

## HEADLINE

**North East Scotland, North Highland and the Clyde, Ayr and Irvine have moved to Significant Scarcity due to evidence of ecological impacts resulting from a protracted period of exceptionally low flows.**

**The Solway, Tweed and Forth areas have moved to Moderate Scarcity.**

**It will require at least a month of rainfall significantly wetter than normal to alleviate the current water scarcity.**

**There are no areas where normal public water supplies have been affected.**

### Situation summary

Dry weather has continued to dominate this week, though heavy rain spells have occurred across parts of the country. Any rainfall experienced has not been sufficient to alleviate the widespread water scarcity situation and this is forecast to continue for the week ahead.

River levels have been very low right across the country for quite some time now. Some rivers, particularly in the north and northeast, have been at exceptionally low flows for the last month. Such a prolonged period of low flows is very unusual. We are seeing continuing evidence in the north, north east and south west regions of river beds becoming extensively exposed and where there is water it is very shallow and slow flowing. These conditions have also led to some high river water temperatures all of which put stress on river plants, fish and other animals. Loch and reservoir storage continues to fall. Groundwater levels are continuing to fall steadily and in Aberdeenshire some levels are the lowest for at least the last 10 years.

The soil moisture deficit has remained steady across most of the country over the last week, although most of East Lothian and the Borders have now deteriorated into the “extremely dry” category.

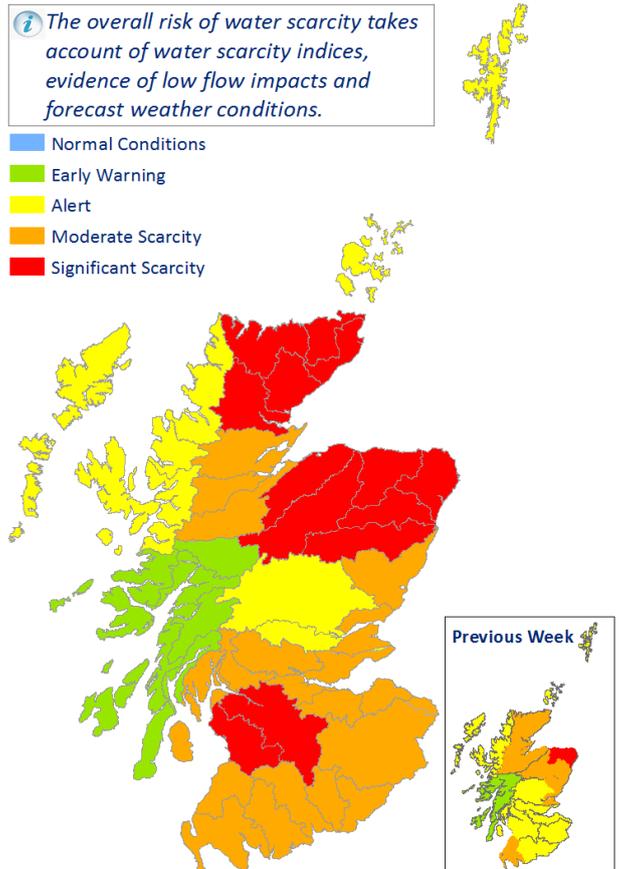
It is highly likely that by the end of July, Scotland will have had the driest 6 month period (Feb – Jul) since 1984.

We are monitoring the situation closely and coordinating steps to manage water resources in line with [Scotland's National Water Scarcity Plan](#).

There are no areas where normal public water supplies have been affected, but there has been an increase in water usage levels.

 *The overall risk of water scarcity takes account of water scarcity indices, evidence of low flow impacts and forecast weather conditions.*

-  Normal Conditions
-  Early Warning
-  Alert
-  Moderate Scarcity
-  Significant Scarcity



SEPA is working closely with Scottish Water who is managing water supplies across Scotland through this extended dry period and will continue to monitor the situation closely. Advice has been issued to all customers to use water wisely nationwide (*link to advice [www.scottishwater.co.uk/about-us/media-centre/latest-news/customers-across-scotland-asked-to-use-water-wisely](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/about-us/media-centre/latest-news/customers-across-scotland-asked-to-use-water-wisely)*).

