

Water Scarcity Report

29th September 2022



The River Enrick in the Ness catchment has been raised to Significant Scarcity.

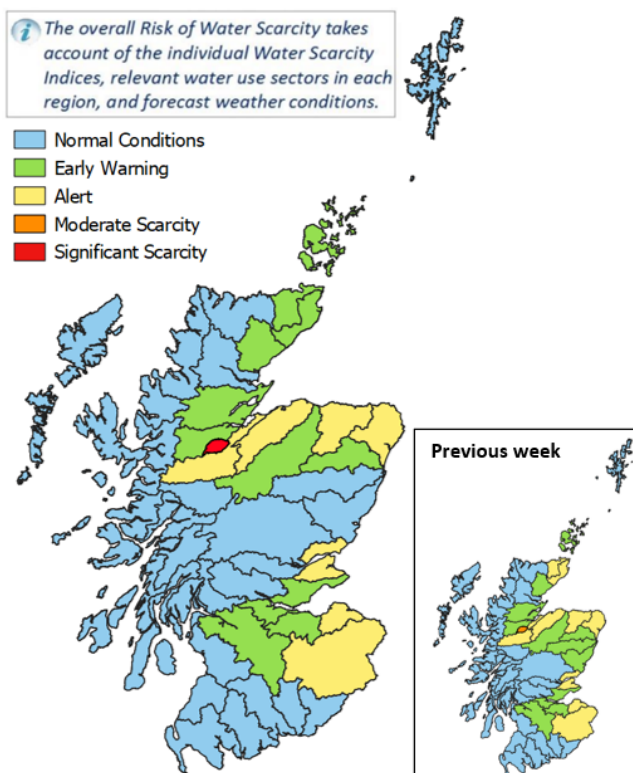
There has been some recovery in the north and north-east.

Situation Summary

Due to recent rainfall there has been some recovery in the north and north-east of the country. Wick and Thurso areas have recovered to Early Warning, and the Dee and Esk catchments in Aberdeenshire have recovered to Normal Conditions.

The River Enrick to the west of Loch Ness, in the Ness catchment, has been raised to Significant Scarcity due to the prolonged low river flows. Further rain is forecast this week, which may aid recovery. SEPA will not be suspending licences in the Enrick catchment as they already contain conditions that limit abstraction during low flows.

Groundwater levels remain low or very low at most monitoring locations.



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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.

Longer-term rainfall deficits, low river flows and dry ground conditions persist more widely in the south-east of the country and along the Moray coast. Further dry periods may lead to deterioration in conditions.

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 farm land are at risk of becoming limited in the Alert 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.
- Reduce evaporation losses by avoiding irrigating during the hottest time of day
- 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.

Public water supplies are operating normally.

Weather forecast (29/09/22)

A few showers Thursday but most places dry. Outbreaks of rain spread east overnight into Friday, the rain becoming persistent and heavy, especially across western and central hills, windy too with southerly coastal gales, perhaps severe in north. The rain clears to showers from the west through the afternoon. Showers, heavy and perhaps thundery, in west Saturday developing more widely, the showers dying out from the south Sunday. Dry start Monday but outbreaks of rain spread NE in afternoon.

