

Flooding from groundwater

Wessex (Dorset & South Wiltshire) Update

27 March 2014

Current situation

The groundwater flood alerts remain in force for the **West of Dorset**, **Cranborne Chase** and **Salisbury Plain**.

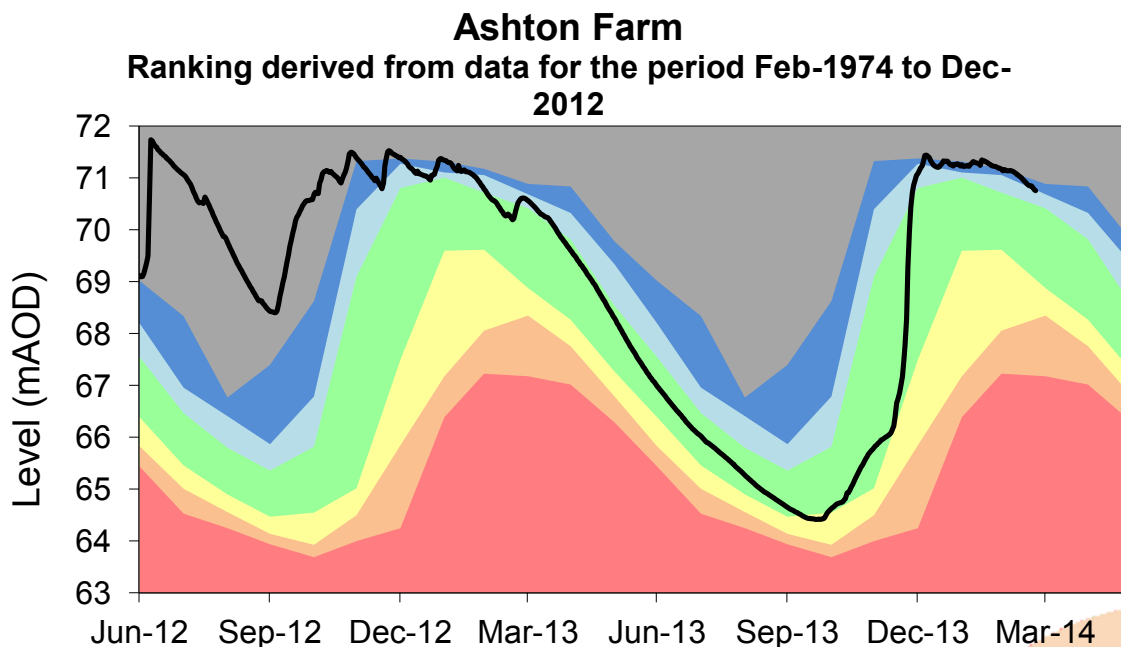
A summary of the water situation report for February giving details of the rainfall, ground water levels and river flows can found at:

[February water situation report - South West](#)

The March report will be placed online around 10 April.

