

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

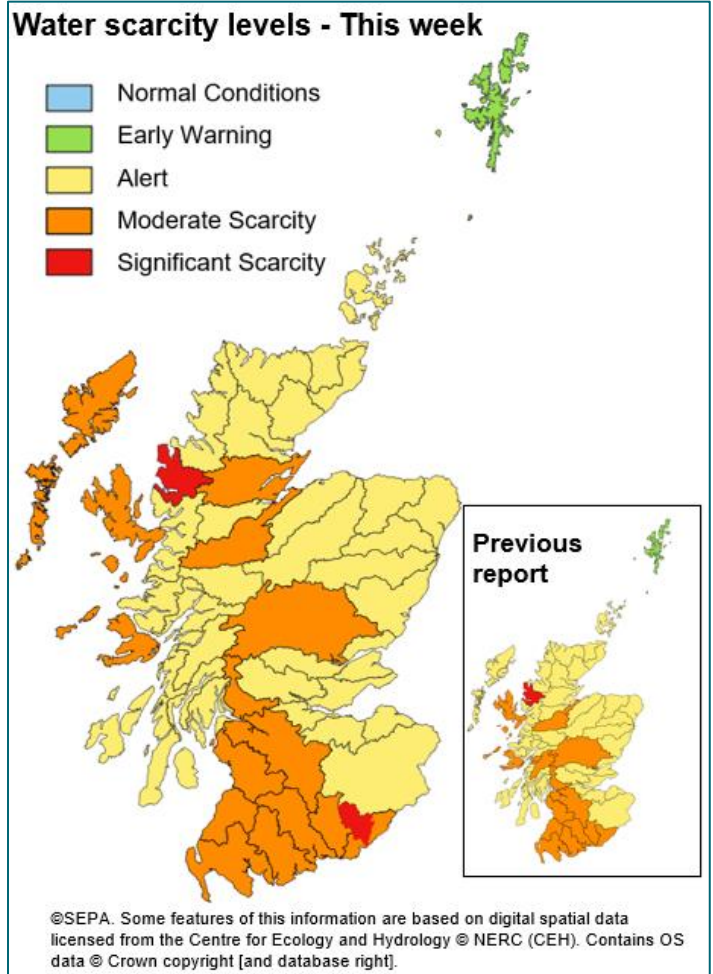
23rd June 2023

Part of the Esk area of Dumfriesshire is now in a Significant Water Scarcity situation.

The Loch Maree area remains in a Significant Water Scarcity Situation.

The Conon area, and the Outer Hebrides, are now at Moderate Scarcity.

The southwest and much of central Scotland remains at Moderate Water Scarcity. The majority of the rest of the country remains at Alert level for Water Scarcity.



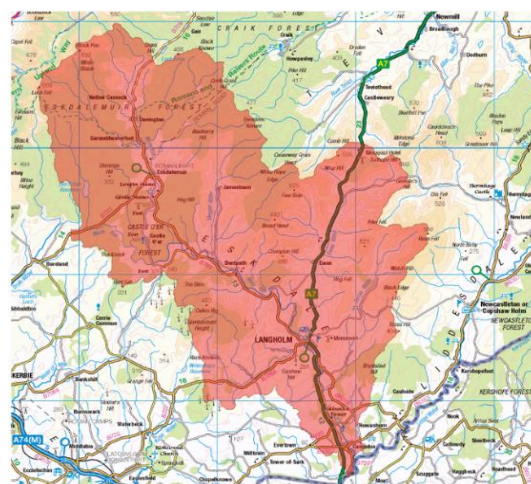
[Accessible version of national water scarcity map](#)



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](#).



Area of significant water scarcity in the Loch Maree area
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Area of significant water scarcity in the Esk area
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Situation Summary

Part of the Esk area of Dumfriesshire is now at Significant Water Scarcity, due to prolonged extremely low river flows in the area. The Loch Maree area in Wester Ross remains at Significant Water Scarcity. When an area reaches Significant Water Scarcity we consider additional action to protect the environment. This includes potentially restricting abstractions from rivers. Where action is required to protect the environment this would be for the minimum time necessary and would be lifted as soon as possible.

Heavy rain occurred across central and southern parts of the country last weekend, and isolated heavy showers have occurred in the west and north through the week. These have caused some localised improvement in conditions, and the recovery of the Awe and Etive area from Moderate Scarcity to Alert status following an increase in river levels. However, the rain has not been sufficient for large-scale recovery, and wide areas remain at risk of water scarcity. The Conon area in Easter Ross, and the Outer Hebrides, are now escalated to Moderate Water Scarcity as river flows in some parts of these areas have now been extremely low for some time. Without further rainfall, parts of these areas are at risk of Significant Water Scarcity.

