

For the future of our environment

# Water Scarcity Report

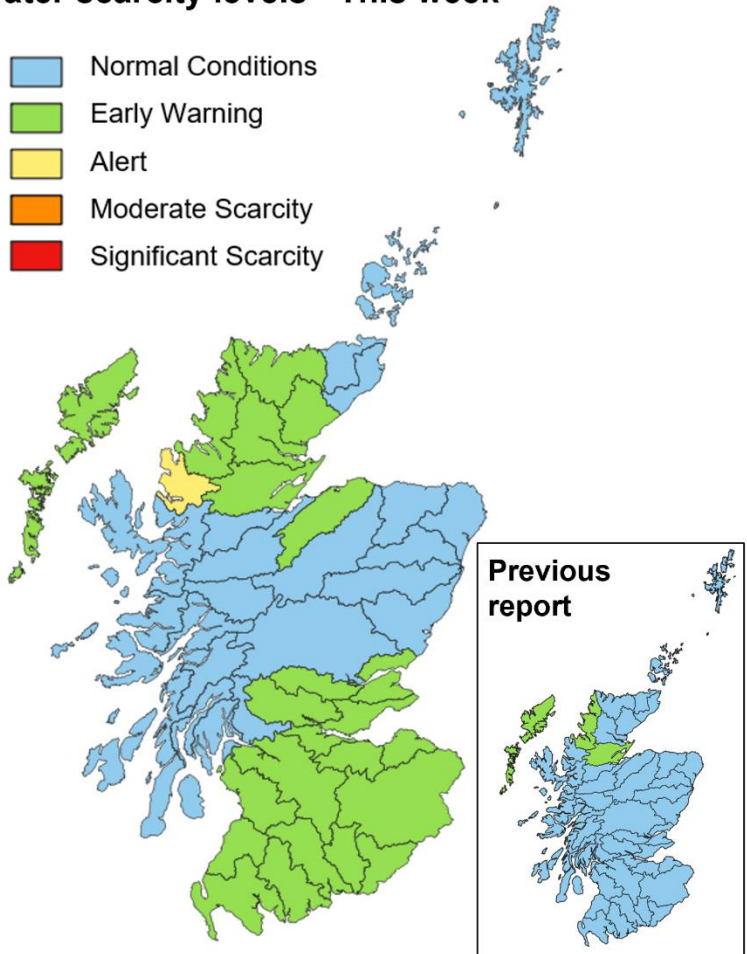
25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**The risk of water scarcity in the Loch Maree area has been increased to Alert level.**

**Areas in southern and central Scotland along with the majority of areas in the north including the Western Isles are now in Early Warning.**

## Water scarcity levels - This week

- Normal Conditions
- Early Warning
- Alert
- Moderate Scarcity
- Significant Scarcity



©SEPA. Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology © NERC (GEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right].

[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

The Loch Maree area has been increased to Alert level due to very low river flows in the area. Continued drier ground conditions and low river flows in the Western Isles and northern Scotland have resulted in areas of Early Warning with this becoming more widespread in the last couple of weeks. Central and southern Scotland have also seen an increase in dry ground conditions over the last fortnight with lower river flows and so these areas have been raised to Early Warning.

Groundwater levels across most monitoring locations are ranging from normal to low for the time of year.

In the next week, it is expected that ground conditions will continue to get drier and river flows will decrease or remain low, as there is very little or no rainfall forecast across Scotland in the coming days.

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 (25/05/2023)

Thursday evening and Friday generally dry, just a few light showers in the far north. Most staying dry over the weekend too, apart from some patchy light rain or showers in the northwest and far north.

