Monthly water situation report: Devon and Cornwall Area

1 Summary - November 2025

Devon and Cornwall received 130% of the November long term average (LTA) rainfall, which was above normal for the time of year. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) decreased overall during November. Monthly mean river flows were normal to above normal for the time of year across the area. Groundwater levels ended the month between below normal and exceptionally high for the time of year. Total reservoir storage across Devon and Cornwall by 30 November was 65%, with Wimbleball, Colliford and Roadford at 45%, 52% and 71% respectively.

1.1 Rainfall

Devon and Cornwall received 191mm of rain during November (130% of the November LTA), which is above normal for the time of year. November was unsettled through the month, with the highest periods of rainfall falling during the first half of the month.

Cumulative rainfall for the last 3 months was above normal across the area except for the Tamar, Seaton Looe and Fowey, and West Cornwall hydrological areas, which experienced notably high rainfall. Over the last 6 months, rainfall was normal in the east of the area and above normal in the west of the area, with the exception of the Fal and St Austell hydrological area, which saw normal rainfall. Over the last 12 months, rainfall was normal across Devon and Cornwall.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit

SMD decreased during November, remaining close to the LTA. The average deficit at the end of November was below 10mm across the whole area. SMD ranged from 5mm lower (wetter) to 5mm higher (drier) than the long term average deficit for November across the area.

1.3 River flows

November monthly mean river flows ranged from normal to above normal across Devon and Cornwall.

All sites experienced a sharp increase in flow in the first part of the month, with many sites reaching exceptionally high daily mean flows in response to the rainfall during Storm Claudia. River flows then decreased a little, before showing a more unsettled pattern responding to further rainfall throughout the month. Daily mean flows on 30 November ranged from normal to above normal across Devon and Cornwall.

1.4 Groundwater levels

On 30 November, groundwater levels were classed as follows:

- Below normal at Coleford Production (monitoring the Permian Breccias and Sandstones)
- Normal at Bussels No7A (monitoring the Dawlish sandstone), Woodbury Common No2 (monitoring the Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds), Woodleys No1 (monitoring the Otterton Sandstone Formation), and Branscombe Lane (monitoring the Dawlish Sandstone).
- Above normal at Winnards Perch (monitoring the Staddon Formation).
- Exceptionally high at Whitlands (monitoring the Upper Greensand).

Groundwater levels at most sites continue to be in recession, except for Winnards Perch, whose hydrograph is now on its rising limb. Levels at this site respond quickly to rainfall due to the low storage of the Secondary Aquifer which it monitors. Bussels No7A appears to have also started to increase; its hydrograph may now have started its rising limb.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Total reservoir storage was 65% on 30 November, which is an overall increase of 13% since -2 November. This is higher than storage at the same time in 2022 (the most recent drought year), which was 49%. On 30 November, storage at Wimbleball, Colliford and Roadford was 45%, 52% and 71% respectively, compared to 48%, 26% and 46% at the same time in 2022.

