

HEADLINE

North East Scotland and North Highland are still at Significant Scarcity due to evidence of ecological impacts resulting from a protracted period of exceptionally low flows.

Clyde and Ayrshire have improved to Moderate Scarcity this week.

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

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

Situation summary

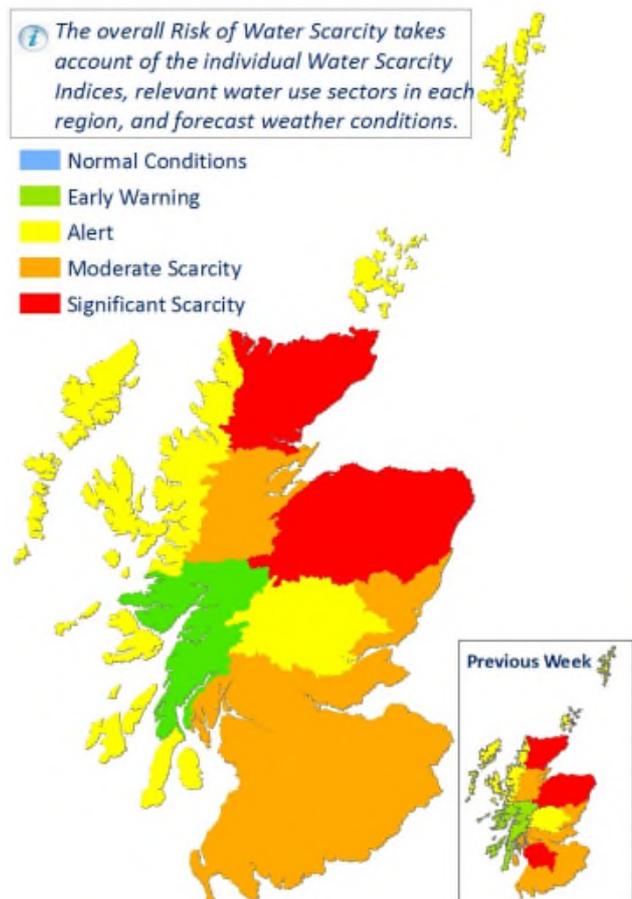
There was some rainfall across the country this week. However, this has not been sufficient to improve the water scarcity situation, except in the Clyde, Ayr and Irvine region, which has seen some improvement. River levels throughout the north and east remain very low, particularly along the Moray coast. The rain experienced this week has made only slight improvements and the situation is likely to worsen again in the week ahead.

Much heavier rain has been experienced in the west, particularly in the south west, and this has led to a rise in river flow and some loch levels. With a dry week ahead, however, the water scarcity situation remains and river levels will fall again.

We continue to see evidence in the North Highlands and North East regions of river beds becoming extensively exposed and where there is water it is very shallow and slow flowing. These conditions have previously led to some high river water temperatures all of which have put stress on river plants, fish and other animals. There has been a limited amount of recharge in some lochs and reservoir storage as much of the rainfall has been retained within soils, as demonstrated by the improved soil moisture deficit across most of the country. Groundwater levels respond much more slowly so remain at very low levels as last week.

The soil moisture deficit has improved in most areas but it should be noted that much of the north and east remain very dry to exceptionally dry.

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, Scottish Water saw a reduction in demand last weekend due to cooler temperatures and rainfall but there is no guarantee that demand will not increase again with warmer weather predicted.

Scottish Water 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*).

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](#).

If your private water supply is drying up you should follow the advice about [maintaining your private supply](#).

Forecast (at 31/07/18): Based on data from Met Office

Western areas will remain fairly cloudy on Thursday and Friday with further outbreaks of light rain, while the east will be brighter with scattered afternoon showers, a few on the heavy side. Mostly dry and bright weekend will follow.

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.

31/07/2018

Precipitation Indices

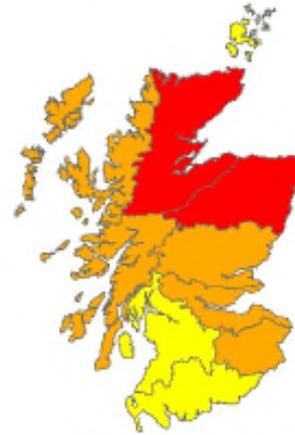
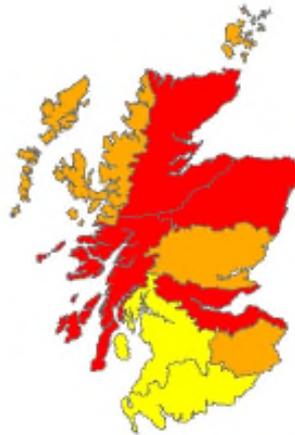
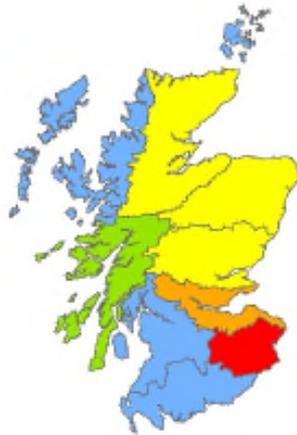
Rainfall over the
past 30 days



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.