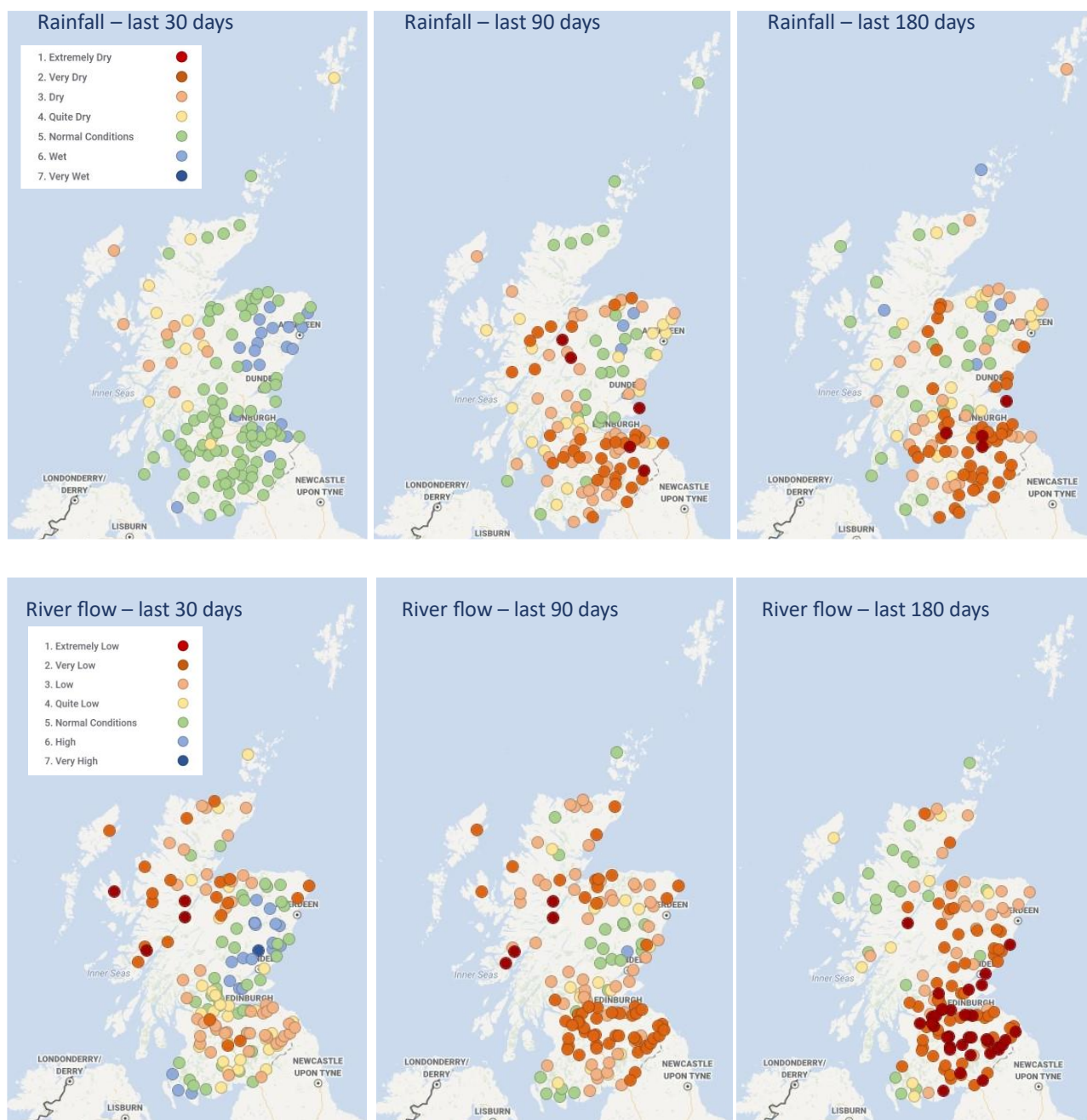
The rainfall outlook for the September-November period suggests that across the UK average rainfall is most likely. Southern and Eastern areas have an increased chance of dry weather continuing, while northern and western areas have most chance of seeing wet conditions.

