

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

8th June 2023

The Loch Maree area is now in a **Significant Water Scarcity** situation.

In the north, the Ness area has increased to **Moderate Water Scarcity**, as has the Esk area of Dumfriesshire in the south.

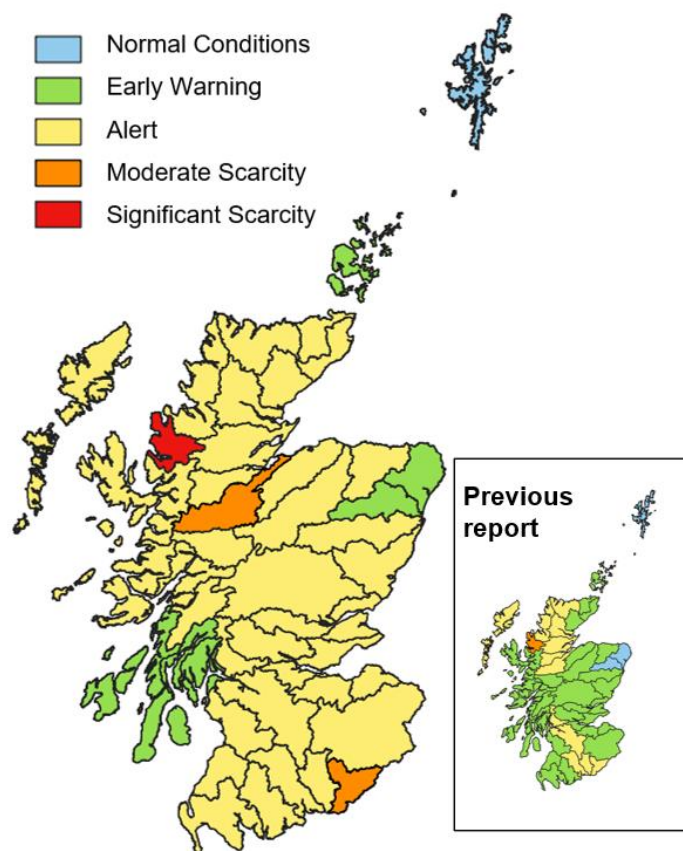
The majority of the rest of the country is now at **Alert level for Water Scarcity** with some areas at **Early Warning**.



Area of significant water scarcity in Loch Maree
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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

The Loch Maree area has increased to Significant Water Scarcity due to prolonged extremely low river flows in the area. When an area reaches Significant Water Scarcity we consider additional action to protect the environment. In this instance, no additional steps are required because authorised abstractions have licensed conditions to protect low flows. Where action is required to protect the environment this would be for the minimum time necessary and would be lifted as soon as possible.

The northwest Highlands, extending down to Loch Ness, are also continuing to experience very low river levels. As a result, the Ness has increased to Moderate Scarcity, and more areas to the north and west of the highlands have moved to Alert level. The Esk area of Dumfriesshire in the south has also been moved to Moderate Scarcity due to prolonged very low flows.

Due to the widespread hot, dry weather over the last week, the rapid drying of ground conditions has continued. This, combined with low river flows, has moved most of the rest of Scotland to Alert level. A brief change in the weather is expected with localised heavy showers forecast for Sunday and Monday before a return to predominantly dry weather mid-week. The anticipated average rainfall over the coming days is expected to do little to alleviate the current water scarcity situation and dry weather is expected to dominate into late June and early July.

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 (08/06/2023)

High pressure continues moving slowly northeast keeping mostly dry conditions Thursday into Saturday. Shallow troughs of low pressure move north across the UK from Saturday bringing the risk of showers from Saturday night into Monday, some of these showers can be locally heavy and thundery.