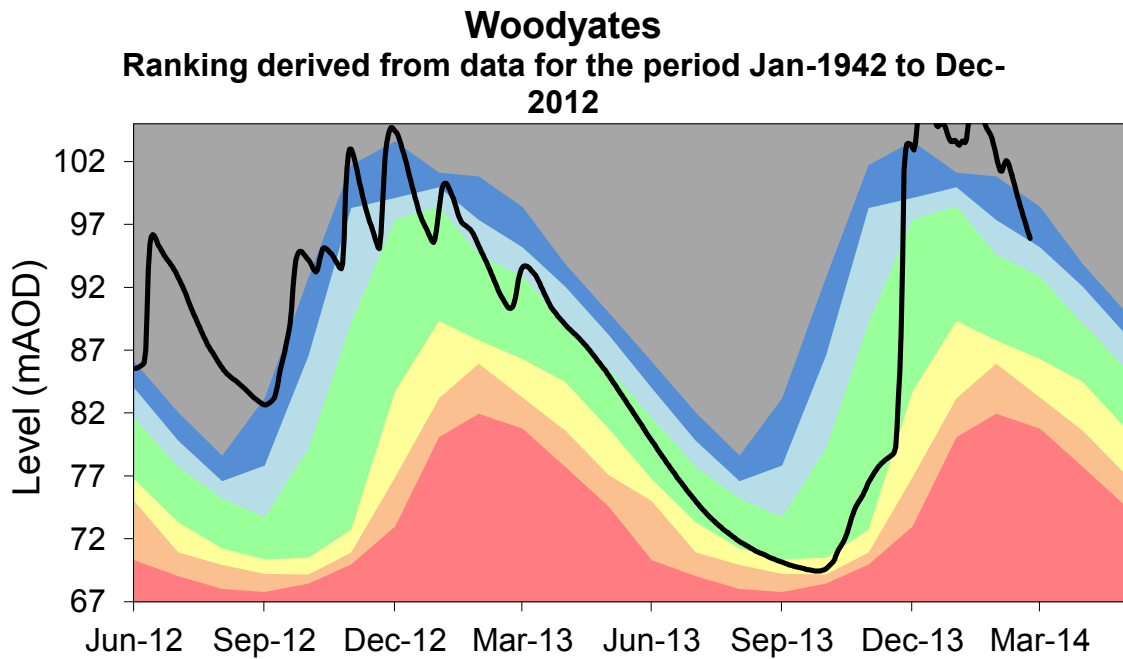
Rainfall during March has been much lighter than the previous months. To date we have had an average of around 40mm rain across the area (the long term average for March is around 80mm). This relatively dry weather has given us a respite and levels in all the boreholes are beginning to drop.

In the **West of Dorset** the level at the Kingston Russell borehole on the 27/03/2014 is 115.57 metres above sea level (mAOD). It has fallen by around a metre and a half in the last week. The graph below shows the trend for our Ashton Farm borehole, where we have a long period of record. The current level is 70.69 mAOD



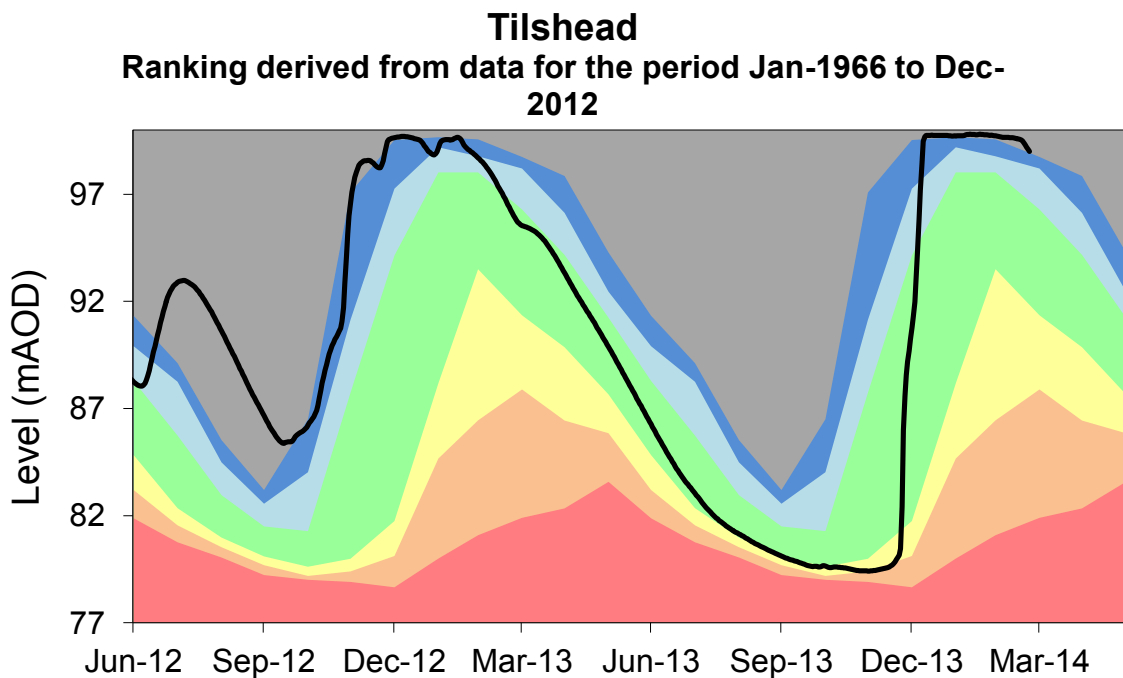
All the groundwater influenced rivers (Piddle, Lower Frome, Wey, Cerne, Sydling Water, Winn, Bere Stream and North Winterbourne) are now below flood alert level but remain at a normal winter baseflow. This means that they will be more reactive to periods of heavy or intense rainfall.