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Supporting information

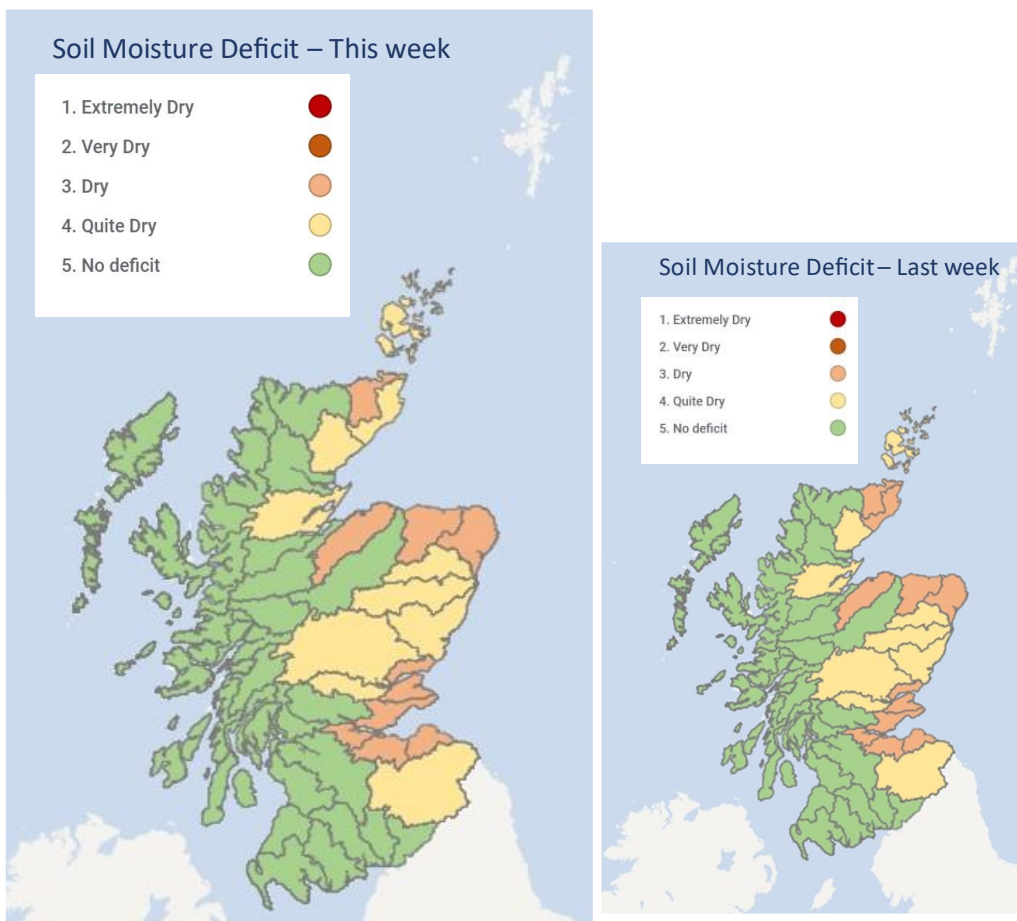
Rainfall and river flows:

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. Rainfall totals have been normal in the shorter term across most parts of the country but conditions in the longer term have been widely very dry. The extreme low river flows this summer are still evident on the timescales shown, although there has been a response to recent rainfall.



Soil moisture deficit:

These maps show this week’s soil moisture deficit, alongside last weeks for comparison. This is obtained from the Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System (MORECS). Ground conditions along the east coast are still dry.

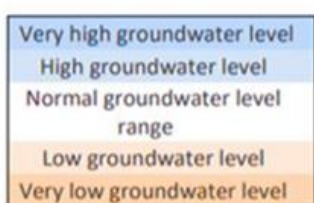


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Groundwater levels:

