

For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

1st June 2023

The risk of water scarcity in the Loch Maree area has increased to Moderate.

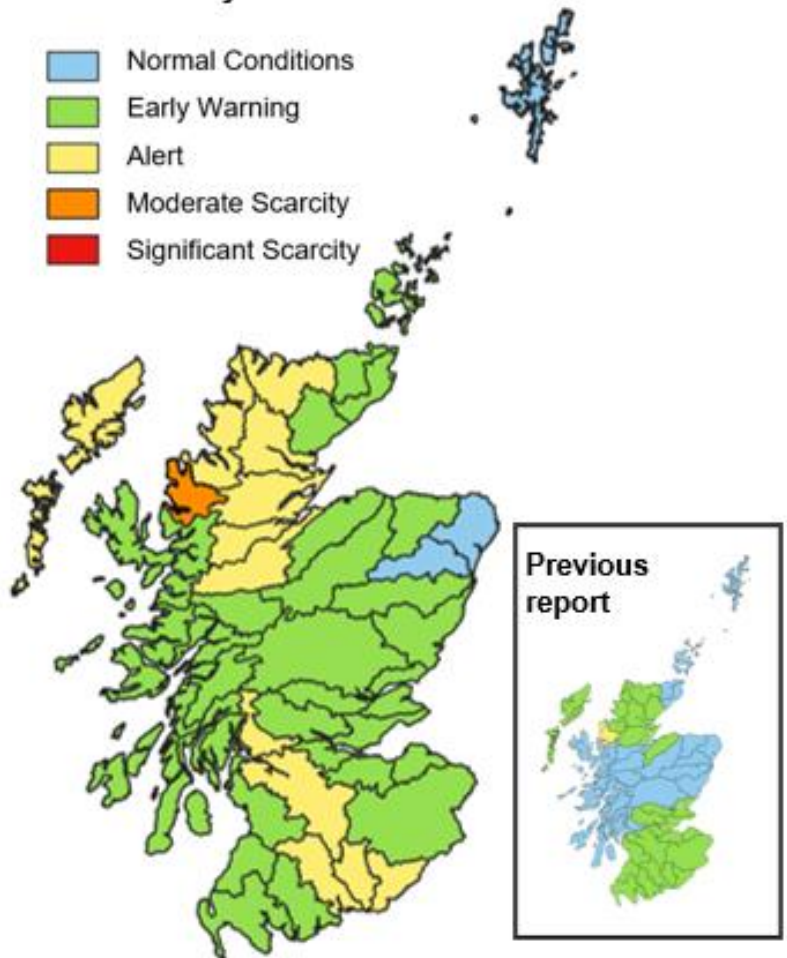
Areas in the Northwest and Southern Central region have been raised to Alert.

The majority of the country is now at Early Warning for Water Scarcity.

Little rain is forecast for the next few weeks, so the water scarcity situation is expected to escalate quickly.

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 Moderate Water Scarcity level due to prolonged extremely low river flows in the area. The surrounding areas of the northwest Highlands, extending down to Loch Ness, are also experiencing very low river levels so have moved to Alert level.

Areas in the Southern Central region have also increased to Alert level, this covers the Clyde, parts of Dumfries and Galloway, and South Lanarkshire.

The majority of the country is now at Early Warning for water scarcity due to increasingly dry ground conditions and falling river levels.

No rain is expected in the next week and very little is forecast for the next few weeks. The water scarcity situation is expected to escalate quickly, and extend across a much wider area, in the coming weeks.

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.

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 (01/06/2023)

Plenty of dry weather through the coming days, although patchy light rain and/or drizzle possible across the Isles, the far north and northwest at times and, especially on Monday, perhaps an isolated shower over the hills.

Settled weather is then expected to dominate in the north of the UK throughout June, meaning the mostly dry weather should continue across Scotland.

