

Water Scarcity Report

23rd September 2021



HEADLINES

The Tweed catchment has been raised to Moderate Scarcity.

Much of south-west Scotland, Caithness, and the Ythan catchment in the north-east remain at Moderate Scarcity.

Most of south, central, and north-east Scotland remains at Alert.

The Don catchment and the Firth of Tay area have been raised to Alert.

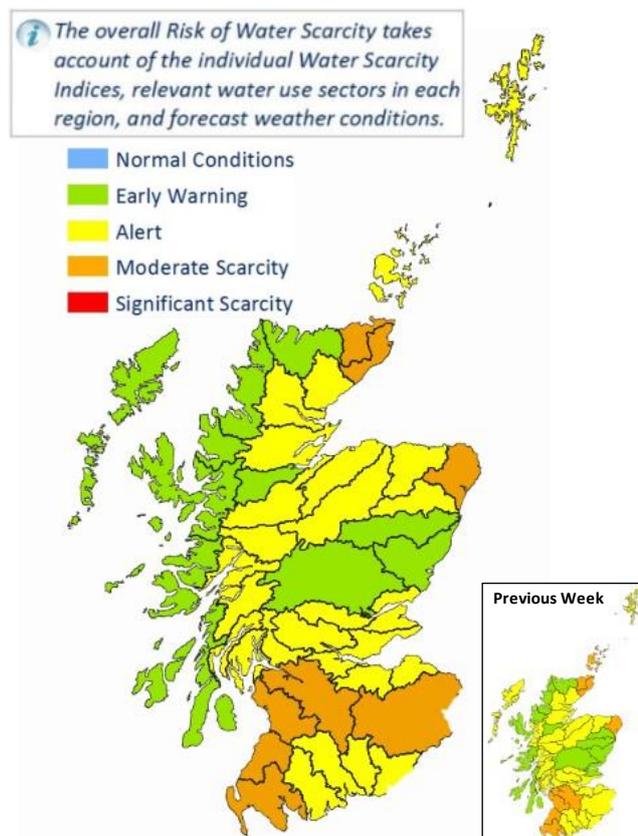
Orkney has recovered to Alert, and the Western Isles and Loch Alsh area have recovered to Early Warning.

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

Situation Summary

Widespread continuous very low river levels over the last few weeks in the Tweed catchment means that this area is now at Moderate Scarcity.

Ground conditions have continued to dry out in the east of the country. Coupled with the very low recent rainfall and river levels, and the low



© SEPA. Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology © NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right].

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.

groundwater levels in some areas, this has now led to the Don catchment and the Firth of Tay area being raised to Alert level.

Much of south-west Scotland, Caithness, and the Ythan catchment in the north-east remain at Moderate Scarcity. Other areas in south, west and north-east Scotland remain at Alert. In these areas, dry ground conditions are widespread and river levels are extremely low in some catchments. Furthermore, groundwater levels are continuing to fall, with some areas approaching very low levels for this time of year.

However, there has been a sustained improvement in ground conditions over the last fortnight in Orkney and across the north-west. Orkney has therefore recovered to Alert, and the Western Isles and Loch Alsh areas have recovered to Early Warning.

More rainfall is expected this week across northern and western areas, but it is unlikely to be sufficient to lead to any long-term recovery. In many areas significant rainfall deficits have 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

