

Water Scarcity Report

16th September 2021



HEADLINES

Wick has recovered to Moderate Scarcity and the Firth of Tay area has improved to Early Warning.

In the southwest, the Cree, Doon and Clyde catchments have been raised to Moderate Scarcity.

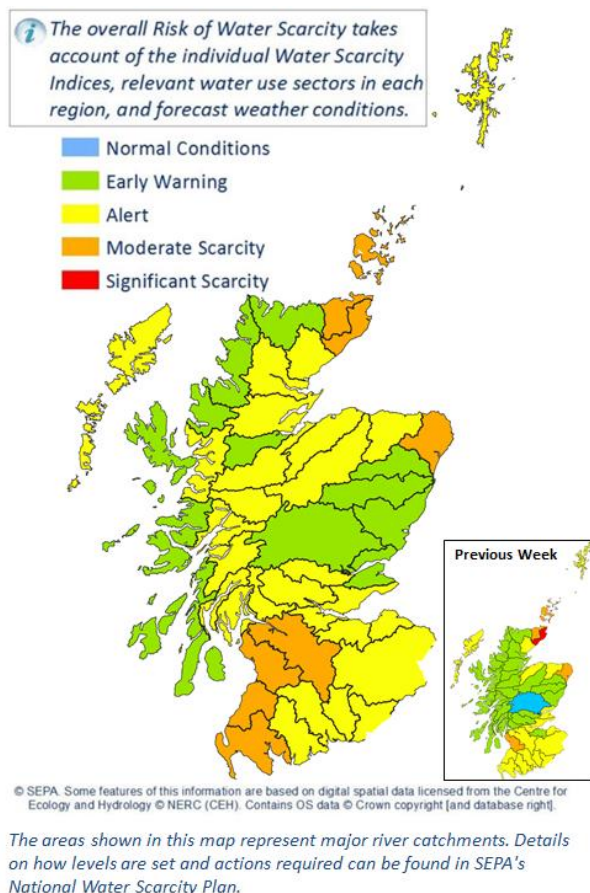
Thurso, Orkney and the Ythan area in the northeast remain at Moderate Scarcity, while Shetland remains at Alert.

The Tay catchment has been raised to Early Warning, while several catchments in the Highlands and central region have been increased to Alert level.

Above average rainfall is required to see long-term recovery as a significant rainfall deficit has built up over the summer.

Situation Summary

Rainfall in the north has marginally improved conditions in the Wick catchment, which has recovered to Moderate Scarcity. However, ground conditions remain exceptionally dry in many areas, and Thurso and Orkney are still at Moderate Scarcity while several catchments in the north of the country have been raised to Alert level.



Much of the Highlands, including Invernesshire and Speyside, as well as much of Argyll and Bute, have also been raised to Alert. In these areas, ground conditions remain very dry and river levels are extremely low in some catchments. Furthermore, groundwater levels continue to fall, with some areas approaching very low levels for this time of year.

The majority of Central and West Central Scotland is now also at Alert, except for the Clyde catchment, which has been raised to Moderate Scarcity. Much of southwest Scotland is now at Moderate Scarcity, while the rest of the south is at Alert. In many catchments river levels are very low and there has been insufficient improvement in ground conditions.

More rainfall is expected this week, but it is unlikely to be sufficient to lead to any long-term recovery. A significant rainfall deficit has built up this summer which will take a long time to offset.

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

Scottish Water are asking customers to use water wisely in and around their homes. More information can be found on the Scottish Water website <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Save-Water>

Farmers and Managers of golf courses irrigating in the Alert and Moderate areas are urged, 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.