Due to the mixture of hot weather and locally heavy showers, change in ground conditions has been mixed in the last week, with some areas recovering slightly and others continuing to dry out. Ground across the country remains mostly Dry or Quite Dry, except for the Esk area of

Dumfriesshire, which is Very Dry (and where a Significant Scarcity is now in place). The majority of the country remains at Moderate Scarcity or Alert level.

Heavy rain is forecast for this weekend, which may lead to some limited recovery in conditions. However, there is uncertainty around the locations and amounts of this rain. If there is no recovery in river levels then further areas may be escalated to Significant Water Scarcity in the coming weeks. If rivers remain at very low flows for more than 30 consecutive days there is a heightened risk of severe, long-lasting ecological impact. Details of this are outlined in [Annex 4 of Scotland's National Water Scarcity Plan](#) and the current count can be seen on [SEPA's Drought Risk Assessment Tool](#).

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 (22/06/2023)

Rain reaching western Scotland on Friday morning will extend eastwards in afternoon, gradually dying out. Showers on Saturday, heaviest across the north-west, possibly some showers edging northwards later. Heavy showers crossing the country on Sunday then drier weather on Monday.

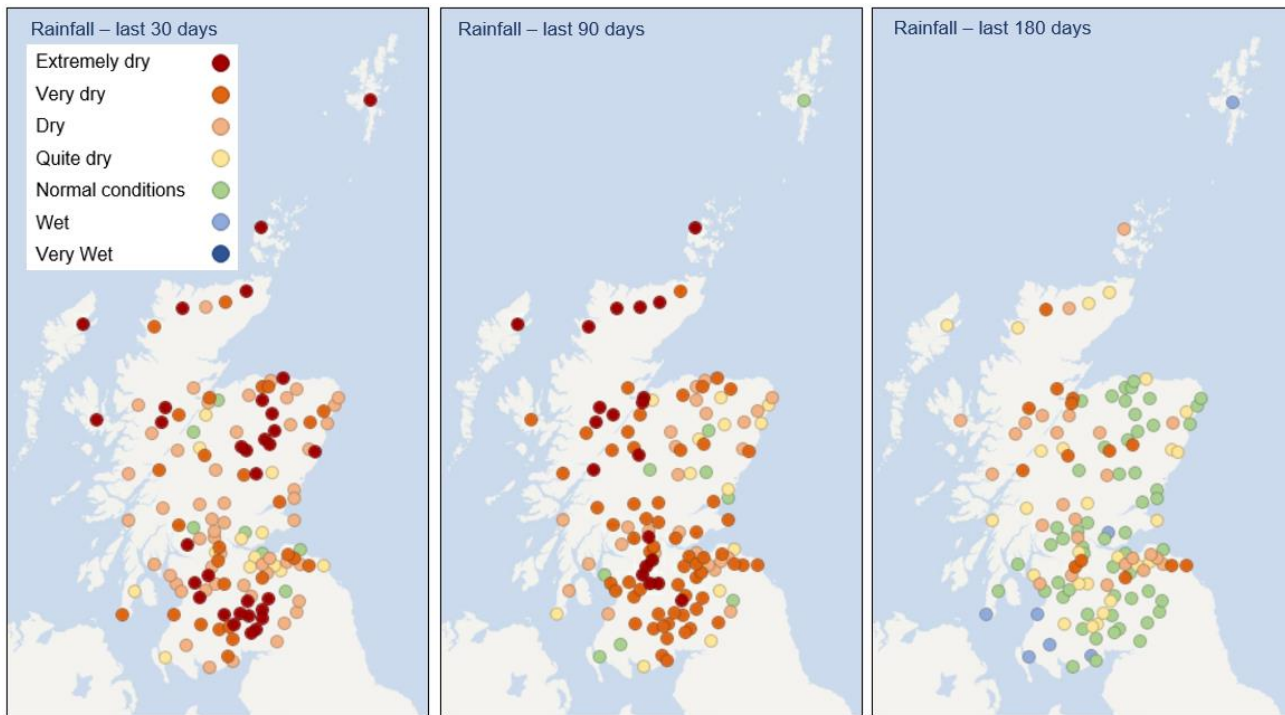
Unsettled weather is most likely to continue into late June and early July. The outlook for the June-August period also suggests that across the UK there is double the usual chance of a hot summer.