31/07/2018

Soil Moisture Deficit Maps

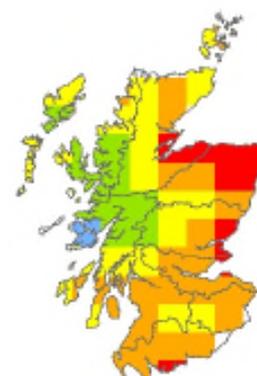
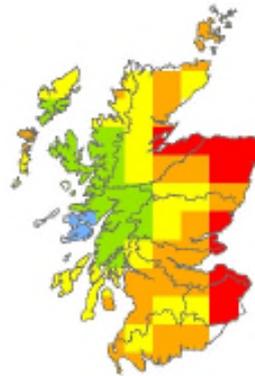
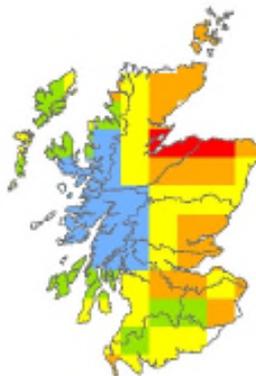
Soil Moisture Deficit
Current



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.*



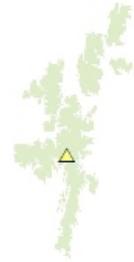
* MORECS data obtained from MetOffice

Average flow over the last 30 days

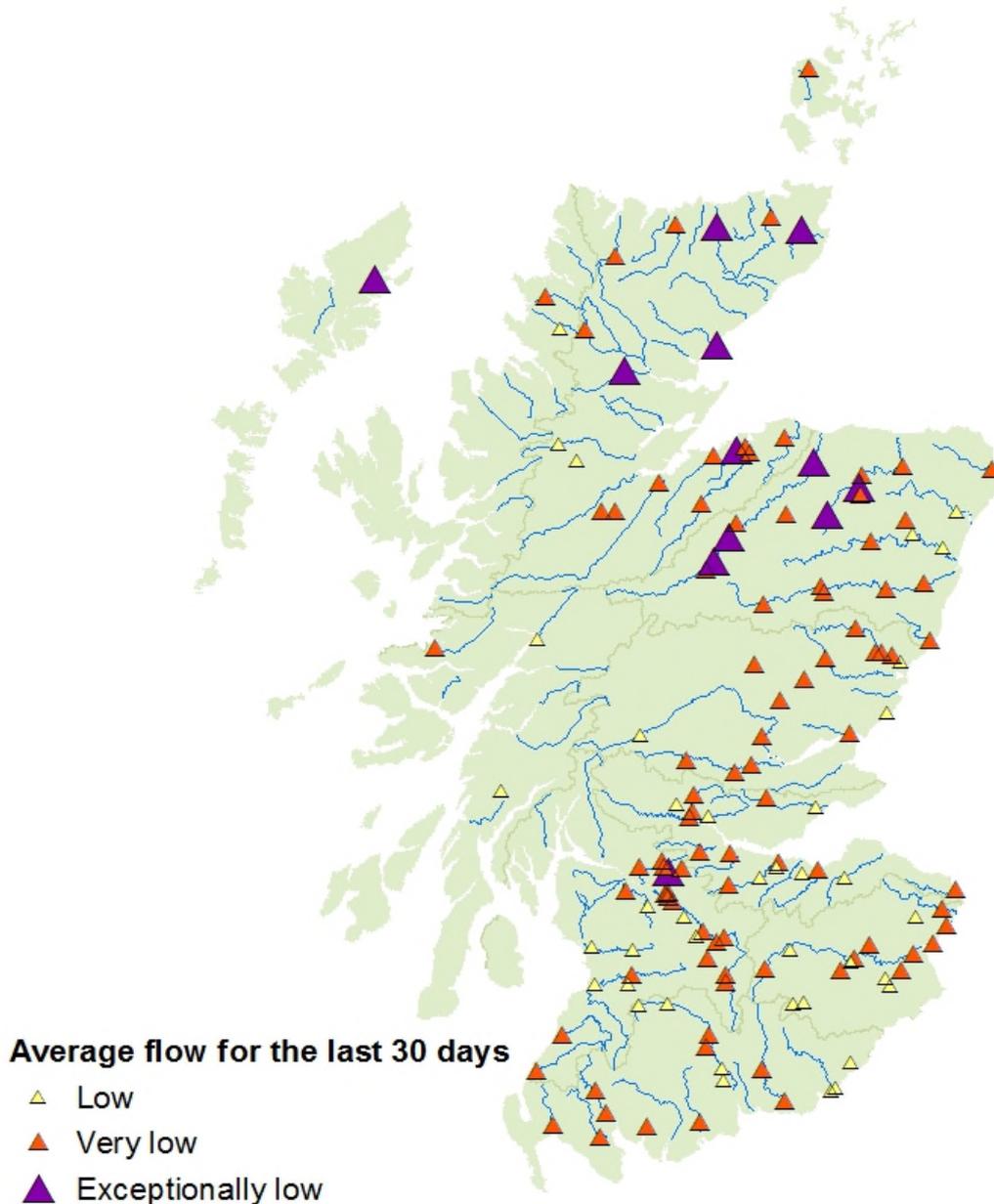
31/07/2018



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.





Natural water storage situation

In each river catchment there is some degree of 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 natural storage has been depleted it will take a lot of rainfall for levels to recover.

Please note that the map below does not reflect conditions in managed water supply reservoirs.

01/08/2018



East – Very Low

Loch and groundwater level data indicate very low levels of storage in this area compared to the long term record.

There are some cases where groundwater levels are lowest on record.

West – Low

Loch level data indicate low levels of storage in this area.

There has been some recovery to long term storage following rainfall, however without further sustained rainfall, storage levels will begin to fall again.