

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

15th June 2023

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

The southwest and much of central Scotland have increased to **Moderate Water Scarcity**.

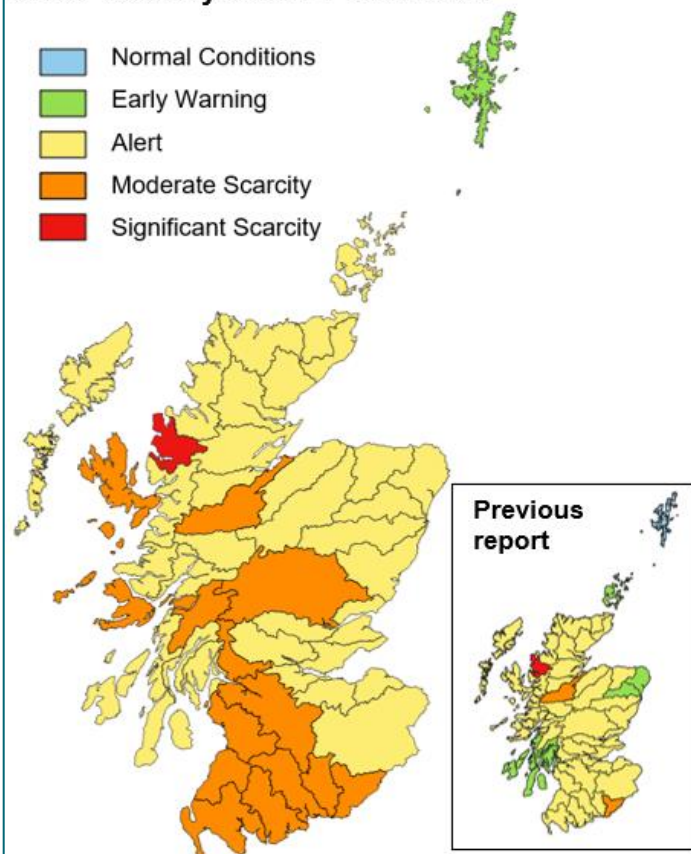
The majority of the rest of the country remains, or has now moved, to **Alert level for Water Scarcity**.



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 remains at 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 isolated thunderstorms in the north earlier in the week have done little to alleviate the overall water scarcity situation. The Ness area remains at Moderate Water Scarcity with the Inner Hebrides now also escalated to Moderate level.

Southwest and central Scotland are also continuing to experience very low river levels and a further drying of ground conditions. As a result, in addition to the Esk area of Dumfriesshire which remains at Moderate water scarcity, the whole of the southwest, along with the Clyde, Leven, Awe and Etive, and Tay areas have increased to Moderate Water Scarcity.

Due to the widespread hot, dry weather persisting over the last week, the rapid drying of ground conditions has continued. This, combined with low river flows, has meant the majority of the rest of Scotland remains at Alert level, and the Ythan & Don in Aberdeenshire and the Kintyre Group in Argyll and Bute have increased to Alert level.

The hot weather is expected to persist in the coming week with showers developing on Saturday and Sunday. Some areas may experience locally heavy showers, which are most likely across the west. 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. If there is no recovery in river levels there will be several areas seeing Significant Water Scarcity in the coming weeks, starting with the Esk area of Dumfriesshire next week. 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 (15/06/2023)

Dry for most of Friday, a few showers breaking out in the southwest later. Showers developing on Saturday and Sunday, locally heavy and most likely across the west. Remaining unsettled on Monday with showers or longer spells of rain.

