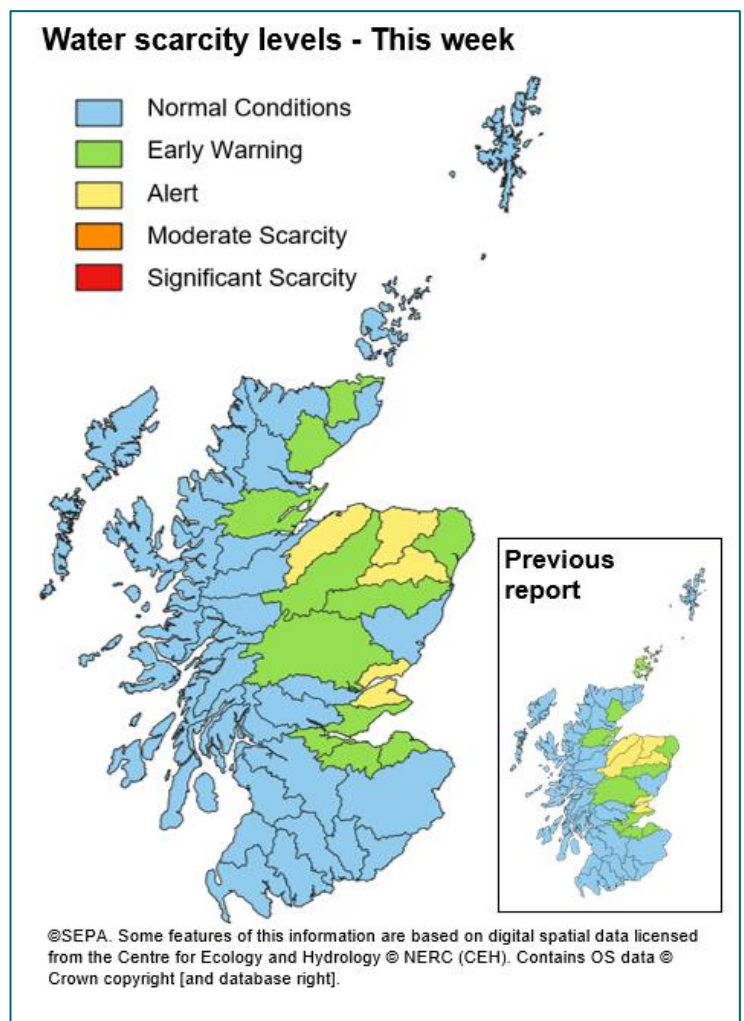


For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

11th August 2023

Despite widespread heavy rain, parts of Moray, north Aberdeenshire, and the Firth of Tay area, remain 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

Last weekend saw heavy rain in many parts, and this week there has been heavy rain in the far north-west and Orkney. However, some areas have seen only locally heavy showers.

The rainfall received has been insufficient to balance the drying of ground conditions in the area around Thurso, which has been raised to Early Warning. However, the heavy rain has seen Orkney recover to Normal Conditions. Recent improvement in river flows in the Spey catchment has also been sufficient for the catchment to recover to Early Warning.

Some parts of the north-east around Moray and Aberdeenshire, as well as the Firth of Tay area including north Fife and Dundee, remain at Alert for water scarcity. There is still the possibility of conditions worsening in these areas without above-average rainfall in August.

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 (10/08/2023)

Turning unsettled, with showers interspersed by longer periods of rain, with the threat of thunderstorms.

Further unsettled weather is expected next week, bringing showers, some heavy and thundery. The unsettled conditions are likely to continue through the middle of August. Conditions are likely to remain changeable towards the end of August and into early September.

