Monthly water situation report: Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area

1 Summary - August 2024

August was a dry month across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, particularly in the first half of the month. August rainfall totals were well below average, ranging from 18mm to 29mm (30% to 50% of the Long Term Average (LTA)) and as such were banded as notably low. The dry end to July and the dry August since then has led to a rapid rise in soil moisture deficits (SMD) in all six hydrological areas. The area as a whole ended the month with SMD of 120mm. Despite August rainfall being classified as notably low for the time of year, most of river sites across the area are showing normal levels because of the healthy recharge season during last winter and the wet spring. Following the notably low levels of rainfall and normal to above normal SMD across the area in August, groundwater levels still remained normal or higher at all sites with data, but trends showed a slight decline at all indicator sites. With the exception of Covenham and Rutland, reservoirs in the area ended the month above their normal operating curves.

1.1 Rainfall

On average, the Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire area received 24mm of rainfall during August, which is 40% of the LTA. August rainfall totals ranged from 30% to 50% of the LTA (18mm to 29mm) and as such were banded as notably low in all six hydrological areas. Throughout the month frontal system did not give hydrological area rainfall totals higher than 9mm during any single event. Following August's rainfall, the 3-month total is now showing that the hydrological areas have received below normal to normal levels of rainfall. This is a decrease from July's report which showed normal level to above normal levels of rainfall in all hydrological areas. As a result of these low levels of rainfall in August, the last 6 months' totals displayed normal levels in all of the six hydrological areas. The record-breaking rainfall totals over winter are still having an impact on the long-term analysis with the last 12 months rainfall totals in all hydrological areas still being exceptionally high during these periods.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Soil moisture deficit responded in line with the rainfall received across August. SMD has increased in all six hydrological areas. The dry end to July and the dry August since then has led to a rapid rise in deficit. Four of the six hydrological areas are now showing above normal levels of SMD for the time of year, whereas in July's report all hydrological areas were at normal levels. The area as a whole ended the month with SMD of 120mm, in comparison to 101mm at the end of July.

1.3 River flows

Despite August rainfall being classified as notably low for the time of year, most of river sites across the area are showing normal levels because of the strong base flows caused by the wet winter. The only one sites not classified as normal is the Glen. The Glen is showing above normal levels (a decrease from notably high levels in July). Although all river flows receded during August, Barlings Eau and Witham levels show no change in banding since July. Hence, mean monthly flows ranged from 34% to 114% of the LTA, and from normal to above normal classification.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Following the notably low levels of rainfall and above normal SMD across the area in August, groundwater levels still remained normal or higher at all sites, but trend showed a slight decline at all indicator sites. Most groundwater level shows no change in banding since July 2024, except Leasingham Exploratory and Grange Farm Aswarby sites. Overall, at all sites with data, groundwater levels were classified as normal to notably high for the time of year.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

With the exception of Covenham and Rutland, reservoirs in the area ended the month above their normal operating curves. The levels at Covenham was 3% below target curve and Rutland was 4% below target curve in August, however levels are not alarmingly low (around 1995-1996 operational curve).

1.6 Environmental impact

The Trent-Witham–Ancholme (TWA) transfer scheme has been in use during August. During August water has been pumped into the Ancholme from the Witham at Short Ferry while transfer from the Trent into Witham at Torksey started on the 3rd of August. Both the Gwash-Glen and Slea Augmentation schemes remained off in August. There were 7 HOFs (Hands Off Flow) active: 4 in the Witham catchment, 2 in the Steeping catchment and 1 in the Ancholme catchment. There were 2 flood alerts, and no flood warnings issued.

1.7 Forward look

1.7.1 Probabilistic ensemble projections for river flows at key sites

September 2024: All sites are showing an increased probability of below normal flows.

December 2024: There is an increased probability of lower-than normal flow at North Brook and a decreased probability of normal flows at Nene Northampton and Nene Wanford.

1.7.2 Probabilistic ensemble projections for groundwater levels in key aquifers

September 2024: All sites are showing an increased probability of groundwater levels being normal or higher with none of modelled rainfall scenarios showing below normal to exceptionally low levels.

March 2025: All sites are showing a slightly increased probability of groundwater levels being higher than normal.

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*[SMD]:soil moisture deficits

*[LTA]: long term average

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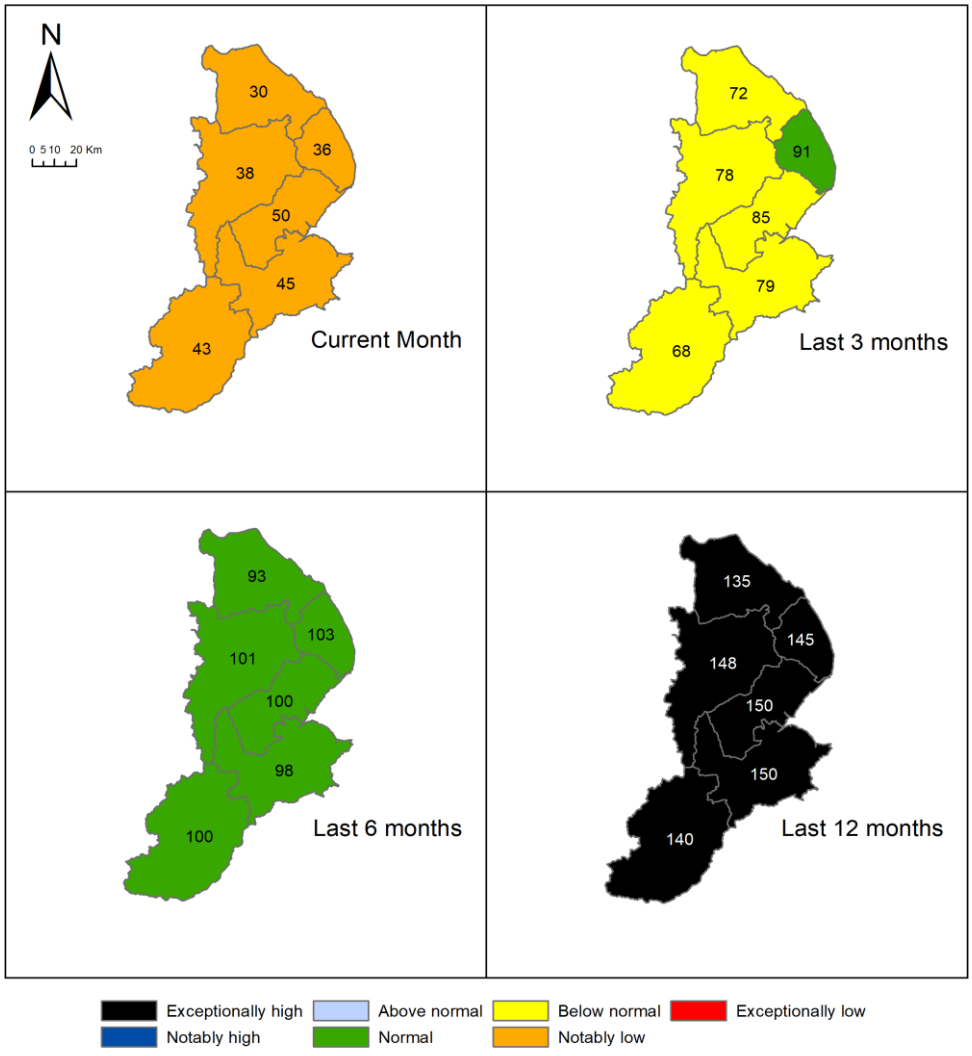
2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