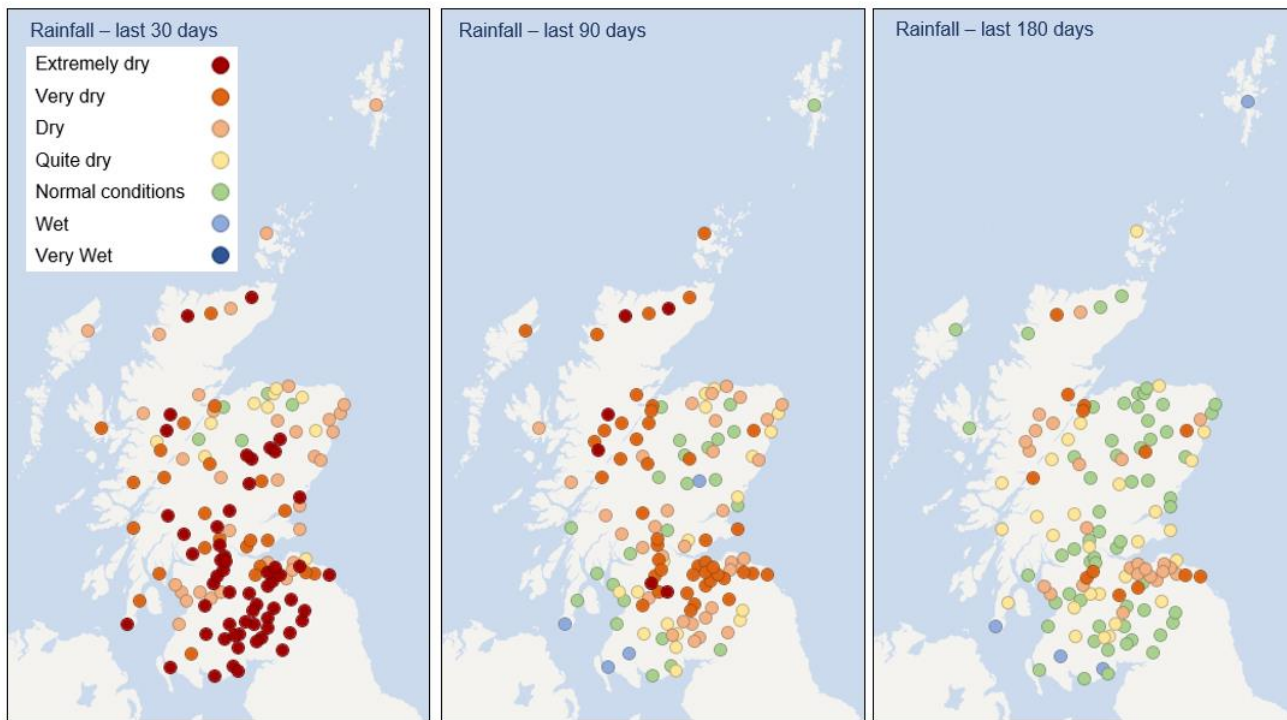
Dry weather is most likely to continue into late June and early July. The outlook for the June-August period also suggests that across the UK there is double the likelihood of the period being hotter than normal.

