

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

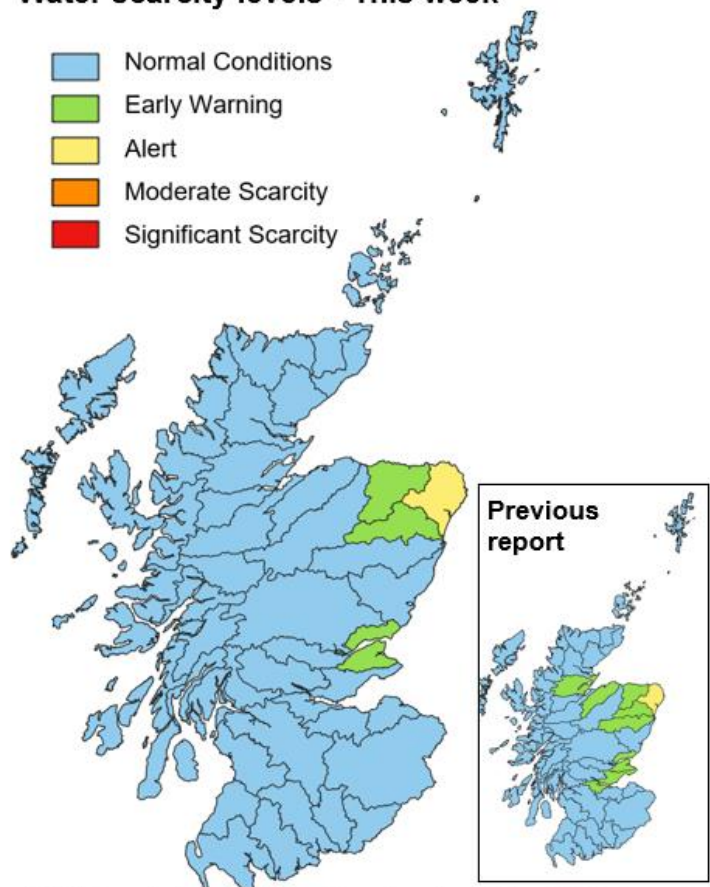
28th September 2023

Rainfall over the past week has led to further recovery.

The majority of the country is now back to Normal Conditions.

Water scarcity levels - This week

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



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[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

More rainfall over the past week has led to further recovery in the north and east of the country, with the Connon, Findhorn, Dee and Firth of Forth areas back to Normal conditions.

However, lower rainfall in parts of Aberdeenshire means that an Alert for water scarcity remains in place for the River Ythan catchment area, whilst the Deveron, Don, and further south the Firth of Tay catchment remain at Early Warning.

Further rain is forecast this week which is likely to aid recovery in these areas remaining at Early Warning and Alert.

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 \(SEPA\)](#).

Weather forecast (28/09/2023)

Rain soon clears the Northern Isles, leaving isolated showers in the north and west and most places dry until squally and sometimes heavy showers spread east from late afternoon. These showers clear east overnight to leave blustery showers, mostly in the north and west Friday. A few showers Northern Isles Saturday otherwise dry until rain, some heavy, spreads northeast from the evening. A few showers, mostly west, Sunday and Monday.