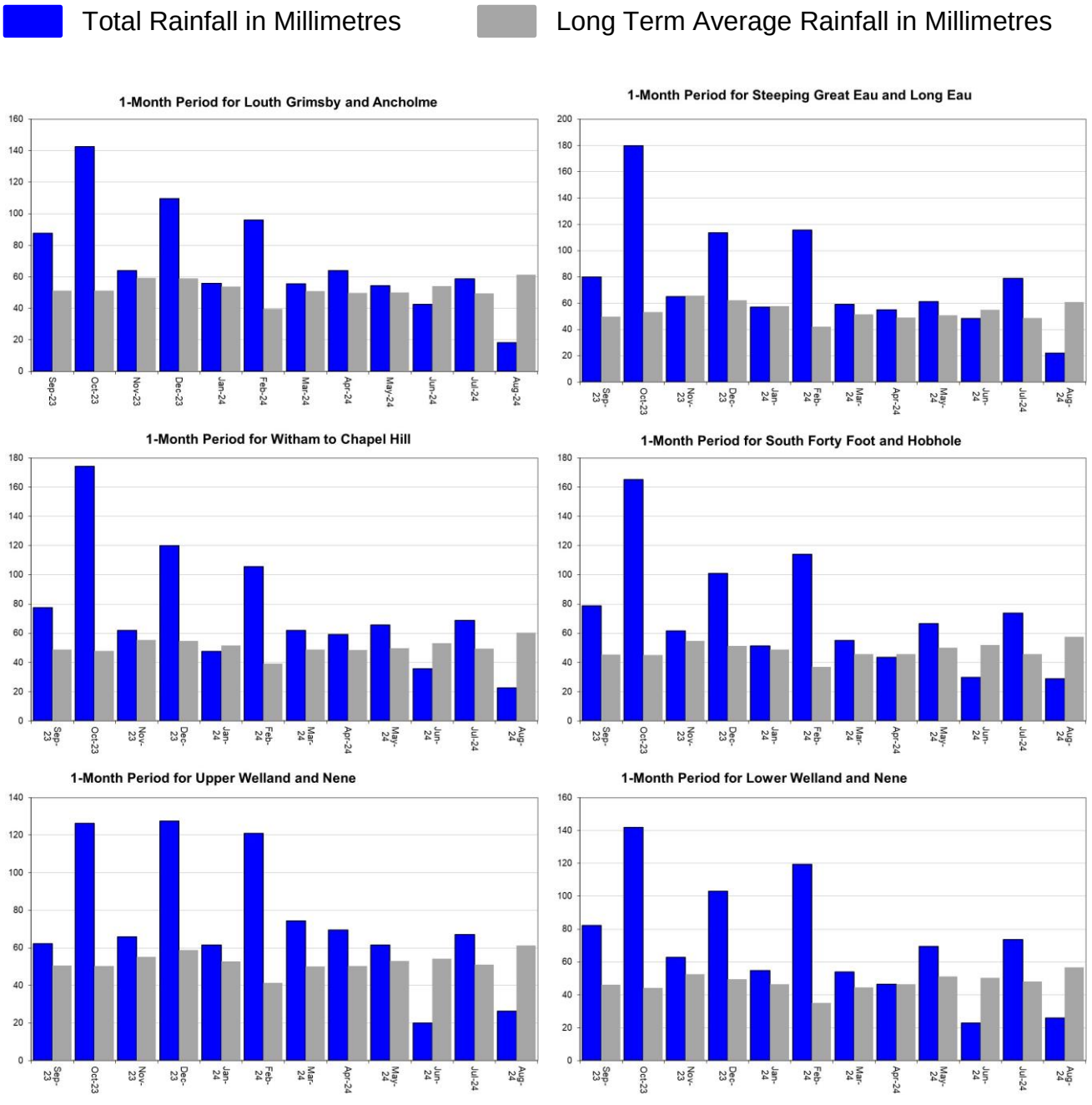
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 August 2024), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2024). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2024.

2.2 Rainfall charts

Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1961 to 1990 long term average for each region and for England.