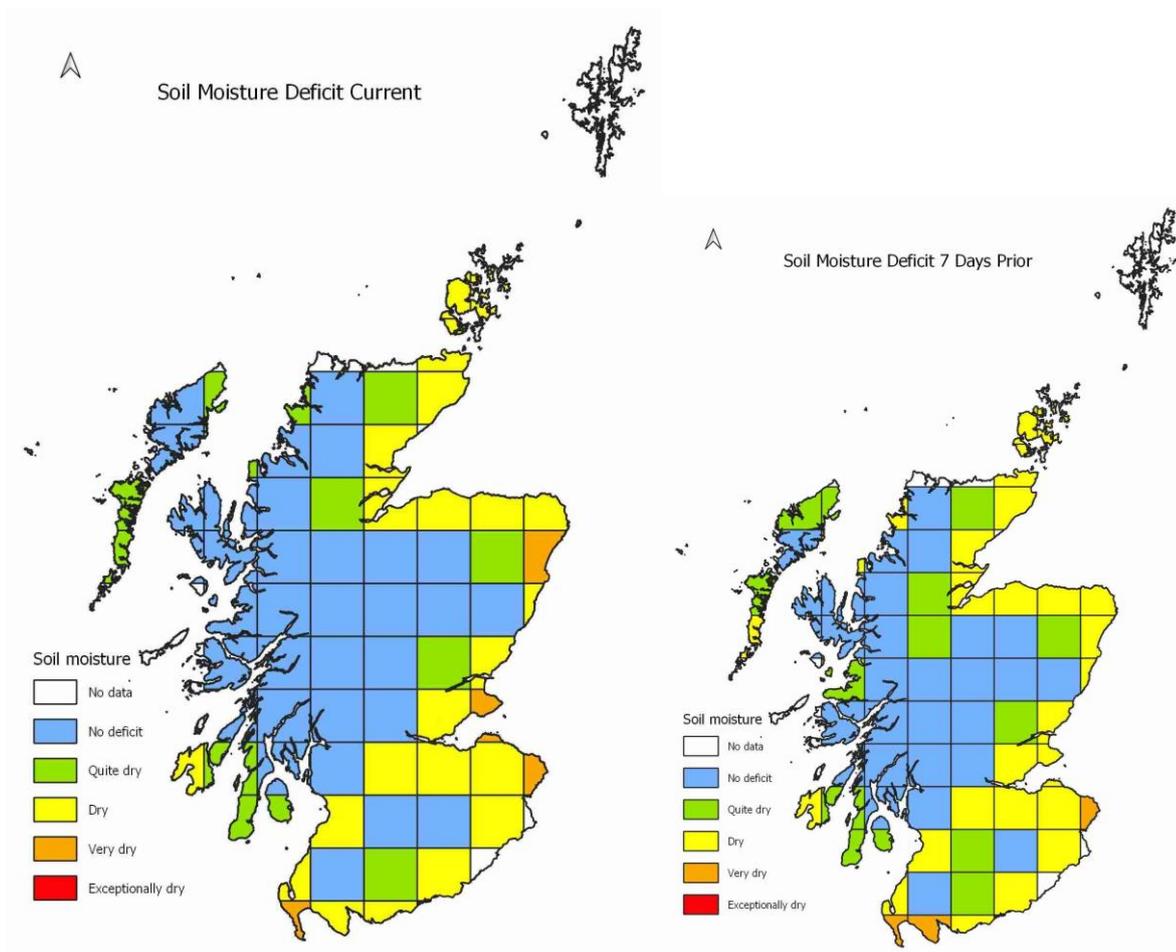
Weather forecast (22/09/21)

Light and patchy rain for the west and north on Friday and Saturday. Low confidence for Sunday but showers and perhaps some heavy rain in the west later.

Current forecasts suggest largely unsettled conditions are likely from next week into early October, with showers and long spells of rain towards northern areas.

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:

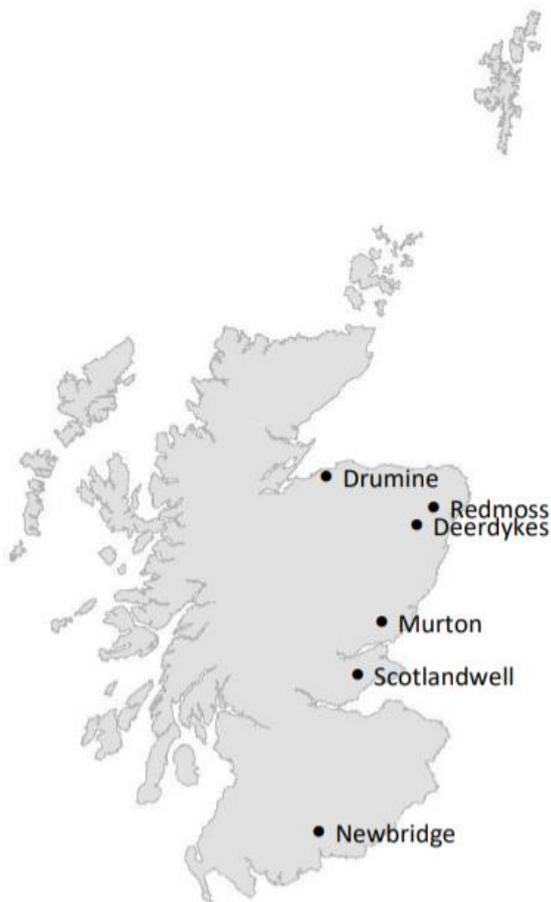


These maps depict the current latest Soil Moisture Deficit (22nd September 2021) and seven days prior for comparison. Based on the MORECS data obtained from the Met Office.



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.



21st September 2021

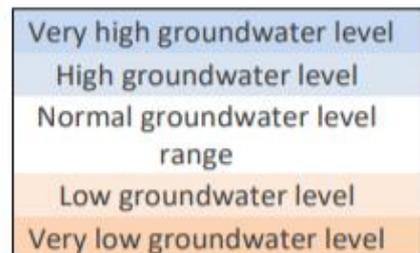
