

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

25th August 2023

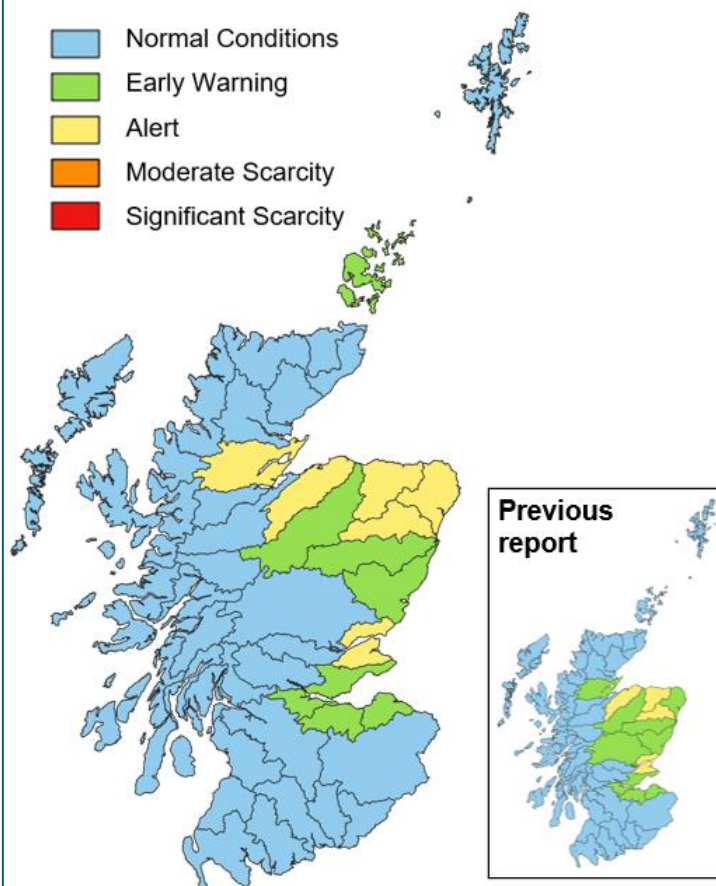
The Conon and Ythan areas have been raised to Alert for water scarcity.

Parts of Moray, Aberdeenshire, and the Firth of Tay area, remain at Alert for water scarcity.

Orkney has been raised to Early Warning.

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

Rainfall this week has been enough to maintain a largely similar water scarcity situation as last week across many parts of Scotland. Areas around the Moray Firth and north Aberdeenshire however, have received less rainfall than the rest of the country, resulting in ground conditions continuing to dry. Low river flows and dry ground conditions in the Black Isle have resulted in the Conon area being raised to Alert. Much of Aberdeenshire is also at Alert for water scarcity due to worsening ground conditions and low river flows. Due to a lack of rainfall in the long term and dry ground conditions, Orkney has been raised to Early Warning.

Recent rainfall received in the Tay area has resulted in recovery to Normal Conditions.

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

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 (24/08/2023)

Further spells of rain across the Northern Isles and northwest on Friday, possibly heavy. Elsewhere scattered showers, occasionally heavy in the east on Friday afternoon. Fewer showers on Saturday. Patchy light rain extending eastwards on Sunday followed by a mainly dry day on Monday.

Conditions are likely to remain changeable towards the end of August and into early September.