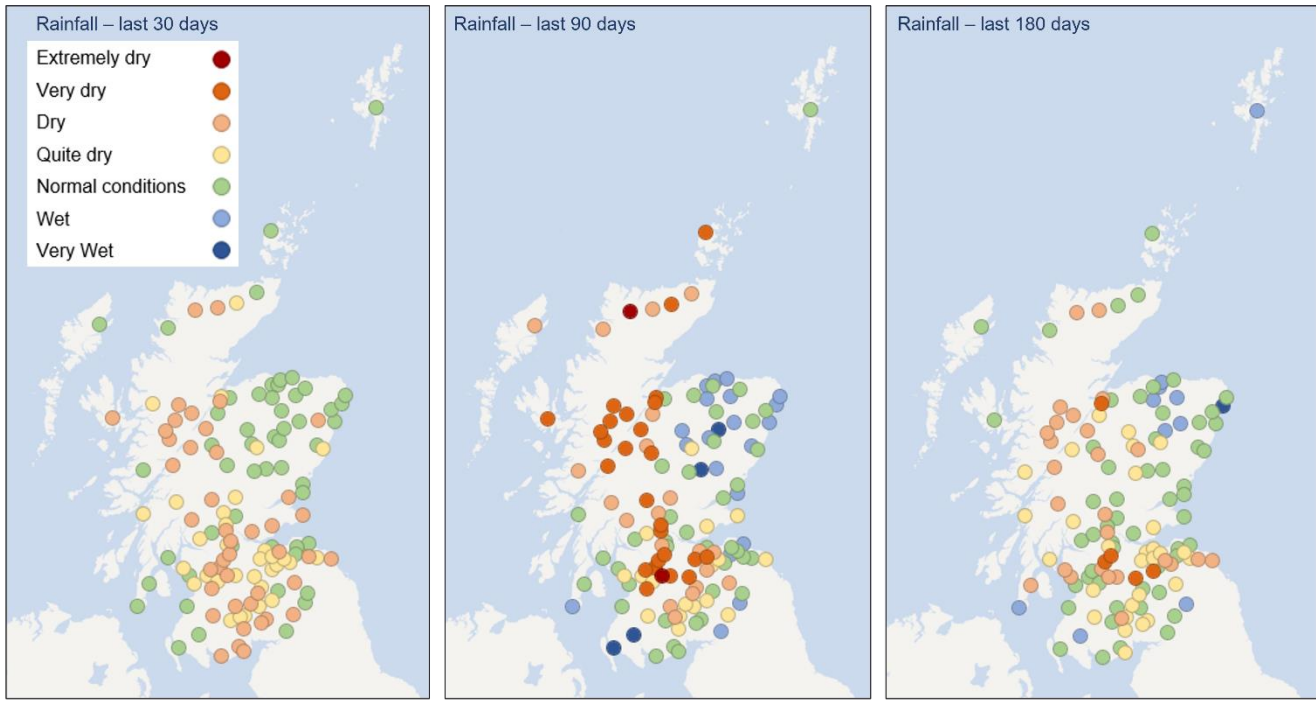
The rainfall outlook for the May-July period suggests that across the UK there is an increased likelihood of the period being warmer and wetter than normal.