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

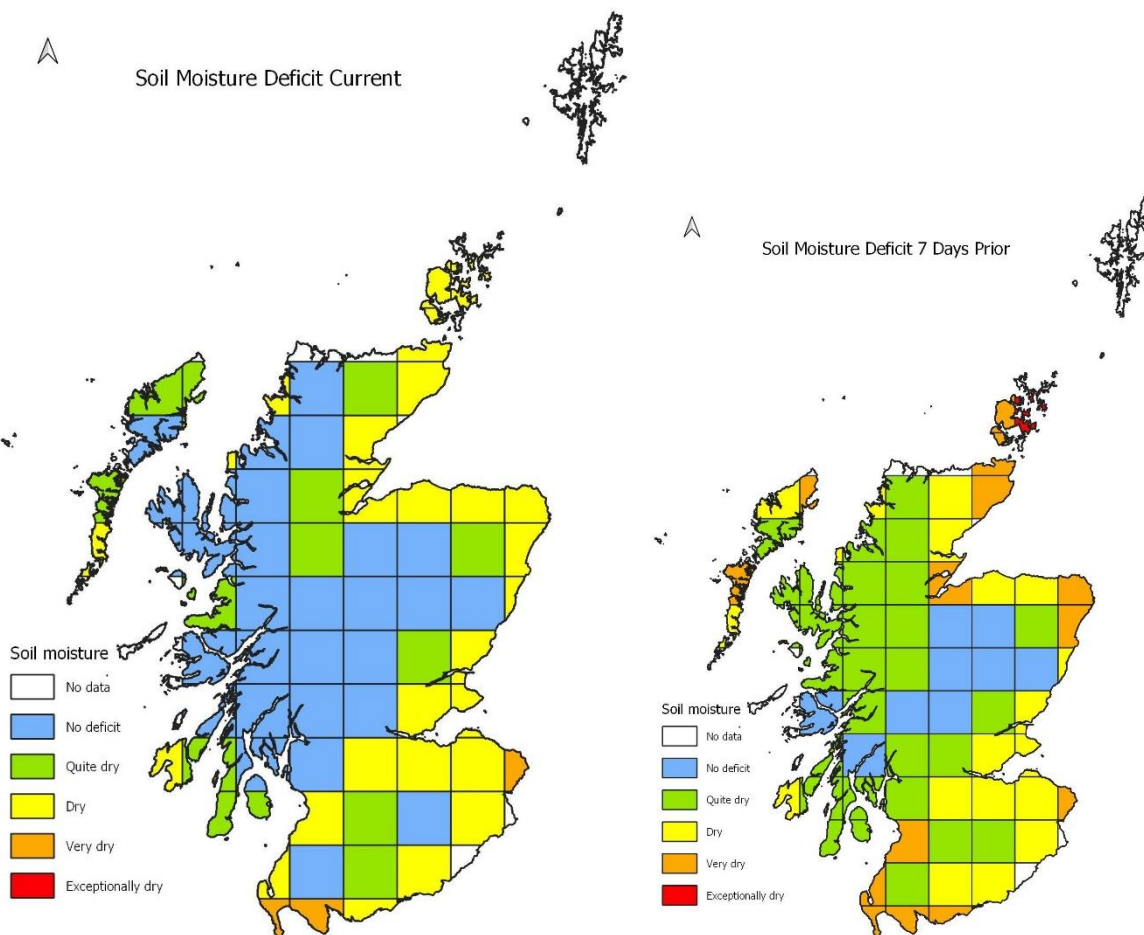
Weather forecast (15/09/21)

A band of rain will move eastwards during Friday, heavier for a time over western Scotland, fizzling out in the east on Saturday. Another band of rain will move into western Scotland on Sunday.

Current forecasts suggest an unsettled period is possible later in September with a return to drier conditions following that. However, confidence in the forecast is relatively low at this time of year.

At a seasonal timescale, models suggest that Autumn is more likely to be dry than wet, with more than double the chance of higher than average temperatures.

Further details are available in the following figures:



These maps depict the current latest Soil Moisture Deficit (15th September 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.