i **Natural water storage situation**

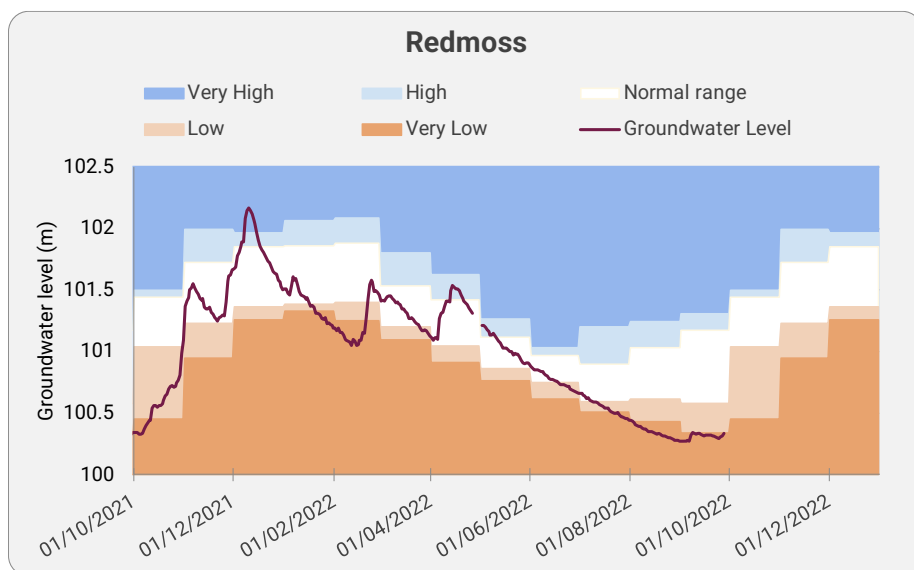
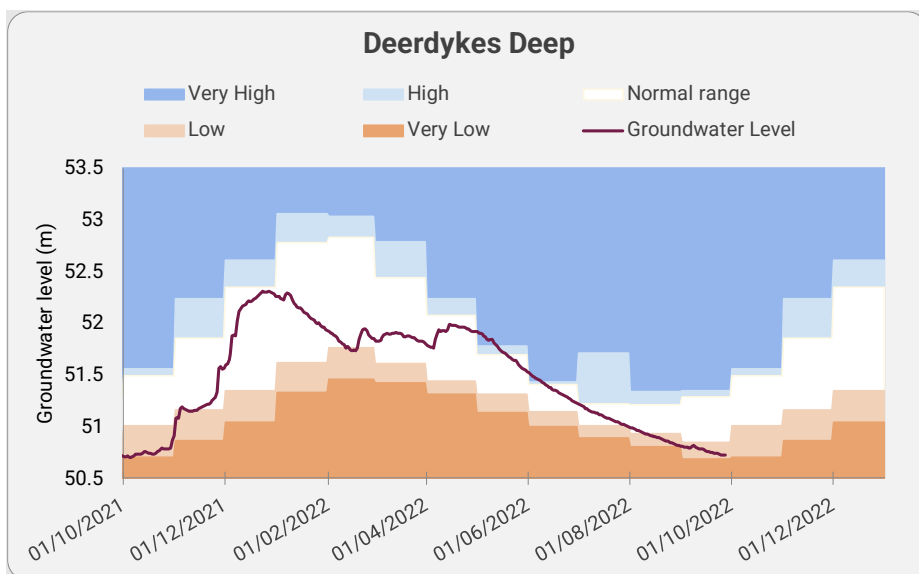
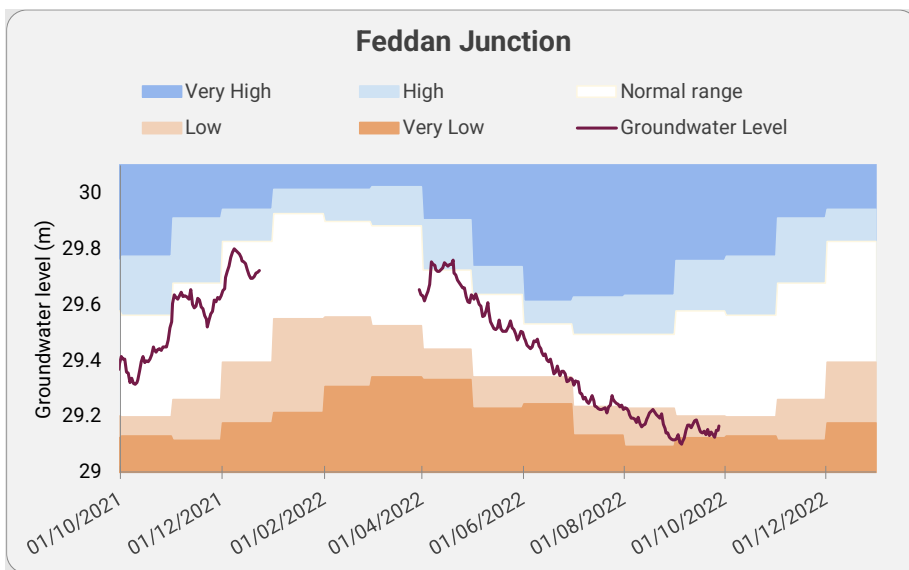
In each river catchment there is some degree of water storage, which can maintain river flows even when it is not raining. This natural water storage is mainly held in lochs and groundwater. When natural storage has been depleted it will take a lot of rainfall for levels to recover.

