

# Water Scarcity Report

12<sup>th</sup> August 2021



## HEADLINE

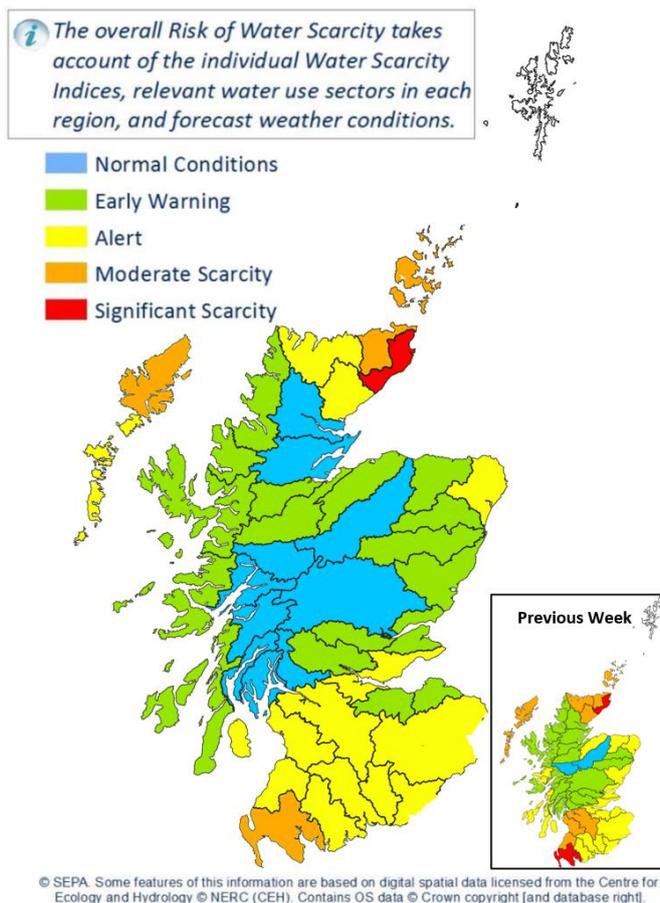
The water scarcity situation has improved across most regions.

Wick catchment is still at Significant Scarcity and Thurso, Orkney and Lewis are at Moderate Scarcity. The rest of the Western Isles and Caithness and Sutherland remain in Alert.

Most of southern Scotland remains in Alert, with the Cree catchment at Moderate Scarcity.

## Situation Summary

Heavy rainfall has fallen across much of the country this week. This has led to some recovery in water storage and river flow in some recently affected areas. In the south west region river levels have risen after a prolonged period of very low flows, and ground conditions have improved. Parts of the region remain dry however and the rain received does not fully make up for the longer-term rainfall deficit. Conditions could deteriorate relatively quickly without further rainfall. Some impacts on water supplies may take longer to alleviate.



Other areas that have seen some improvement in water scarcity level include the Outer Hebrides, Highlands, parts of Argyll, Moray coast, and some east coast catchments.

There is still Moderate Scarcity across the Isle of Lewis as it received much lower rainfall compared to the rest of the Outer Hebrides so recovery has been much more limited.

Rainfall was also lower in the Wick and Thurso catchments and so these areas remain at Significant and Moderate scarcity respectively. Rivers within this region continue to experience prolonged low flow.

Similarly, ground conditions across Orkney remain very dry and the Moderate Scarcity level remains in place.

SEPA is monitoring the situation closely 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 and Moderate areas. We are urging farmers in these areas, especially if taking water from burns and small rivers, to:

- Only irrigate when, and only as much as, absolutely necessary.
- Make sure irrigation equipment isn't leaking.
- Try to irrigate at night to reduce evaporation losses.
- Explore how you and your neighbours in the same river catchment could avoid irrigating at the same time.
- Consider whether you could switch to using groundwater rather than river water if conditions worsen. If you would need a new borehole to do this, your local SEPA office will be able to help and advise.

Managers of golf courses are asked to do the same.

For the most up to date advice please see: [Advice for abstractors](#).