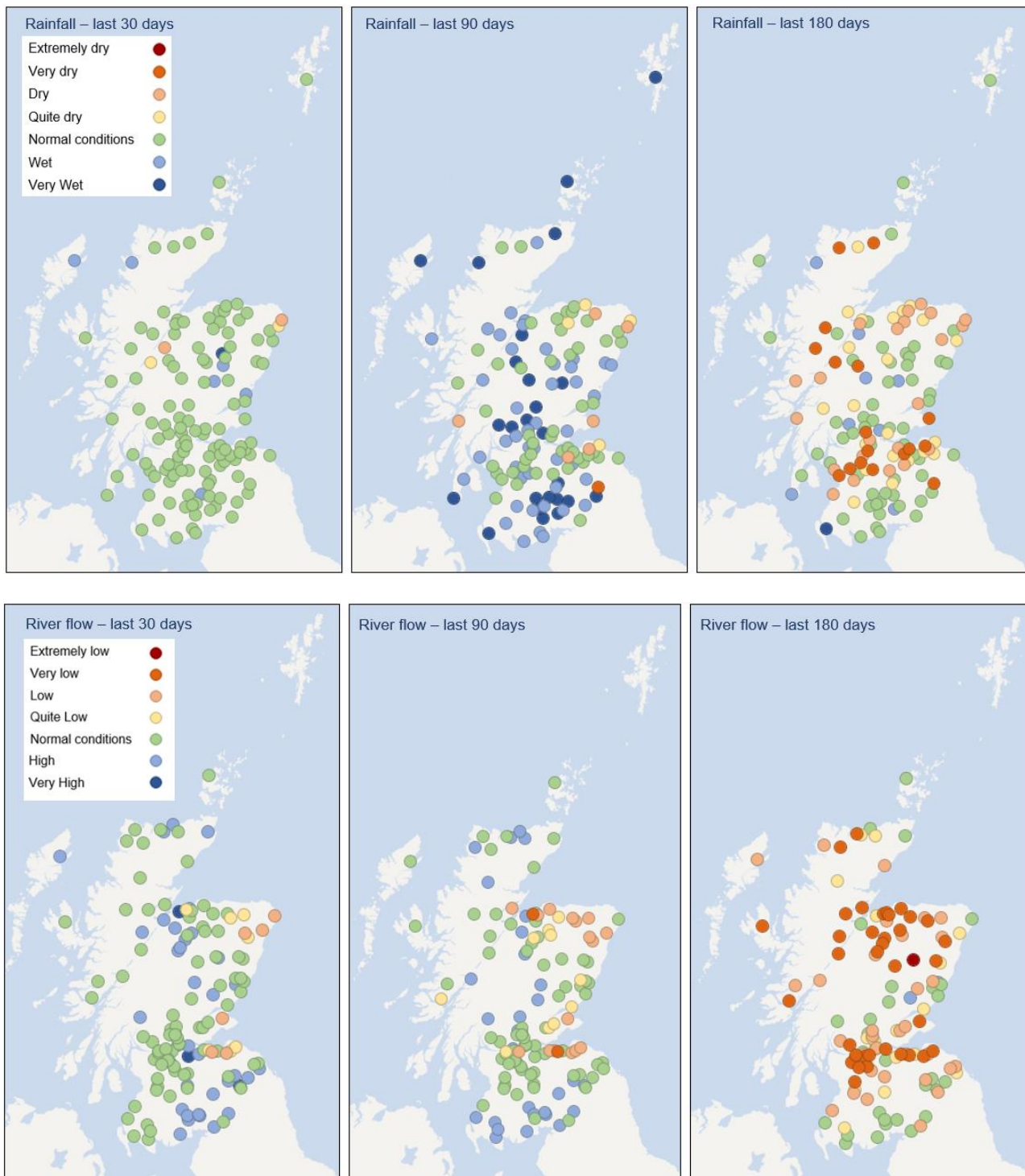
The current outlook for the October - December period indicates that near-average conditions are most likely, with wetter conditions slightly more likely than usual.

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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.