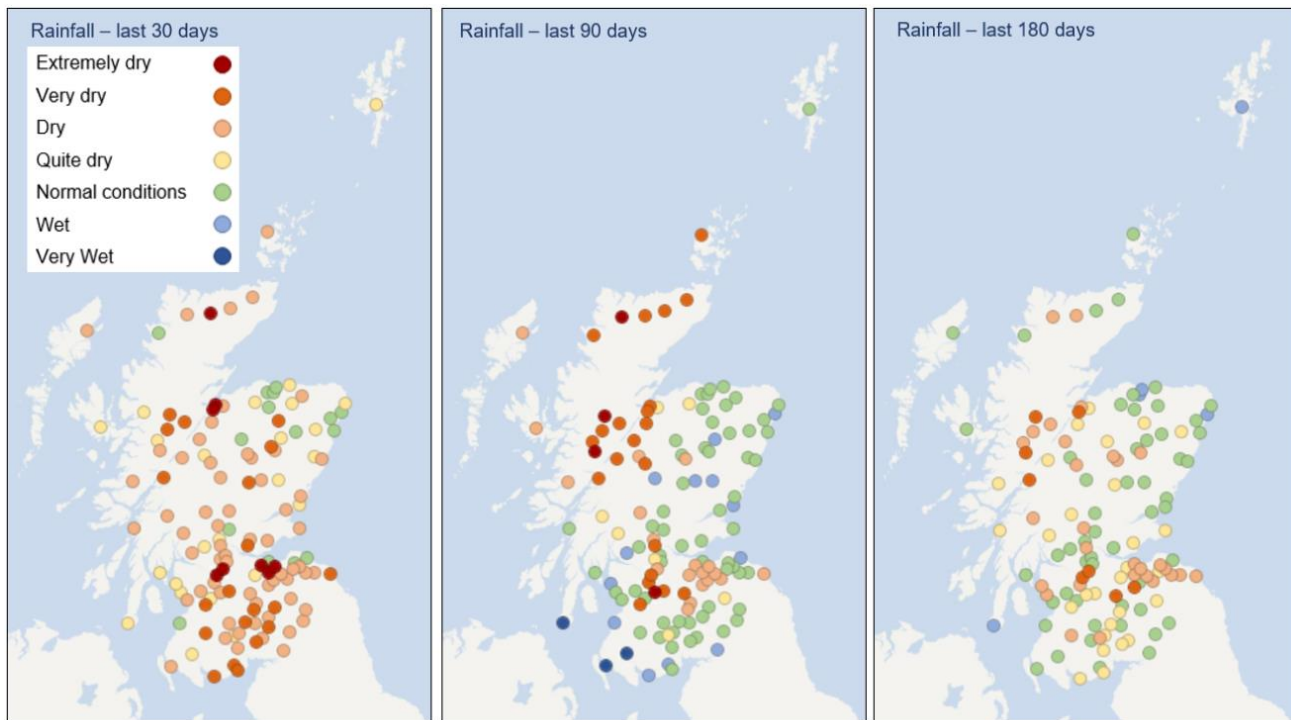
Dry weather is most likely to continue into late June and early July. The outlook for the June-August period also suggests that across the UK there is double the likelihood of the period being hotter than normal.

