

For the future of our environment

# Water Scarcity Report

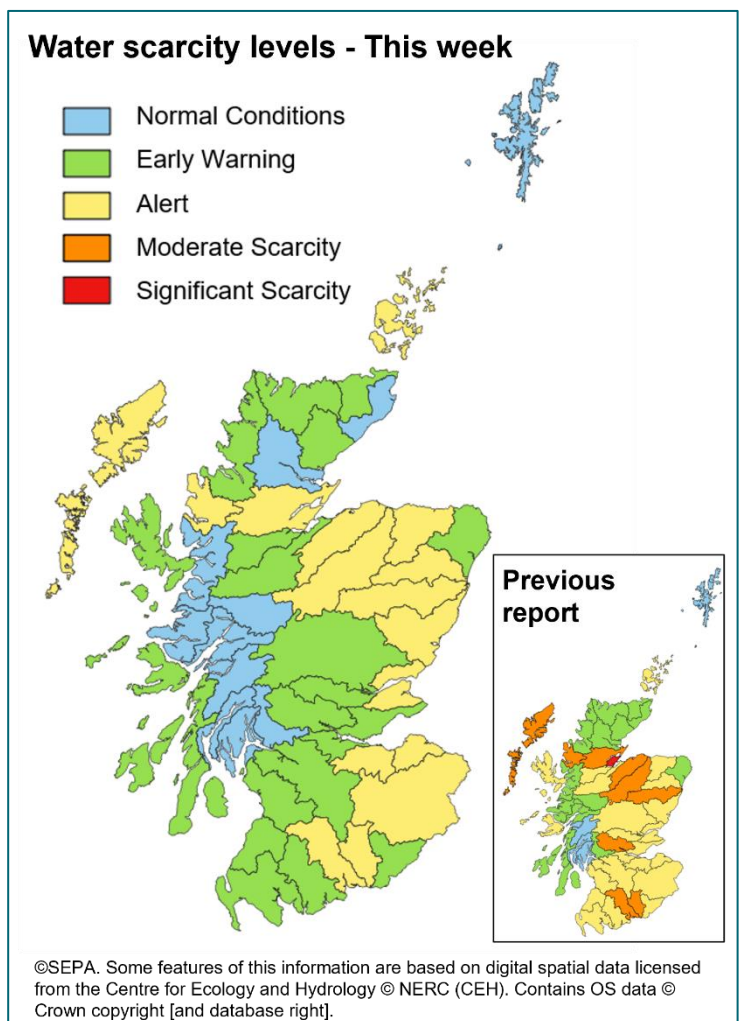
14<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Recent rainfall has resulted in some recovery in most parts across Scotland.

The Black Isle has improved from Significant Water Scarcity to Alert.

All areas that were at Moderate Scarcity last week have dropped to Alert, apart from the Forth area, which has recovered to Early Warning.

The majority of Aberdeenshire, and southeast Scotland is at Alert for water scarcity.



[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

Following an uncharacteristically dry first part of summer, recent rainfall has led to some recovery across Scotland. Conditions are now more typical for this time of year. However, another dry spell may quickly lead to a deterioration in the water scarcity situation, especially in the east where soil moisture remains dry.

Widespread improvement in river flows and ground conditions due to recent rainfall has resulted in many areas across Scotland experiencing some recovery in their water scarcity level. As a result, the Black Isle has improved to Alert, dropping from Significant Water Scarcity.

The Forth area has improved from Moderate Scarcity to Early Warning, with the Findhorn, Spey, Dee (Aberdeenshire), Annan, Nith, Loch Maree and Outer Hebrides dropping to Alert.

In the east river flows and soil moisture have seen less recovery and remain drier, with many areas remaining at Alert. Further recovery in parts of western Scotland has resulted in more areas in the region improving to Normal conditions.

Rainfall showers are forecast for this weekend, which may lead to continued recovery in some areas. However, there is uncertainty around the locations and quantity of this rain. With parts of Scotland remaining at risk of water scarcity, continued rainfall into August will be necessary to avoid further deterioration.

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

Water sources used for irrigating farmland 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:

- Routinely check equipment isn't leaking;
- Only use the water required for the use;
- Consider water saving measures for next irrigation season.
- If the catchment reaches Moderate Water Scarcity, consider your upcoming water needs and begin to plan with others in the catchment to share the resource or schedule abstractions.