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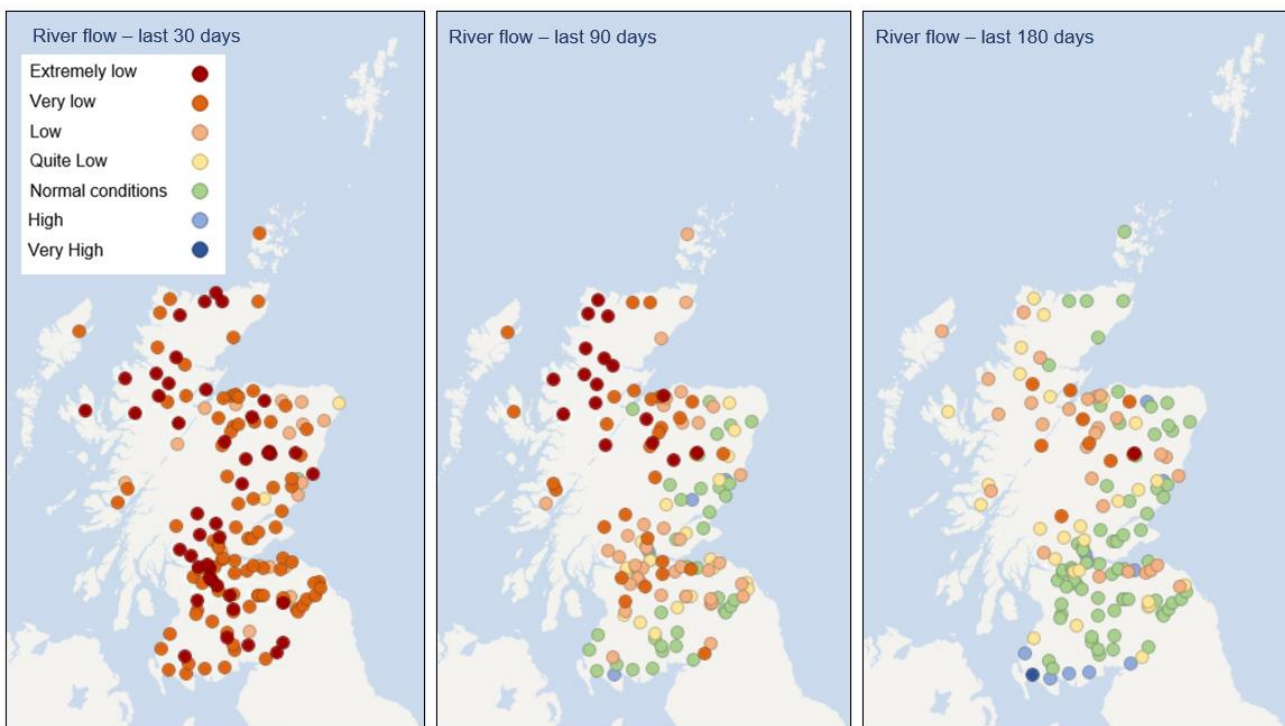
Supporting information

