

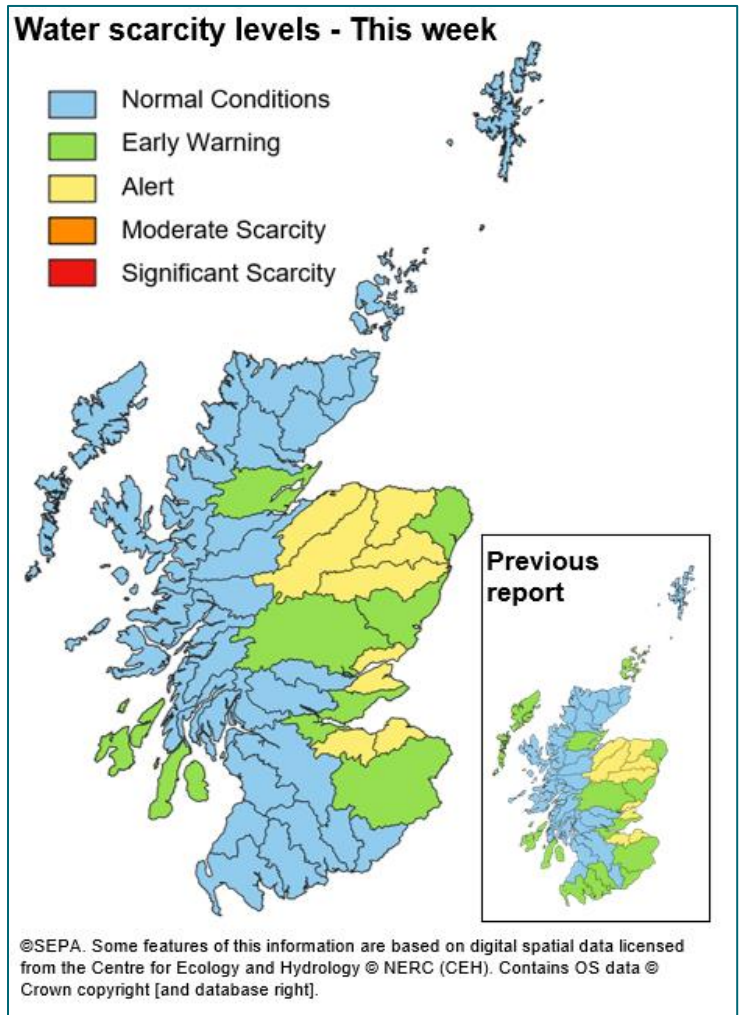
For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

28th July 2023

Recent rainfall has resulted in recovery of water scarcity levels in parts of south of Scotland, the Outer Hebrides and Orkney.

Across the rest of the country there has been no change in water scarcity levels with some parts of the east and north-east remaining 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

Rainfall over the past week has resulted in very little change in water scarcity levels across most parts of Scotland. In the north-east, Fife and East Lothian, continued low river flows and dry ground conditions mean that many areas remain at Alert.

In some areas however, there has been improvement in river flows and ground conditions, with parts of south Scotland, the Outer Hebrides and Orkney all returning to Normal Conditions. Most of the west of the country has now recovered to Normal Conditions with the exception of Kintyre, which remains at Early Warning.

Further rain is forecast over the coming week with potentially heavy showers over the weekend in some areas which may lead to further recovery. With eastern and north-eastern parts of Scotland remaining at Alert for 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 (27/07/2023)

Scattered light showers on Friday. Some heavier showers over the weekend, slow-moving in places, dying out on Sunday evening. Another band of rain moving northeast on Monday followed by scattered showers.

Through next week, remaining changeable, with a mixture of sunshine and showers, and spells of rain across the UK. The start of August is likely to see further unsettled conditions.