Water abstractors with concerns about meeting licence conditions or wishing to discuss contingency measures should get in touch at the following e-mail address

[WaterScarcity@sepa.org.uk](mailto:WaterScarcity@sepa.org.uk)

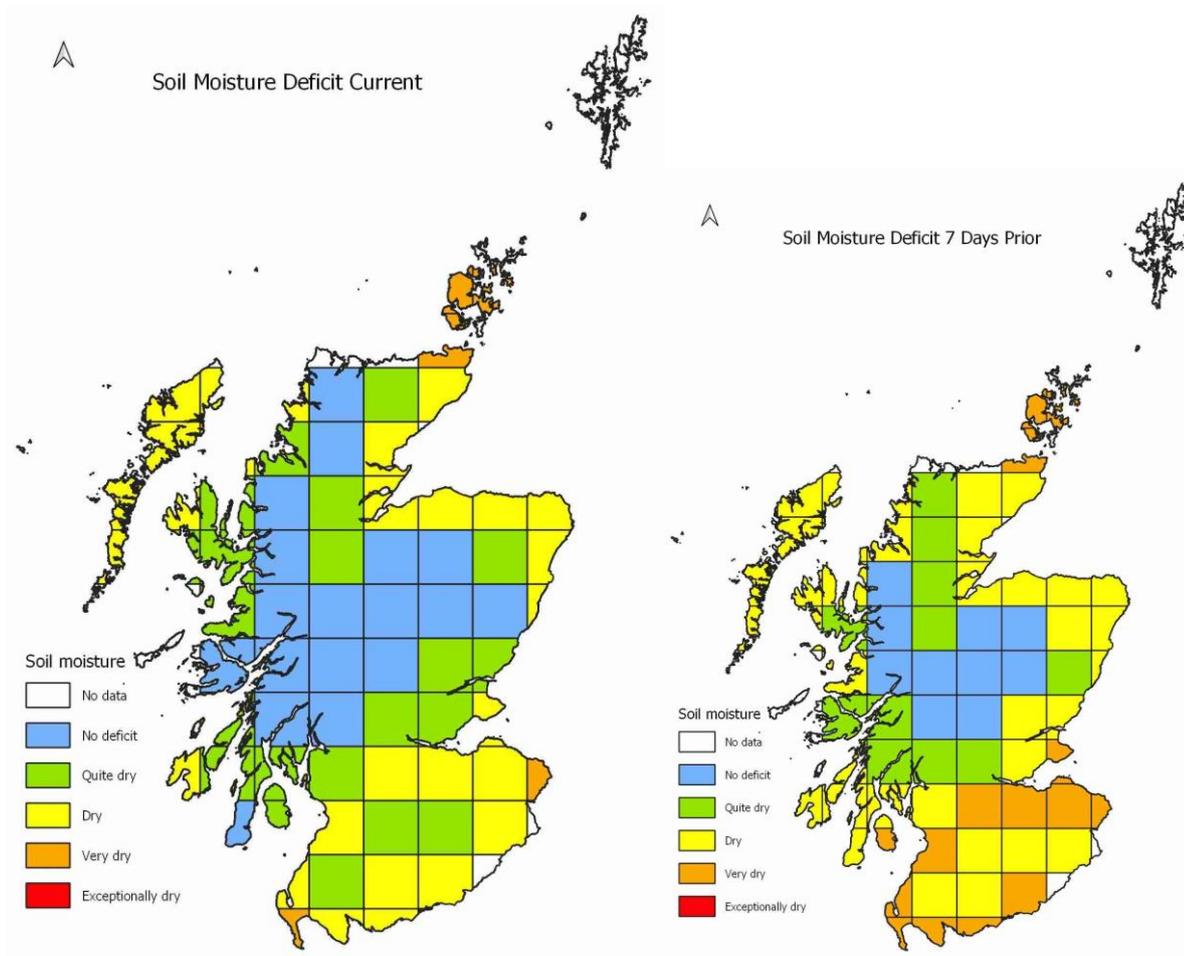
### **Weather forecast (12/08/21)**

Further showers on Friday, mostly affecting the west. Still some showers over the weekend, but some dry and bright weather too, heaviest showers likely to be focused on northern Isles and north mainland Scotland. Limited rainfall over southern catchments in the short term.

Over the next couple of weeks conditions are expected to be changeable. Initial showers may give way to high pressure and settled weather for a time, but this will probably be followed by changeable and often unsettled weather. However, confidence in the forecast is very low through this period.

At a seasonal timescale, models suggest the next three months are likely to see above normal temperatures and near average precipitation, although there is a slightly higher than normal chance of the season being dry.