**By taking the right steps now, businesses that abstract water can help make the water supplies on which they and others depend last as long as possible through this period.**

SEPA is working with businesses to help ensure abstractions can be sustained and the water environment protected.

General and sector specific advice for abstractors is available: [Advice for abstractors](#)

Water abstractors with concerns about meeting licence conditions or wishing to discuss contingency measures should [contact their local SEPA office](#).

Scottish Water and Local Authorities are working together to help maintain supplies. If your private water supply is drying up you should contact your local authority for assistance and follow the advice about [maintaining your private supply](#).

## Forecast

Thundery showers are forecast on the east coast for Thursday night and Friday with potentially heavy showers continuing over the weekend. There is currently a good deal of uncertainty as to exactly how much rain will fall and how far inland the showers will extend. Intense rainfall may result in some minor surface water flooding impacts but it is unlikely to significantly alleviate the long term water scarcity situation.

The longer-term outlook shows a slightly higher likelihood of drier and warmer conditions than normal over the next three months, although the confidence in this is not high.

Further details on the current situation are provided in the following figures.

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### Precipitation Indices

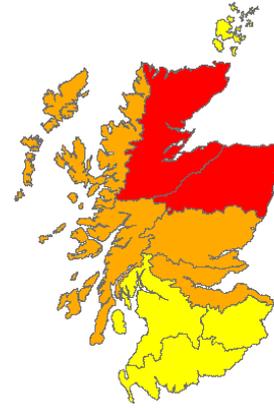
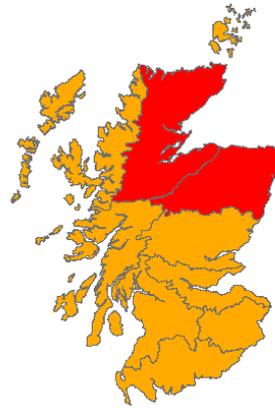
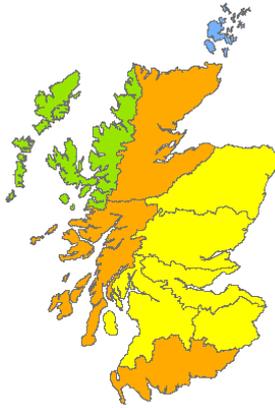
Rainfall over the past 30 days



Rainfall over the past 90 days



Rainfall over the past 180 days



*These maps show how low current rainfall totals are for this time of year, relative to historical averages, over the past 30, 90 and 180 days.*

- Normal Conditions
- Quite Dry
- Dry
- Very Dry
- Exceptionally Dry

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### Soil Moisture Deficit Maps

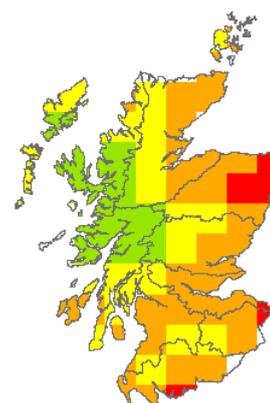
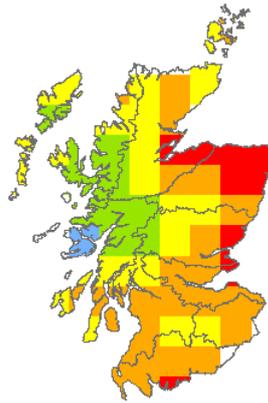
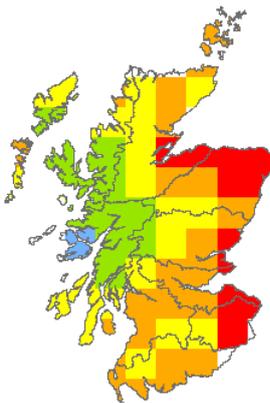
Soil Moisture Deficit Current