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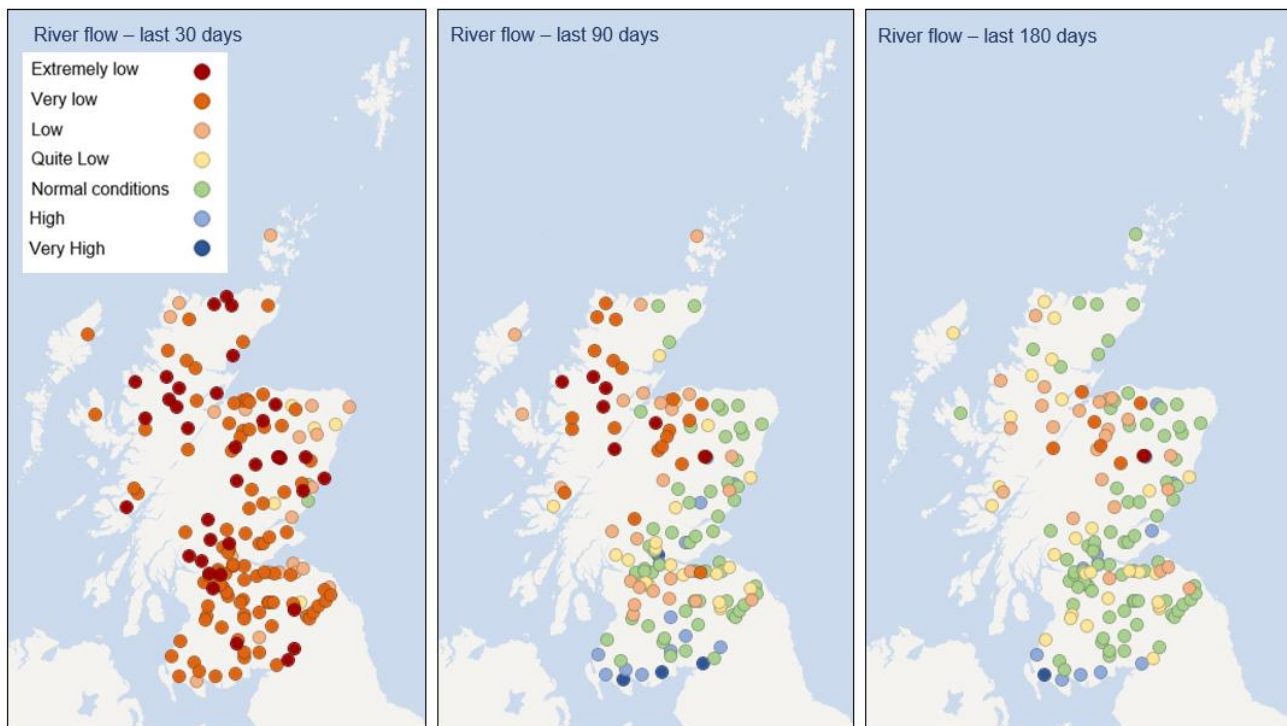
Supporting information

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



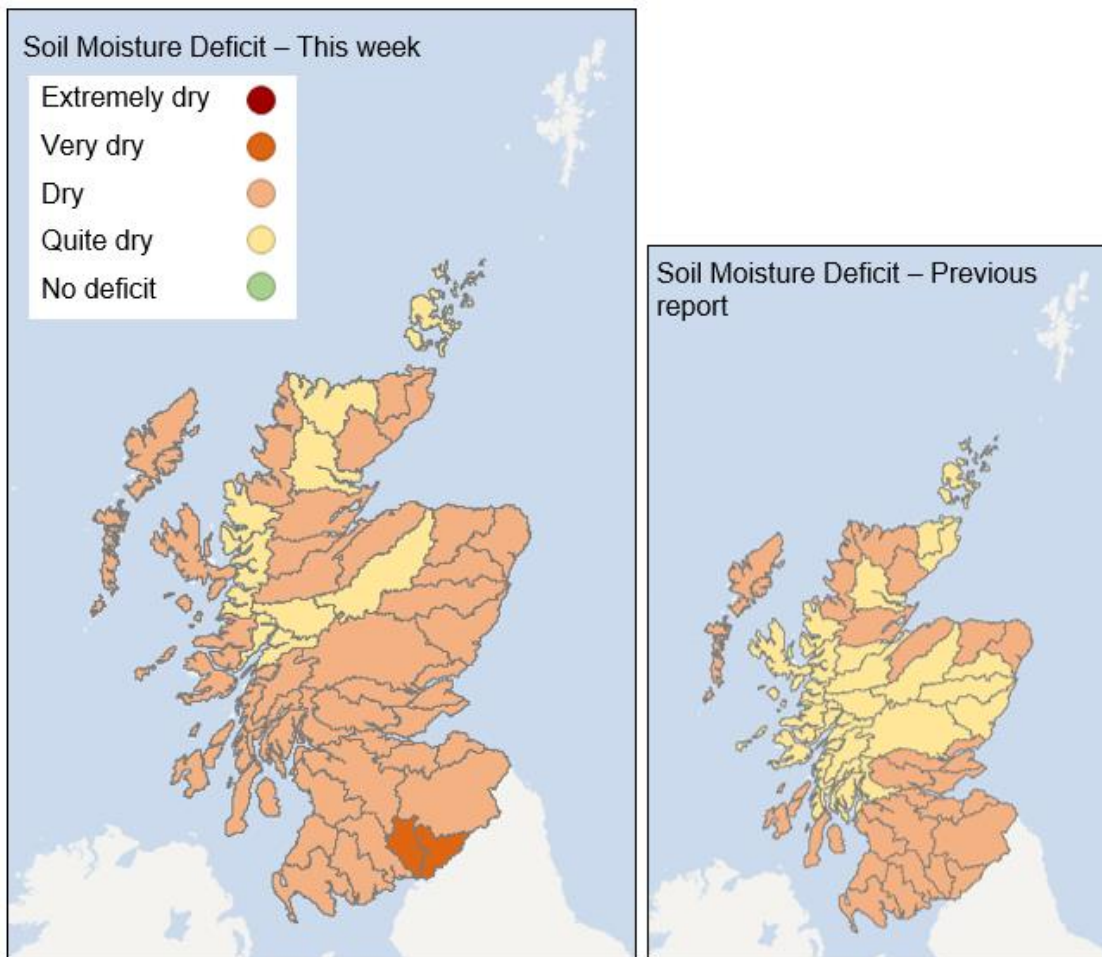
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Rainfall totals in the short term have been extremely dry in south and central Scotland and have generally ranged between dry and very dry across the rest of country. 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 the northeast and southwest 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. 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 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.