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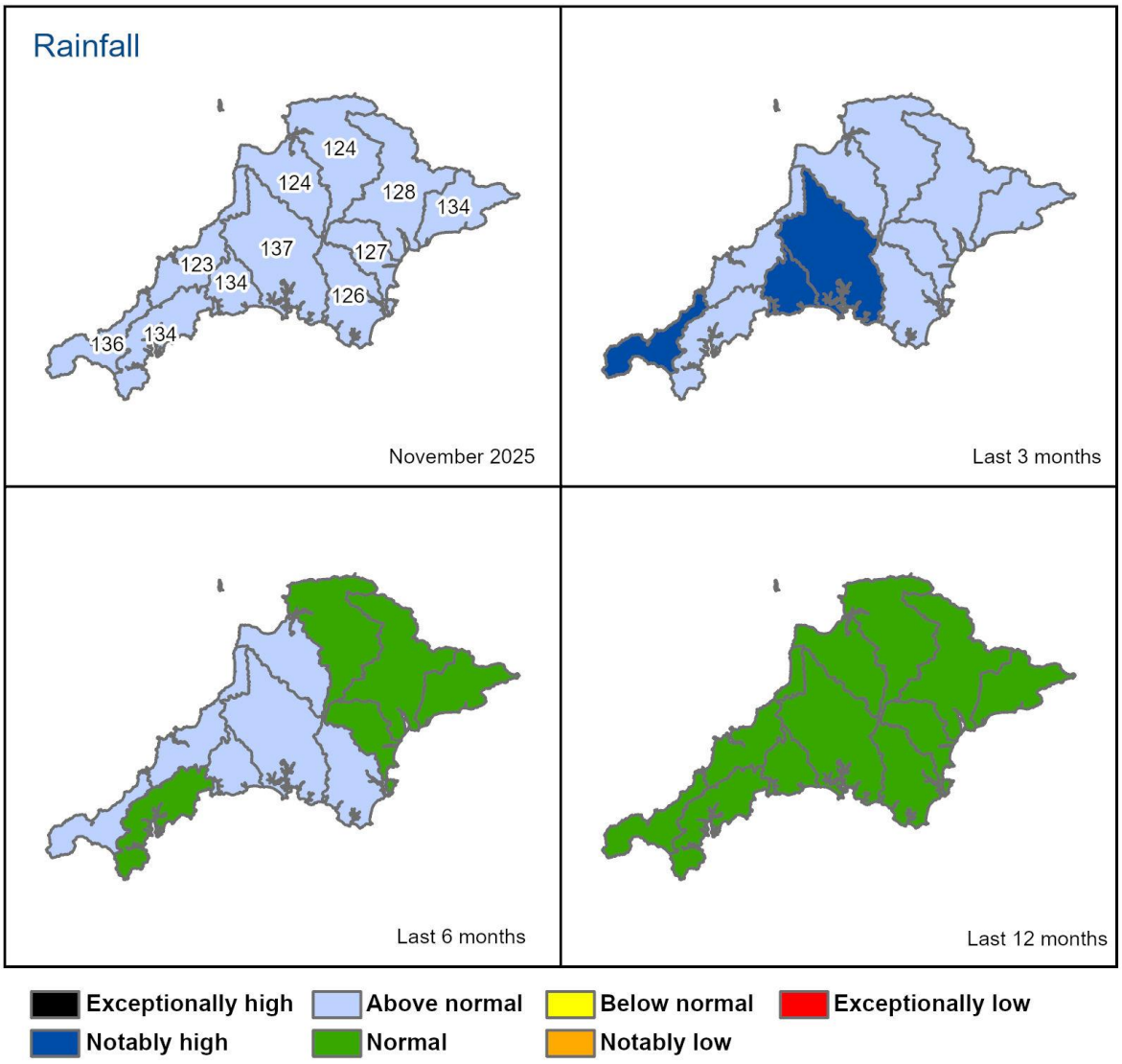
2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