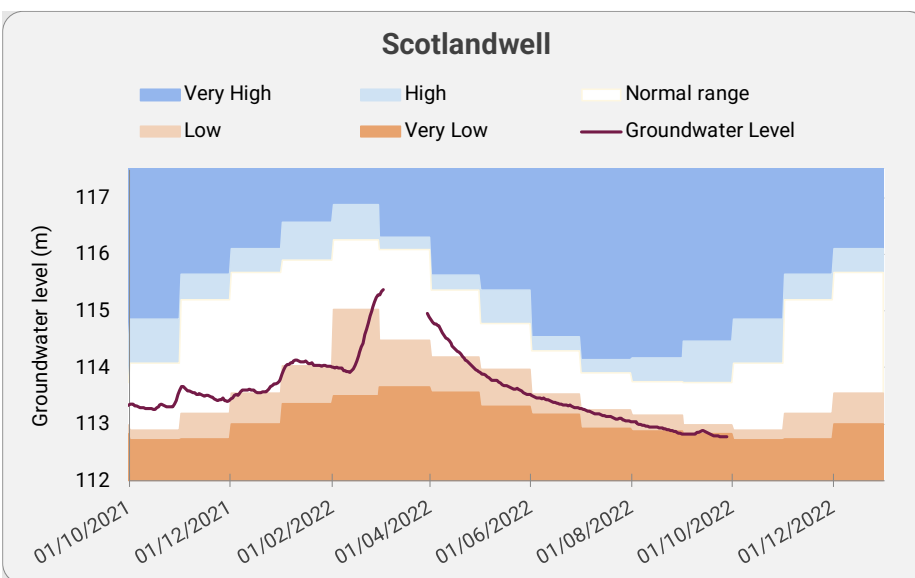
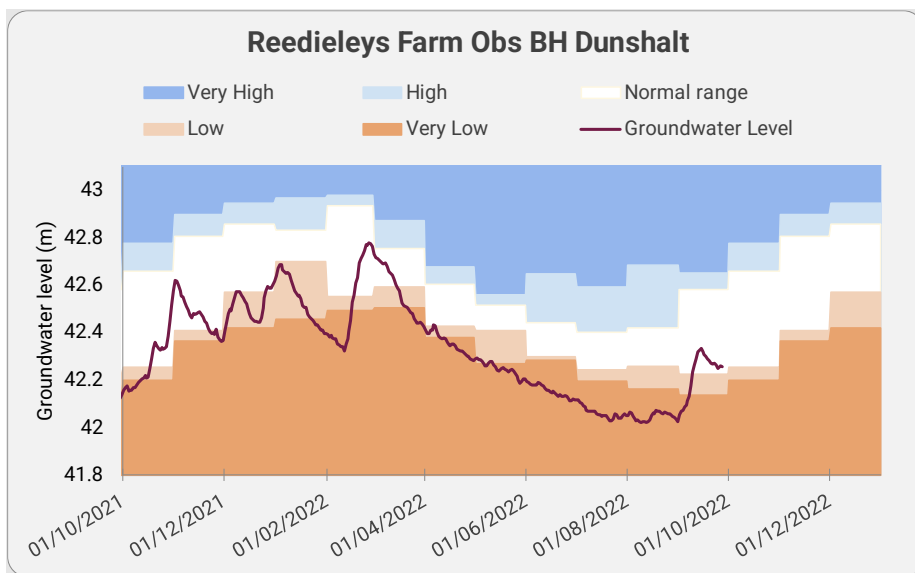
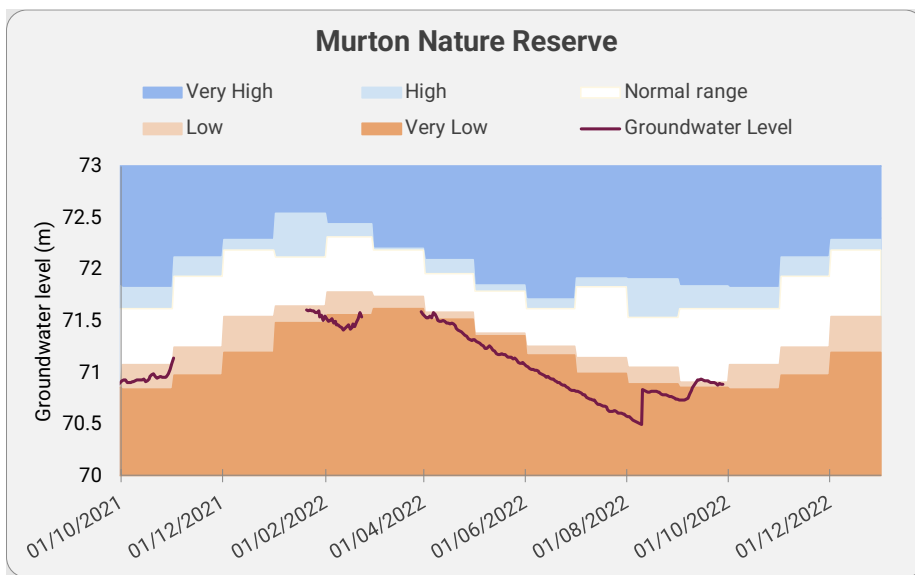