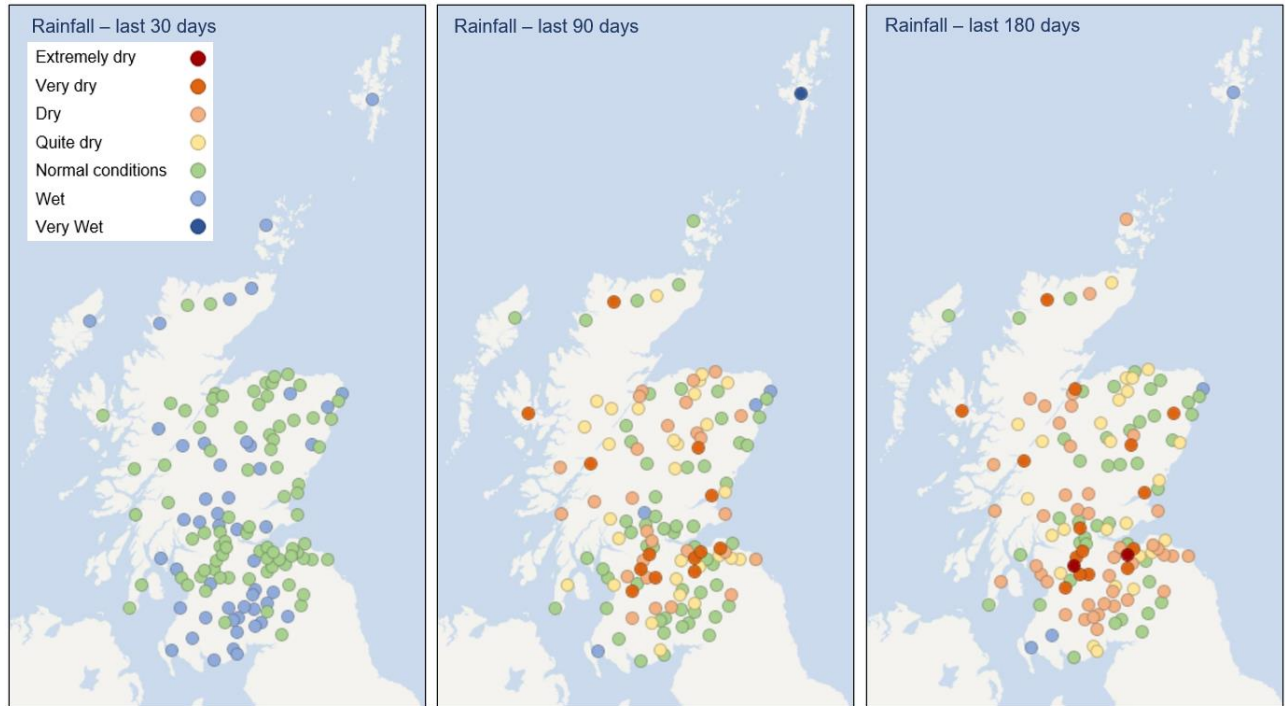
The outlook for the July – September period also suggests that across the UK there is double the usual chance of hot weather. The current long-term forecast indicates that this summer is likely to experience normal levels of rainfall.