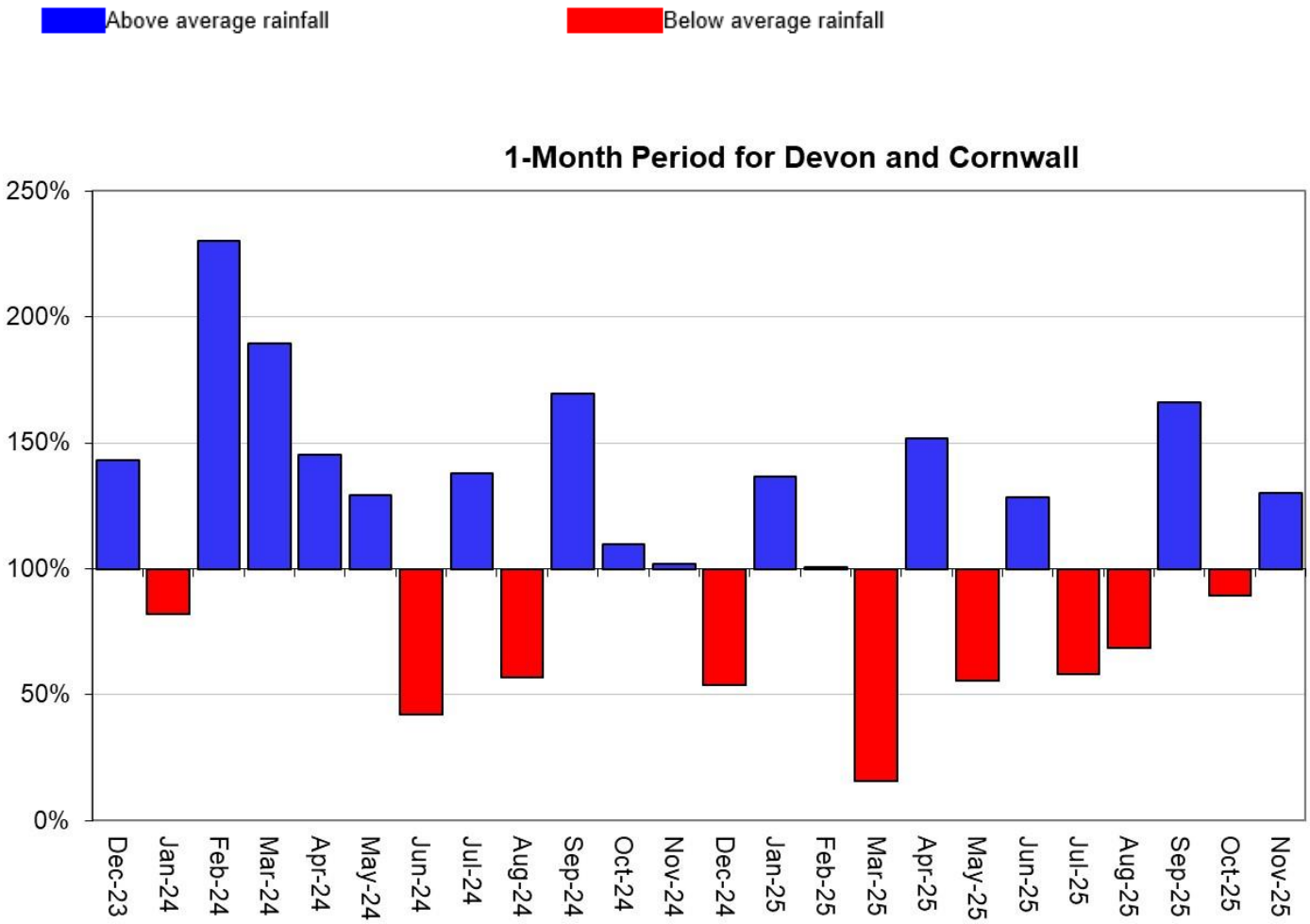
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 30 November 2025), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges prior to January 2025 (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2025). Provisional data for January 2025 onwards based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2025.

2.2 Rainfall charts

Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 24 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for Devon and Cornwall area.