Managers of golf courses are asked to do the same.

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

Public water supplies are operating normally.

## Weather forecast (13/07/2023)

Some rain moving north on Friday, then some heavier rain on Friday night and at times over the rest of the weekend, with details uncertain at this point. Showers focused in Northwest Monday with rest of country turning increasingly dry.

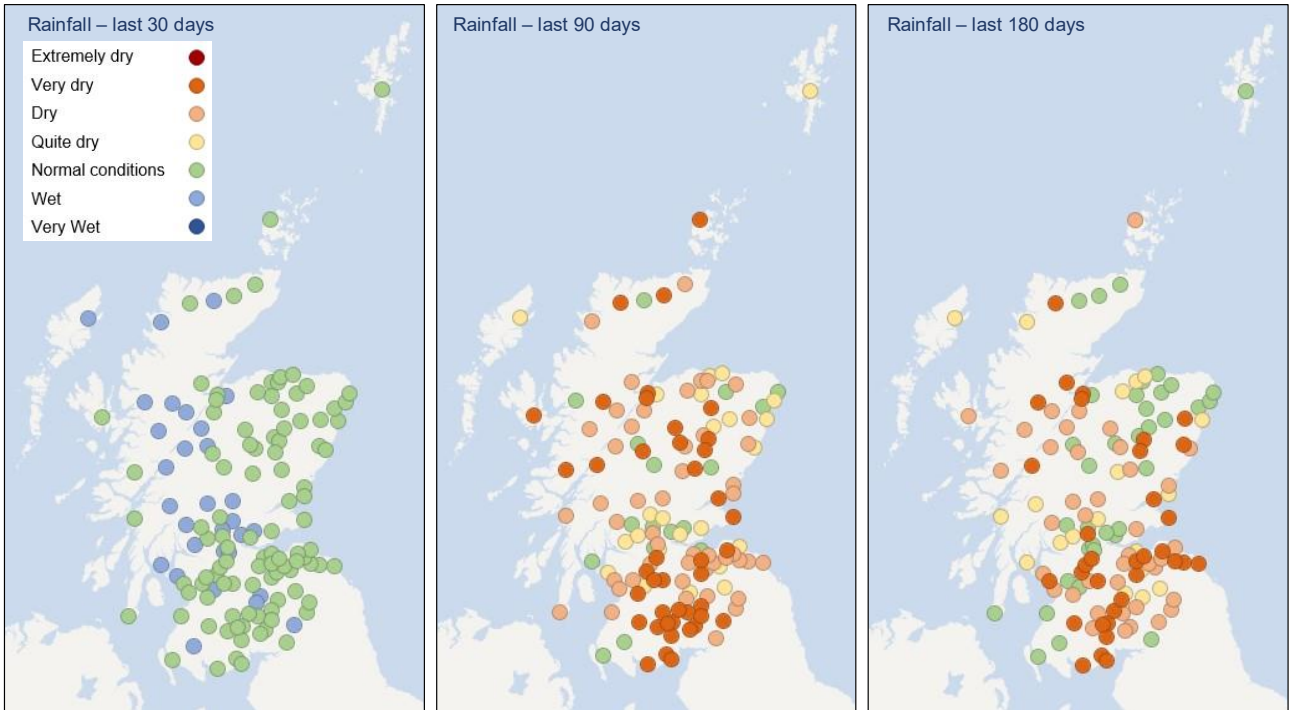
Unsettled weather is expected to continue into mid-July, with showers or longer spells of rain for many, most frequent towards the west. Towards the end of July and into August there are signs of a trend from generally less settled conditions towards generally more settled conditions. The outlook for the July – September period also suggests that across the UK there is double the usual chance of hot weather. The current long-term forecast indicates that this summer is likely to experience normal levels of rainfall.