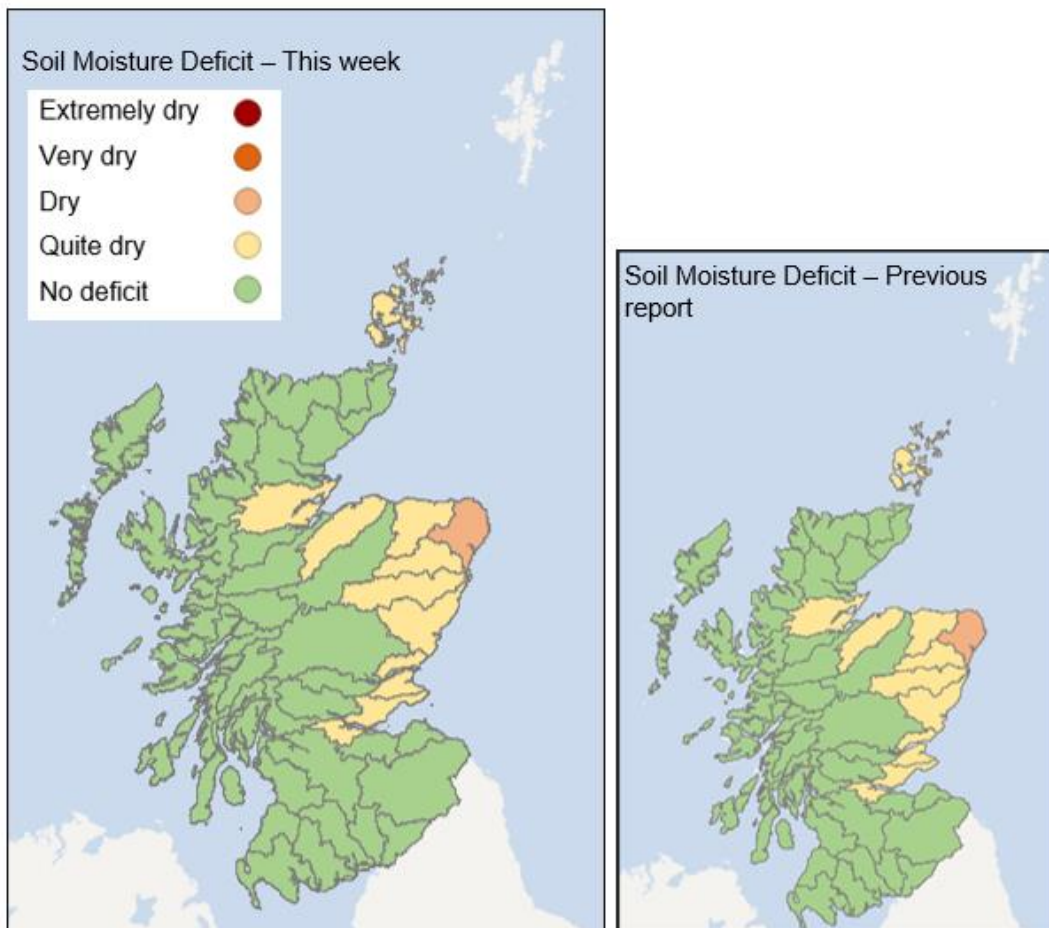
Rainfall over the last 30 days has been predominantly Normal across the country with the exception of the northeast which has shown Quite Dry to Dry conditions.

Over the past three to six months, conditions have been mixed with long-term Dry conditions across parts of the central belt, the Highlands, Moray and Aberdeenshire. This has given way to Normal to Very Wet conditions over the second half of summer, except in northeast Aberdeenshire where conditions have remained Dry to Very Dry.

Over the past month river flows have been mostly Normal to High across the majority of the country, with the exception of parts of the east coast where river flows have been Quite Low to Low. Over the last 3 – 6 months flow conditions have been varied, with much of the country experiencing Very Low flows at the beginning of the summer but have shown recovery over the second half of summer.

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.