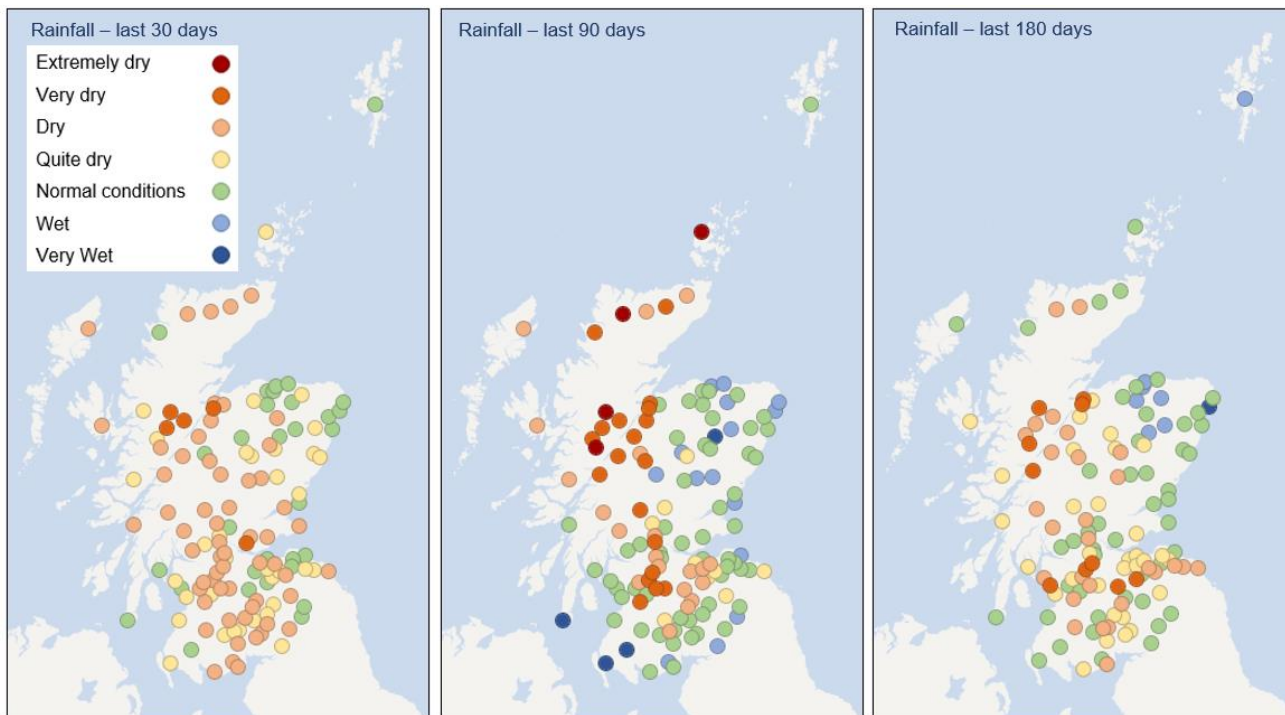
The outlook for the June-August period also suggests that across the UK there is double the likelihood of the period being hotter than normal.

