

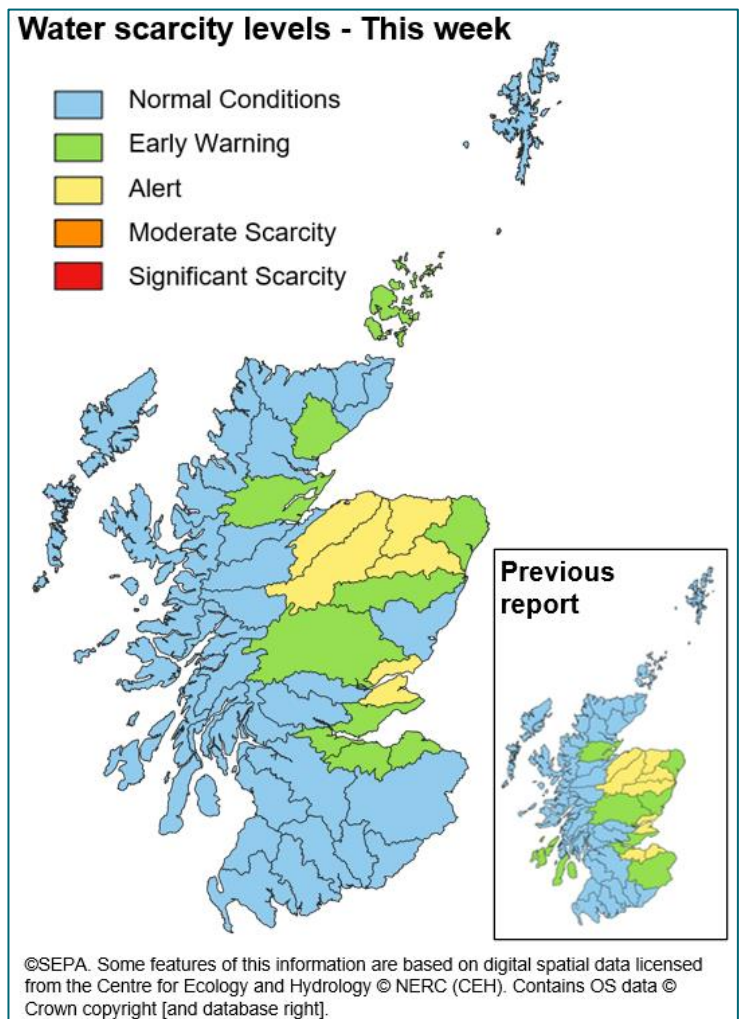
For the future of our environment

Water Scarcity Report

04th August 2023

Heavy rain in most areas has resulted in recovery of water scarcity levels across parts of the east coast, as well as in the Kintyre area.

Lower rainfall in the far north has led to Early Warnings of water scarcity in the Helmsdale area and in Orkney.



[Accessible version of national water scarcity map](#)



The overall risk of water scarcity takes account of the individual water scarcity indices, relevant water use, sectors in each region, and forecast weather conditions. 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](#).

Situation Summary

The past week has seen heavy rain across most areas of Scotland, apart from the Moray coast and the northern highlands and islands. In the south-east, the river catchments of the Almond, Tyne and Tweed have all recovered to Early Warning or Normal Conditions. In the north-east, the Dee catchment and Esk area have similarly improved. In the west, the Kintyre area has now recovered to Normal Conditions, joining the rest of that wider area.

Lower rainfall in the far north has led to Early Warnings of water scarcity in the Helmsdale area and in Orkney, as ground conditions in those areas have begun to dry out again.

Some parts of the north-east around Moray and Aberdeenshire, as well as the Firth of Tay area, are recovering more slowly and remain at Alert for water scarcity. There is still the possibility of conditions worsening in these areas without above-average rainfall in August.

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

- Routinely check equipment isn't leaking;
- Only use the water required for the use;
- Consider water saving measures for next irrigation season.
- If the catchment reaches Moderate Water Scarcity, consider your upcoming water needs and begin to plan with others in the catchment to share the resource or schedule abstractions.

Managers of golf courses are asked to do the same.

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

Public water supplies are operating normally.

Weather forecast (03/08/2023)

Some showers on Friday but a ridge will topple in from the west before a low tracks east over central UK on Saturday to bring windier conditions with rain or showers, and a spell of persistent and heavy rain likely in southern parts. Then a change to scattered showers for Sunday and Monday.