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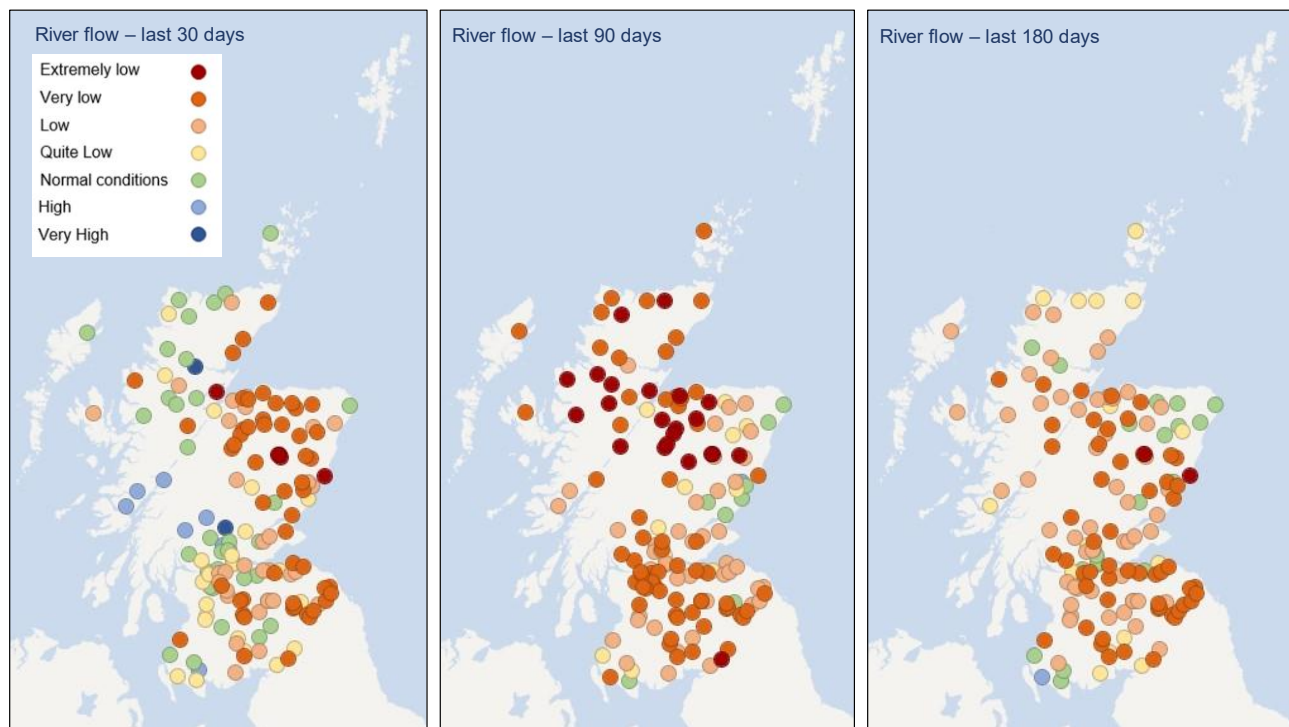
## Supporting information