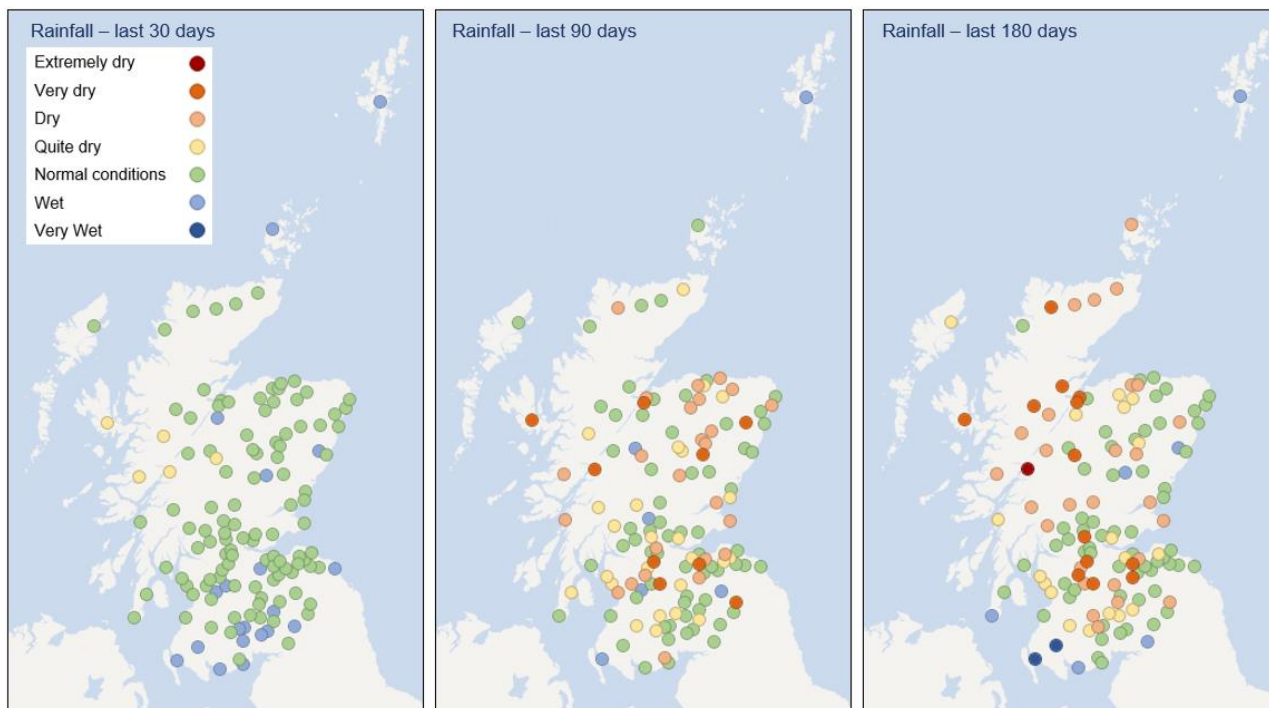
The current outlook for the August – October period indicates that near-average conditions are most likely, with wetter or drier conditions overall no more likely than usual. However, an increased likelihood of easterly winds means that some large regional variations are possible.