**Further details are available in the following figures:**



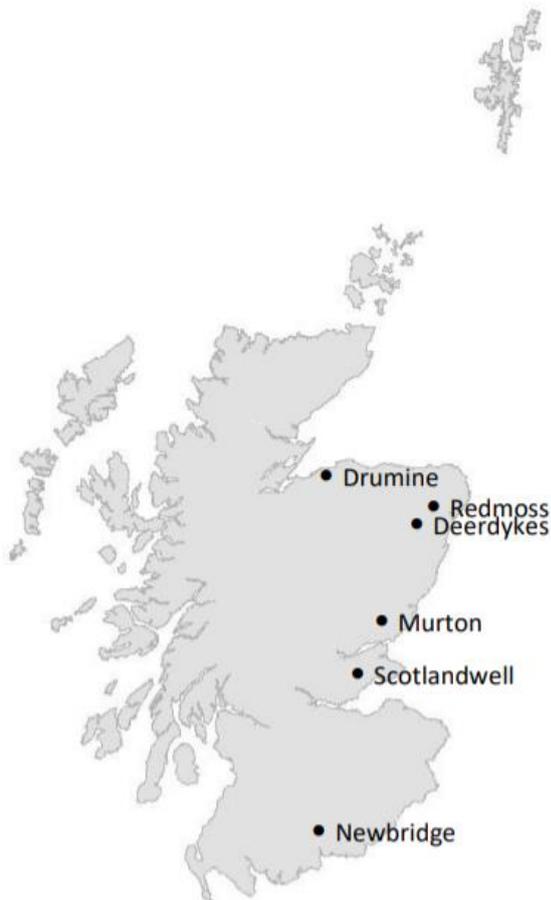
**These maps depict the current latest Soil Moisture Deficit (11<sup>th</sup> August 2021) and seven days prior for comparison. Based on the MORECS data obtained from the Met Office.**