In Cranborne Chase the current level, on the 27/03/2014, in the West Woodyates borehole is 95.01 mAOD. It has fallen by around two metres during the last week. In January the borehole reached its highest recorded level of 109.23 mAOD.

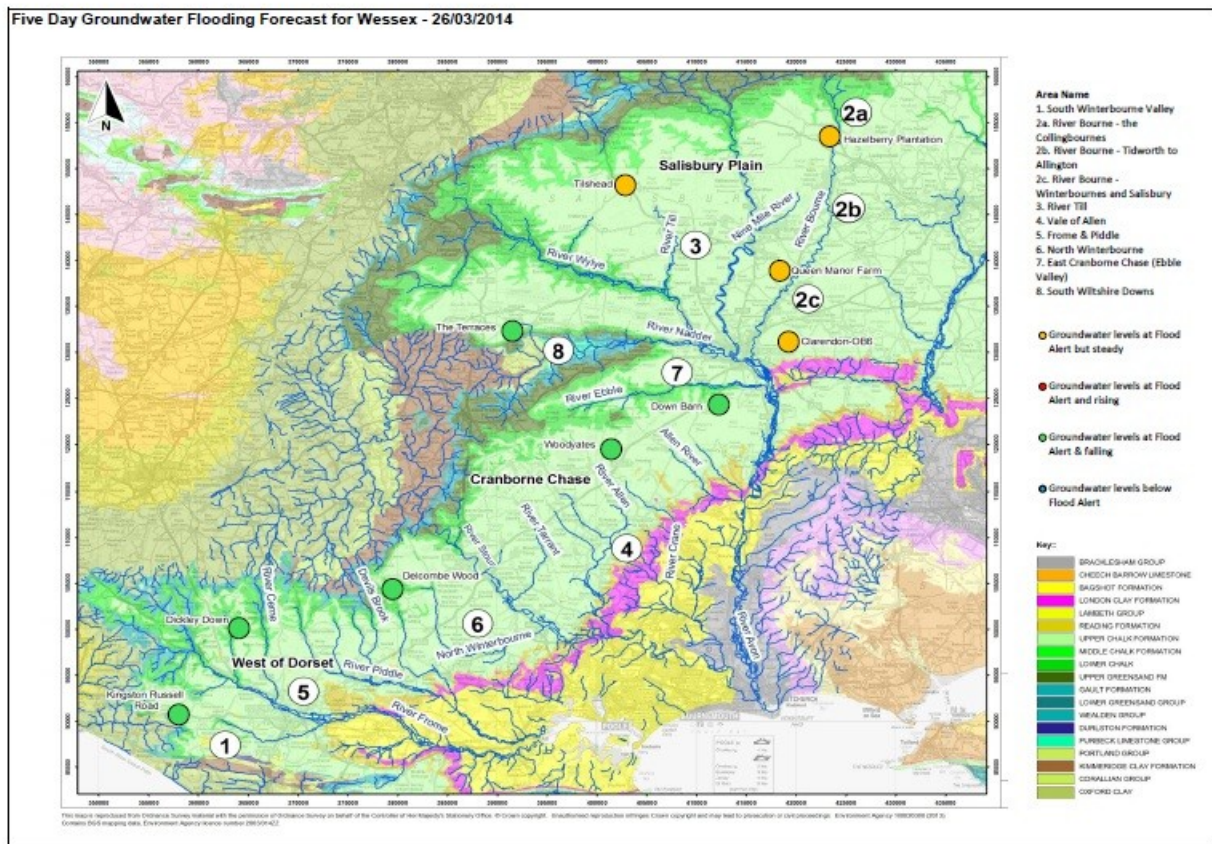


Although the levels are dropping, groundwater is still affecting some minor roads around the Vale of Allen, but the reconnaissance shows that the situation is improving.