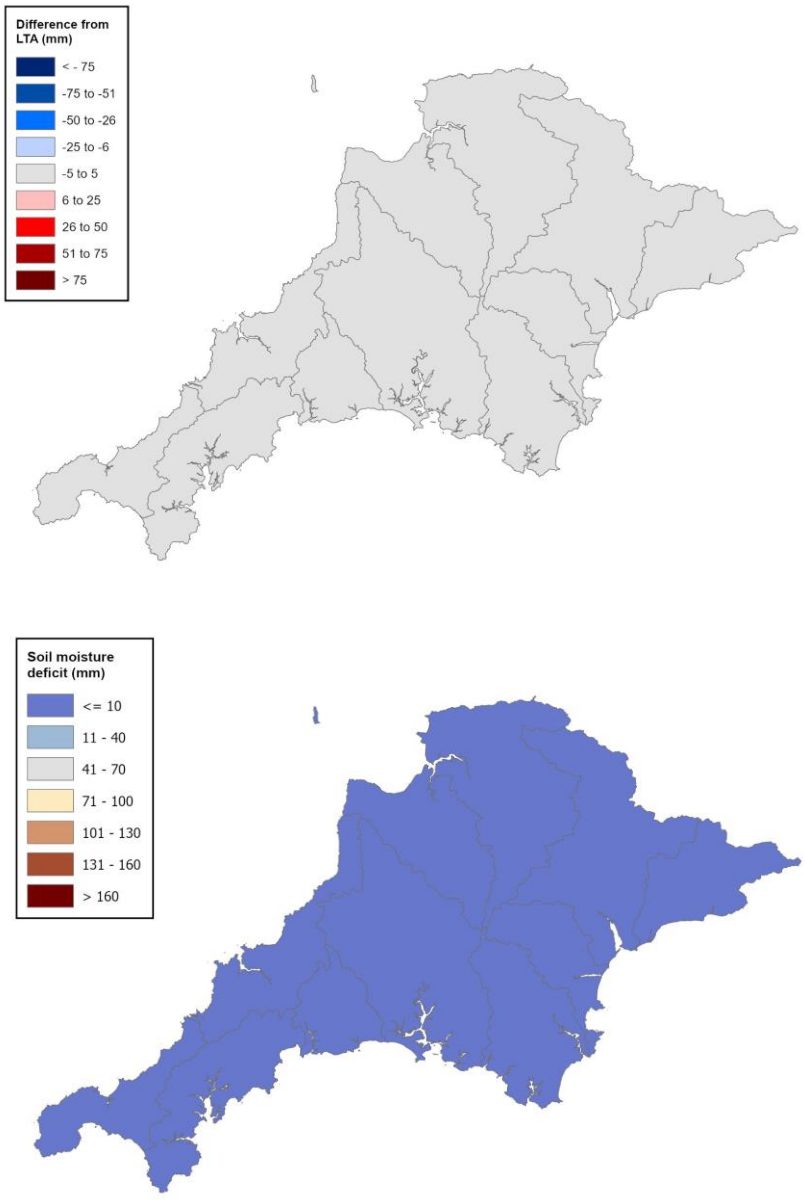


Rainfall data from January 2025 extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2025). Rainfall data prior to January 2025 extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2025).