The start of next week will see a mix of sunshine and showers. Drier and brighter interludes become increasingly likely by the end of the week, though further spells of rain are possible too. Towards mid-month a changeable pattern looks most probable, though more in the way of drier interludes are possible.

During the second half of August, there is a greater chance of more settled spells developing, with warmer and drier conditions becoming slightly more likely than the unseasonably unsettled weather of July, but interspersed still with some more unsettled weather.

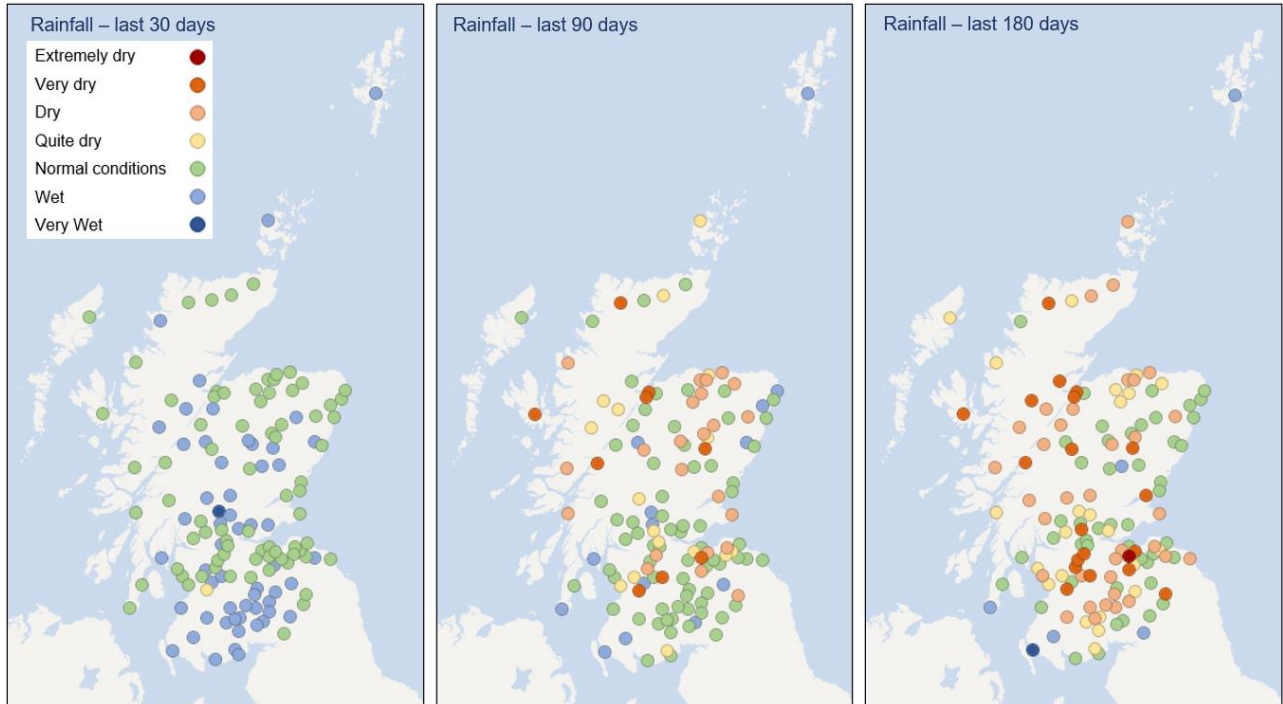
The current outlook for the July – September period indicates that this summer is likely overall to experience normal levels of rainfall.