Groundwater levels in the north-east and some parts of the east are now low for the time of year and continuing to fall.

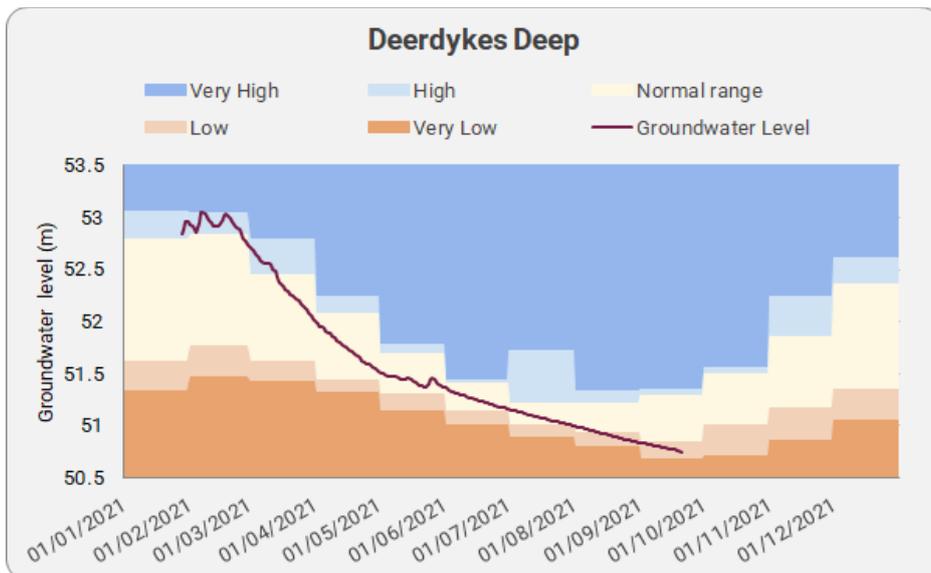
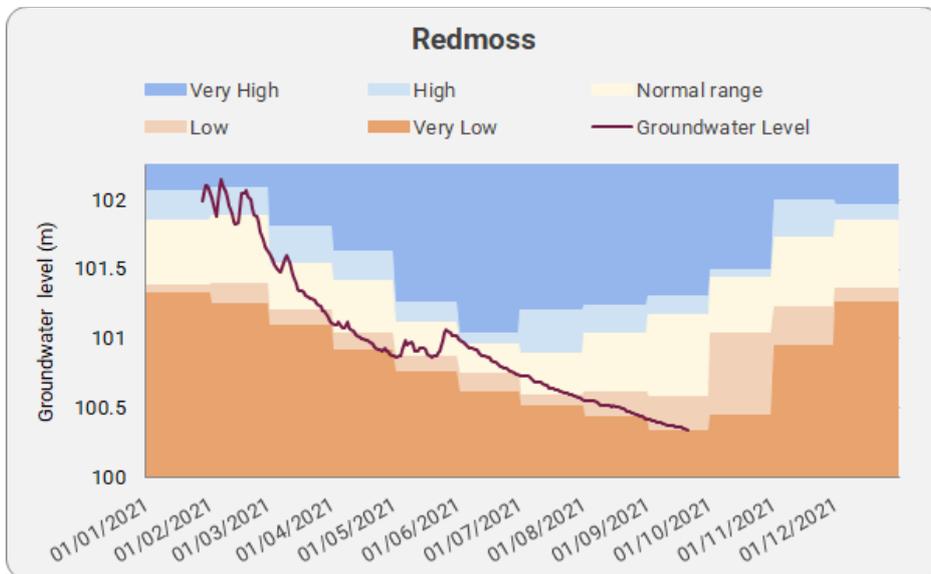
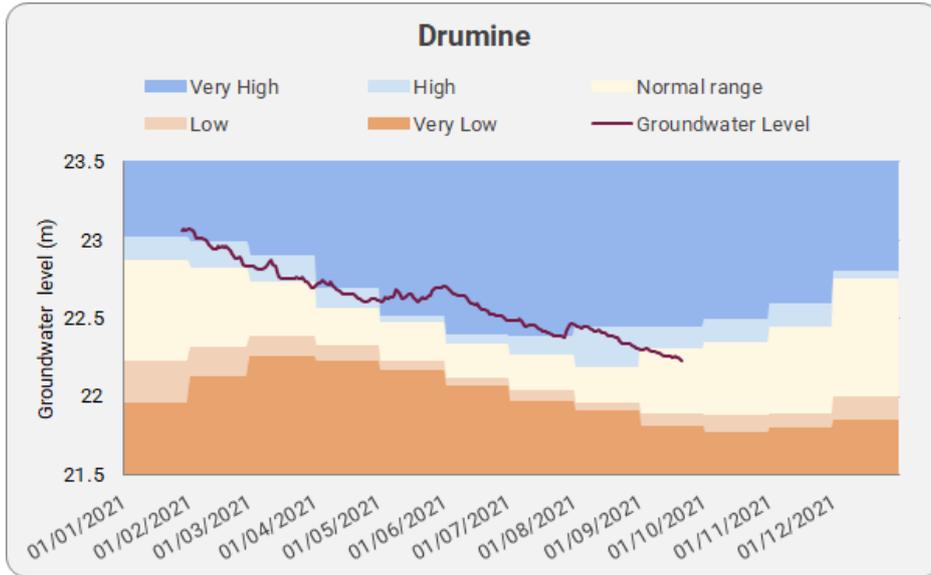
Groundwater levels in other areas are also falling but remain within the normal range for the time of year.