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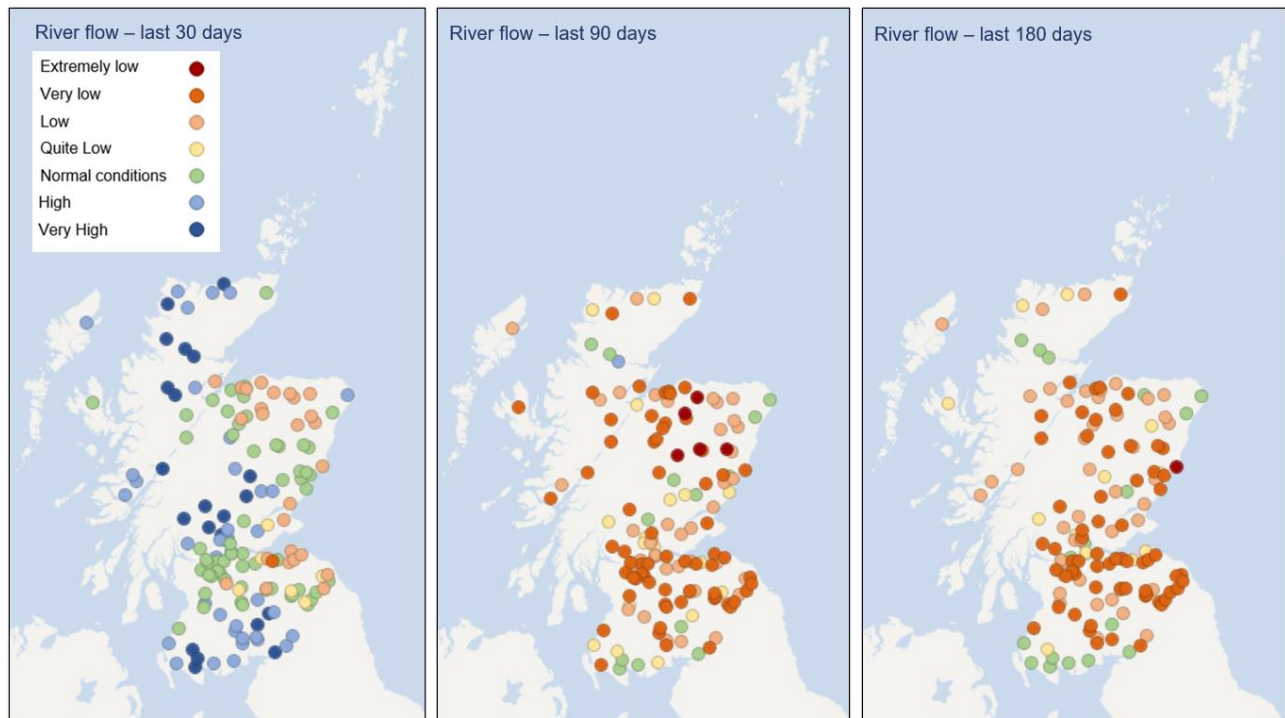
Supporting information

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



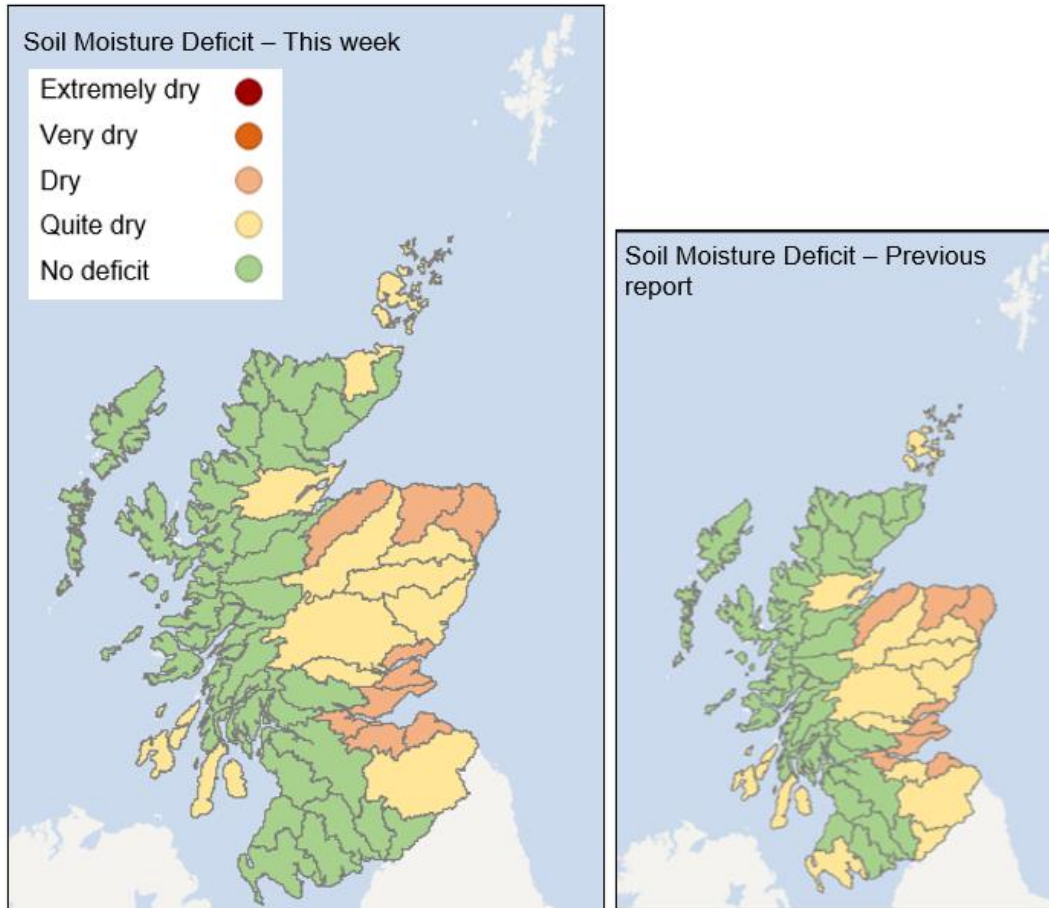
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