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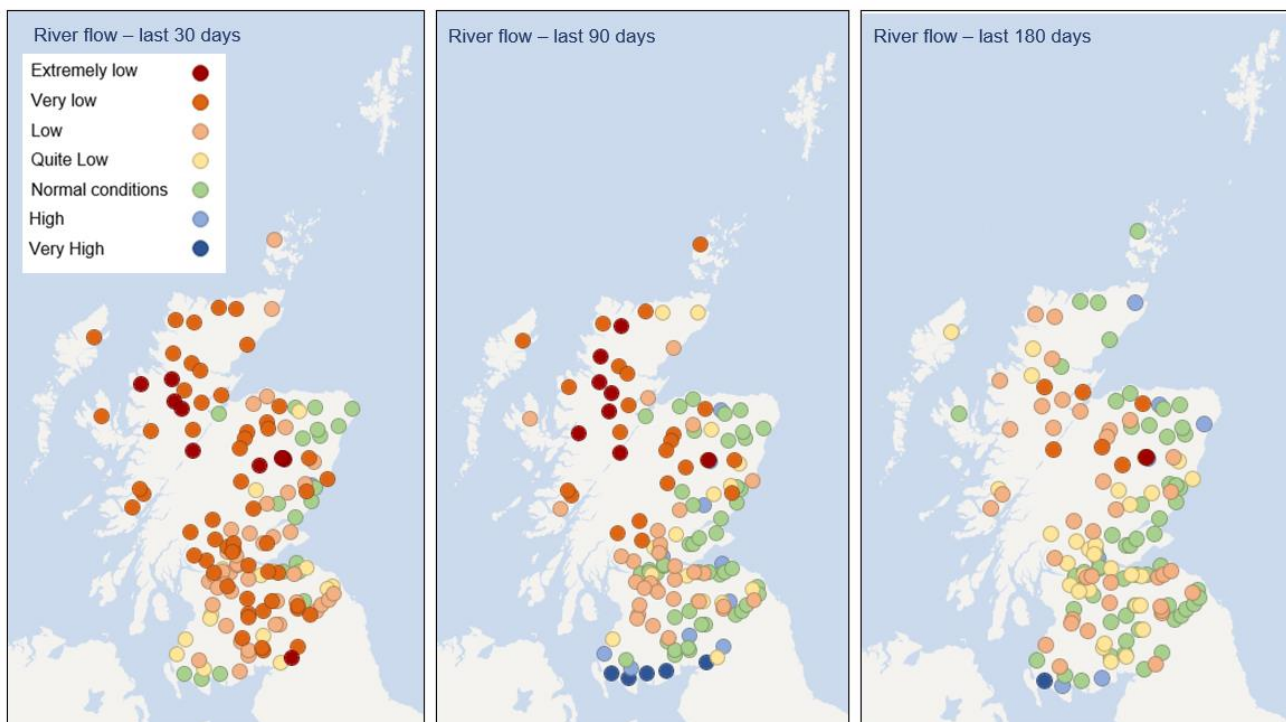
Supporting information

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



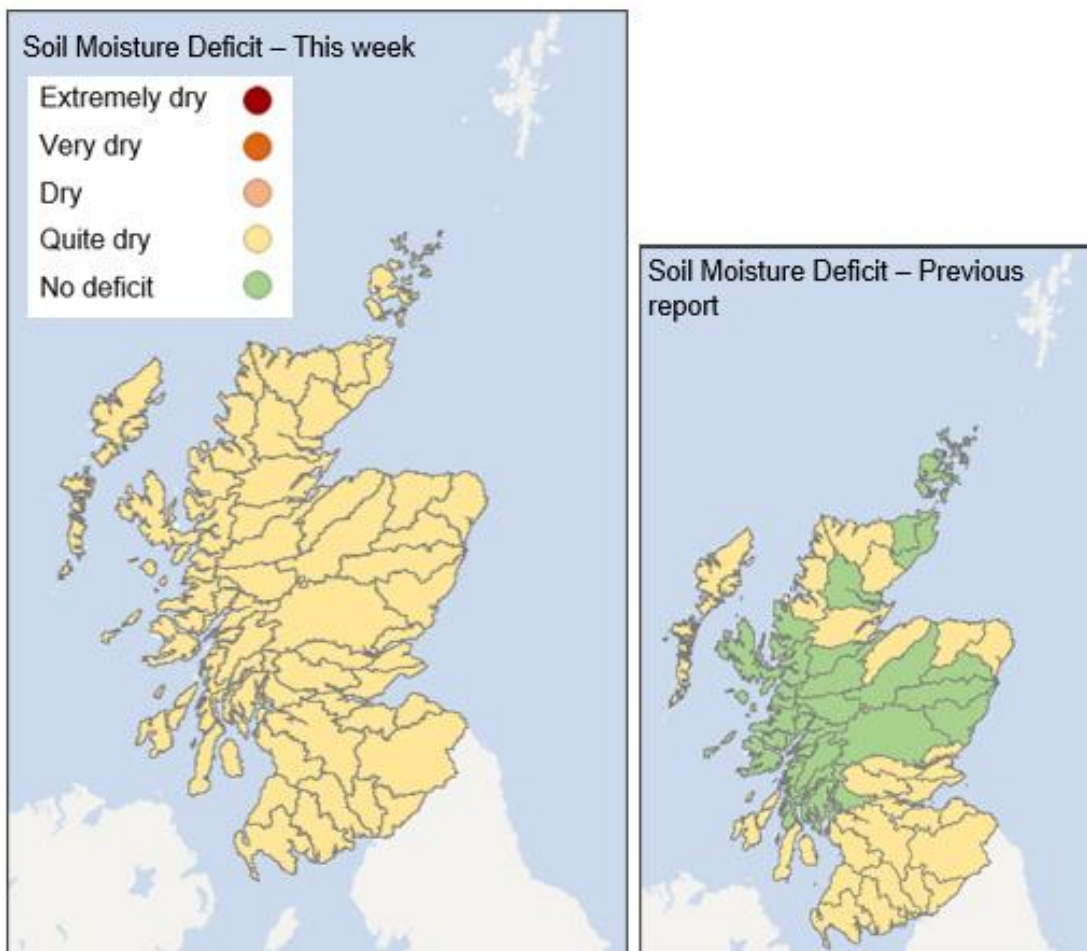
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Rainfall totals in the short term have been very dry in the northwest and widely dry elsewhere, except for the northeast, where they have mostly been normal. In the medium term, extremely dry to very dry conditions have been experienced in the northern highlands and very dry in parts of central and southern Scotland.

