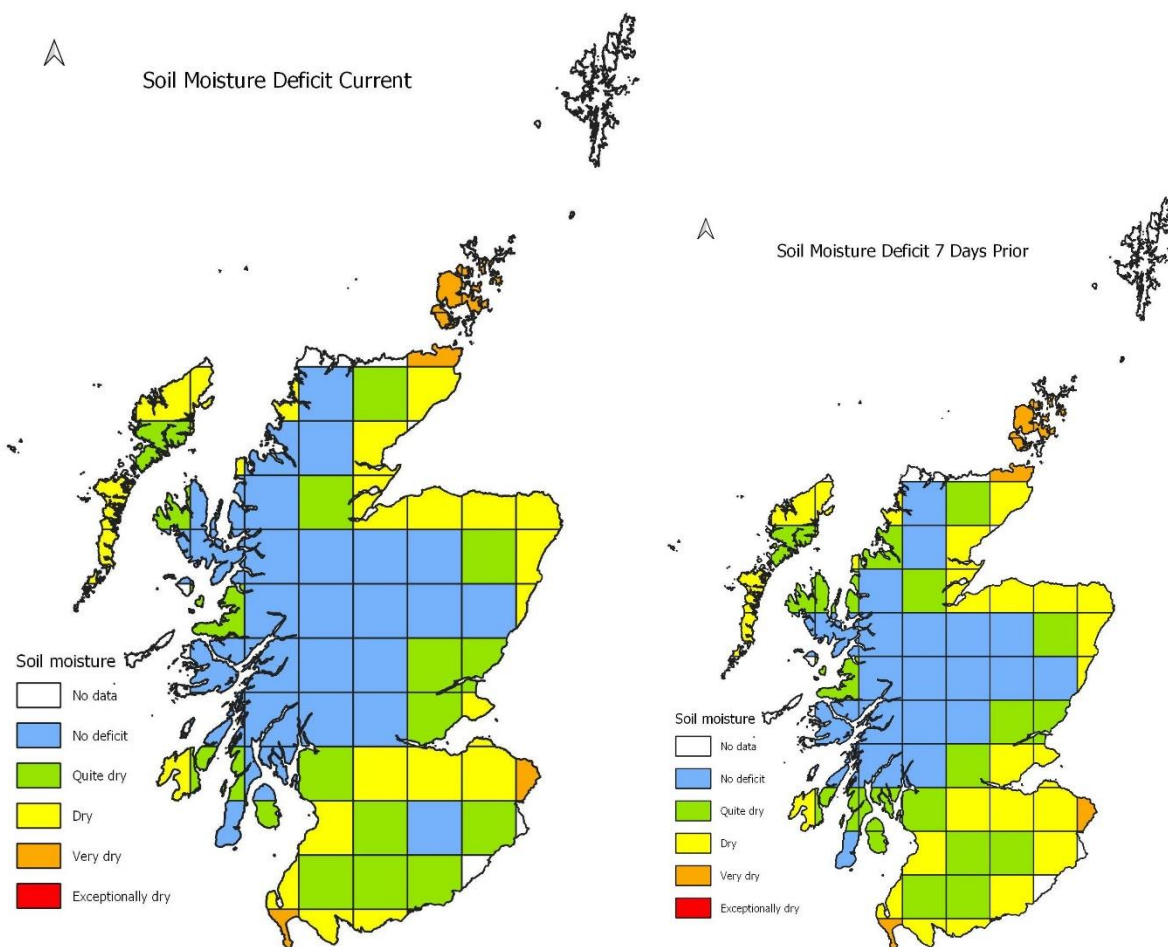
WaterScarcity@sepa.org.uk

Weather forecast (25/08/21)

High pressure over or to the west of Scotland maintaining settled weather with most of the country staying dry through the next 5 days.

At a seasonal timescale, models suggest the next three months are likely to see above normal temperatures and near average precipitation, although there is a slightly higher than normal chance of the season being dry.

Further details are available in the following figures:



These maps depict the current latest Soil Moisture Deficit (25th August 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.