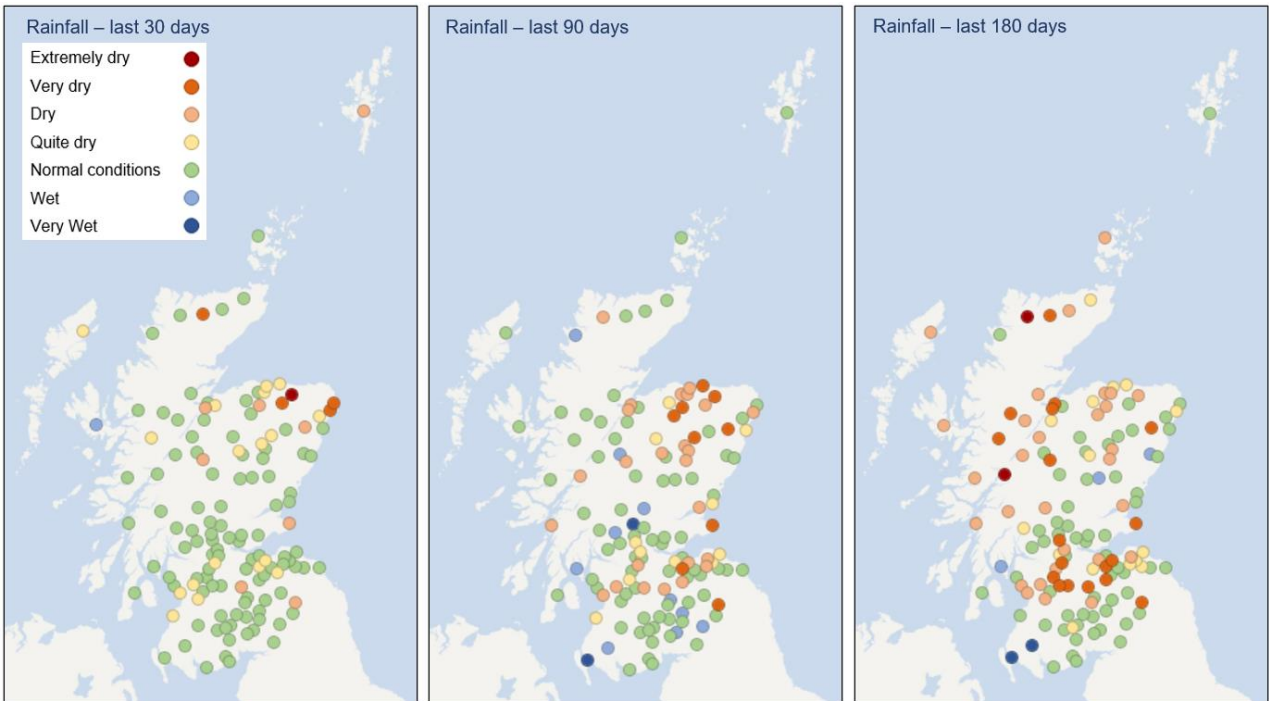
The current outlook for the August – October period indicates that near-average conditions are most likely, with wetter or drier conditions overall no more likely than usual. However, an increased likelihood of easterly winds means that some large regional variations are possible.

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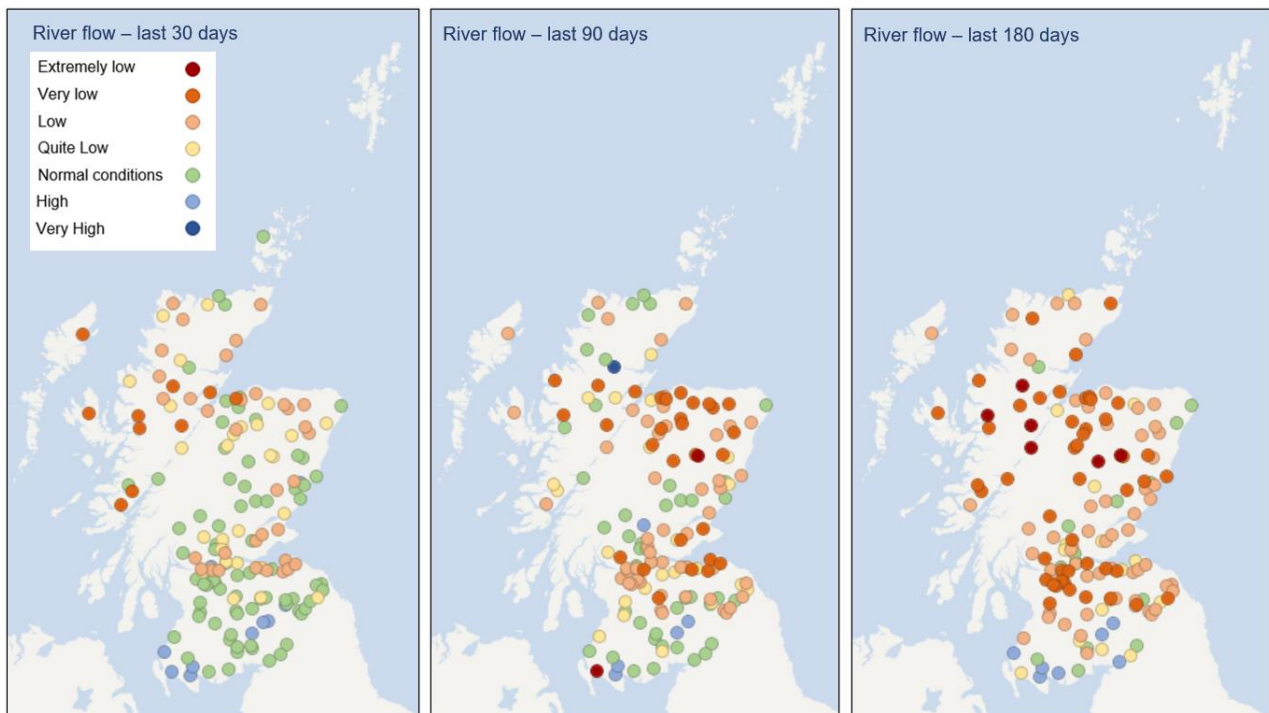
Supporting information