3 Soil moisture deficit

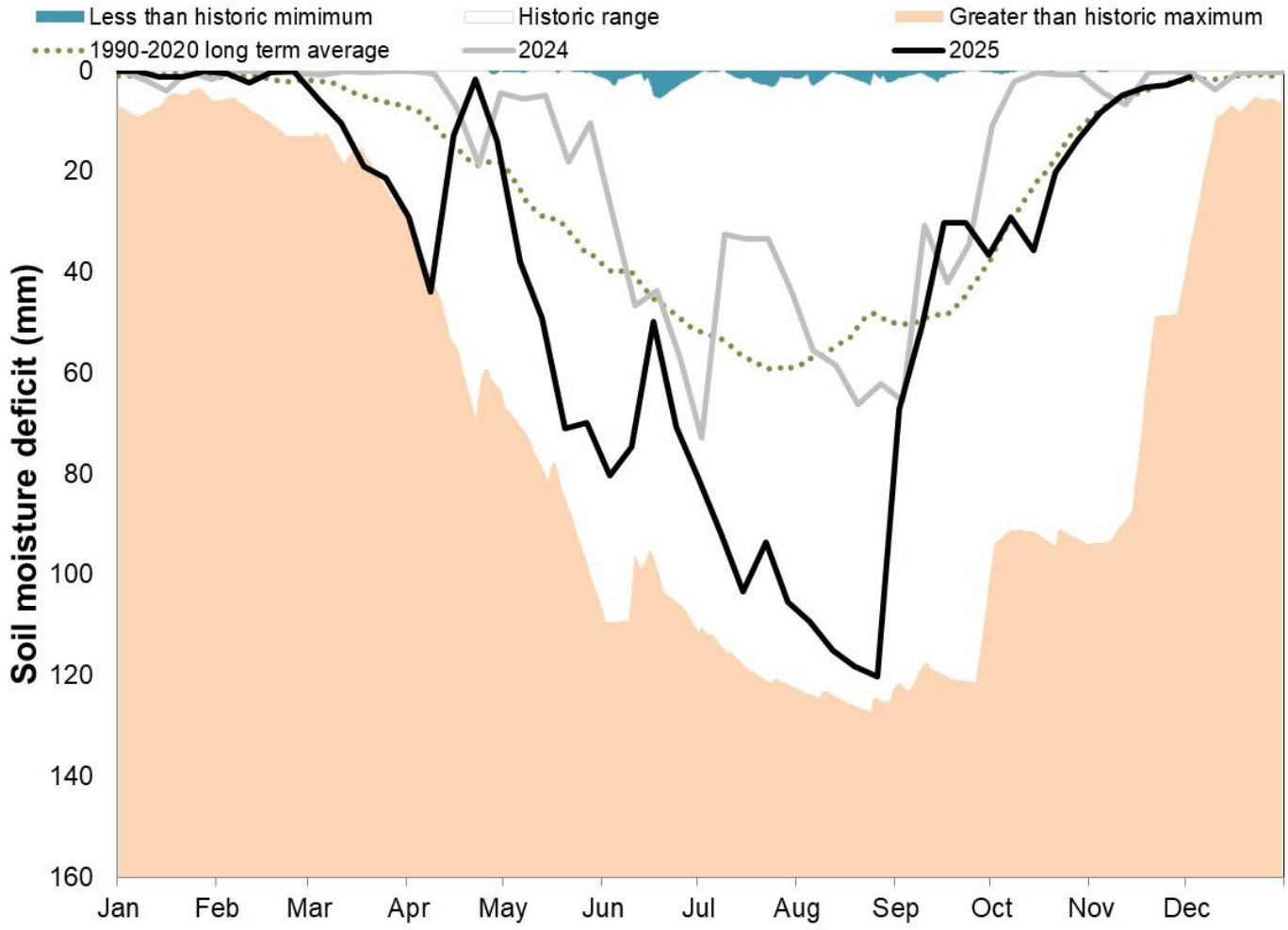
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Top map shows soil moisture deficit for week ending 25 November 2025. Bottom map shows the difference (mm) between the actual soil moisture deficit and the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