### 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.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors



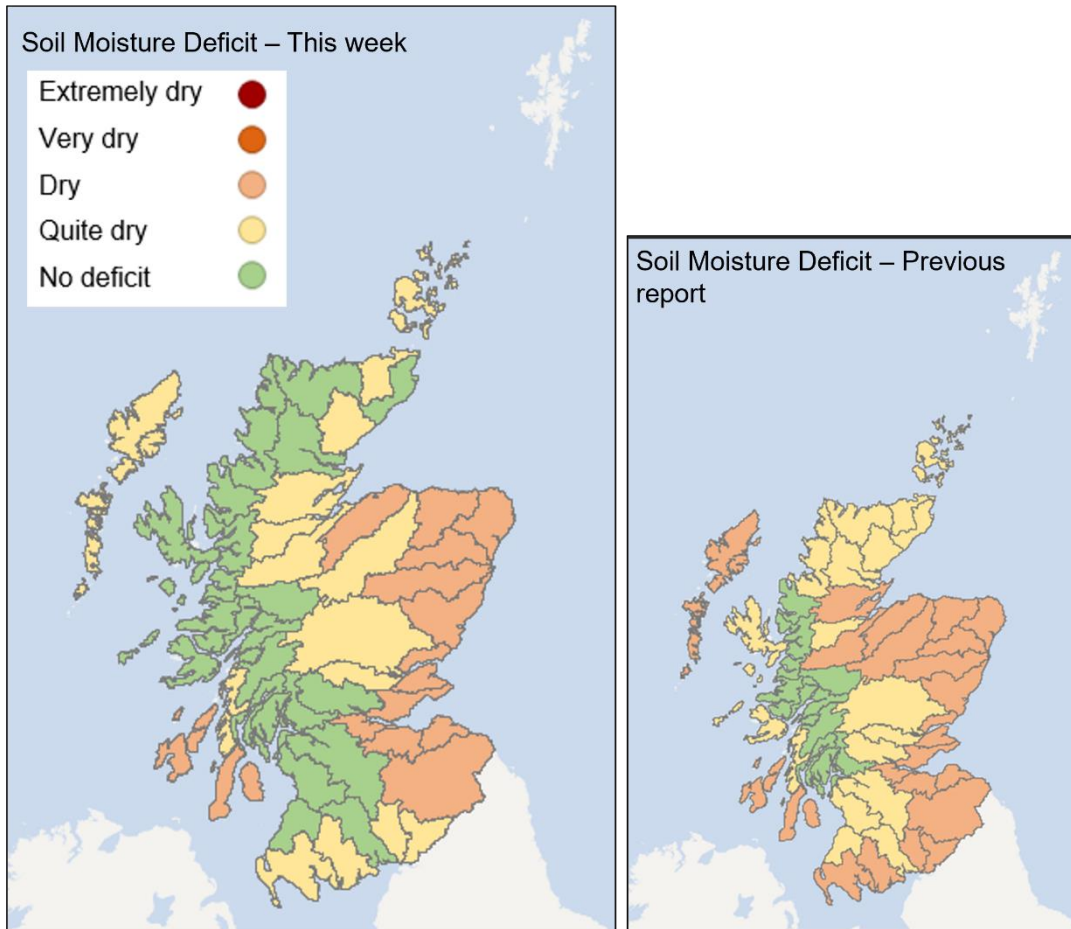
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Most of Scotland has experienced normal rainfall totals over the short term, with wet conditions in some parts of the west and central Scotland. However, conditions in the medium term have mostly been dry or very dry compared to normal, particularly in the south and in areas of northern Scotland. In the longer term, following heavy rainfall events in March and April, rainfall totals have been more normal in the northeast and southwest of the country, with dry conditions more prevalent in the north, central and south areas of Scotland.

In the short-term river flows across much of the east of Scotland have continued to be very low for this time of year, with some recovery to normal or high flow conditions in parts of the north and west. In the medium and longer term, very low and extremely low flows have been seen in northern areas, with low flows in central Scotland and more normal flows evident in parts of the northeast.