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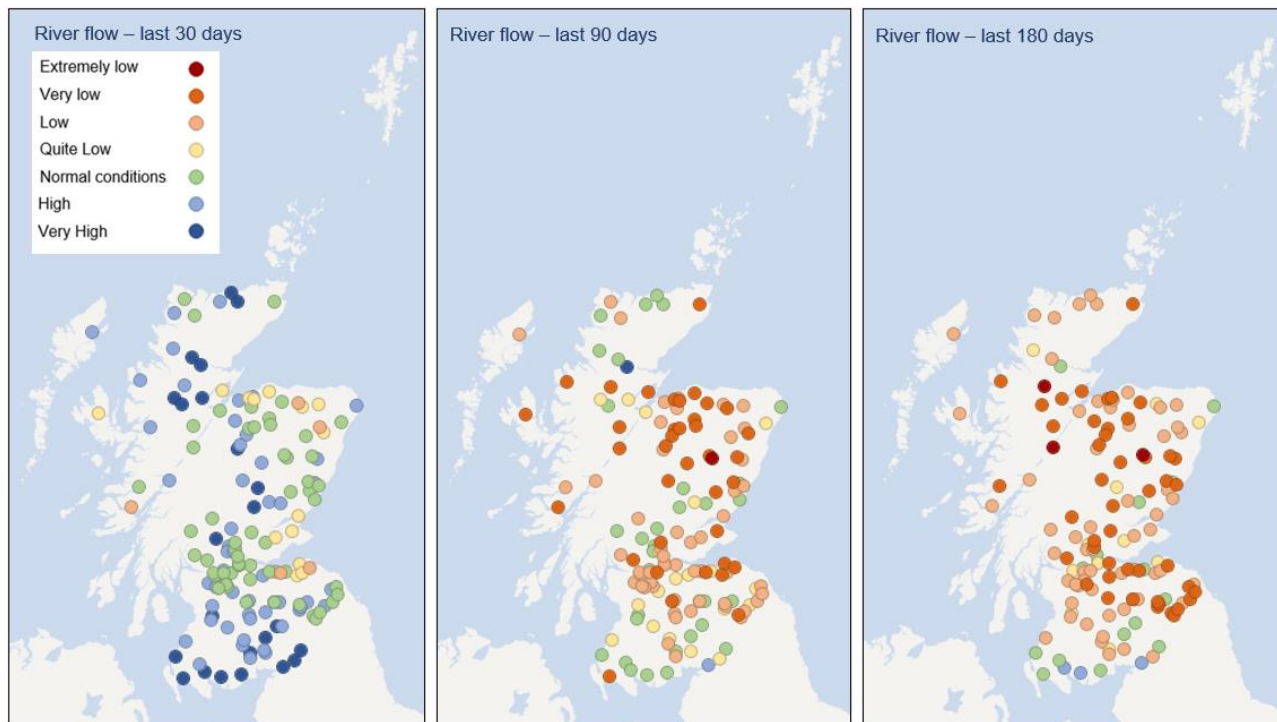
Supporting information

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



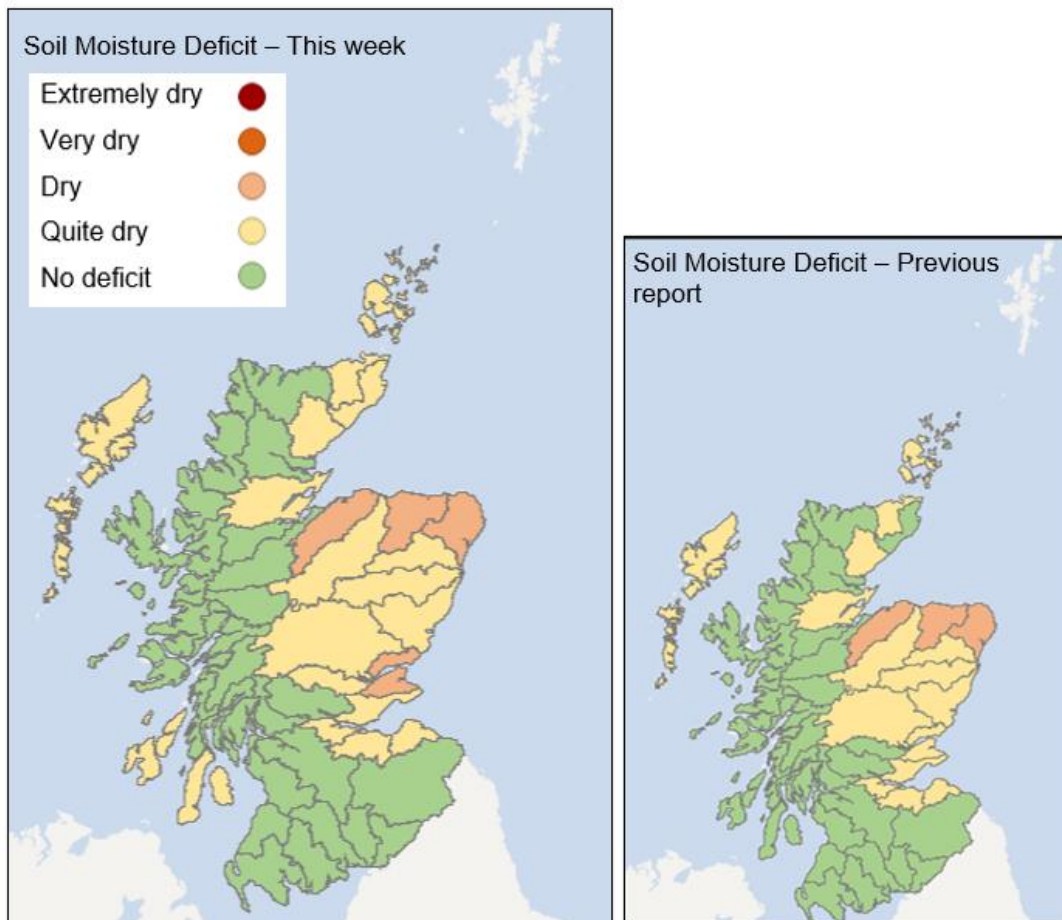
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