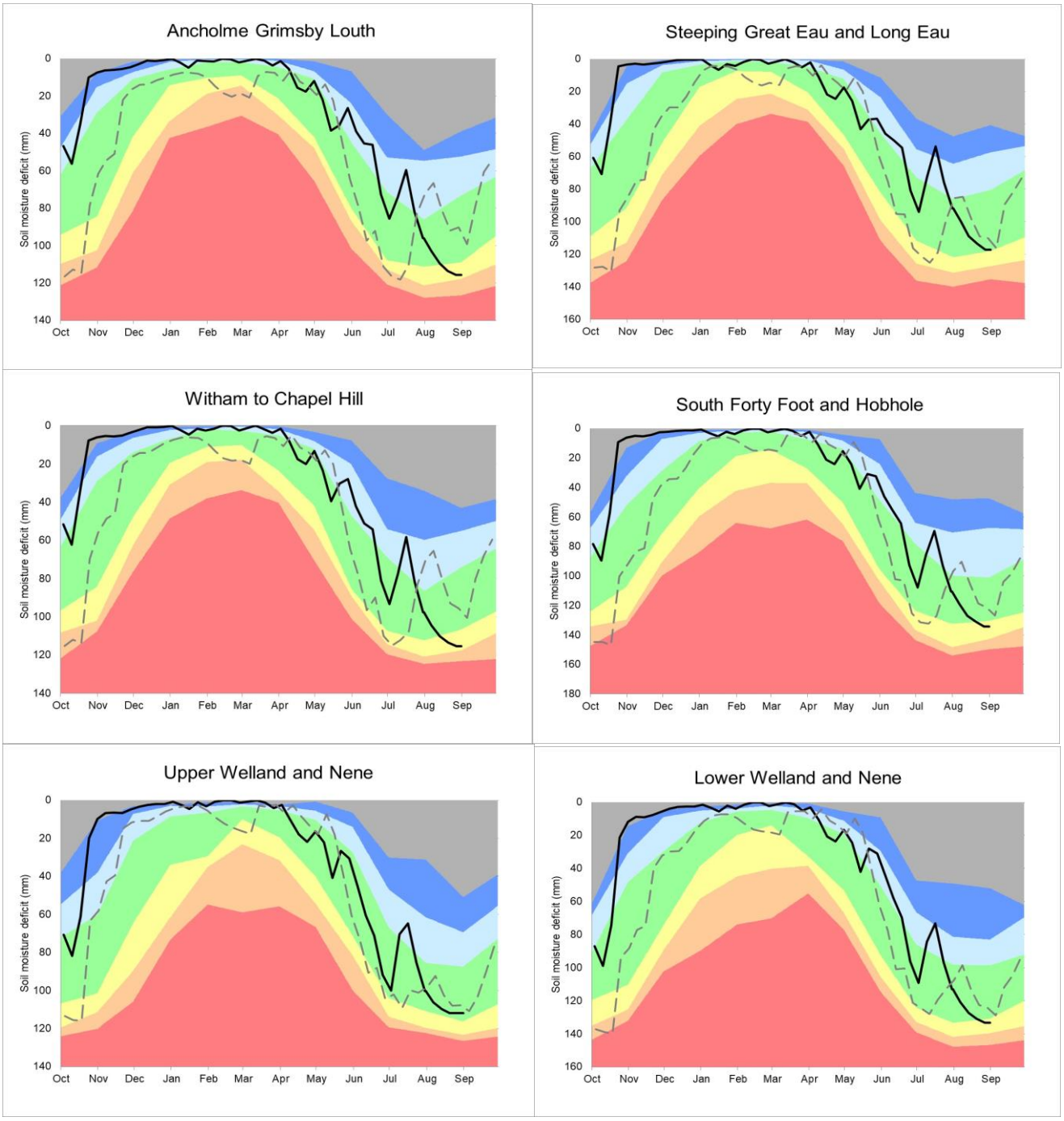


HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2024).

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit charts

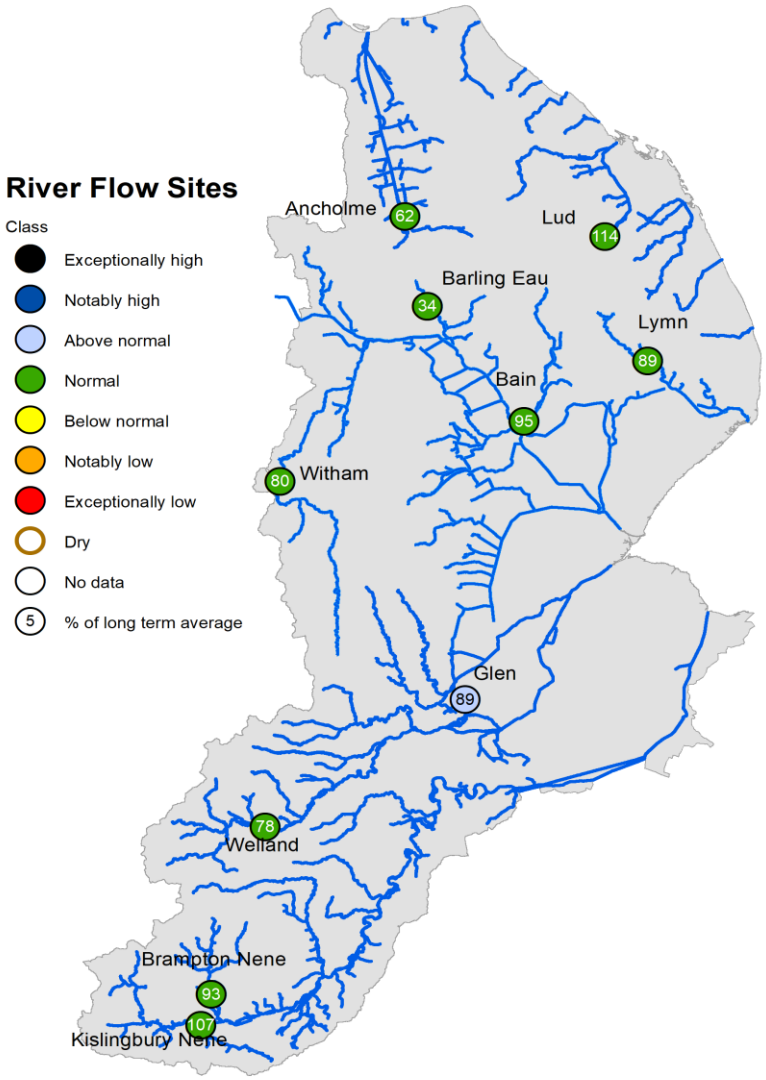
Figure 3.1: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to an analysis of historic 1961 to 1990 long term data set. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