**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), no data is available for Shetland.

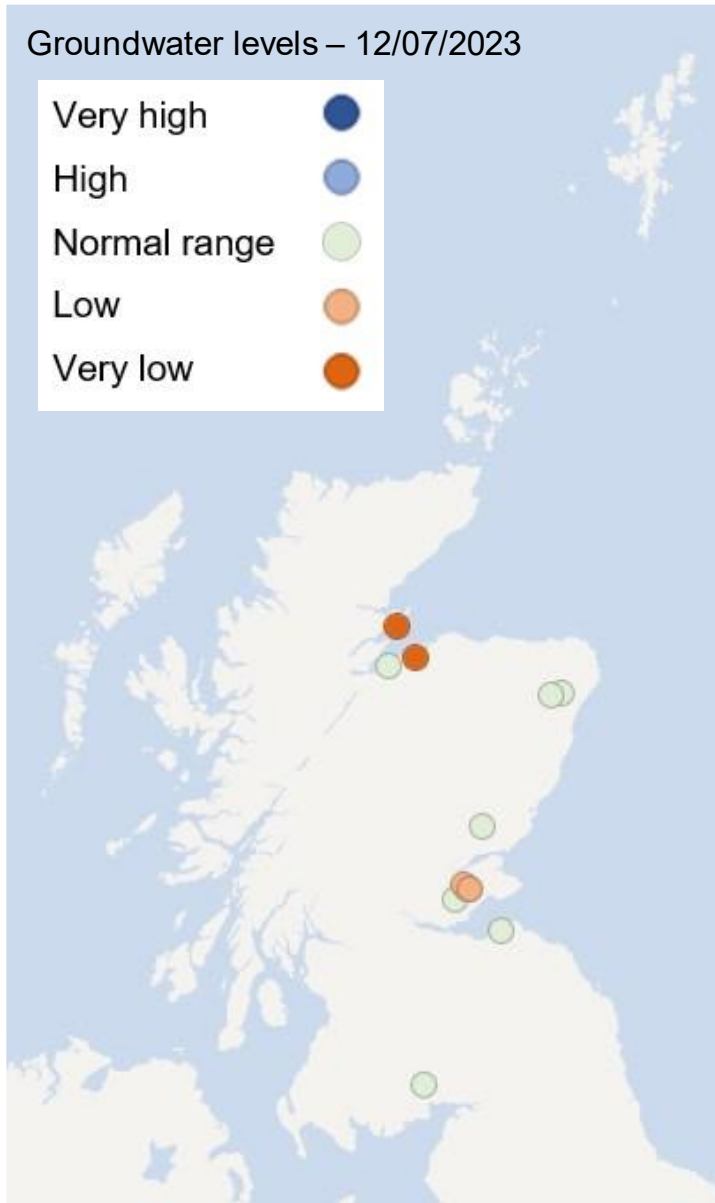


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Widespread showers have continued to ease the drying of ground conditions particularly in the west and north. The majority of the east of the country remains Quite Dry or Dry.

**Groundwater levels:**

This map shows groundwater levels compared to the long-term record at each station. Groundwater levels are updated fortnightly and reported as above (high) or below (low) the typical (normal) level for the calendar month. 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.



In Fife, and near Forres some monitoring locations show that the seasonal low level has been reached earlier than usual.

Groundwater levels at SEPA's other monitoring stations are within the normal range for this time of year.

Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors





### 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.

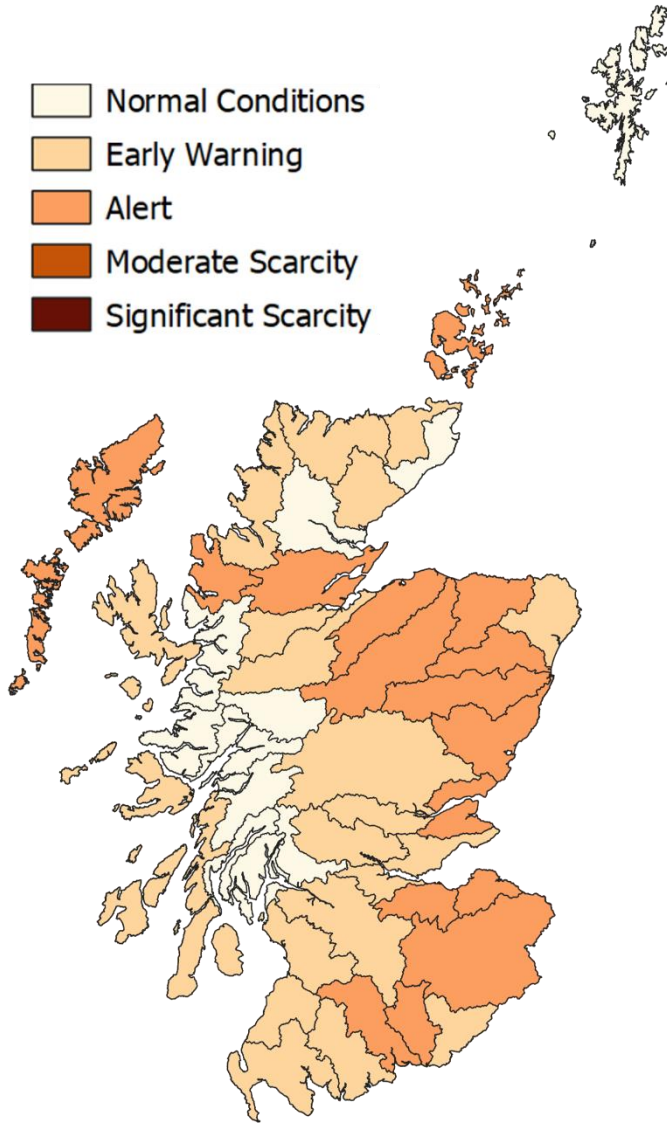
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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

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## Appendix

### Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)