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



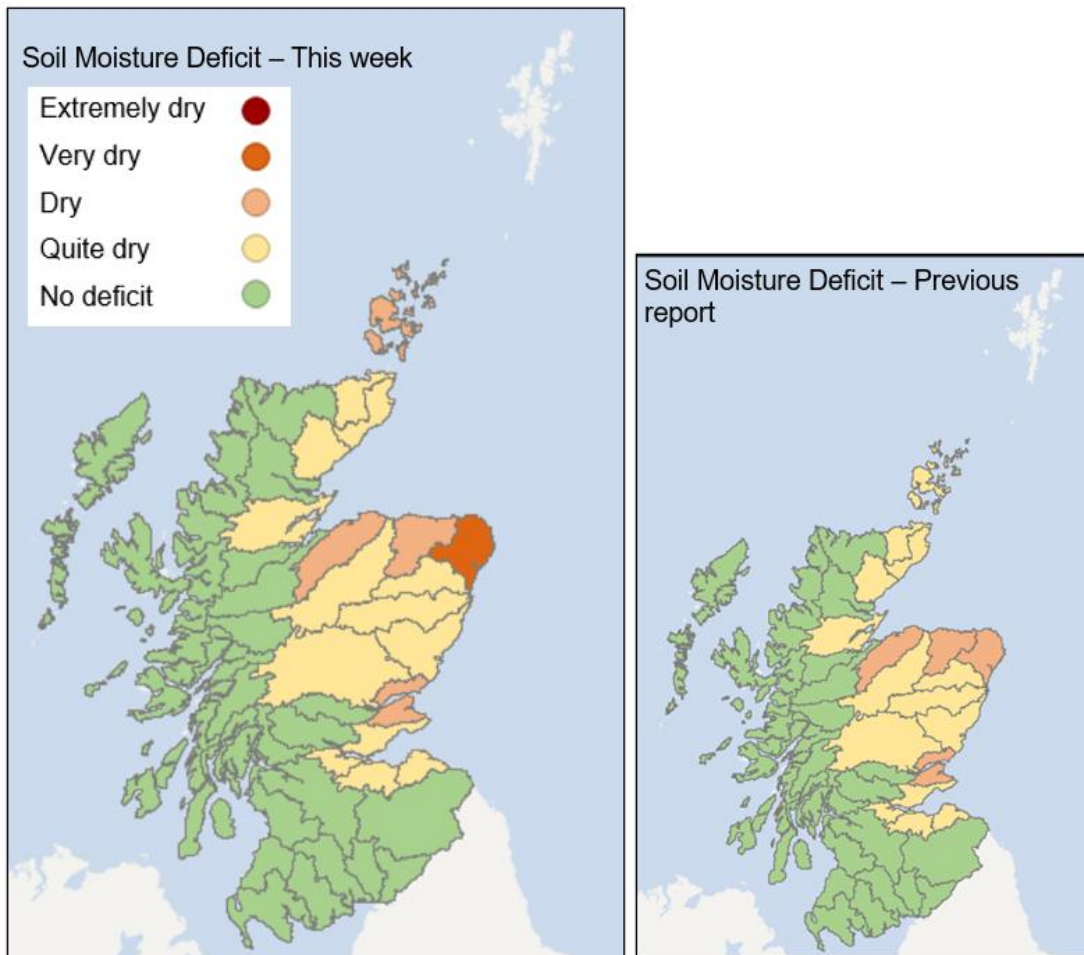
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

In the short term (since mid-July), normal rainfall totals have been experienced across most of Scotland for the time of year although some parts range between quite dry and extremally dry, particularly in Aberdeenshire. 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 parts of Scotland have been normal for this time of year, particularly in the south. Flows in the Highlands, north-east and the Central Belt are mainly low or very low. In the medium to longer term (over the past three to six months), river flows in most areas of Scotland have been low or very low.

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.