4 River flows

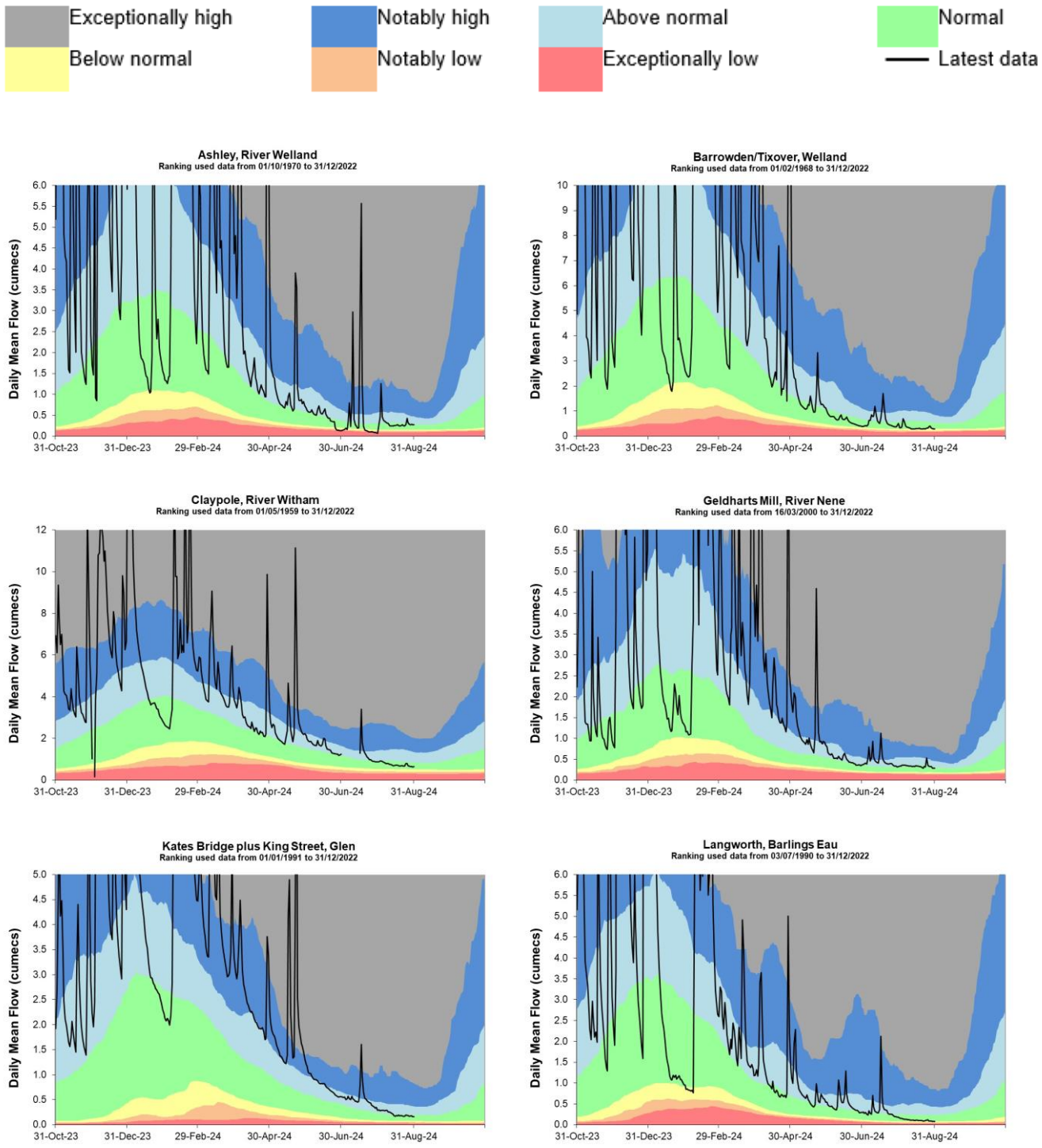
4.1 River flows map

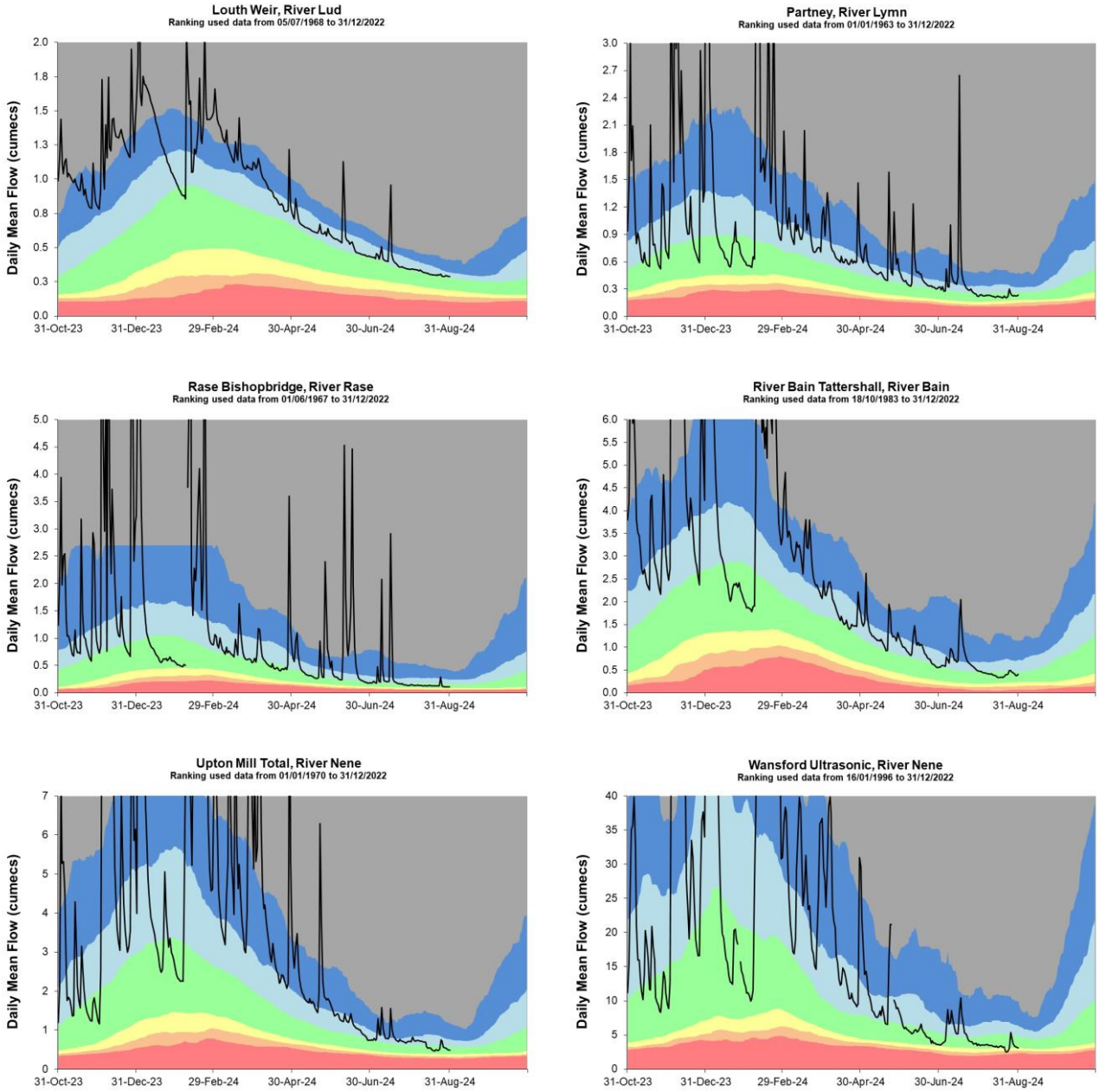
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for August 2024, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic August monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