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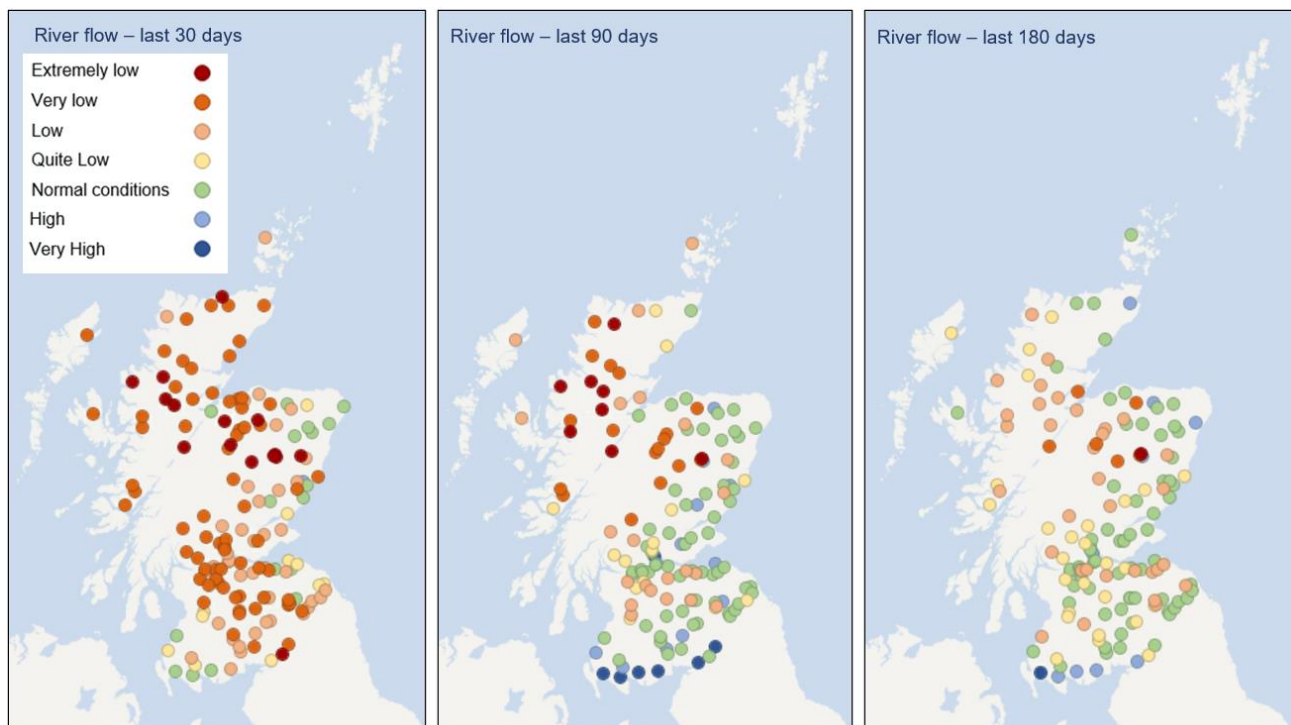
Supporting information

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



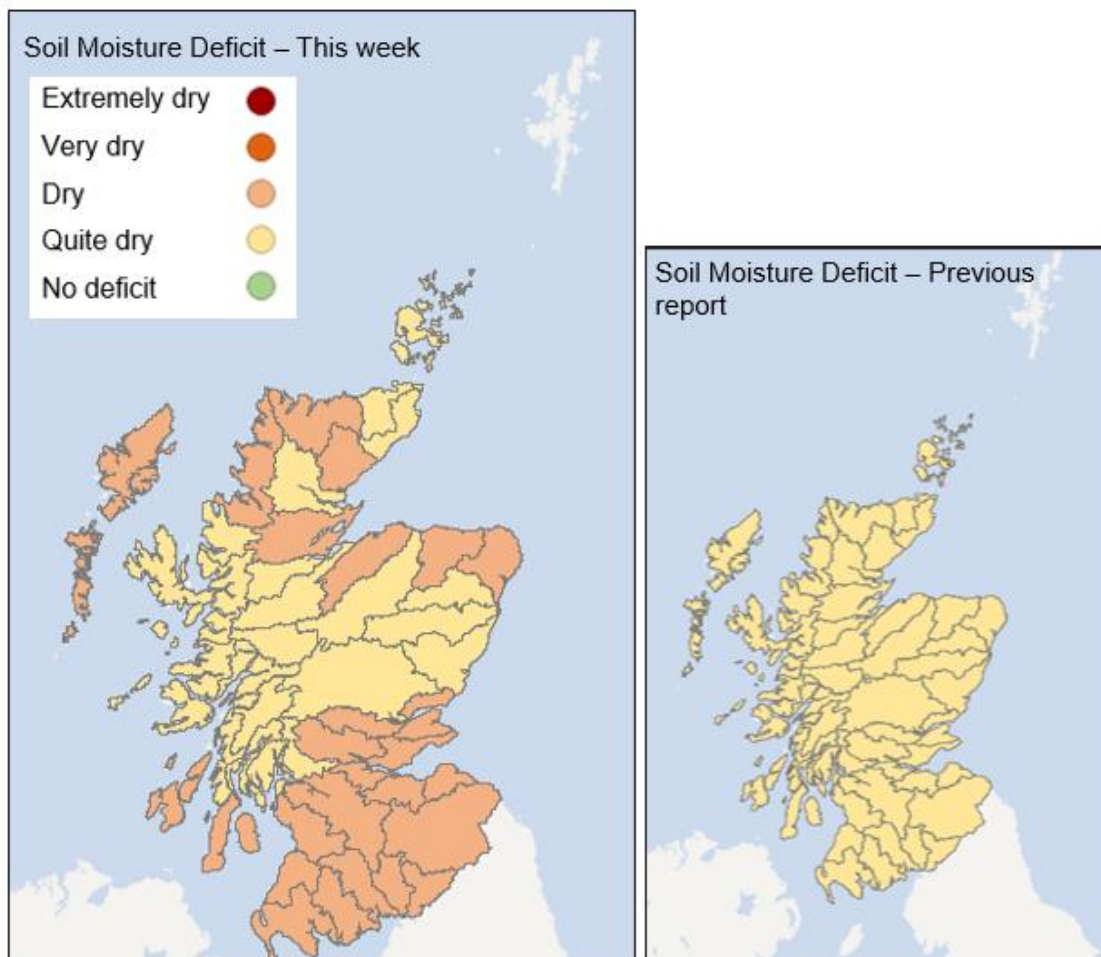
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Rainfall totals in the short term have generally ranged between dry and very dry across most of Scotland. Extremely dry conditions have been experienced in areas of northern and central Scotland. In the northeast and southwest conditions are widely quite dry or dry with some isolated areas of normal rainfall conditions. In the medium term, conditions in the north and parts of central Scotland have been very dry and extremely dry compared to normal. Rainfall totals over this period were more normal in other parts of the country that experienced heavy rainfall events in March and April.