Soil Moisture Deficit 7 days prior



Soil Moisture Deficit 14 days prior



*These maps depict the latest Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD) data and the SMD 7 and 14 days prior.*

- No Data
- No Deficit
- Quite Dry
- Dry
- Very Dry
- Exceptionally Dry

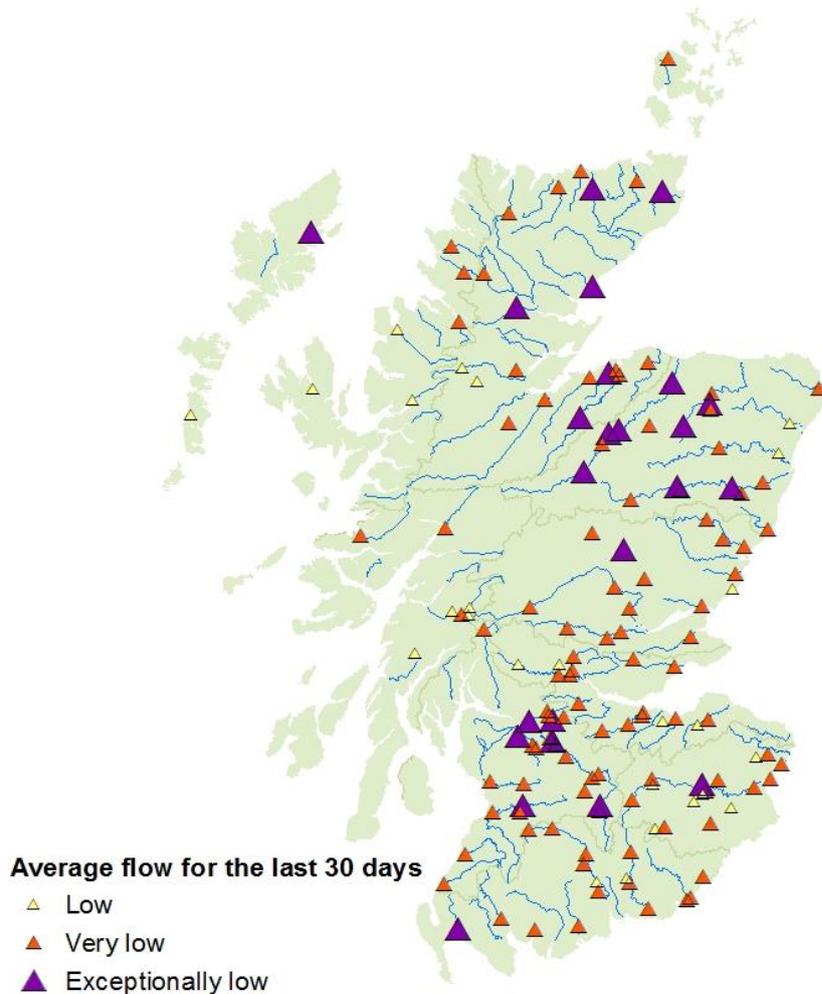
Average flow over the last 30 days

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This map shows the average flow at SEPA's gauging stations over the past 30 days, highlighting sites which have been at very low flows for this period.

Evidence shows that river ecology is at high risk when very low flows are maintained for this length of time.



#### Notes on exceptionally low flows:

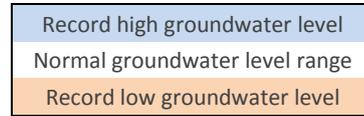
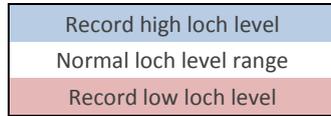
- In the figure above, those sites marked as exceptionally low have had the types of low flows normally seen only a few days per year, persisting for at least a month.
- Even in areas where flows have not reached this extremely low level the advice to use water wisely still applies.

Further information from SEPA's water level stations can be found at <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/waterlevels/>.

## Loch and Groundwater levels: 25/07/2018



These charts show the trend in groundwater and loch levels since January 2017. The white zone represents the observed range in the long-term record.



The lochs shown have been selected as representative of lochs not being used for abstraction.