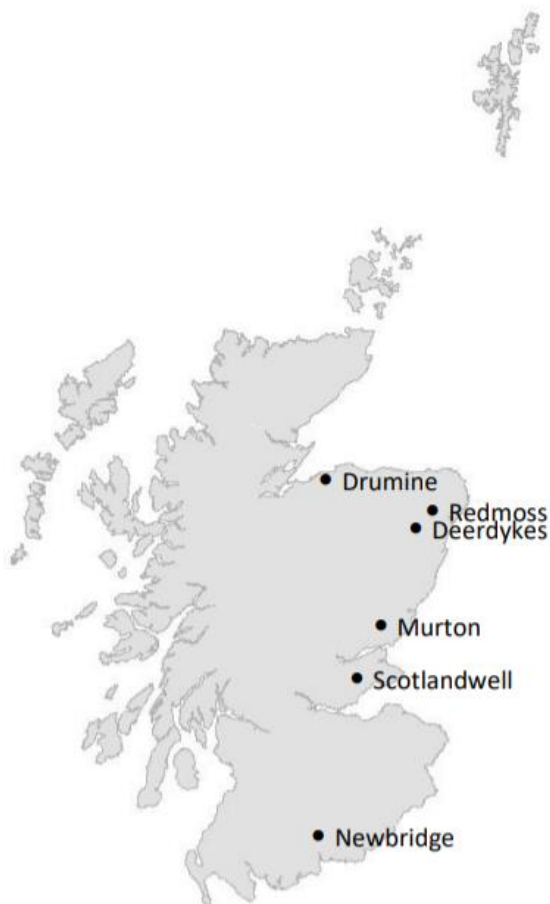
24th August 2021

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

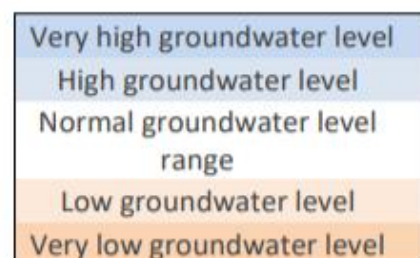
Groundwater levels in other areas are also falling but remain within the normal or high range for the time of year.