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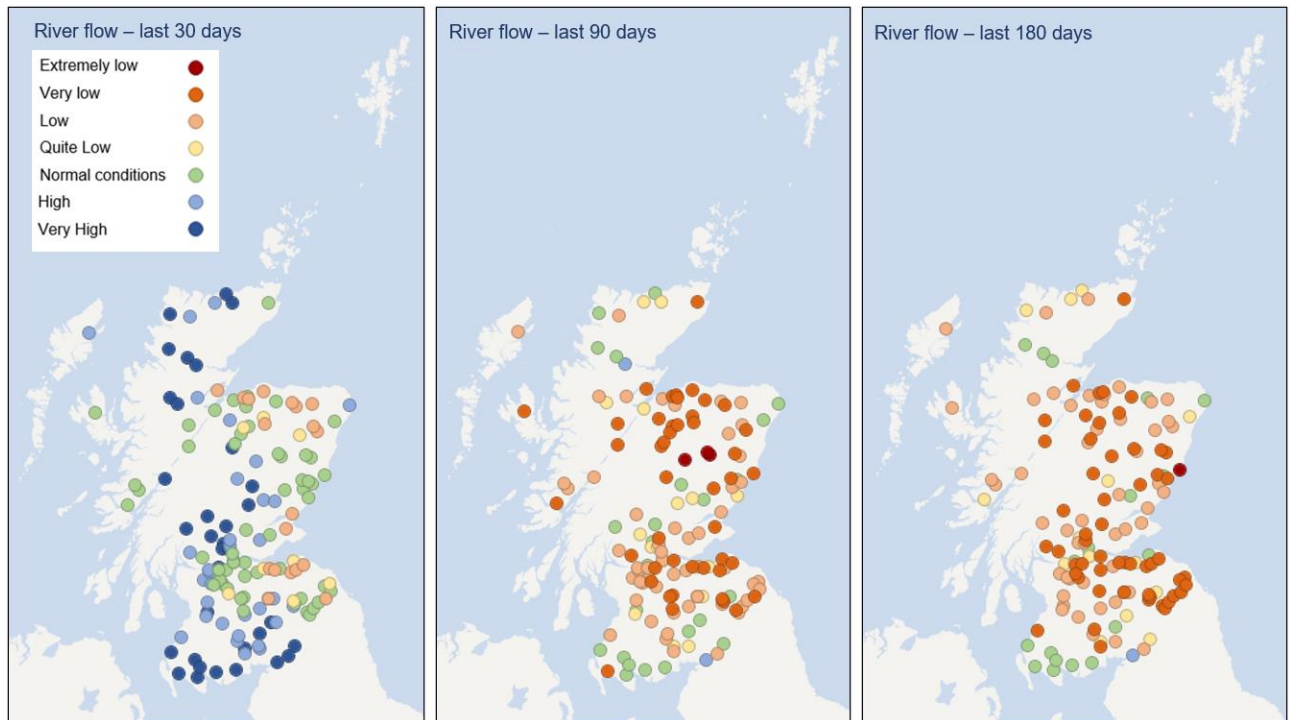
Supporting information

Rainfall and river flows:

These maps show rainfall (top row) and river flow (bottom row) relative to the long-term average, for this time of year, over 30 days, 90 days and 180 days.



Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors



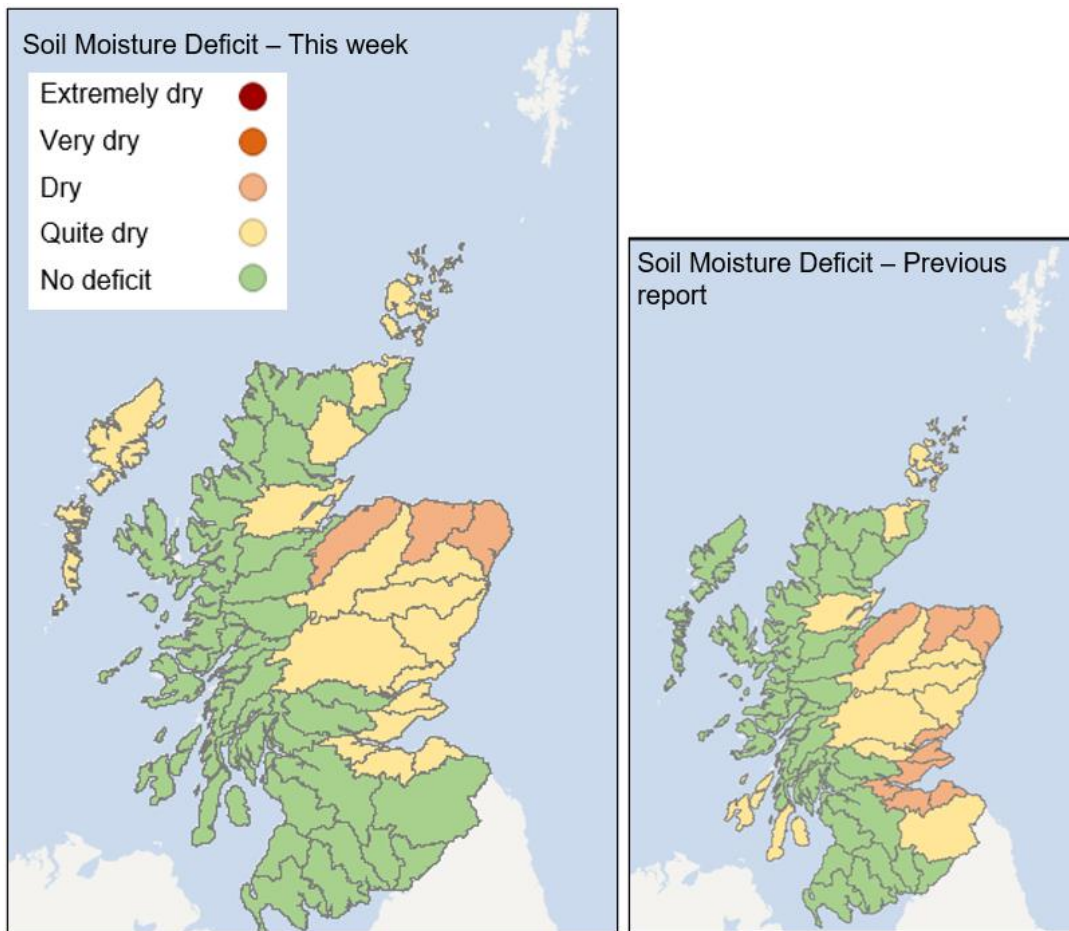
Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