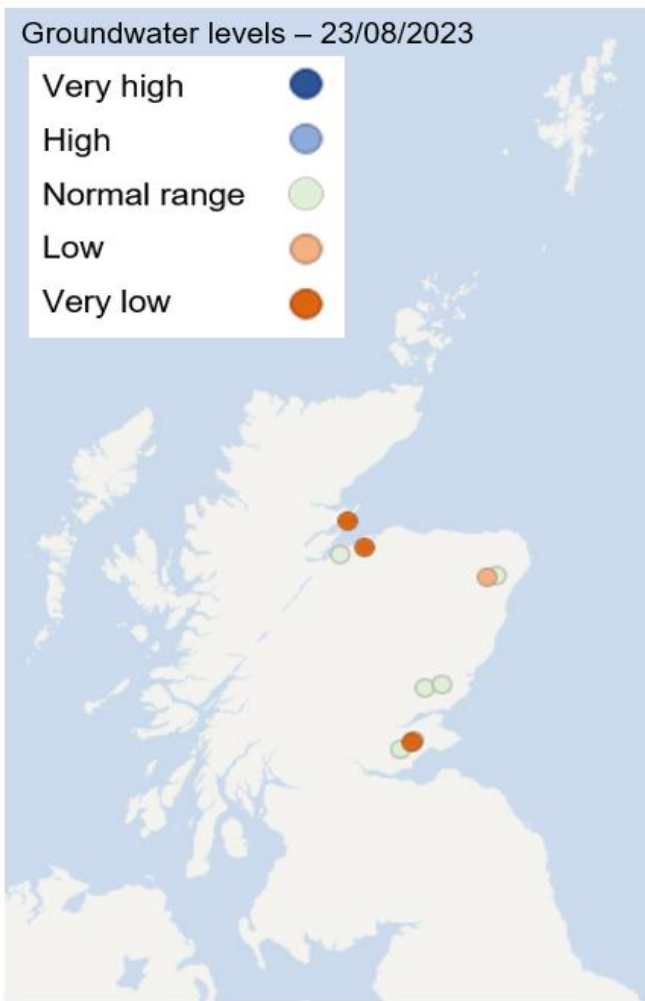


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Ground conditions are currently showing No Deficit in the west. In the east and north-east, ground conditions are widely Quite Dry, and some parts of the north and north-east are Dry or Very Dry.

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 are mostly within the normal range for this time of year. However, some sites in the north are low and very 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.



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.

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.

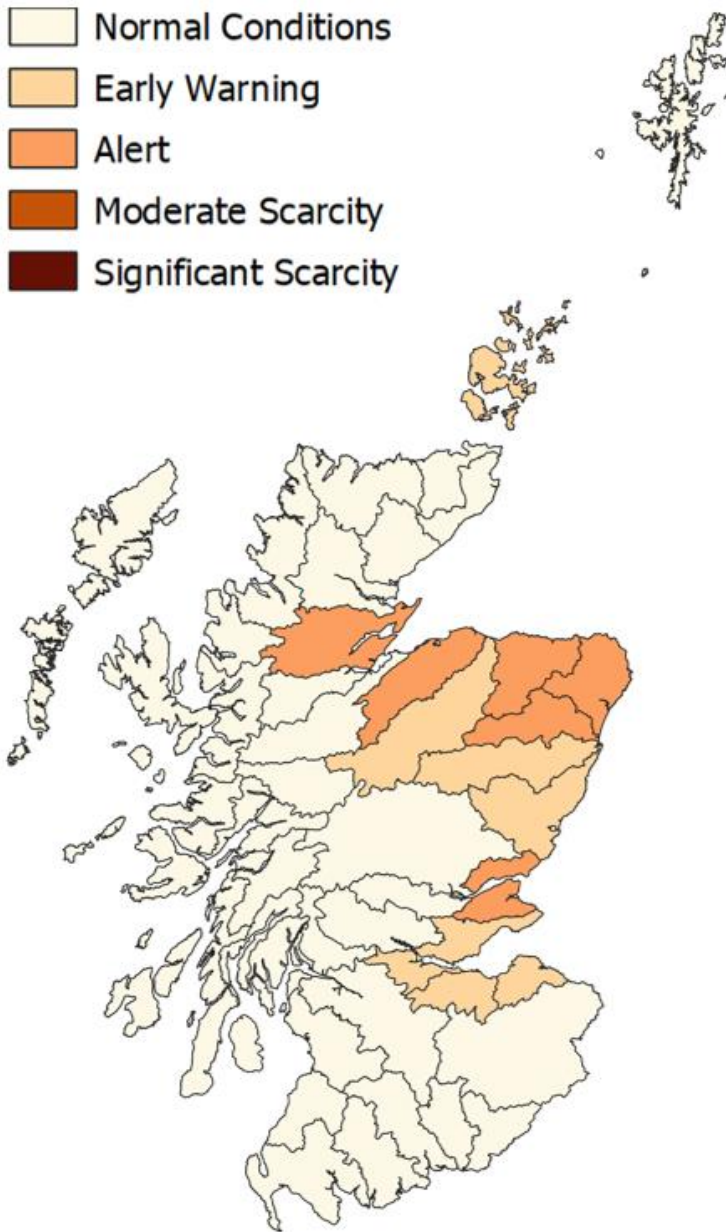
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)