Persistent extremely low river flows for this time of year are evident in the north-west. With widespread very low flows across the majority of the rest of the country in the short term, except the northeast of Aberdeenshire and western edge of Dumfries and Galloway. In the medium term, low flows dominate in central and northern areas, with more normal flows 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.

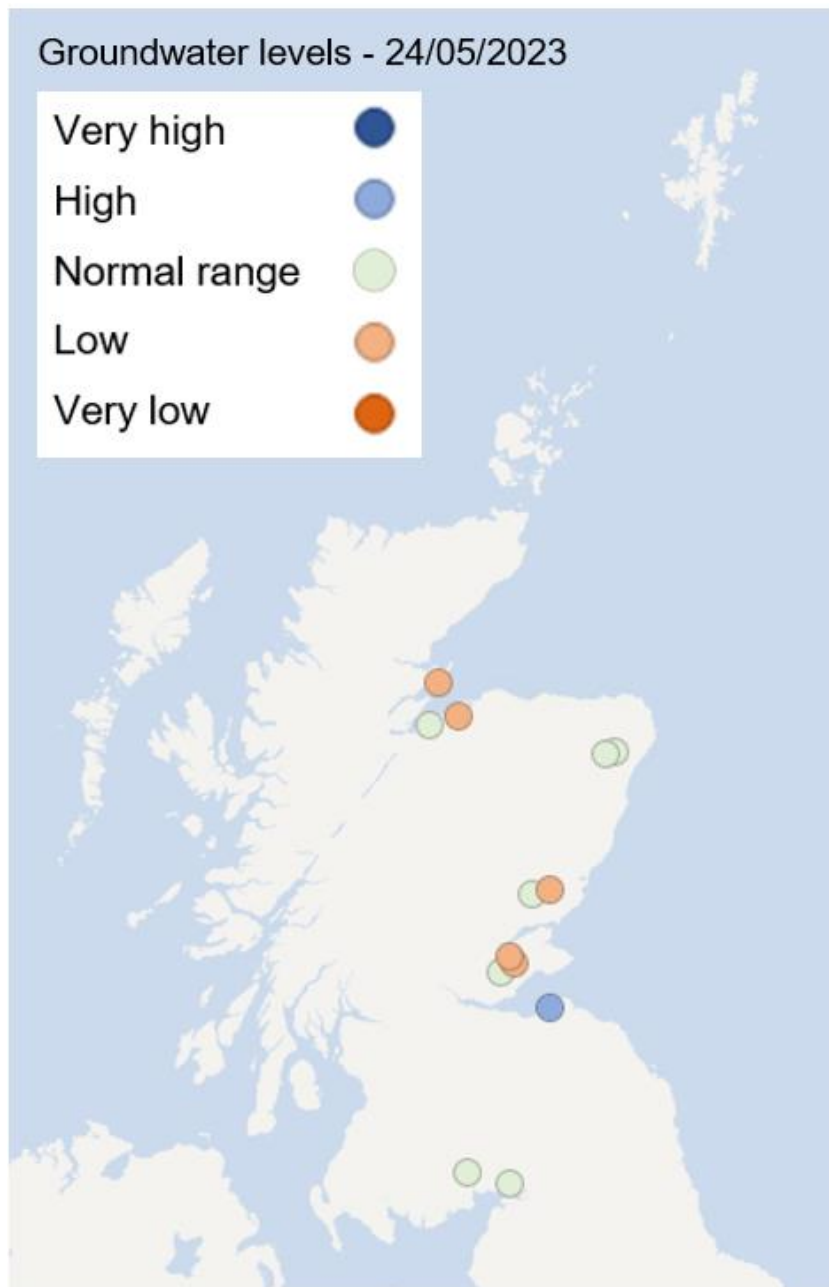


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Due to the widespread hot, dry weather over the last week, there has been a rapid drying of ground conditions which has seen the whole of Scotland move to Quite dry conditions this week.