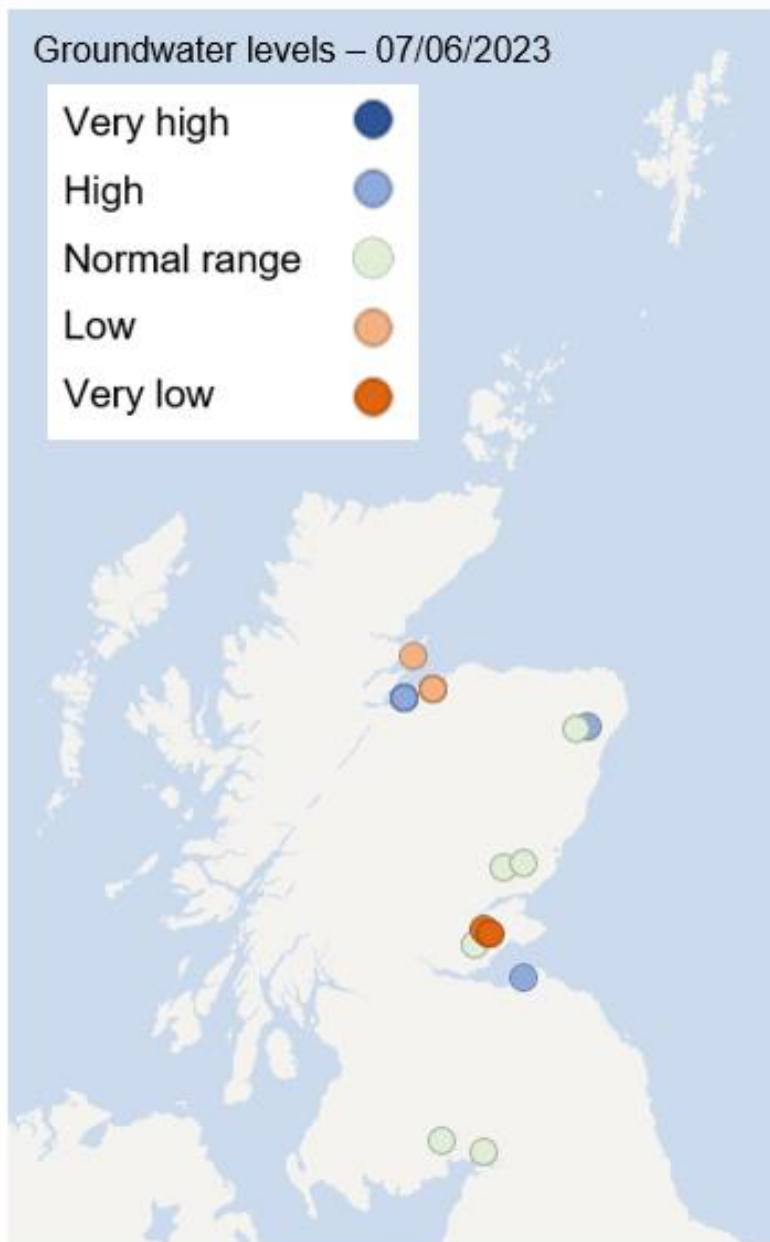


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Due to the widespread hot, dry weather over the last week, the rapid drying of ground conditions has continued with more of Scotland moving to dry conditions this week, with some very dry areas in the south.

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.

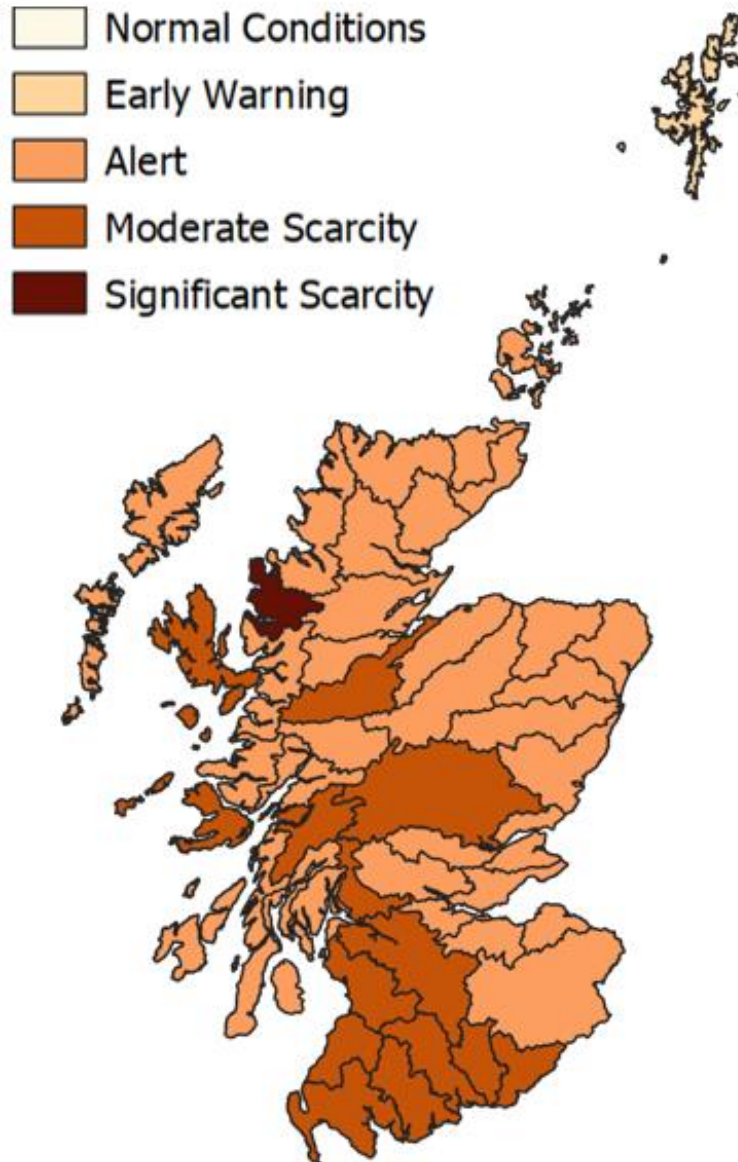
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)