4.2 River flow charts

Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



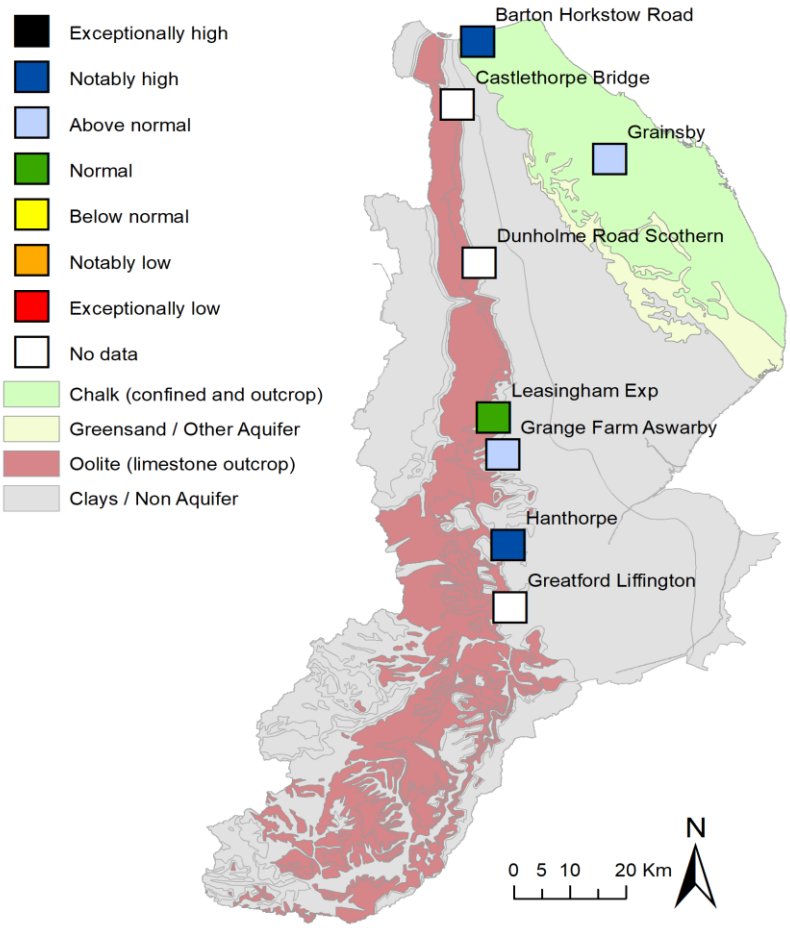


Source: Environment Agency.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

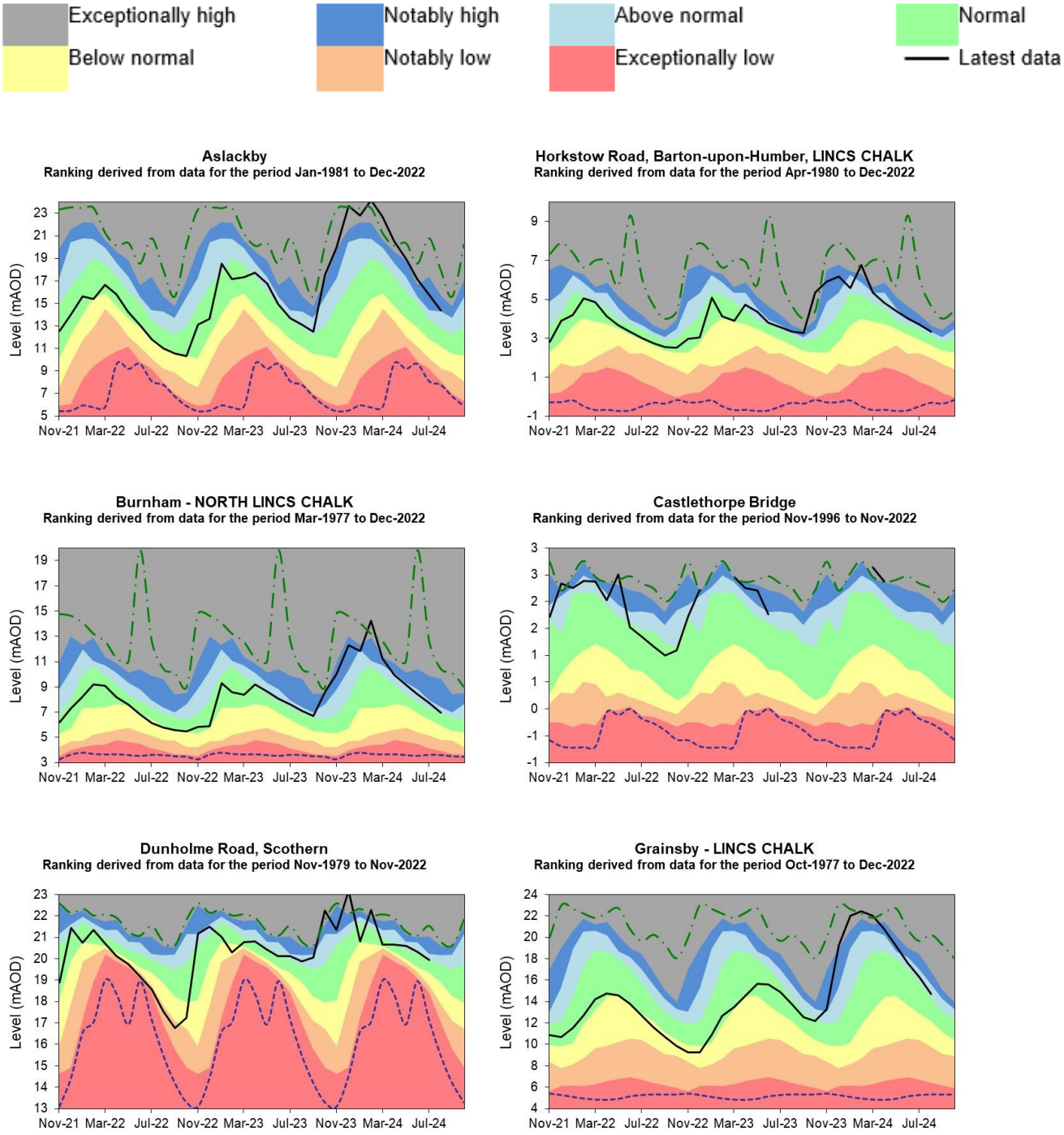
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of August 2024, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic August levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

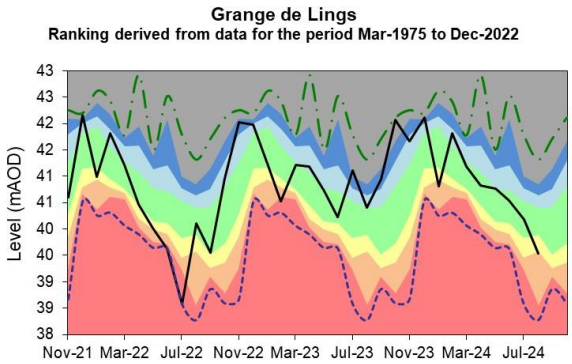


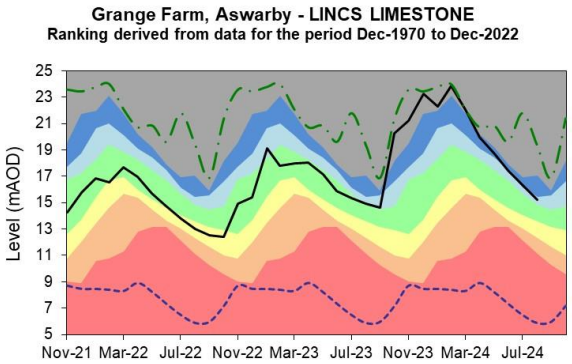
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2024.