© Crown copyright [2023], Met Office

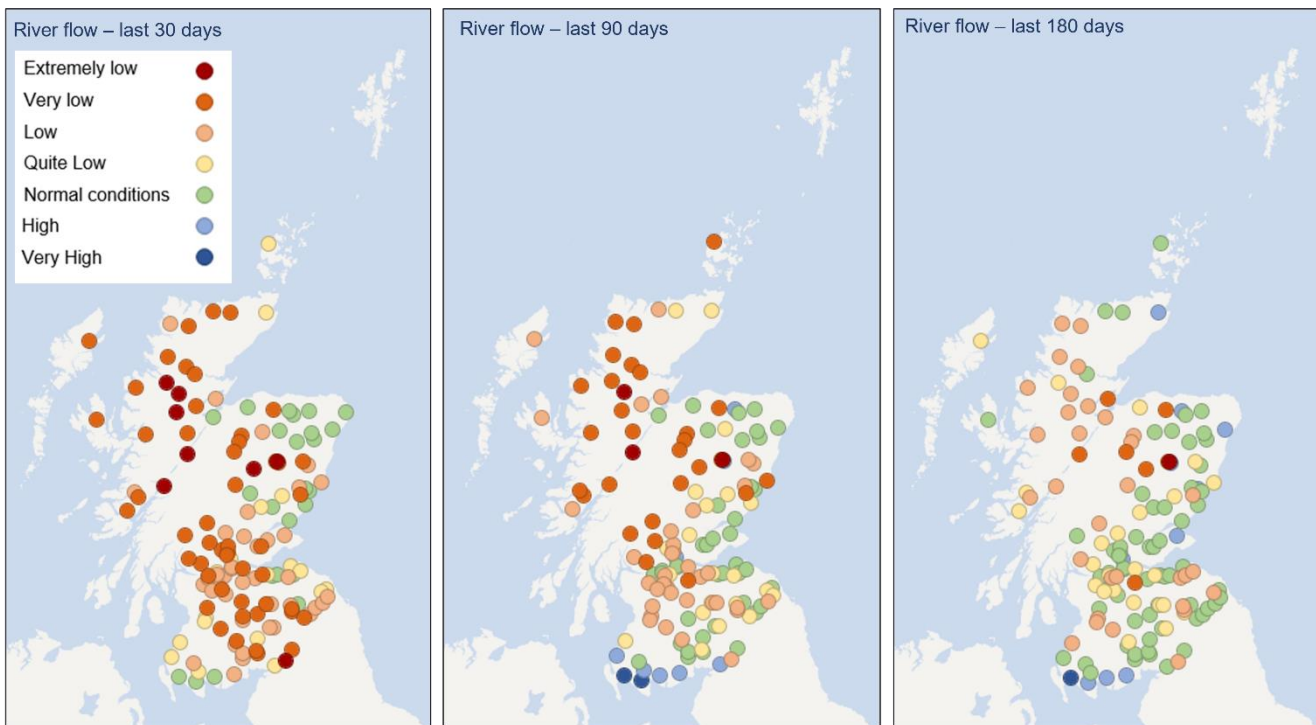
## Supporting information

### 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.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors



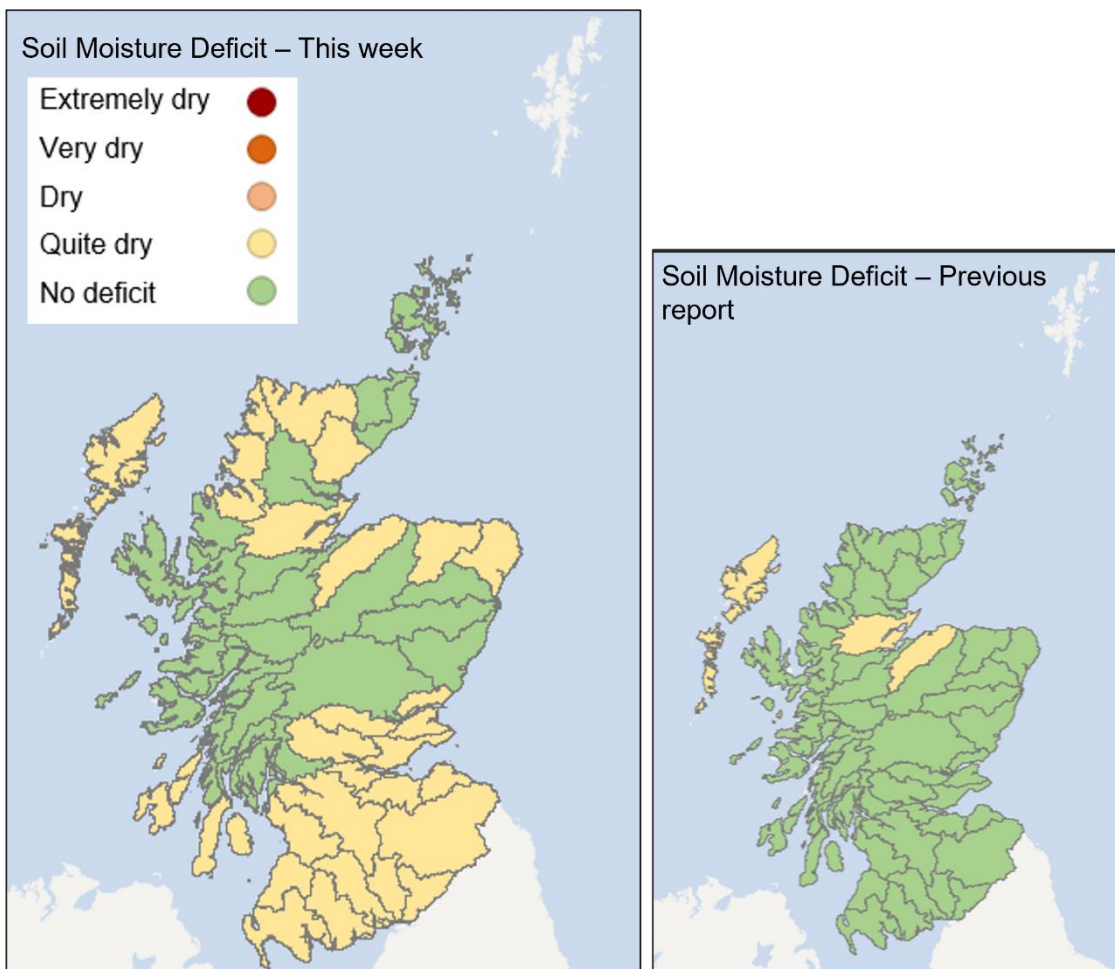
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Rainfall totals in the short term have been quite dry apart from in the northeast, where they have mostly been normal. In the medium term, very dry conditions have been experienced in the northern highlands and parts of central and south of Scotland.