In the short term (in July), normal rainfall totals have been experienced across most of Scotland for the time of year while some parts, particularly in the southwest, have been wetter than normal. In the medium to longer term, conditions have been mixed, with long-term dry conditions widespread across parts of the Central Belt and the western highlands.

Recent river flows (in July) across many parts of Scotland have been high or very high for this time of year. In parts of the east and north-east, river flows remain mainly low but are continuing to slowly recover. In the medium to longer term (over the past three to six months), river flows in most areas of Scotland have been lower than normal, particularly around the Cairngorms and Speyside and across the Central Belt.

Soil moisture deficit:

These maps show this week’s soil moisture deficit, alongside those previously reported for comparison. This is obtained from the Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System (MORECS), no data is available for Shetland.

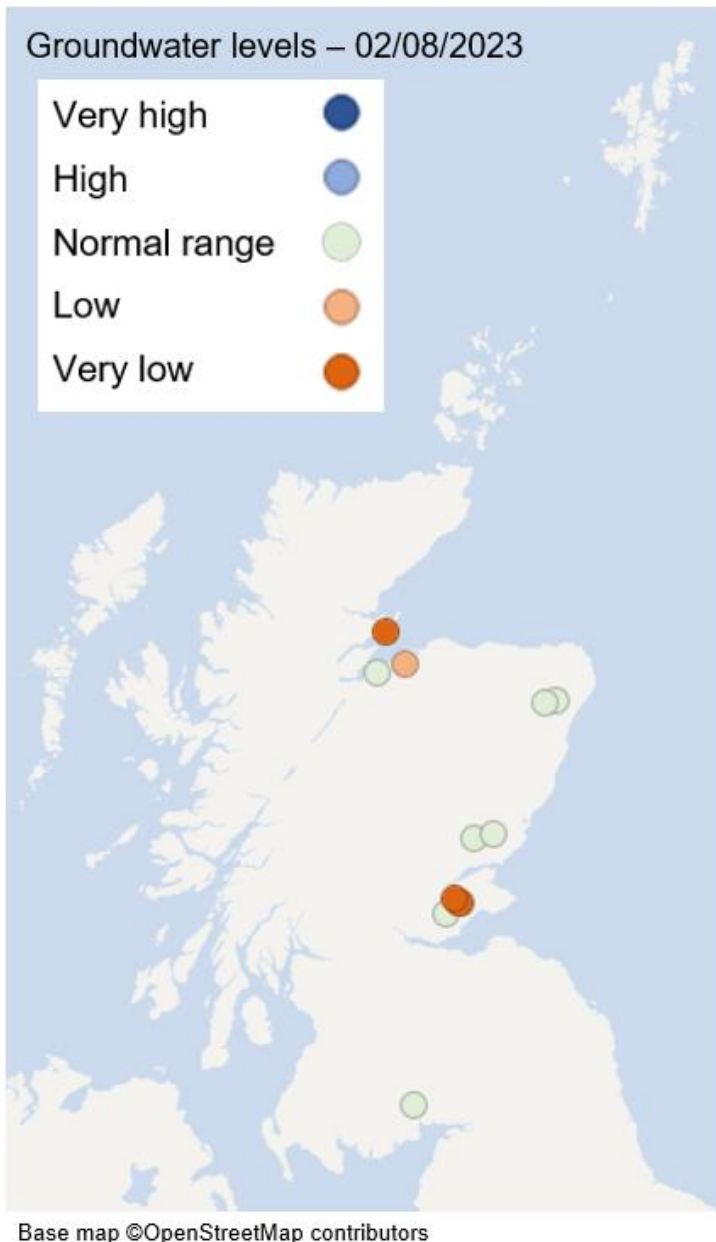


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright). Some features of this information are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Copyright NERC (CEH). Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right]. Base map ©OpenStreetMap contributors