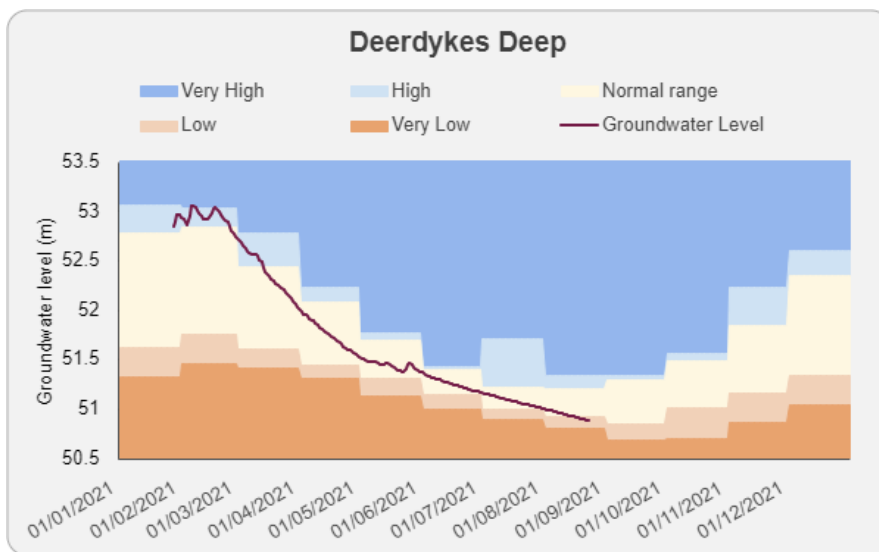
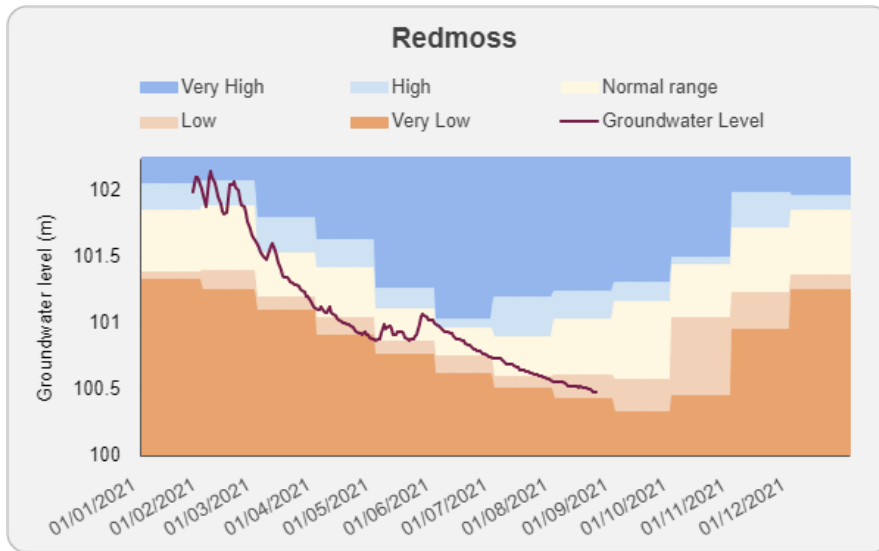
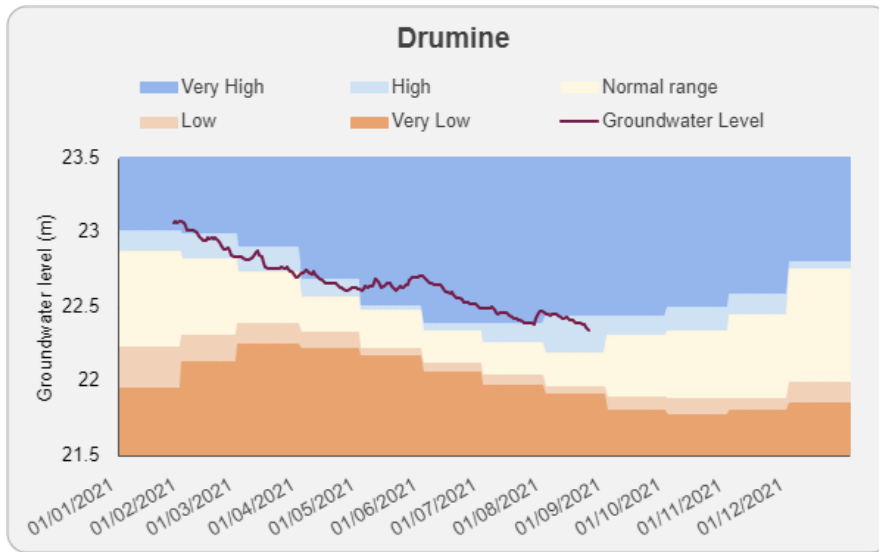
We have up to date data for 11 groundwater level monitoring sites, spread across the east and south-west of the country, giving a good picture of the current situation.