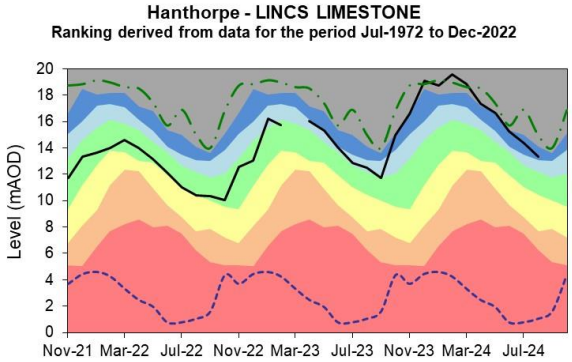
5.2 Groundwater level charts

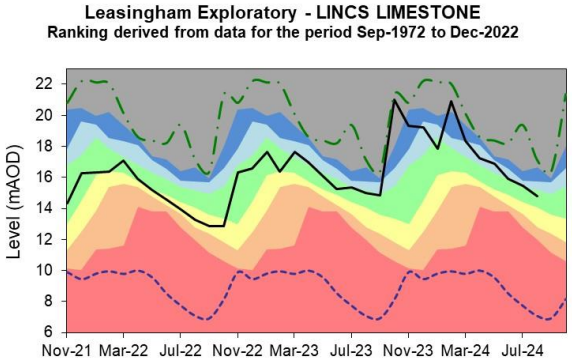
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.







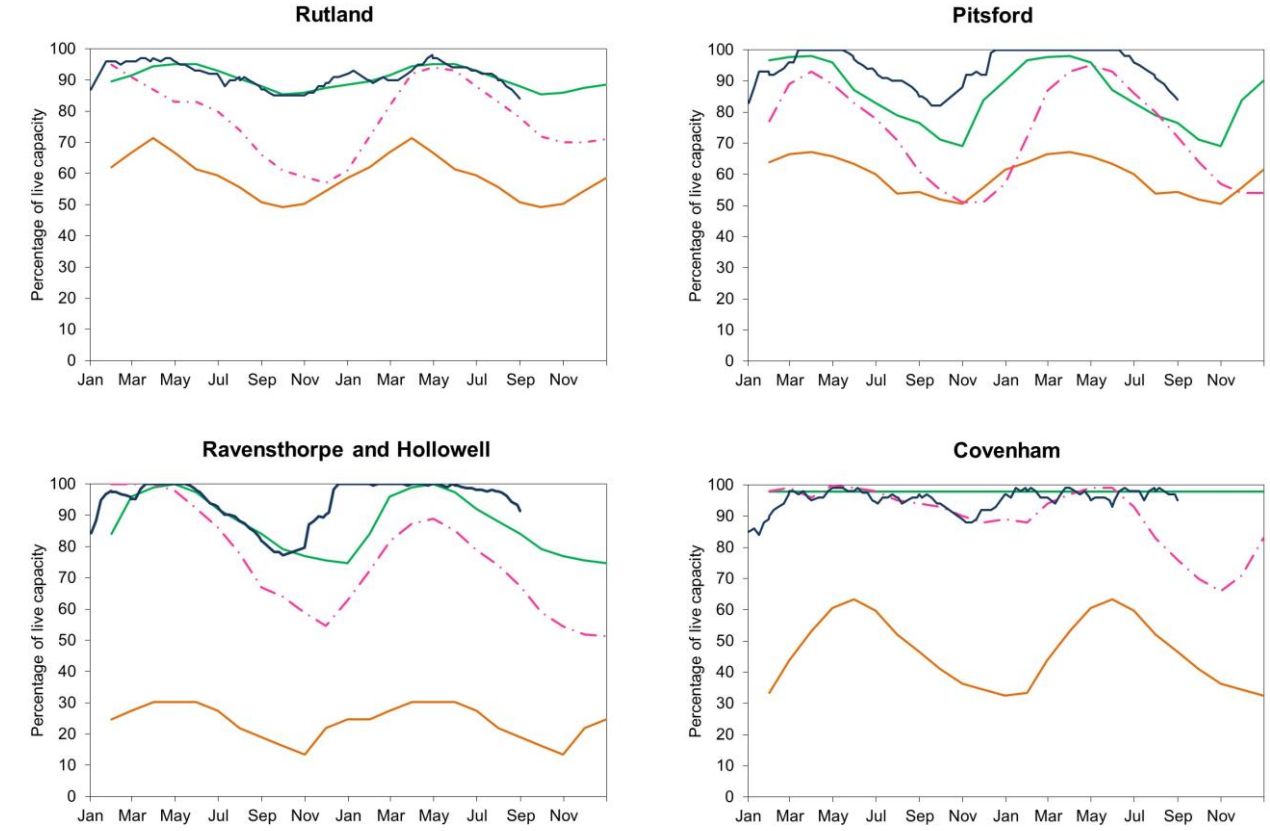




Source: Environment Agency, 2024.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the normal operating curve, drought curve and dry 1995-1996 stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length