Soil moisture conditions have improved across Fife and the south-east over the past week. Most of the west is now at No Deficit. In the east and north-east, ground conditions are widely Quite Dry, and some parts of the north-east are Dry.

Groundwater levels:

This map shows groundwater levels compared to the long-term record at each station. Groundwater levels are updated fortnightly and reported as above (high) or below (low) the typical (normal) level for the calendar month. Groundwater level trend bands are specific to each station and based on the long-term (minimum 10 years) record of mean monthly level values recorded at individual stations.



Groundwater levels at most of our monitoring stations have remained stable in recent weeks. Levels at some sites are still very low for the time of year after reaching the seasonal low earlier in the year than usual.

Groundwater levels at SEPA's other monitoring stations are within the normal range for this time of year.



Natural water storage

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

Flow, rainfall and groundwater data are accessed via SEPA's [time series data service](#) (API). SEPA's live data are subject to ongoing quality control and periodic review.

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.

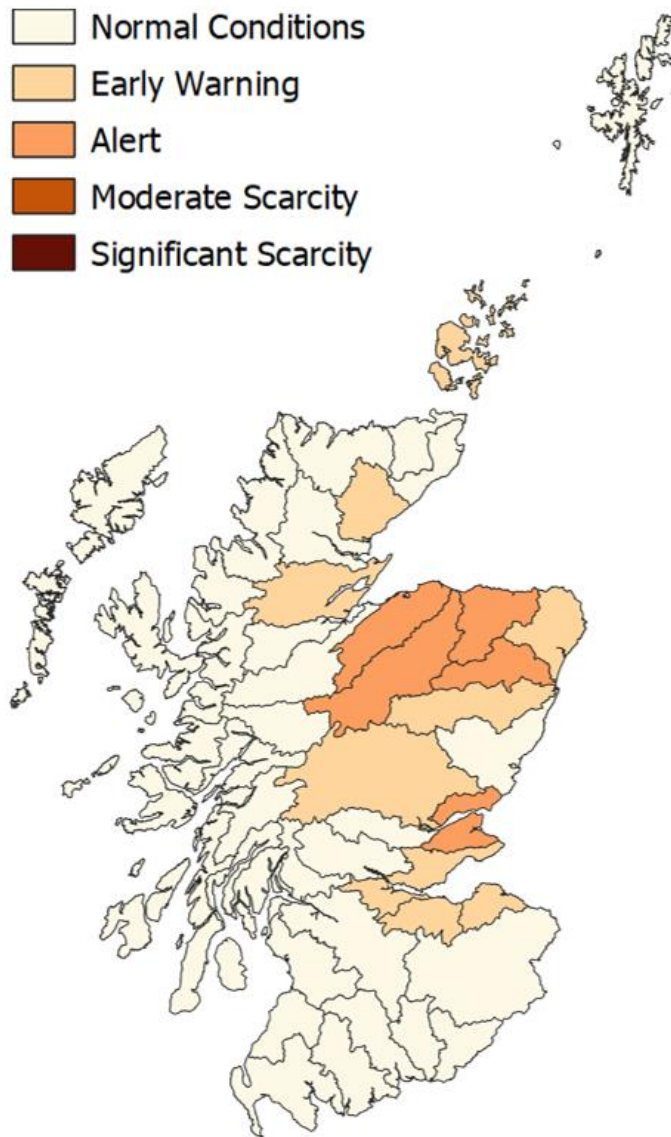
<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

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Appendix

Accessible national water scarcity map



[Link to Situation Summary](#)