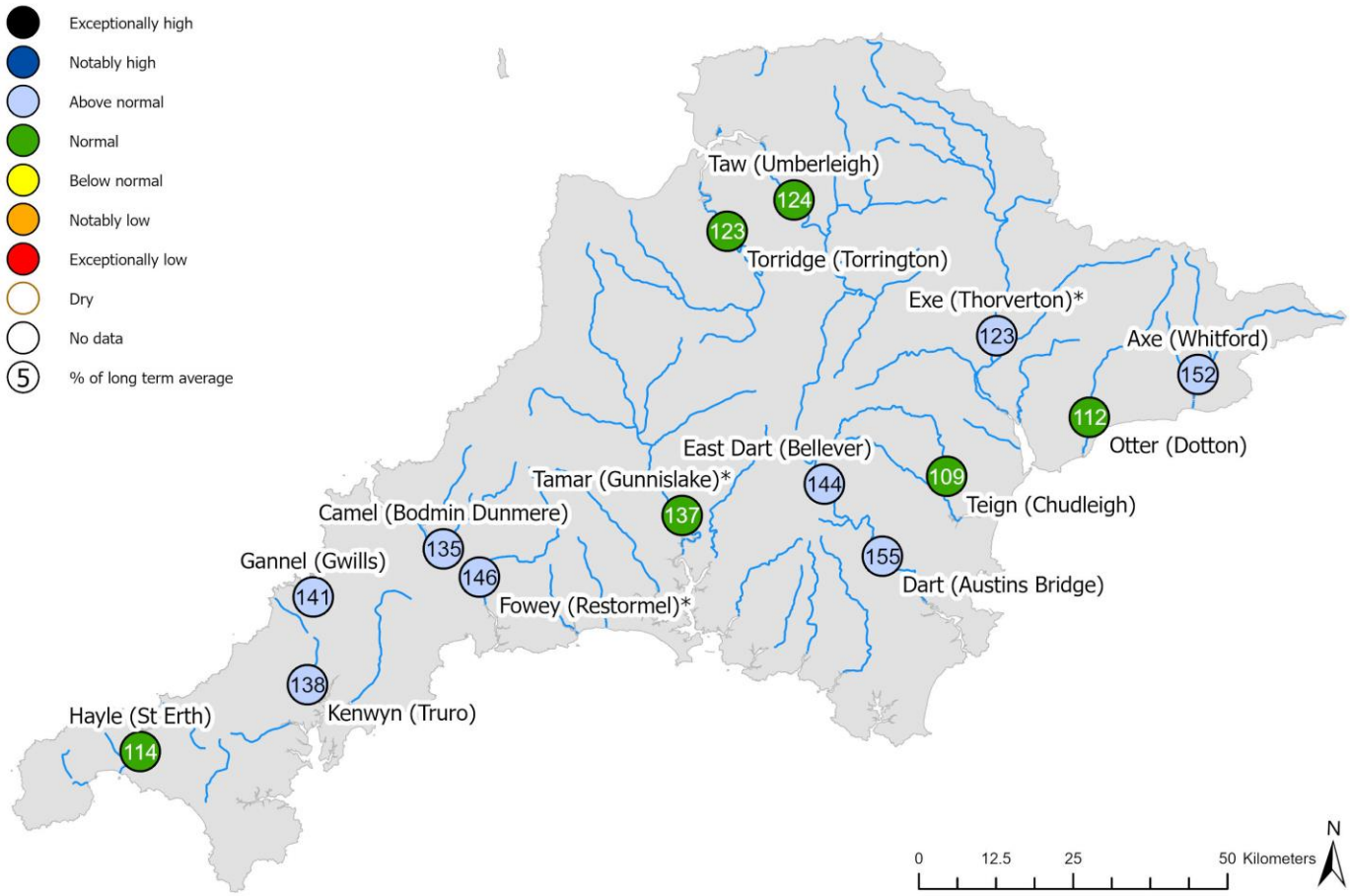
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to previous year, maximum, minimum, and 1991 to 2020 long term average. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