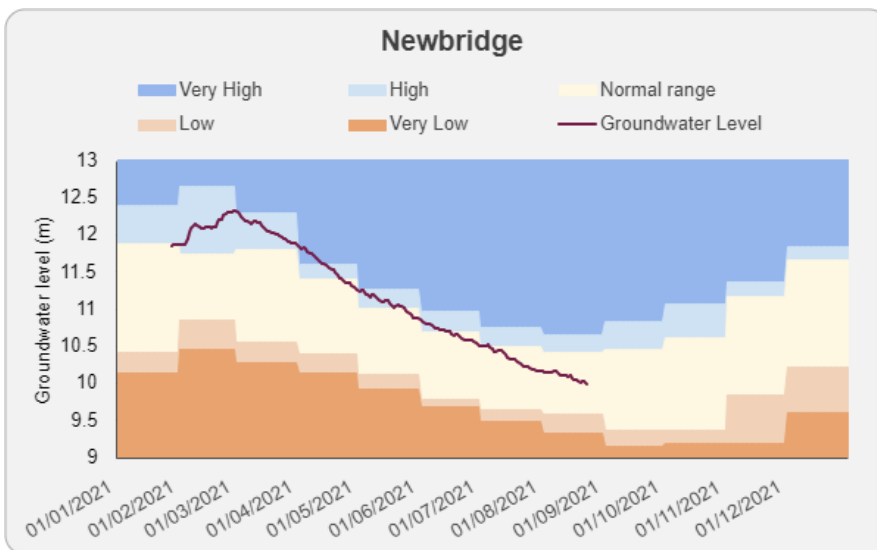
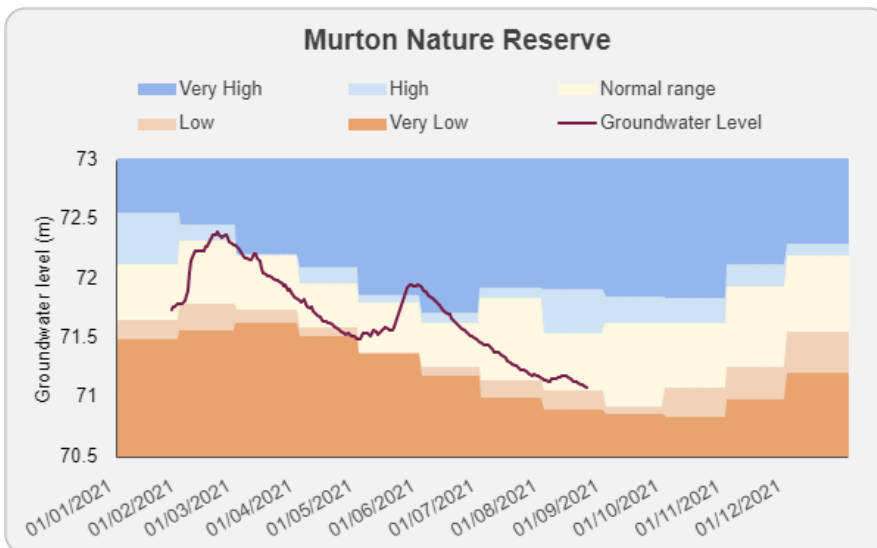
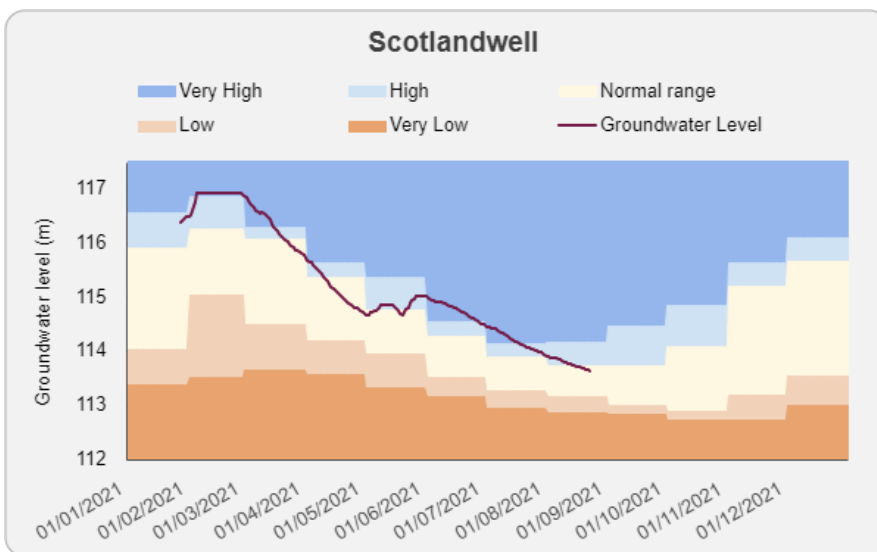
Loch level data is not currently available.



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.







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/>

www.sepa.org.uk

Strathallan House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TZ