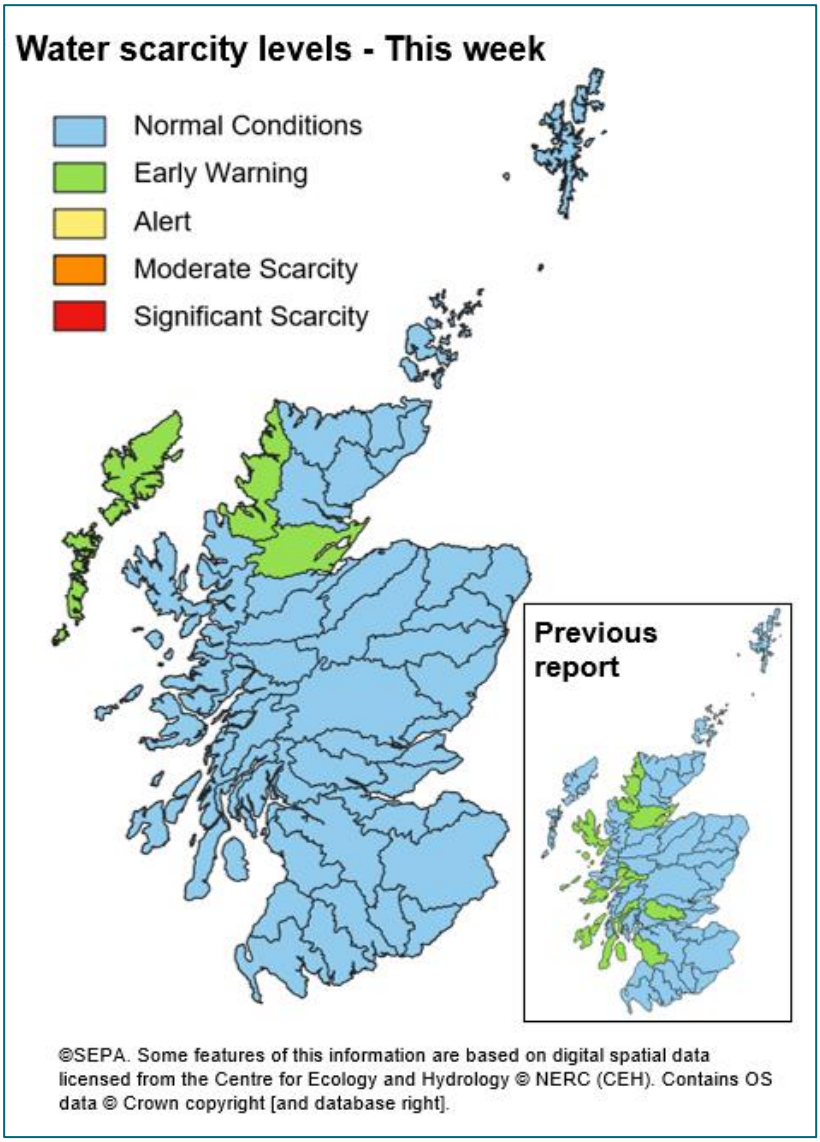
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Buidheann Dìon Àrainneachd na h-Alba

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

11th May 2023

Parts of the far north remain in Early Warning, along with the Western Isles.
Areas in the west and central Scotland have recovered to Normal Conditions.



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

Western and Central Scotland has seen recovery to Normal Conditions due to rainfall over the past two weeks. However drier ground conditions and low river flows in the Western Isles and northern Scotland have resulted in localised areas of Early Warning.
Groundwater levels across most monitoring locations are ranging from normal to very high, although in some parts of Fife they are low for the time of year.

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).

Advice for water users

We advise water users, including those with private water supplies, to be aware of the potential risk of water scarcity this summer, and for businesses to plan ahead where possible. Water scarcity - plan ahead and use water wisely (sepa.org.uk).

Weather forecast (11/05/2023)