In the short term (over the past month), normal rainfall totals have been experienced across most of Scotland for the time of year while some parts, particularly in the southwest, have been wetter than normal. In the medium to longer term, conditions have been mainly dry, particularly across the Central Belt. Parts of the northeast and southwest have seen more normal rainfall totals over this timeframe.

River flows across much of northern Scotland remain high for this time of year. In the northeast however, river flows are mainly low. Further recovery is evident in southern Scotland, particularly in the southwest, where high and very high flows for this time of year are seen. River flows in the southeast have seen some improvement due to recent rainfall, however, flows here remain lower than normal. In the medium to longer term (i.e. over the past three to six months), flows in most areas of Scotland have been lower than normal, particularly around the Cairngorms and Speyside and across the Central Belt.

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.

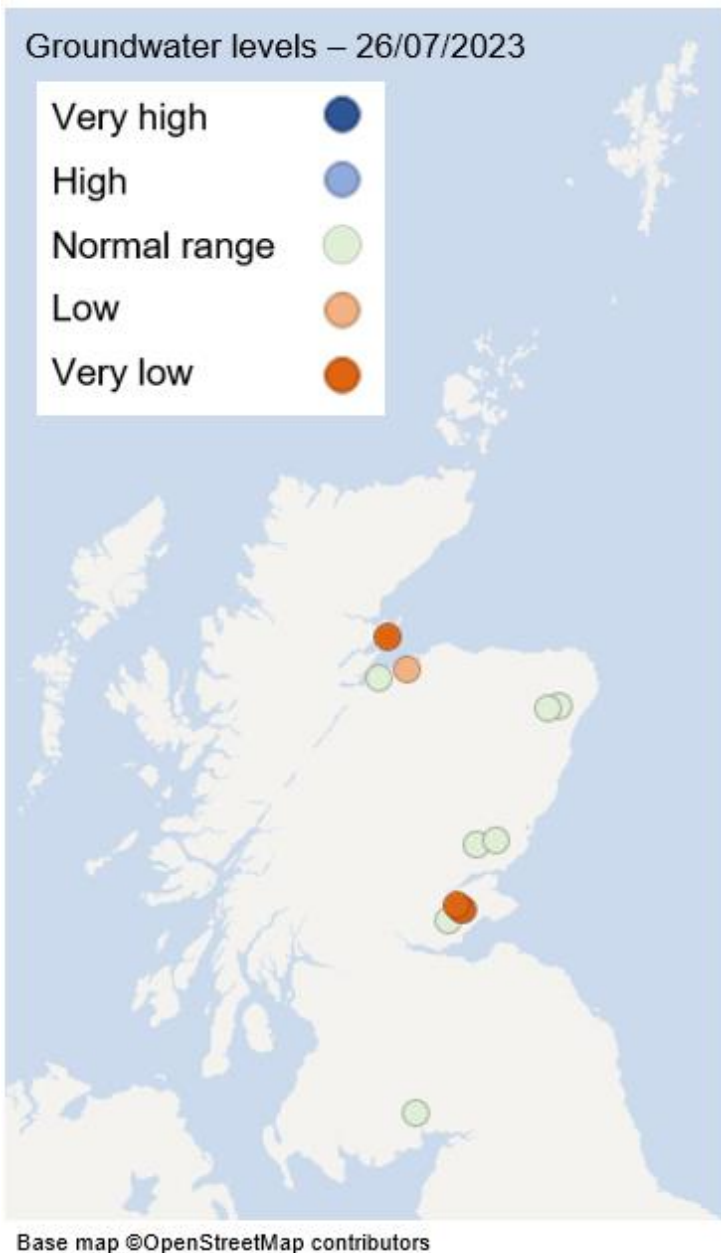


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Soil moisture conditions have remained fairly stable over the past week. The majority of the west of the country is now at No Deficit. In the east, ground conditions are mainly Quite Dry with some areas being 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.



Groundwater levels at most of our monitoring stations have remained stable in recent weeks. Levels at some sites are still low compared to this time of previous years after reaching the seasonal low earlier than usual.

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



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 rain fall 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.

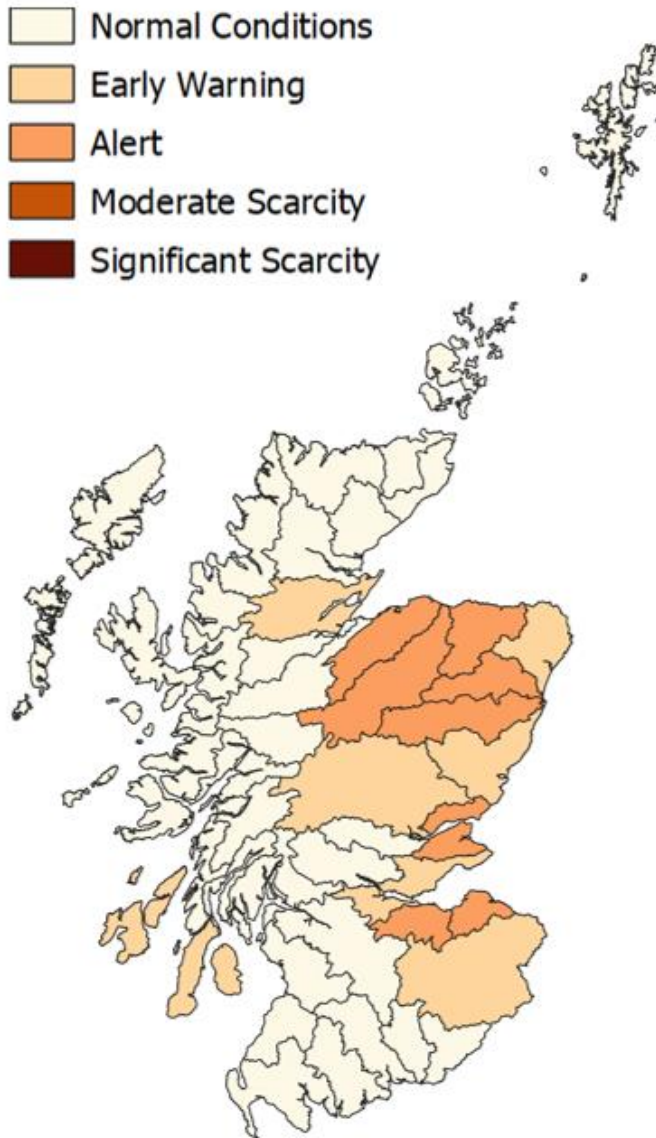
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)