Very low river flows for this time of year are evident in the short term in the north, north-west, central and south of the country. In the medium term, low flows were also experienced with flows lowest in the north and northwest.

**Soil moisture deficit:**

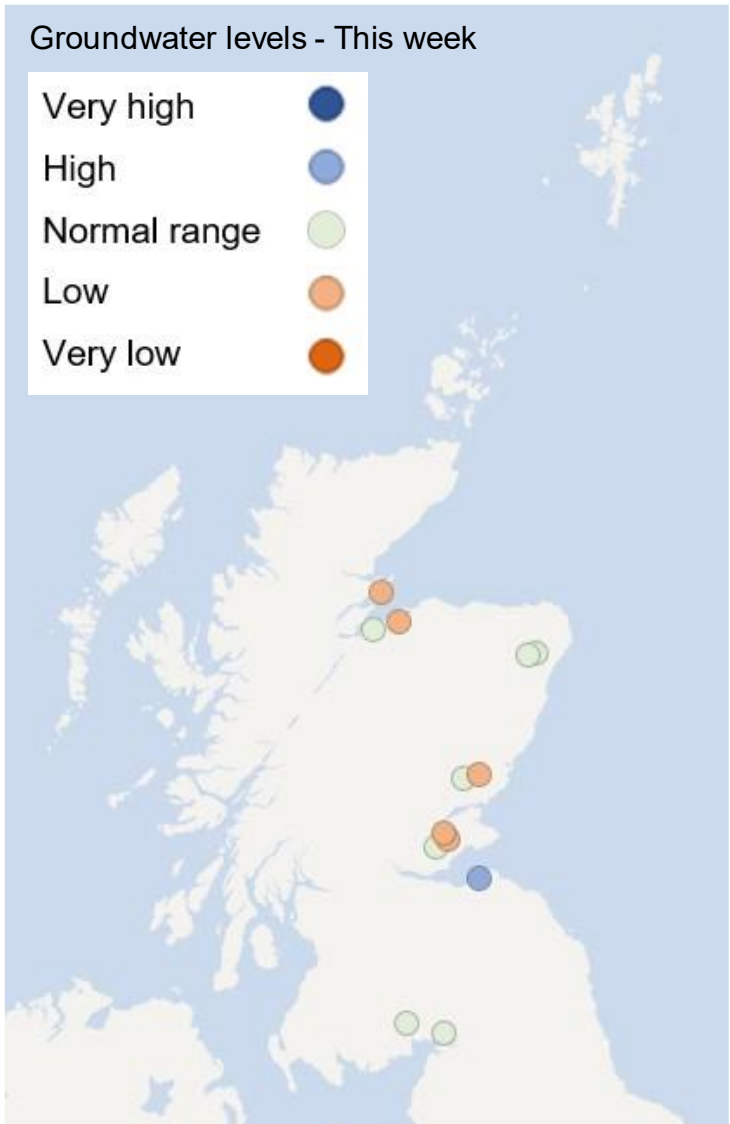
These maps show this week’s soil moisture deficit, alongside those previously reported for comparison. This is obtained from the Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System (MORECS).



Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

**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.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Groundwater levels at our monitoring stations are mostly within the normal range for this time of year. In parts of some areas, 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](mailto: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.

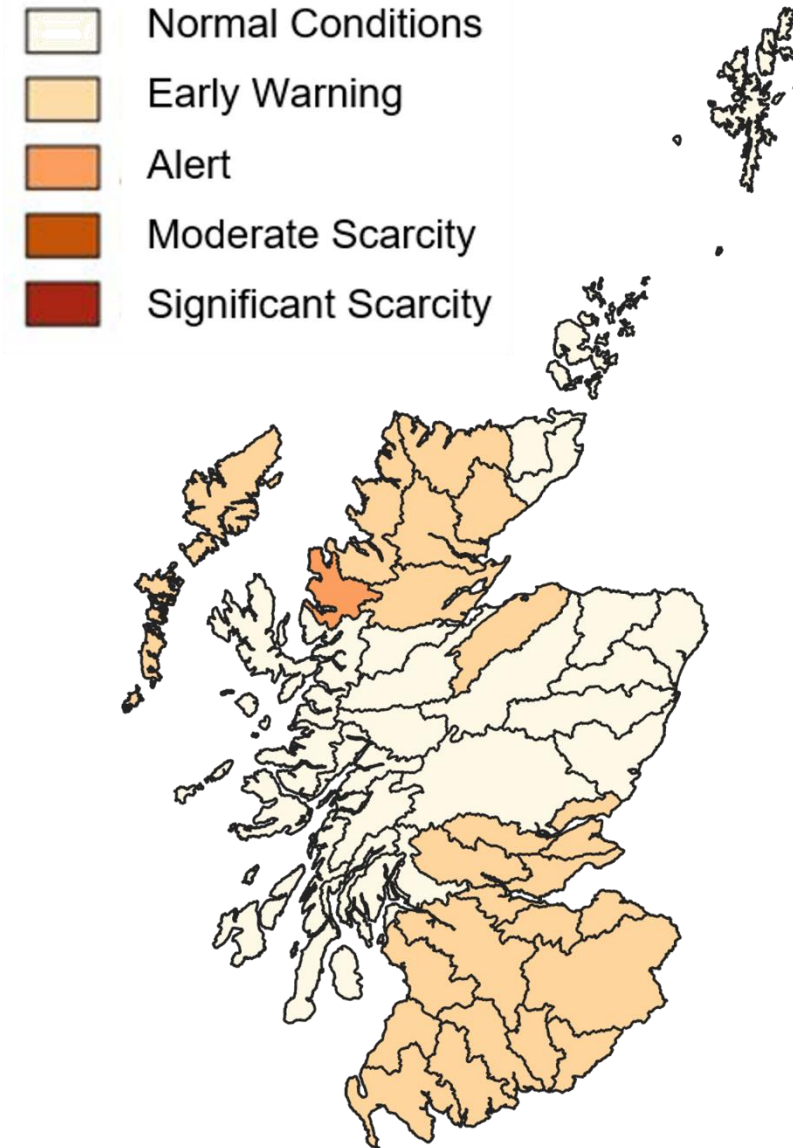
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

Angus Smith Building, 6 Parkland Avenue, Eurocentral, Holytown, North Lanarkshire, ML1 4WQ

## Appendix

### Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)