4 River flows

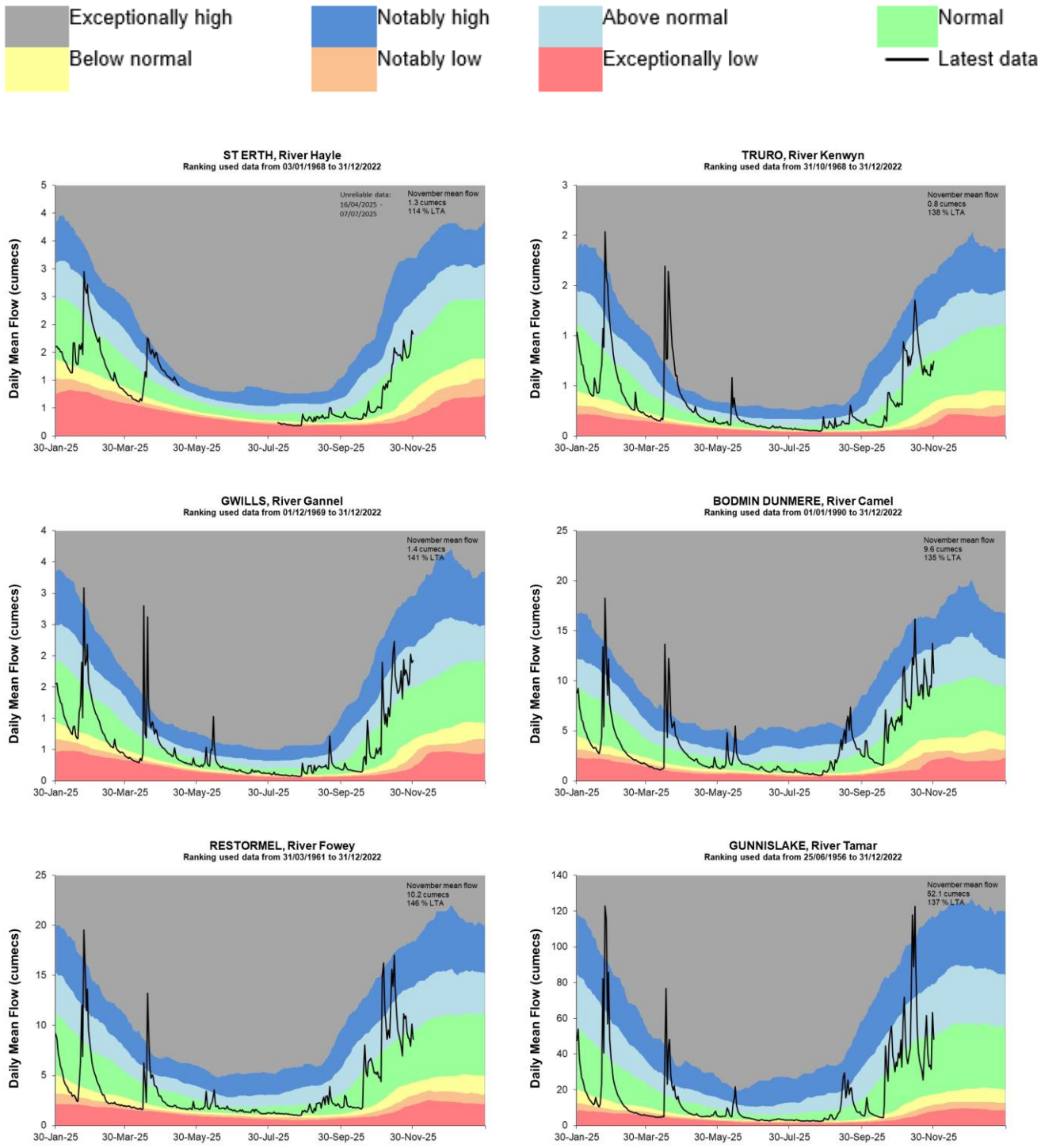
4.1 River flows map

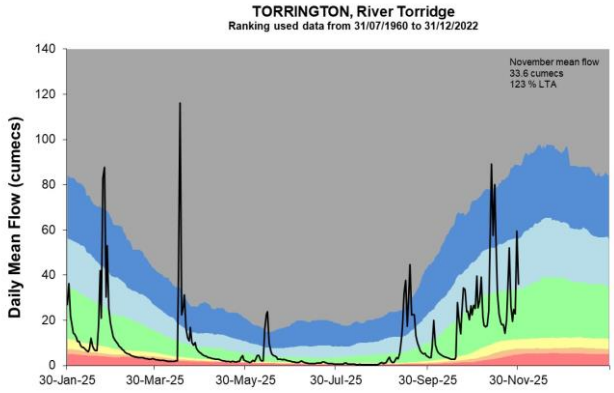
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for November 2025, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic November monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