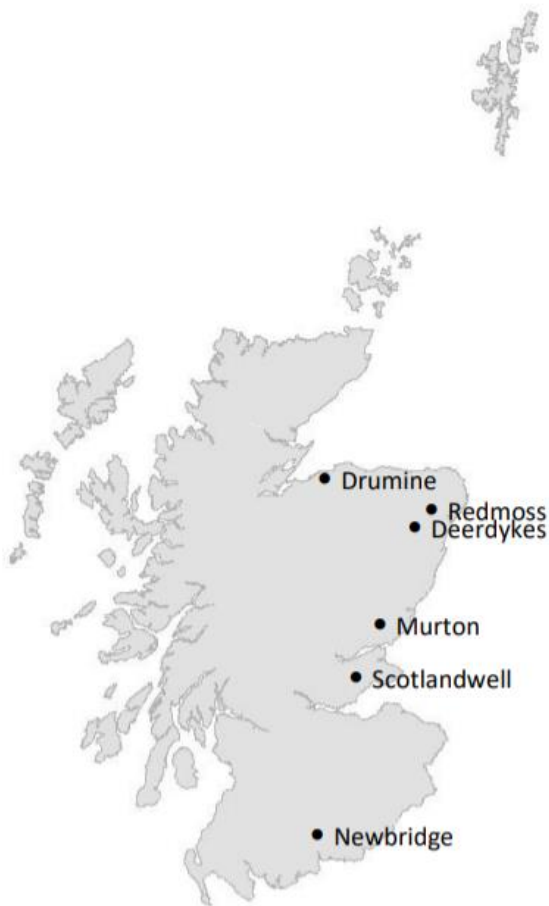
14th September 2021

Groundwater levels in the north-east are now low for the time of year and continuing to fall.

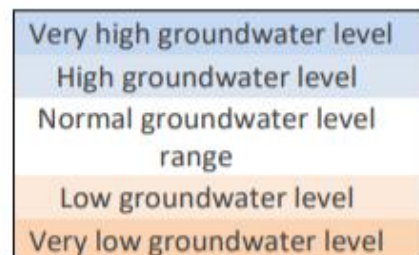
Groundwater levels in other areas are also falling but remain within the normal range for the time of year.

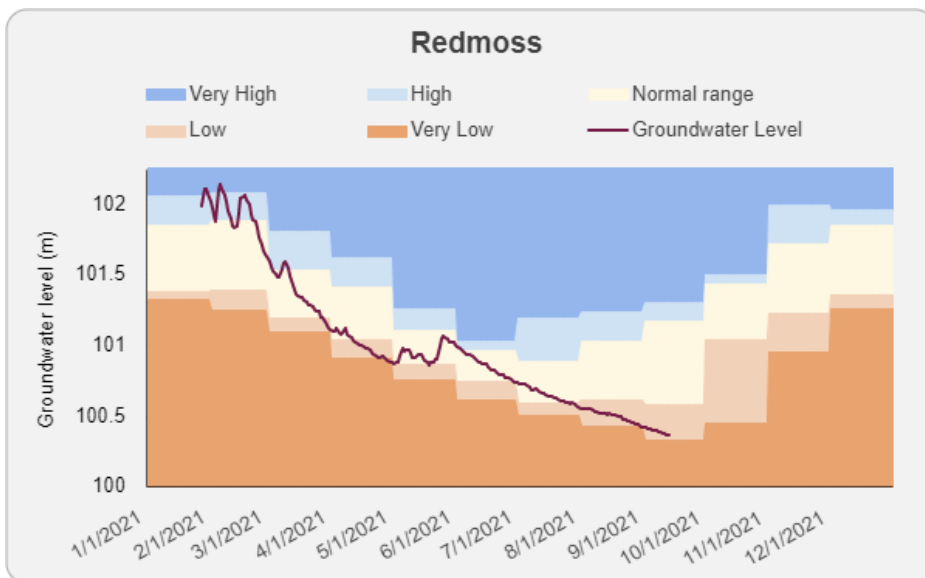
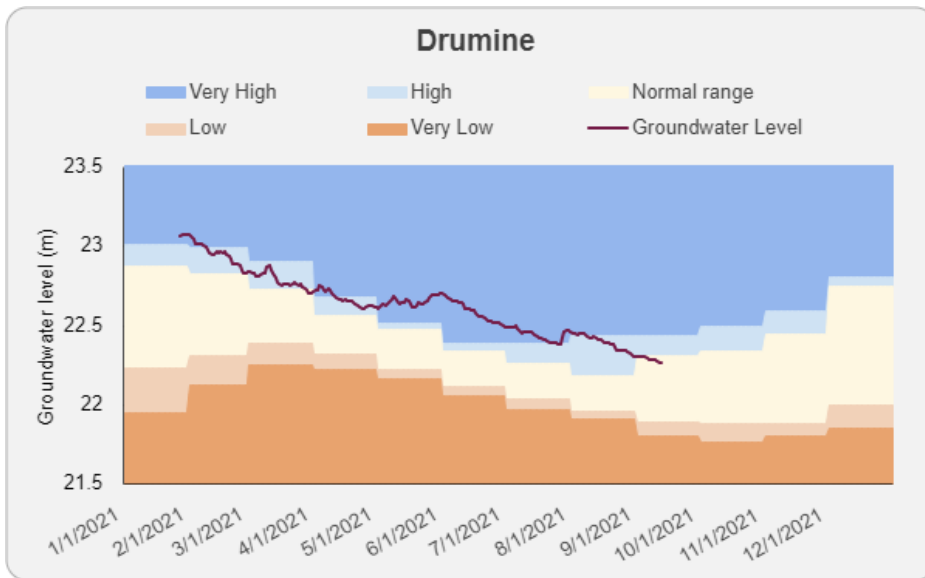
We have up to date data for 11 groundwater level monitoring sites, spread across the east and south-west of the country, giving a good picture of the current situation.