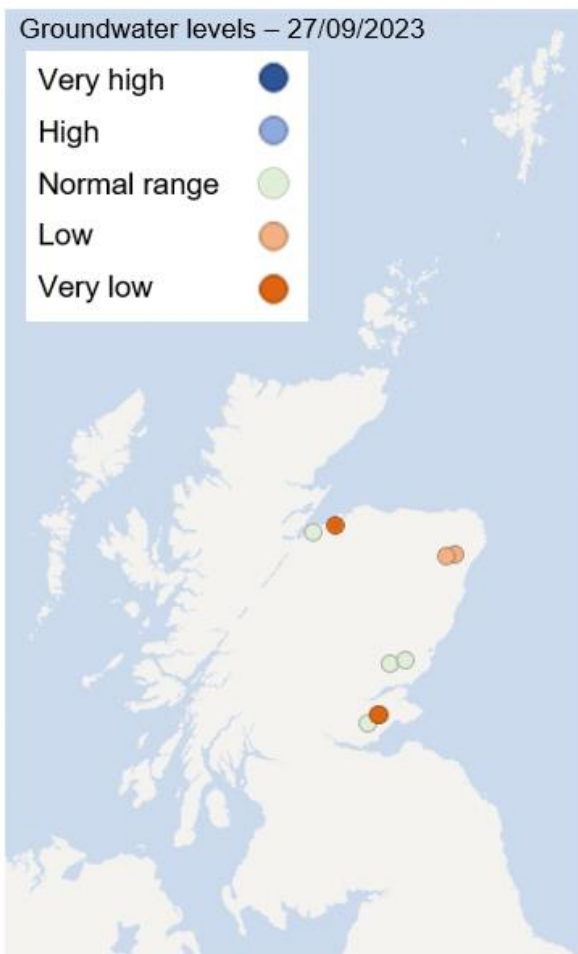


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There has been little change in ground conditions over the last week, with most of the country showing No Deficit. However, in parts of the east and northeast, as well as Orkney, ground conditions still remain Quite Dry, and parts of Aberdeenshire remaining 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.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Groundwater levels at sites in the north are mostly low for the time of year, and levels in parts of Fife are still very low for the time of year after reaching their seasonal low earlier in the year than usual. However, levels in the Angus area remain within the normal range for the 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 rainfall for levels to recover.

River flow, rainfall and groundwater level data can be 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.

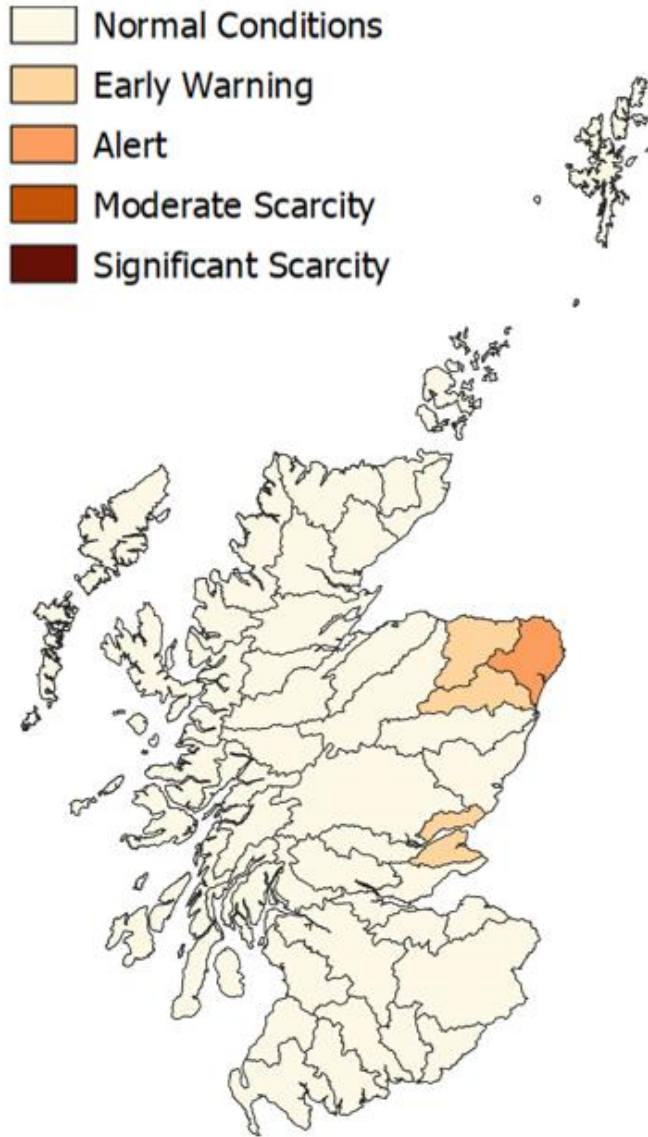
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)