In the short term (since mid-July), normal rainfall totals have been experienced across most of Scotland for the time of year although Lochaber and Skye have been quite dry. In the medium to longer term (over the past three to six months), conditions have been mixed, with long-term dry conditions across parts of the Central Belt and the highlands.

Recent river flows (since mid-July) across many parts of Scotland have been high or very high for this time of year. In parts of the east and north-east, river flows are quite low but are continuing to slowly recover. The lower recent rainfall across Lochaber and Skye has resulted in some low river flows too. In the medium to longer term (over the past three to six months), river flows in most areas of Scotland have been low, with long-term very low river flows around the Cairngorms and Inverness, and in the south-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.

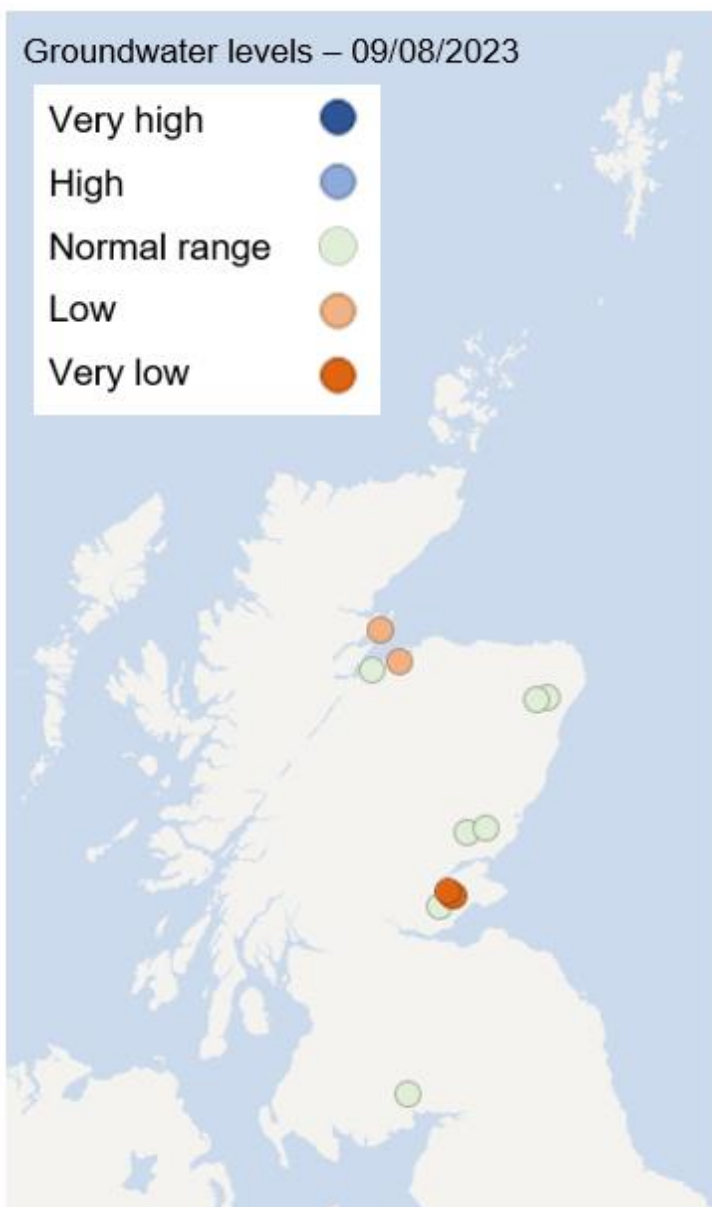