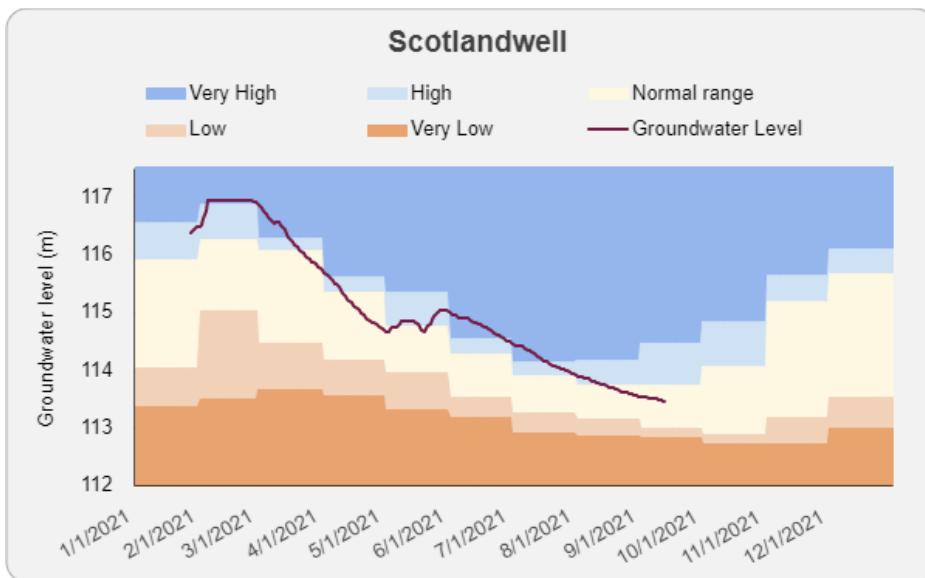
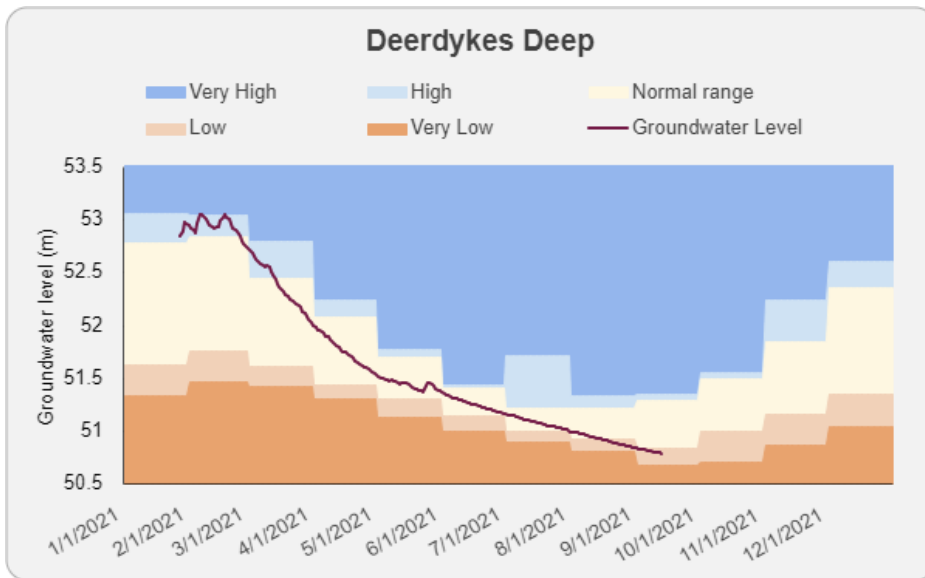
Loch level data is not currently available.