### 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.

10<sup>th</sup> August 2021

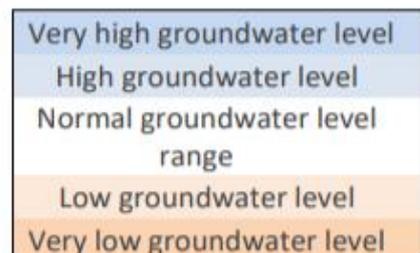


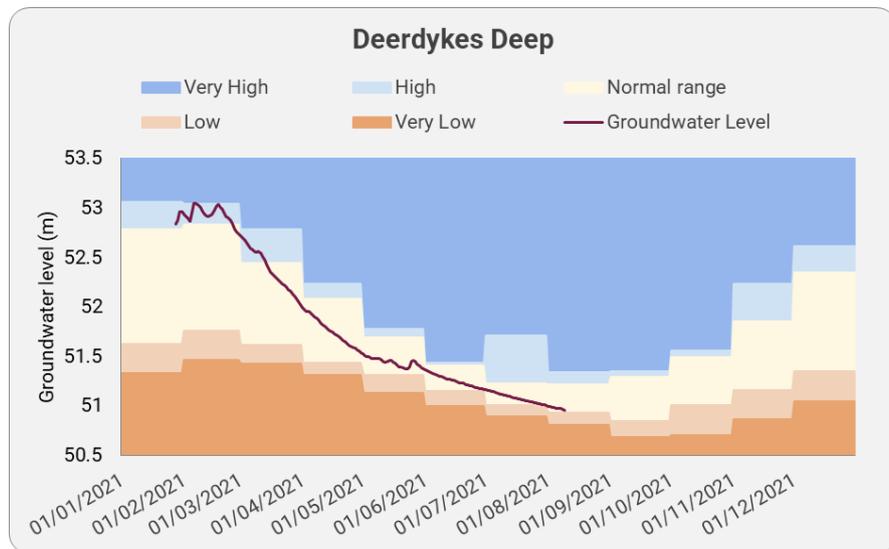
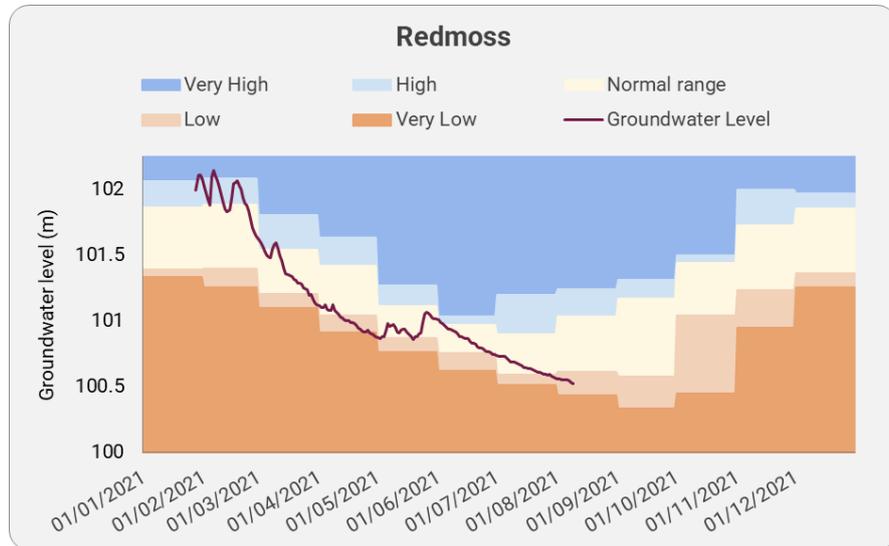
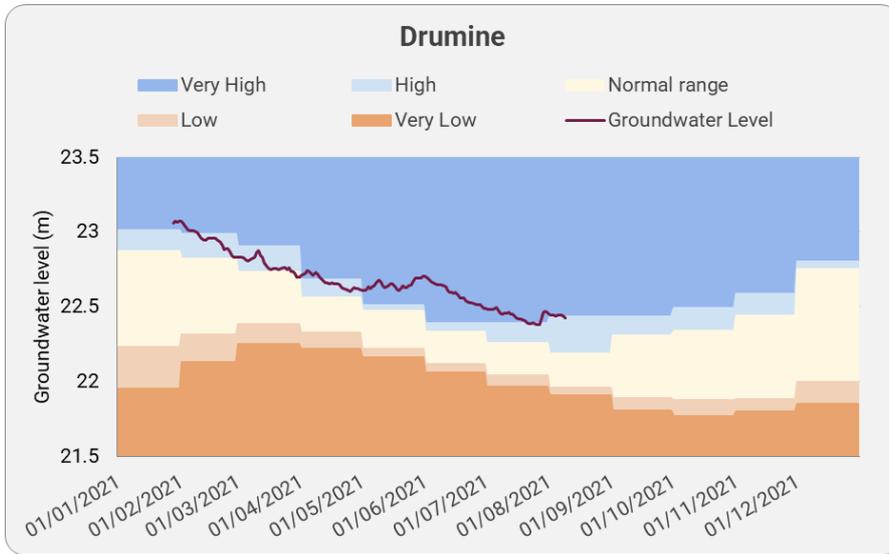
Groundwater levels are falling but remain within the normal or high range for the time of year. Monitoring stations in the northeast show that groundwater levels are now low.