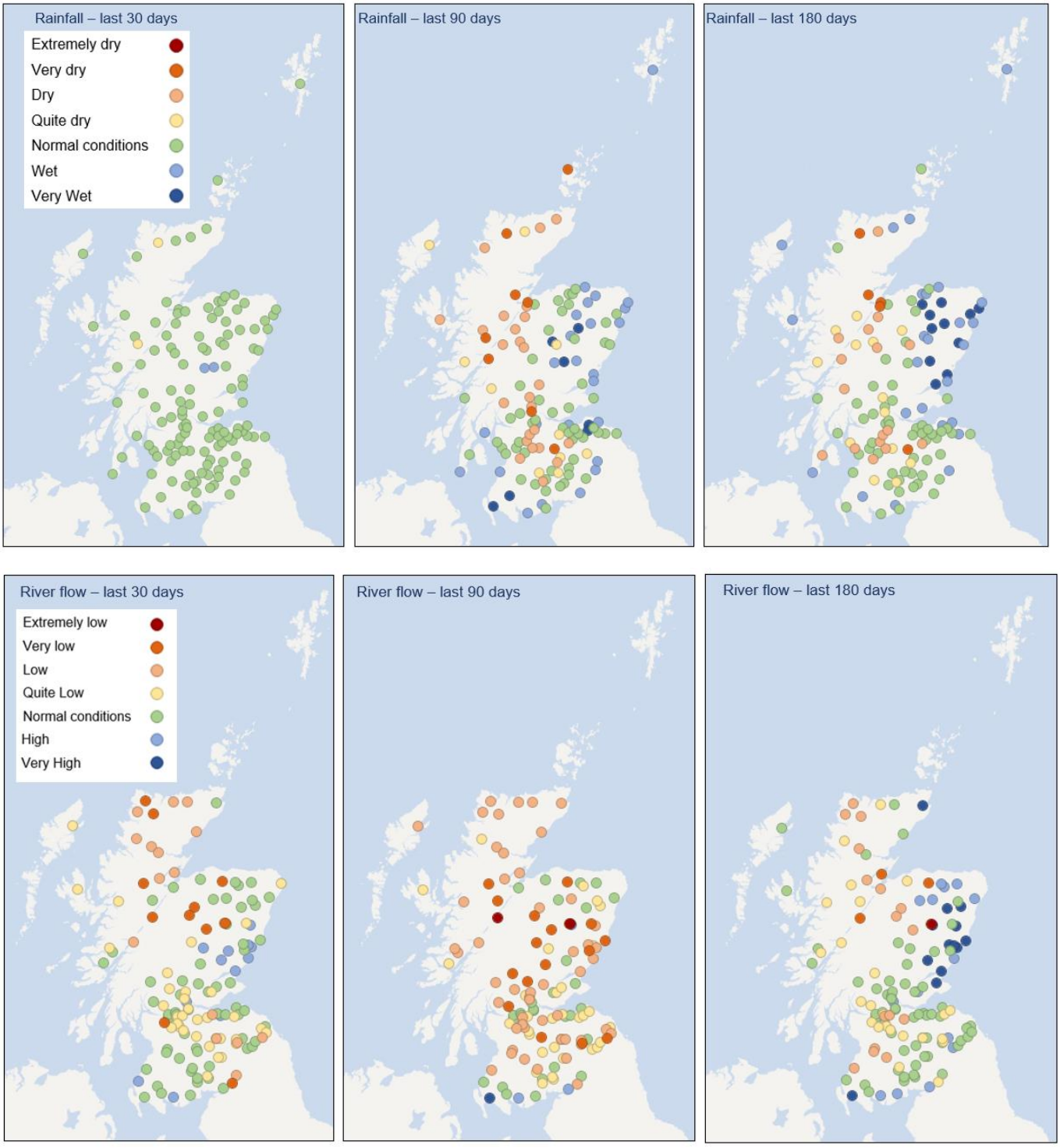
A low will fill as it gradually moves southeast across the UK on Thursday, with some heavy showers breaking out over Scotland. Drier on Friday with a ridge of high pressure building northeast over Scotland. Ridge slips south on Saturday then declines as a complex frontal trough pushes across the UK from the west, bringing a spell of rain. Trough moves into North Sea on Monday as another ridge starts to build northeast to west of UK.

The rainfall outlook for the May-July period suggests that across the UK there is an increased likelihood of the period being warmer and wetter than normal.

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.