Groundwater levels:

This map shows groundwater level compares to the long-term record at each station. Groundwater level is 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 at our monitoring stations are mostly within the normal range for this time of year. In parts of some areas, groundwater levels are low compared to the May average level.

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.

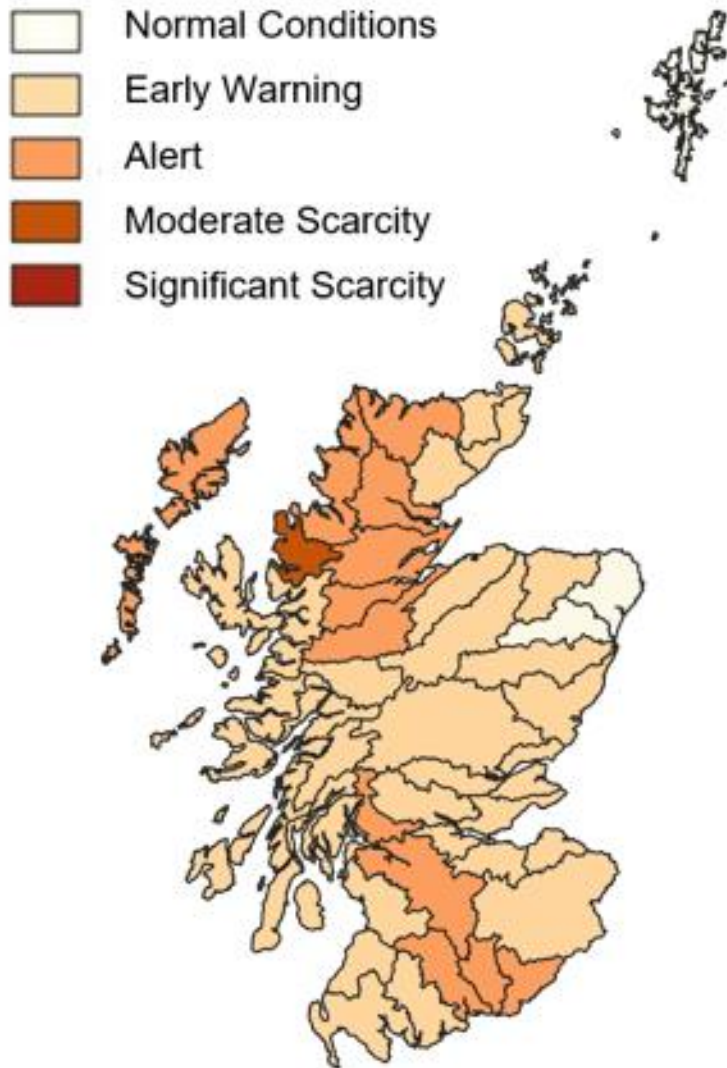
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

Angus Smith Building, 6 Parkland Avenue, Eurocentral, Holytown, North Lanarkshire, ML1 4WQ

Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)