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



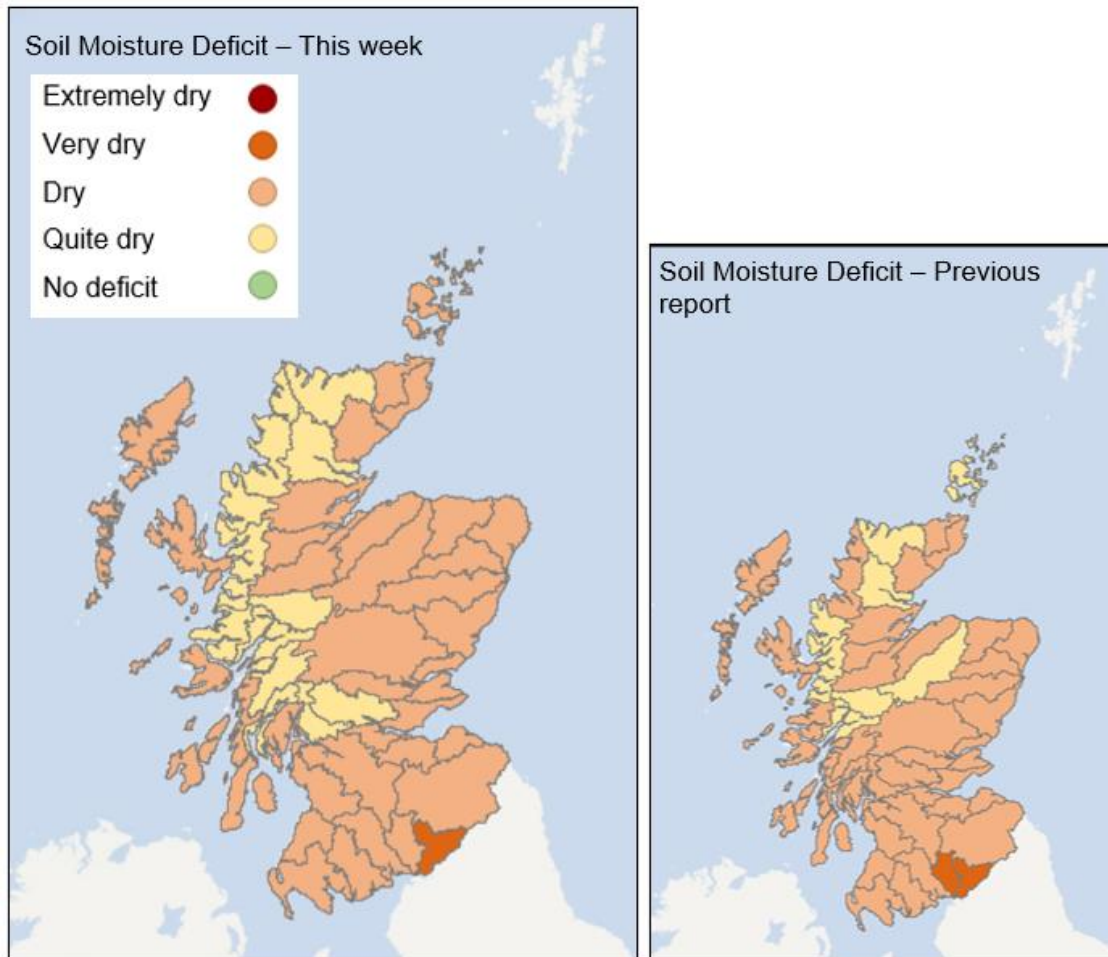
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Rainfall totals in the short term have been extremely dry in many parts of Scotland. In the medium term, conditions in the north and parts of central Scotland have been extremely dry compared to normal, with wider areas across central and south parts of the country being very dry. In the longer term, rainfall totals have been more normal in the northeast and southwest of the country, following heavy rainfall events in March and April.

In the short-term river flows across much of Scotland have been very low or extremely low for this time of year, except parts of northeast Aberdeenshire and some parts of Angus. In the medium 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 south and east.

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.