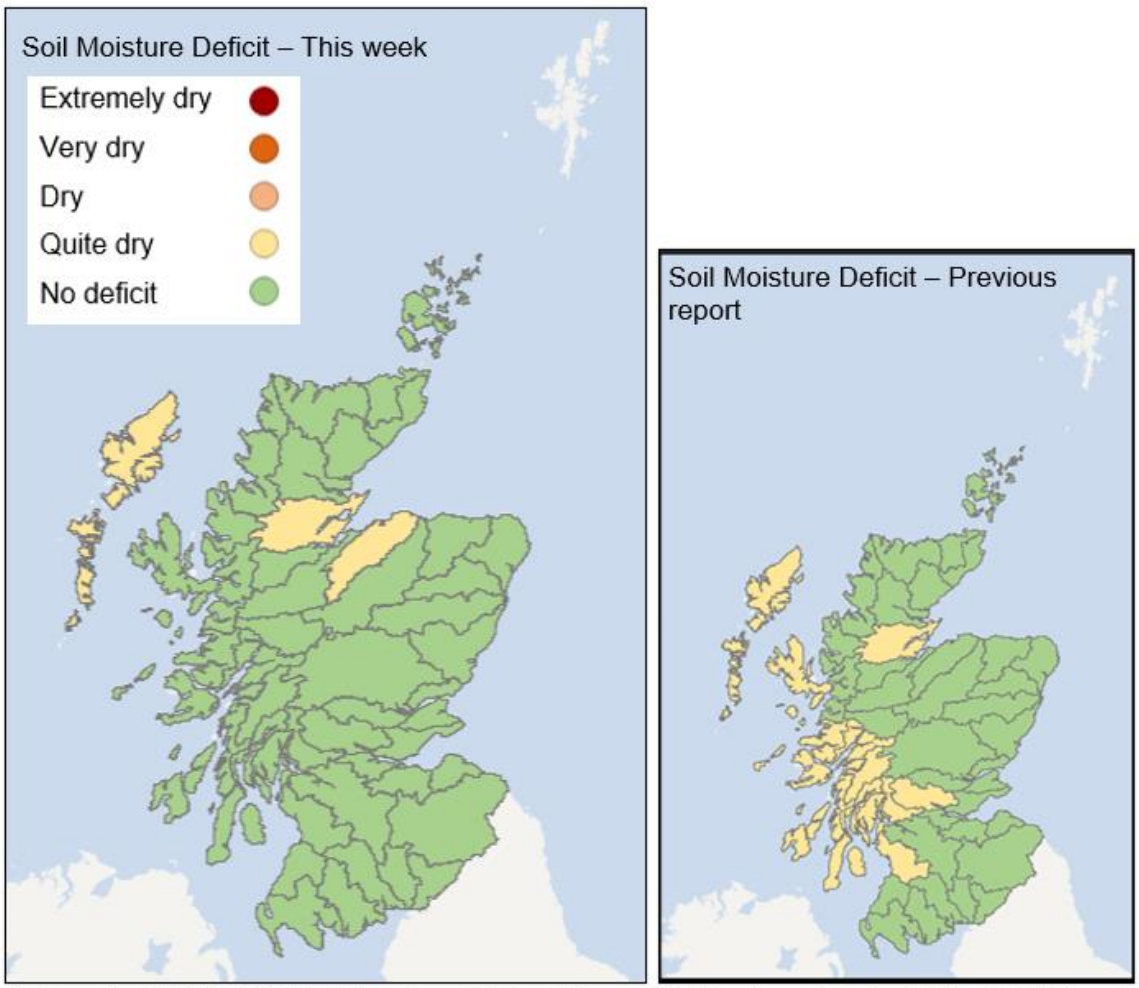


Rainfall totals in the short term have been normal apart from in the northern highlands, where they have been widely quite dry. In the medium term, drier conditions have been experienced in areas of the south and north.

Very low river flows for this time of year are evident in the short term in parts of the north and north-west of the country. In the medium term, low flows were experienced in the south but within the last month, these have mostly returned to normal or high flows.

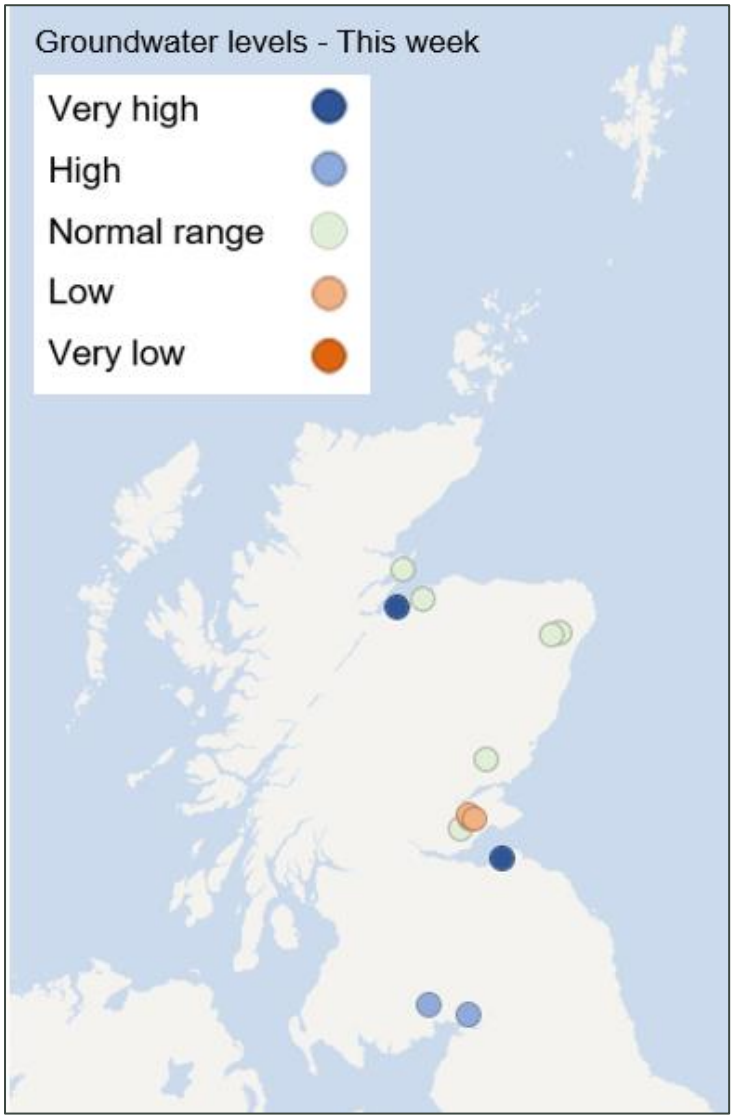
Soil moisture deficit:

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).



Groundwater levels:

This map shows how this week's groundwater level compares to the long-term record at each station. Groundwater level is reported as above (high) or below (low) the typical (normal) level for the time of year. 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 our monitoring stations are mostly within the normal to high range for this time of year. In some parts of Fife, groundwater levels are low for the time of year and very gradually falling.

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.

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/

www.sepa.org.uk

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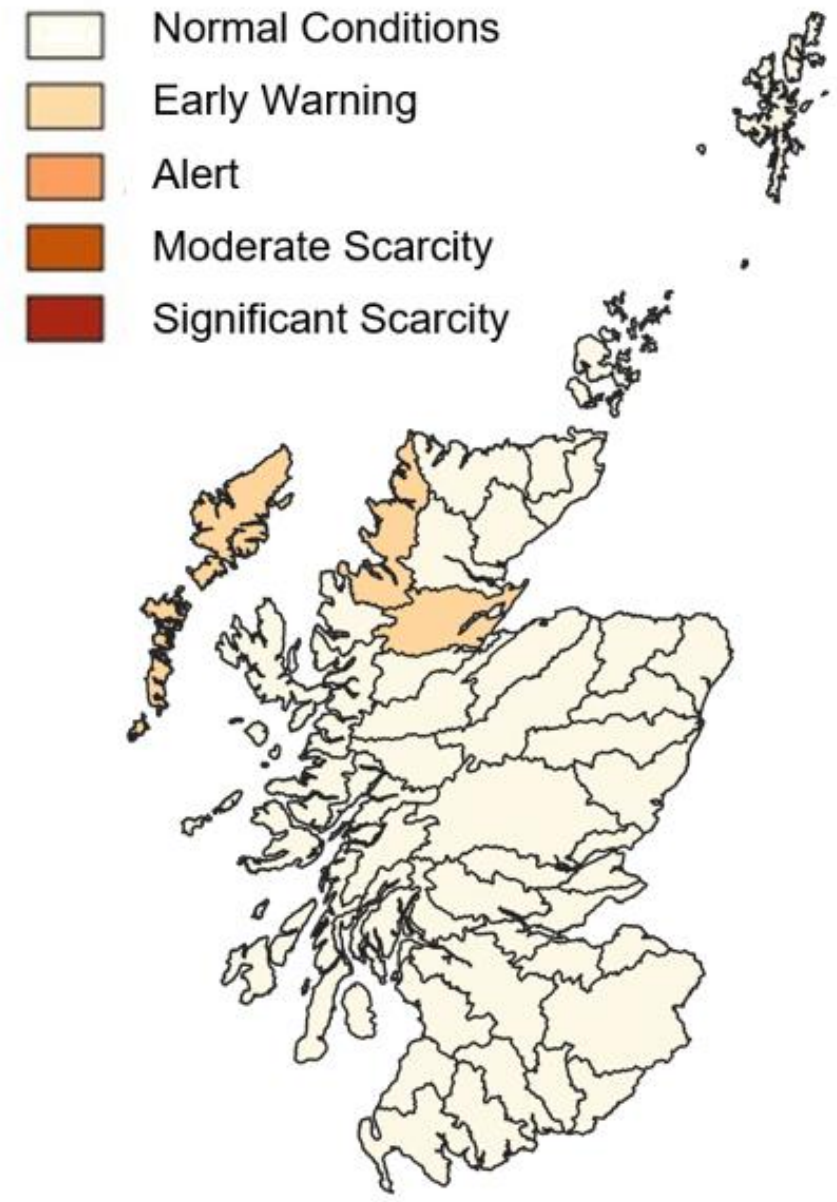
Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



Link to Situation Summary