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Ground conditions have remained roughly constant in most areas over the past week, but have dried out in some places. Soils have now become Dry around the Firth of Tay, and Quite Dry around Wick in the north and Kintyre in the west. Most of the west, though, remains at No Deficit. In the east and north-east, ground conditions are widely Quite Dry, and some parts of the north-east are 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 are predominantly within the normal range for this time of year. However, some sites in the north are low for the time of year, and in parts of Fife are still very low for the time of year after reaching their seasonal low earlier in the year than usual.

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 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.

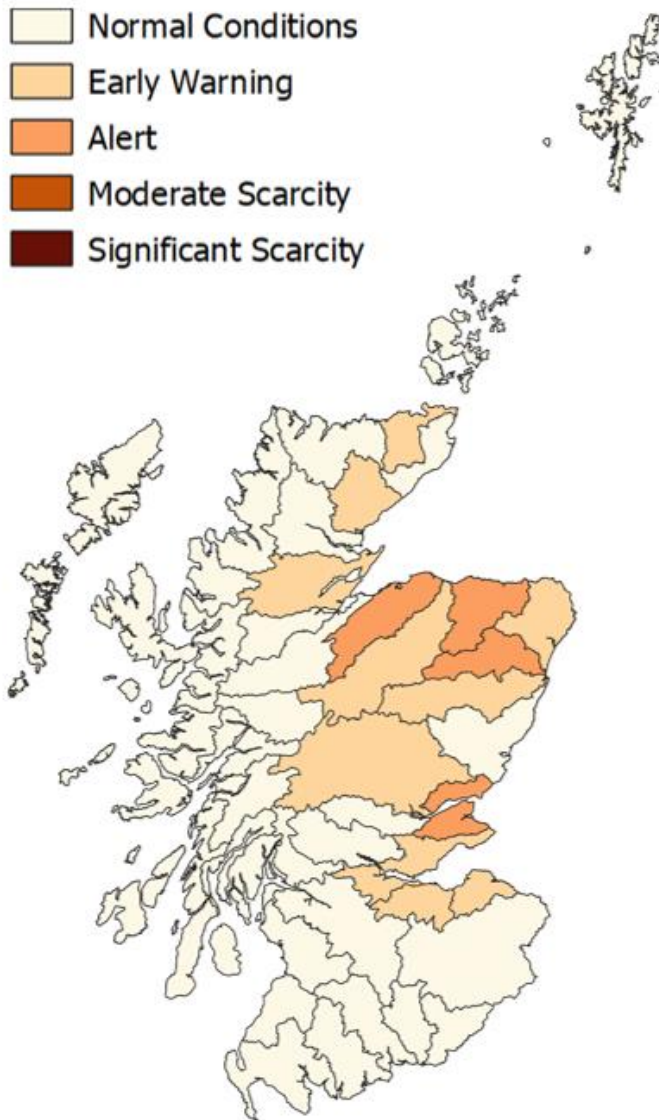
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)