Across Salisbury Plain levels are generally dropping and several boreholes on the West Wiltshire Downs are now below the groundwater flood alert. The level at the Tilshead borehole, on 27/03/2014, is 98.65 mAOD. The level means that the borehole is no longer artesian. Most roads that were affected across Salisbury Plain are now open



Forecast risk of flooding



The forecast for the next week or so is showery, with up to 30mm of rain forecast over the next five days. With the levels in the boreholes falling, the response to any heavy rain will be delayed and we may see a response to any periods of heavy rain several days after the rainfall.

Groundwater levels are likely to continue falling across the area with the slowest rate of recession being in the Salisbury Plain area. The groundwater flood alerts will remain in force for at least the next week but we expect to remove the West of Dorset and Cranborne Chase alerts in the early part of April and the Salisbury Plain alert shortly after. With the current forecast, prospects for the week ahead are that:

- Levels will continue to fall across the area
- Impacts of high groundwater levels on communities across West Dorset, Cranborne Chase and Salisbury Plain will reduce.
- It is unlikely that any new properties will suffer from additional internal flooding.
- Flows in ditches and in upper tributaries of the Bourne and Hampshire Avon will remain high.
- Although septic tank and sewer management problems will continue, with the ingress of groundwater into the network continuing across all catchments, the situation will gradually improve.

What we are doing

We are actively monitoring groundwater levels across the area and are publishing information about this on our website. The groundwater alert messages on the internet will be updated regularly. We are also talking to our local authority and other partners to ensure that they are aware of the situation.

We are also working hard to ensure that the defences we operate are functioning effectively (trash screens, pumps, flood storage areas) and will take action to clear removing blockages from rivers in the area to ensure they flow freely.

We are in contact with the flood wardens in the communities affected.

Actions and advice

To find out if you are at risk and to register to receive Flood Alerts for groundwater call Floodline on 0345 988 118 or 0845 988 1188 (24 hour service) or go online at www.environment-agency.gov.uk. (Please check your call plan as some customers may find the 0845 number is cheaper than the 0345 number).

Think and prepare now for what you'll do if flooding occurs where you live, don't wait until flooding happens.

- If you have a personal flood plan you should put it into action
- Move valuables from basements and cellars
- If you have a pump ensure it is serviced and working effectively.
- Keep drains and gullies around your property free of debris
- You may need to improve surface water drainage and /or install and assess sump pumping arrangements.
- Visit the Environment Agency website www.environment-agency.gov.uk for local water levels and flooding information.
- If you own part of the river bank you should keep the banks and bed of the river clear of debris.

We are encouraging parishes at risk to develop a Community Flood Plan, identifying local issues and working with the different agencies to prepare and respond to flooding should it occur later in the year.

If you have flooded

The government has introduced a number of measures to support people who have flooded. These include council tax relief and a scheme for householders to put in place resilience measures to help reduce the effect of flooding on their properties. These measures are being administered by the relevant local authorities.

Further details about these measures can be found on the Wiltshire Council website ([Wiltshire Flood Support](#)) and the "Dorset for You" website ([Dorset Flood Support](#))

Next update

The situation is being monitored daily by our flood warning duty officers. The next scheduled briefing note will be issued during the week beginning 7 April, unless the situation changes.

Further information

To see the latest message about the flood alert for Salisbury Plain follow the link:

[Groundwater on Salisbury Plain](#)

To see the latest message about the flood alert for Cranborne Chase follow the link:

[Groundwater on Cranborne Chase](#)

To see the latest message about the flood alert for West Dorset follow the link:

[Groundwater in West Dorset](#)

Contacts

If you would like any further information on groundwater levels in the area please contact us by emailing floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk . Please use this email to report incidences of groundwater flooding.

Alternatively ring Floodline 0345 988 118 or the National Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60