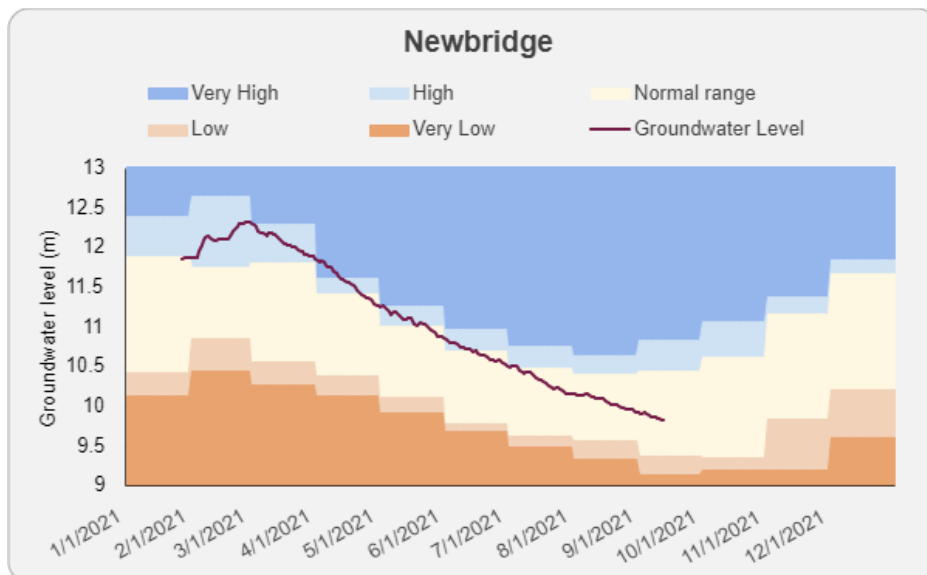
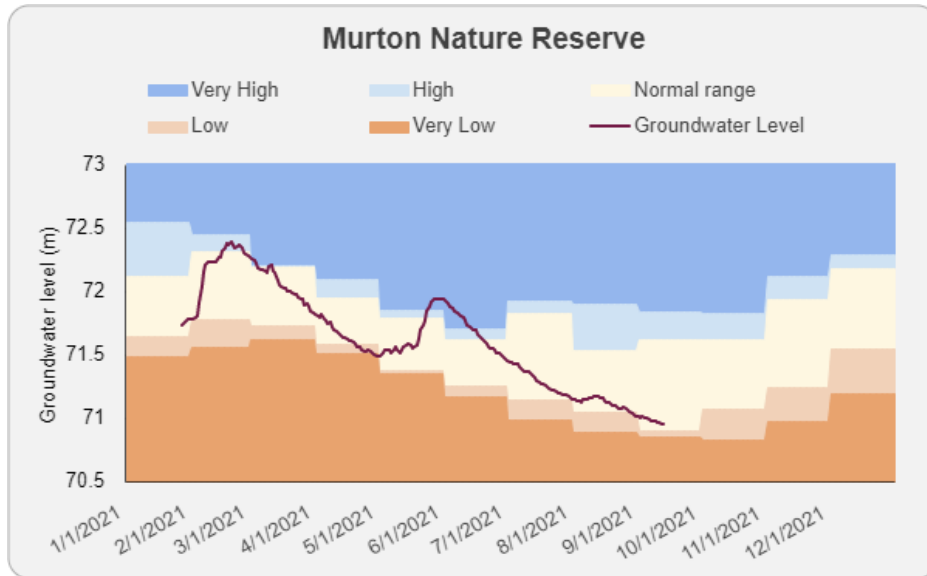


The following charts show the trend in groundwater level (GWL) since start of the year at selected monitoring sites (see map above). The black line shows the recorded groundwater level. This is plotted over level trend bands, which are based on the long-term record of mean monthly level values.









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

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