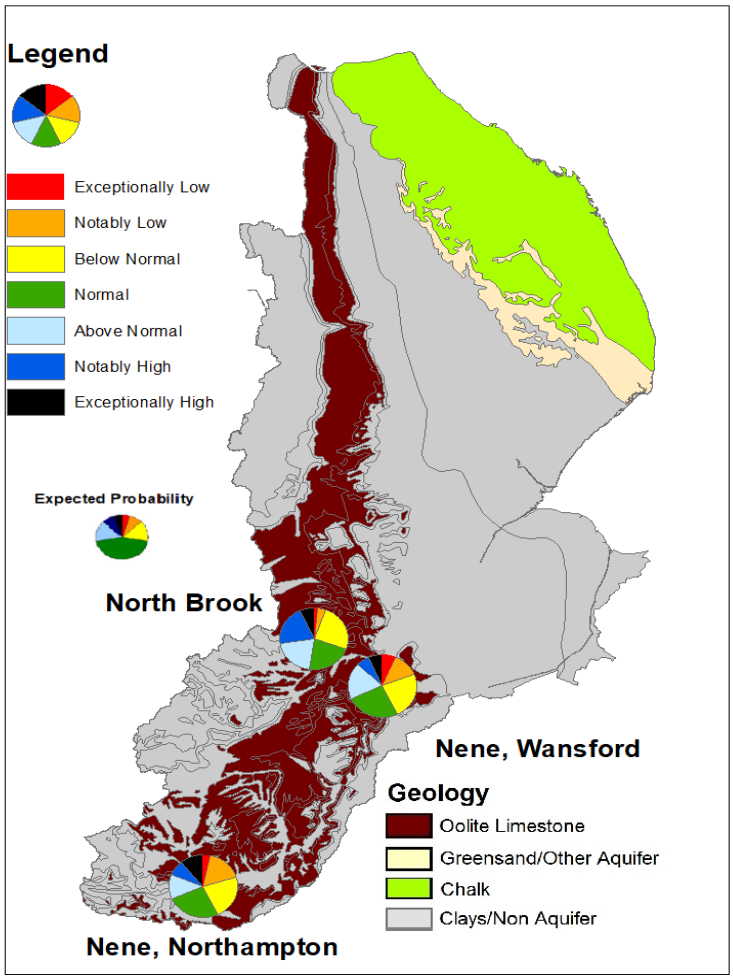


(Source: water companies).

7 Forward Look

7.1 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in September 2024

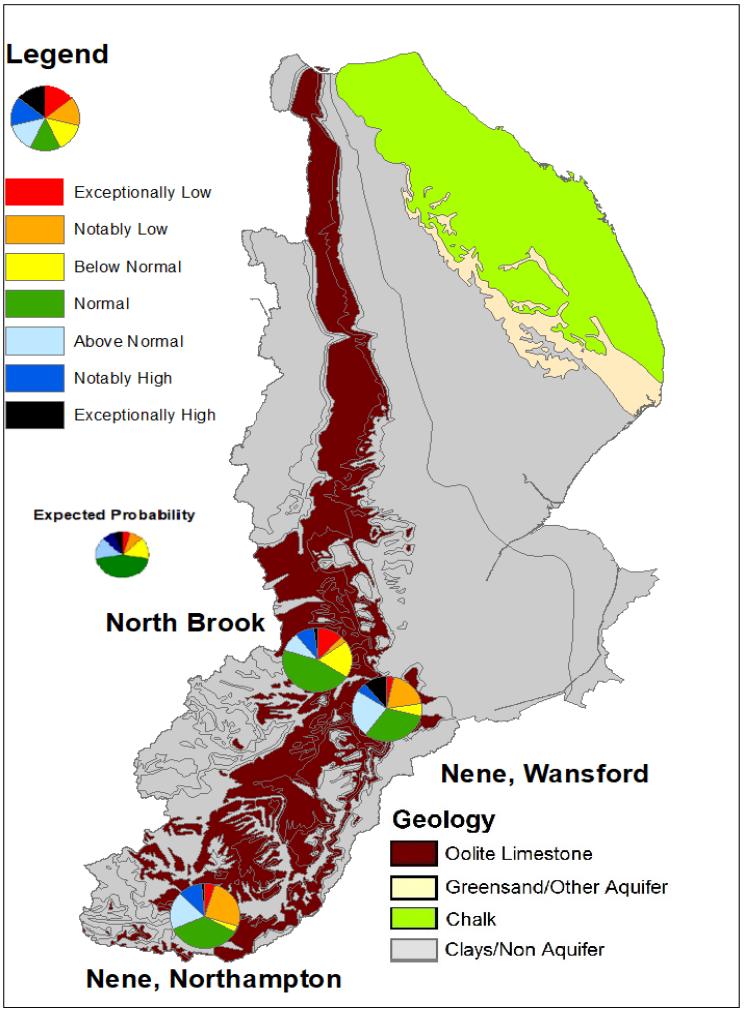
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2024.

7.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in December 2024

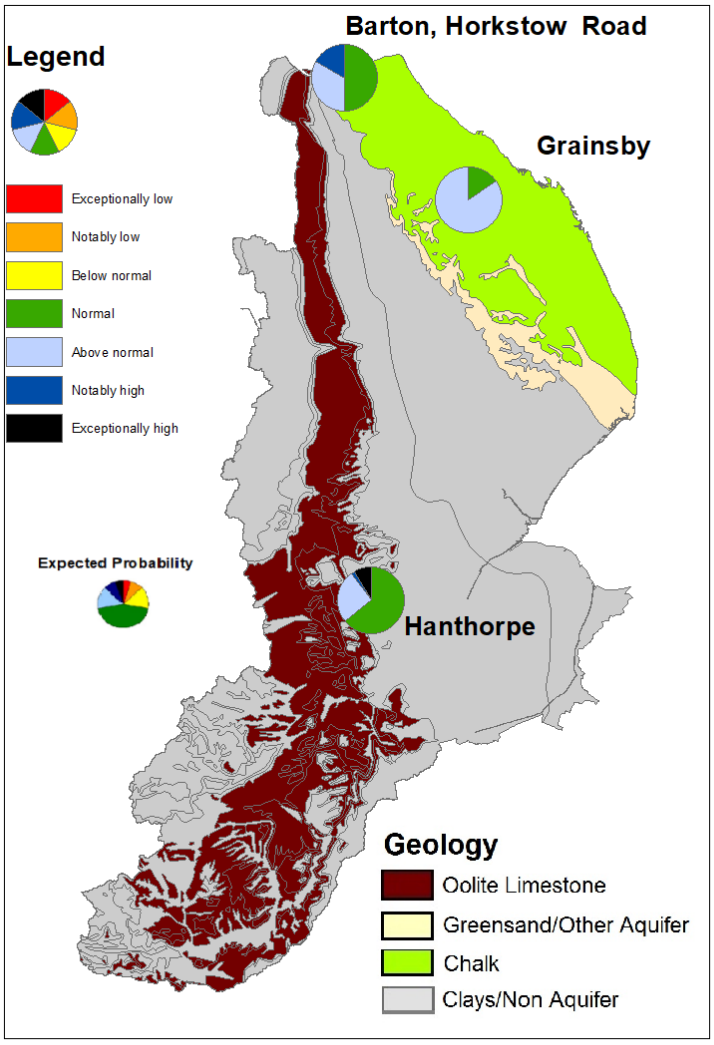
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2024