In the short-term river flows across much of Scotland have ranged between low and extremely low for this time of year, except parts of northeast Aberdeenshire and western edge of Dumfries and Galloway. In the medium term, very low and extremely low flows have been seen in northern areas, with low flows in central Scotland. More normal flows are evident in 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.

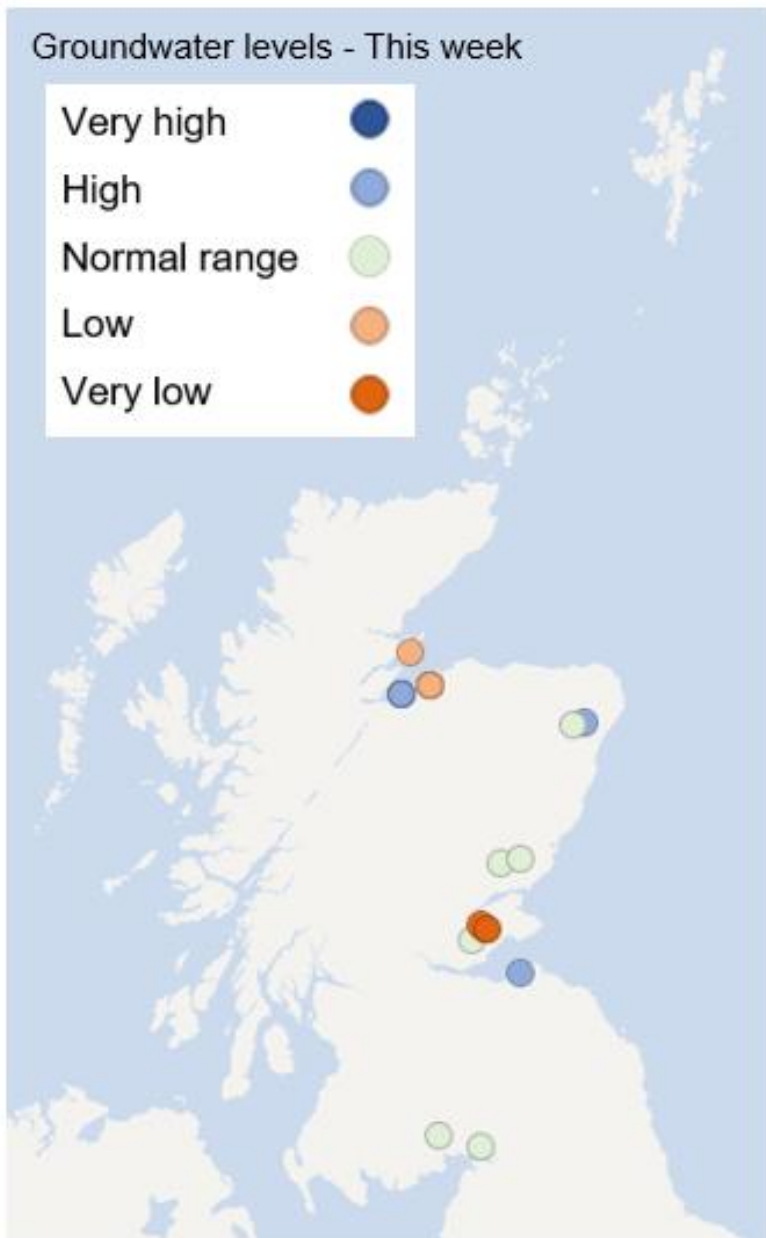


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Due to the widespread hot, dry weather over the last week, the rapid drying of ground conditions has continued with much of the north and southern Scotland moving to Dry conditions this week.

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

In areas of Fife some monitoring locations show the seasonal low level has been reached earlier than usual.

Groundwater levels at SEPA's other monitoring stations are mostly 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 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

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.

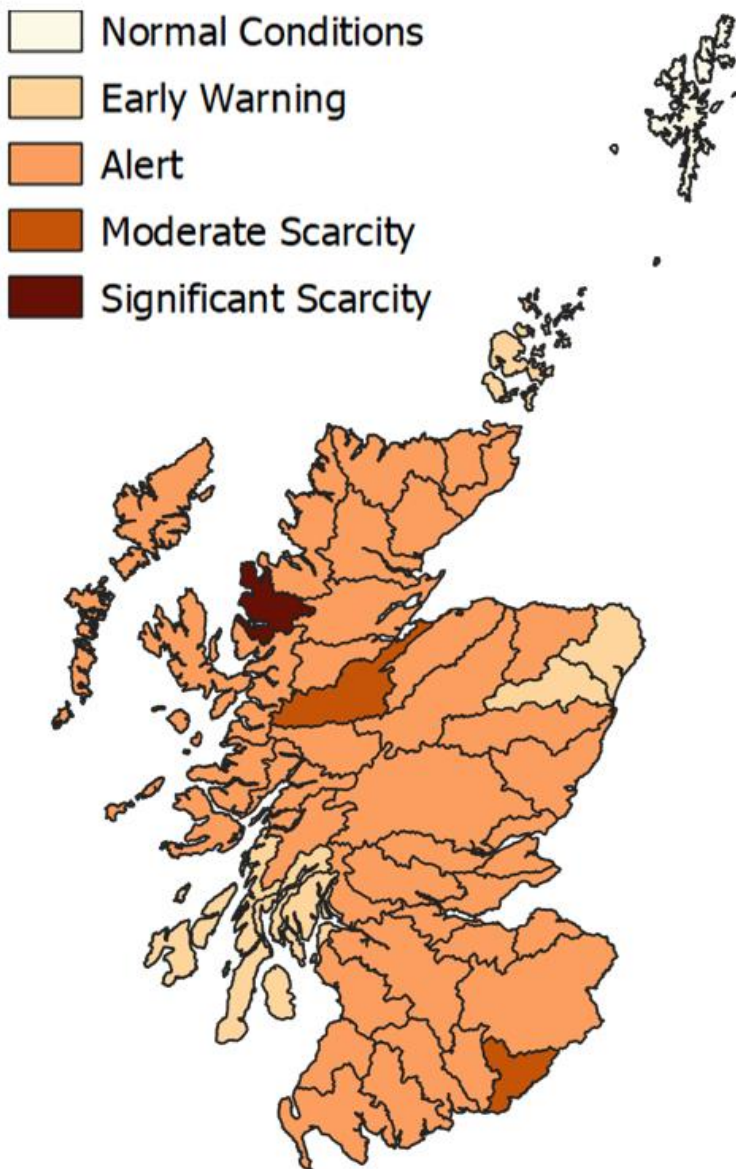
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)