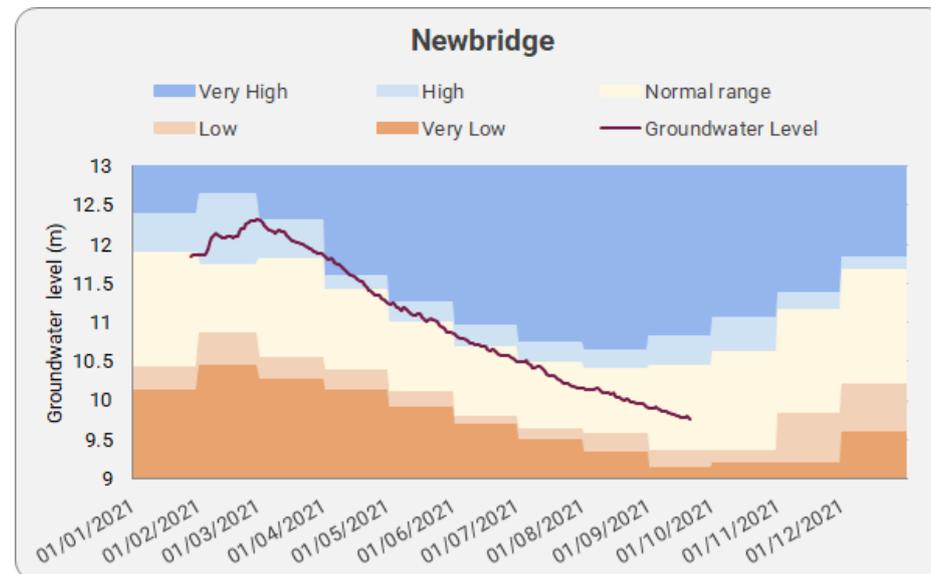
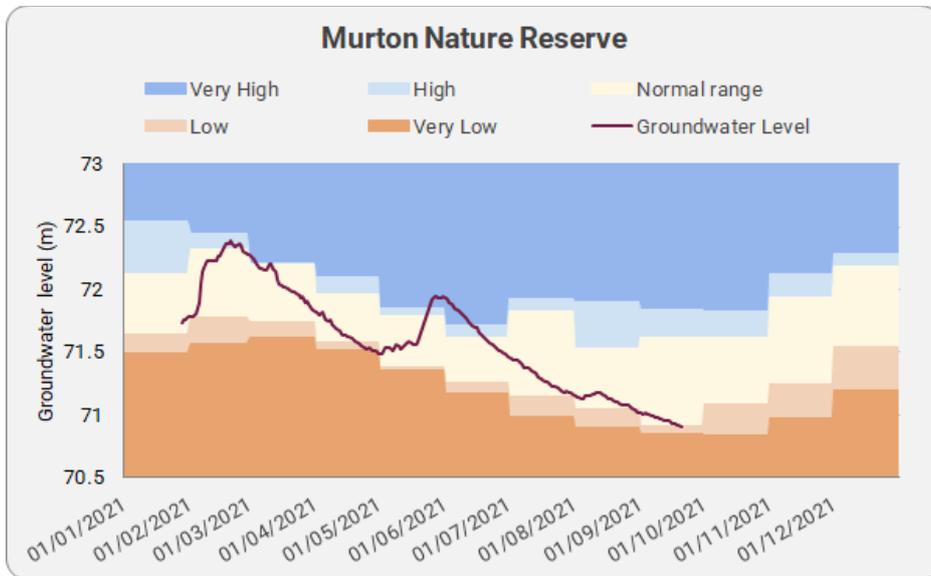
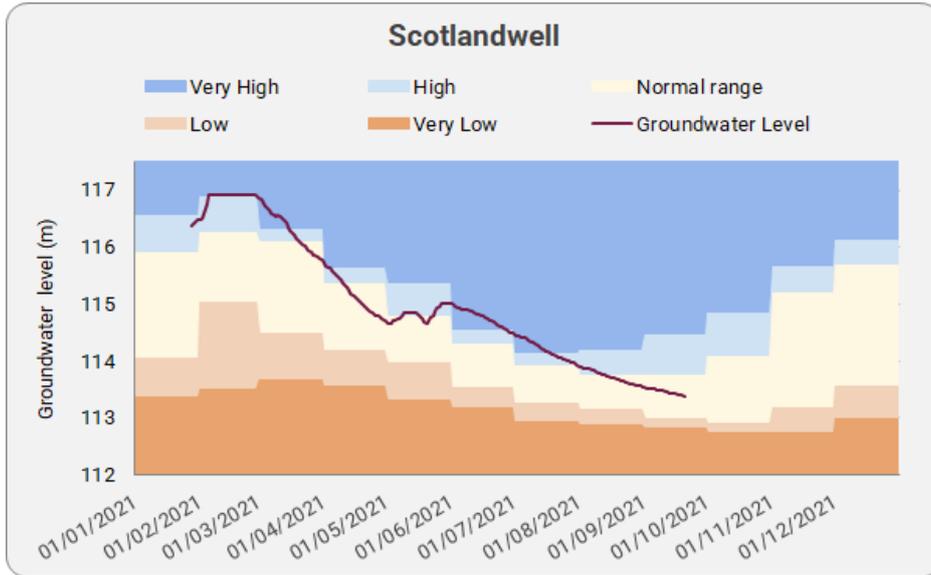
We have up to date data for 11 groundwater level monitoring sites, spread across the east and south-west of the country, giving a good picture of the current situation.

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

Strathallan House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TZ