7.3 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in September 2024

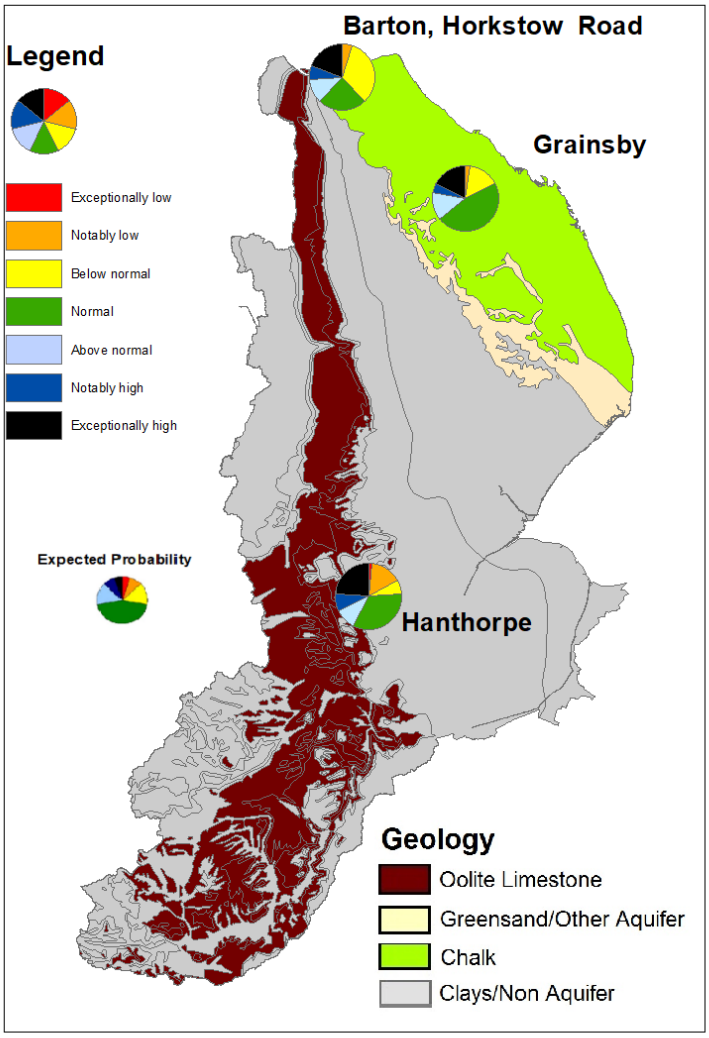
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2024

7.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2025

Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2024

8 Glossary

8.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second (m^{3s-1}).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1961 to 1990. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.

Recharge

The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Reservoir gross capacity

The total capacity of a reservoir.

Reservoir live capacity

The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (for example, storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as ‘net’ or ‘deployable’ capacity.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD)

The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

8.2 Categories

Exceptionally high

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

Notably high

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Above normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Normal

Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time.

Below normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Notably low

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

9 Appendices

9.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Aug 2024 rainfall % of long term average 1961 to 1990	Aug 2024 band	Jun 2024 to August cumulative band	Mar 2024 to August cumulative band	Sep 2023 to August cumulative band
Louth Grimsby And Ancholme	30	Notably Low	Below normal	Normal	Exceptionally high
Lower Welland And Nene	45	Notably Low	Below normal	Normal	Exceptionally high
South Forty Foot And Hobhole	50	Notably Low	Below normal	Normal	Exceptionally high
Steeping Great Eau And Long Eau	36	Notably Low	Normal	Normal	Exceptionally high
Upper Welland And Nene	43	Notably Low	Below normal	Normal	Exceptionally high
Witham To Chapel Hill	38	Notably Low	Below normal	Normal	Exceptionally high

9.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Aug 2024 band	Jul 2024 band
Ashley	Welland Mkt.harb-rockinghm	Welland Rockingham	Normal	Above normal
Barrowden/tixover	Welland (rockingham To Stamford)	Welland Stamford	Below normal	Normal
Claypole	Upper Witham	Witham Bargate Upper	Normal	Normal
Geldharts Mill	Nene (brampton Branch)	Nene Brampton Bridge	Normal	Notably high
Kates Bridge Plus King Street	Glen (an)	Welland and Glen	Above normal	Notably high
Langworth	Barlings Eau	Barlings Eau	Normal	Normal
Louth Weir	Lud	Louth Canal	Normal	Above normal
Partney	Lymn & Steeping	Lymn Steeping	Normal	Notably high
Rase Bishopbridge	Ancholme	Ancholme W Mid	Normal	Above normal
Upton Mill Total	Nene (kislingbury Branch)	Nene Kislingbry Bridge	Normal	Notably high

Wansford Combined	Nene (wollaston To Wansford)	Nene Wansford	Below normal	Above normal

9.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Aug 2024 band	End of Jul 2024 band
Barton-upon-humber	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk	Notably high	Notably high
Castlethorpe Bridge	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone		
Dunholme Road, Scothern	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone		Normal
Grainsby	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk	Above normal	Above normal
Grange Farm, Aswarby	Central Lincs Limestone?	Above normal	Notably high
Hanthorpe	Cornbrash (south)	Notably high	Notably high
Leasingham Exploratory	Blisworth Limestone Rutland Formation (south)?	Normal	Above normal

9.4 Ensemble projections tables

9.4.1 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in September 2024

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Nene Nton	Nene Wansford	North Brook
Exceptionally low	3.2	6.3	1.4
Notably low	17.5	12.7	4.1
Below normal	22.2	23.8	24.7
Normal	25.4	25.4	21.9
Above normal	12.7	19.0	20.5
Notably high	7.9	6.3	20.5
Exceptionally high	11.1	6.3	6.8

9.4.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in December 2024

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Nene Nton	Nene Wansford	North Brook
Exceptionally low	4.8	3.2	12.3
Notably low	25.4	19.0	3.1
Below normal	3.2	6.3	18.5
Normal	34.9	31.7	46.2
Above normal	19.0	23.8	9.2
Notably high	11.1	4.8	9.2
Exceptionally high	1.6	11.1	1.5

9.4.3 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in September 2024

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Grainsby	Hanthorpe	Horkstow
Site	Grainsby	Hanthorpe	Horkstow
Exceptionally low	0.0	0.0	0.0
Notably low	0.0	0.0	0.0
Below normal	0.0	0.0	0.0
Normal	15.6	64.4	50.0
Above normal	84.4	25.4	33.3
Notably high	0.0	1.7	16.7
Exceptionally high	0.0	8.5	0.0

9.4.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2025

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Grainsby	Hanthorpe	Horkstow
Exceptionally low	0.0	1.7	0.0
Notably low	2.2	15.3	4.8
Below normal	15.6	6.8	33.3
Normal	46.7	33.9	23.8
Above normal	13.3	10.2	11.9
Notably high	4.4	8.5	7.1
Exceptionally high	17.8	23.7	19.0