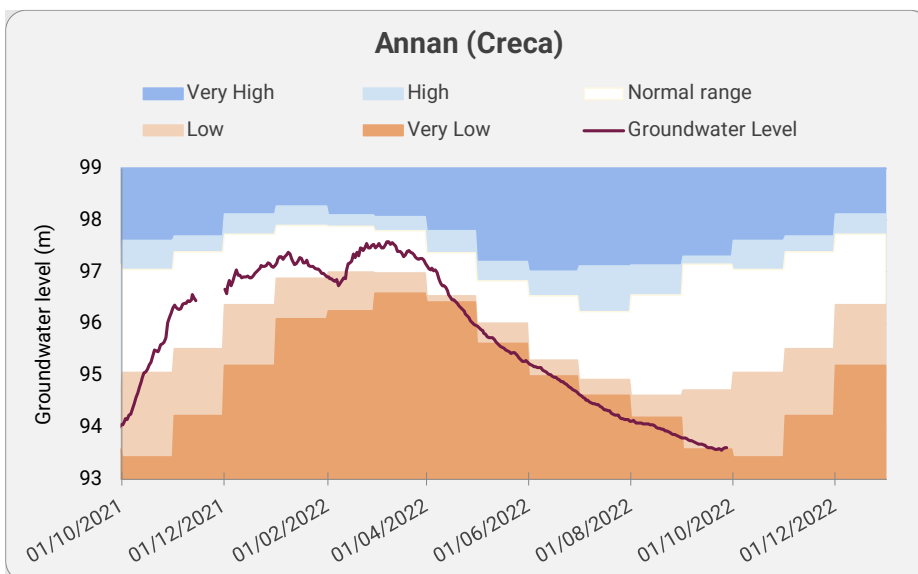
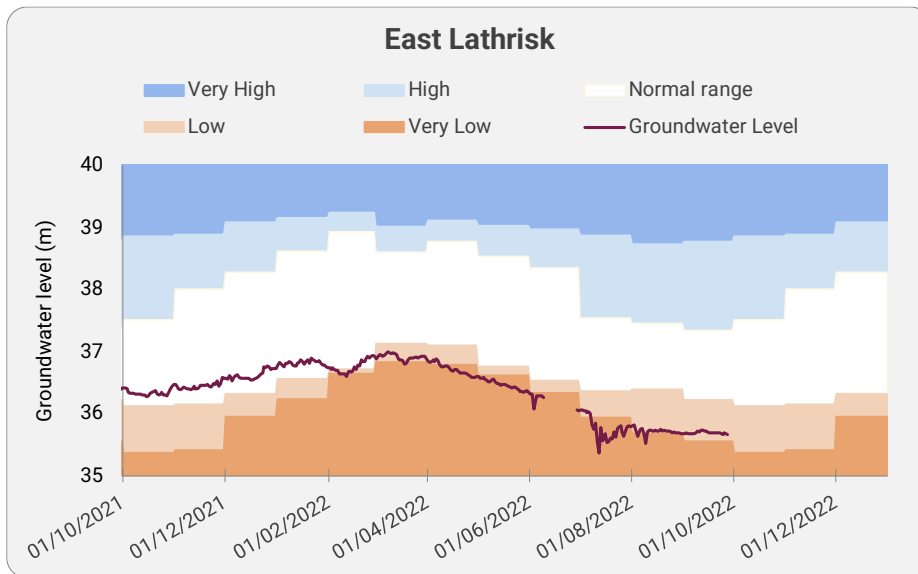
Groundwater levels have seen limited recovery over the past week, with levels ranging between normal and very low.

Loch level data is not currently available.

The following charts show the trend in groundwater level (GWL) since October 2021 for selected monitoring sites (see map above). The dark 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.







Flow, rainfall and groundwater data are 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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