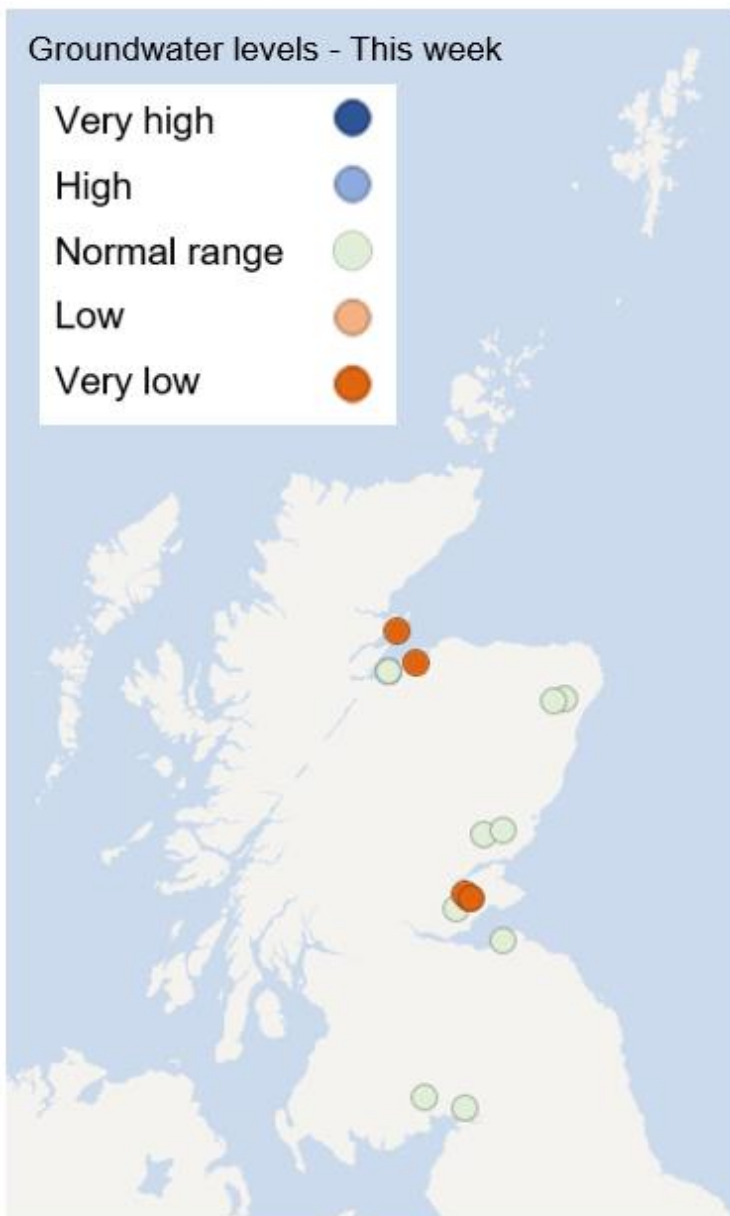


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Heavy showers in some areas have eased the drying of ground conditions slightly, but in the east and Orkney conditions have dried further. The Esk area of Dumfriesshire remains Very Dry, with the rest of the country either 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 Inverness, 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 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.

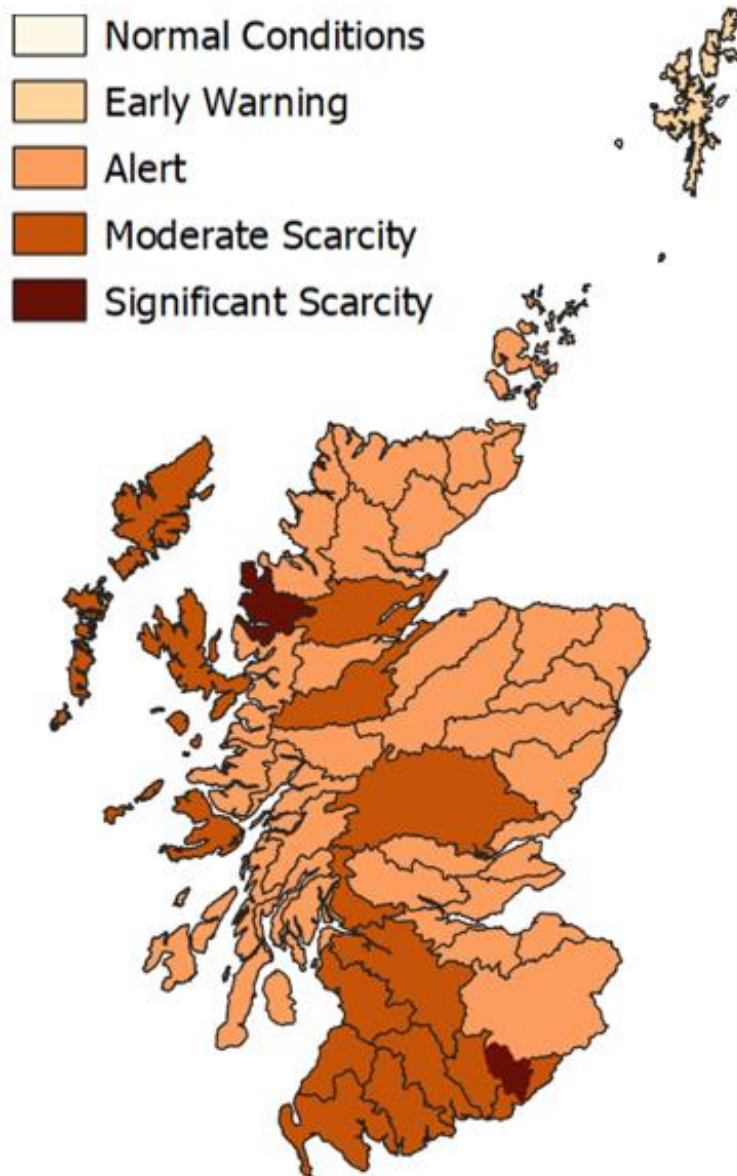
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)