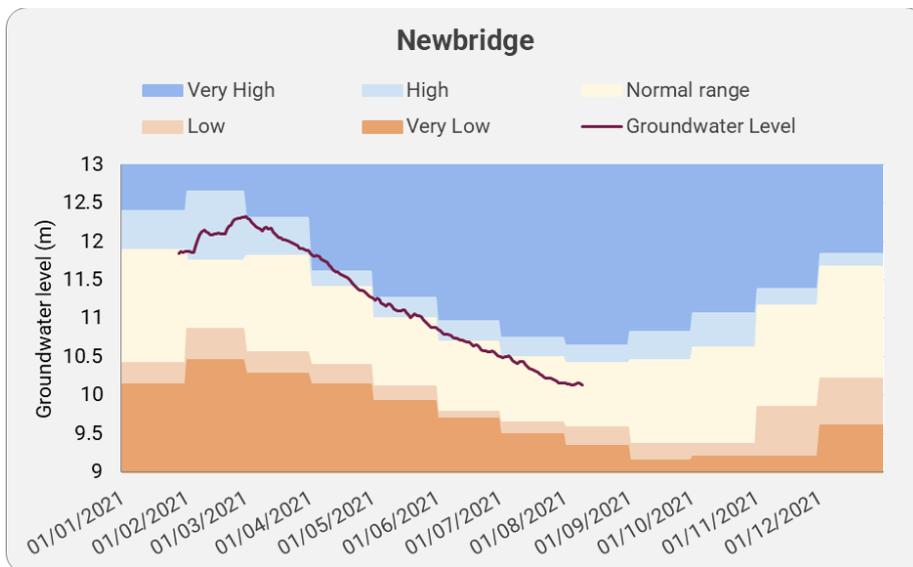
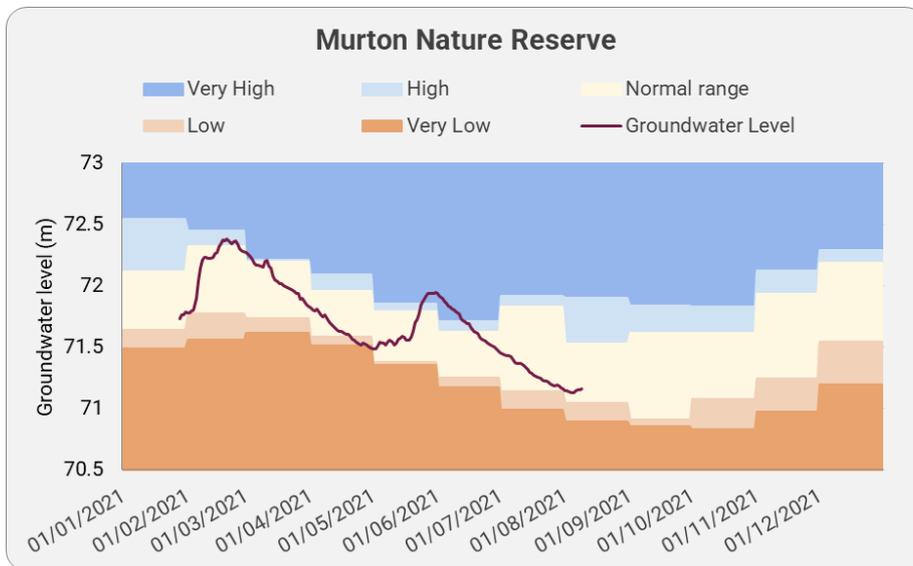
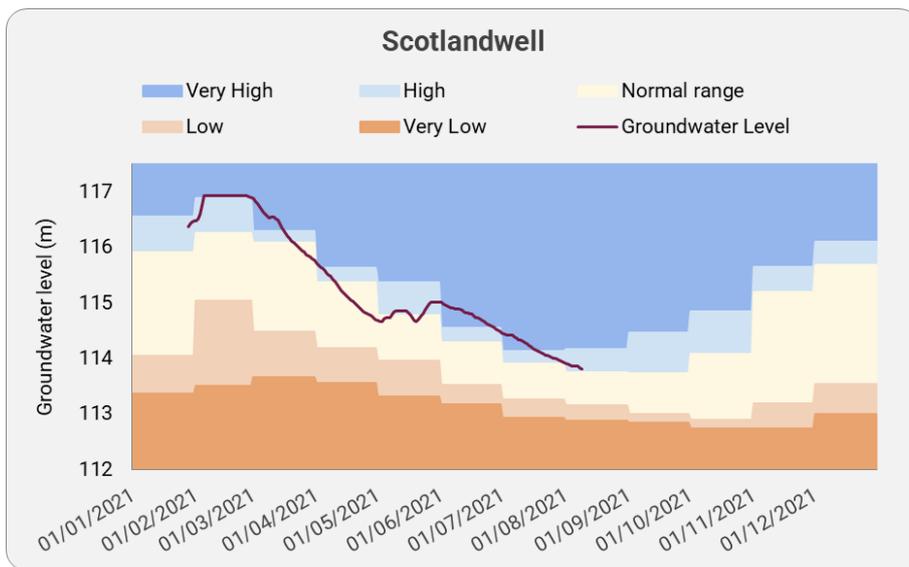
We have up to date data for 11 groundwater level monitoring sites, spread across the east and south-west of the country, giving a good picture of the current situation.

Loch level data is not currently available.

The following charts show the trend in groundwater level (GWL) since start of the year at selected monitoring sites (see map above). The black line shows the recorded groundwater level. This is plotted over level trend bands, which are based on the long-term record of mean monthly level values.







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

[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

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