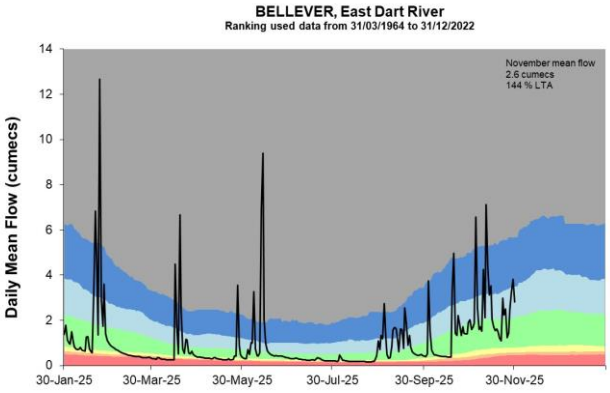


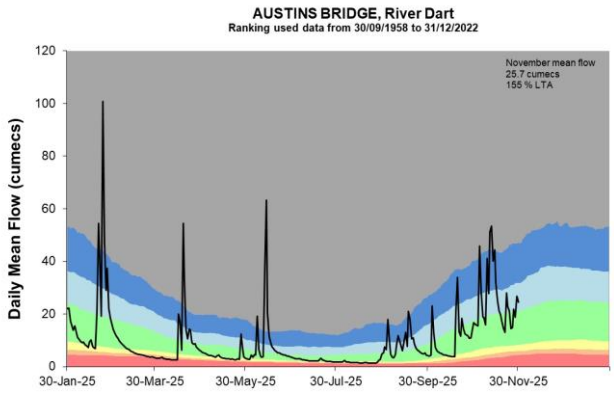
4.2 River flow charts

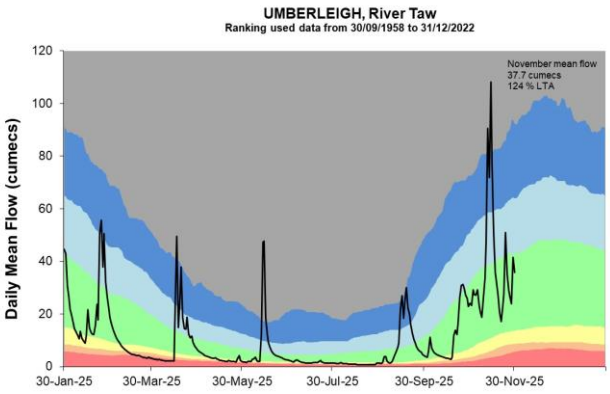
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for indicator sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

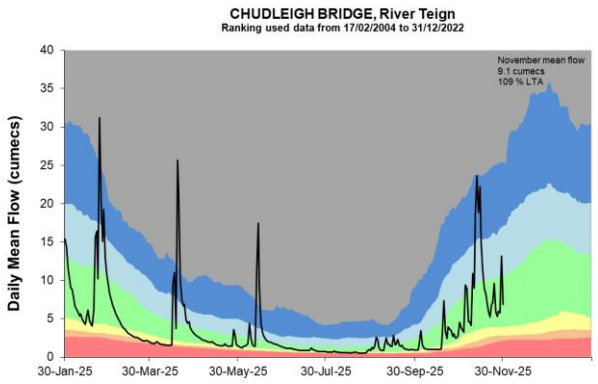


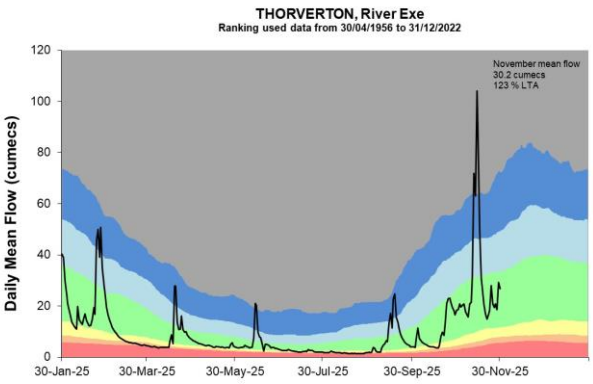


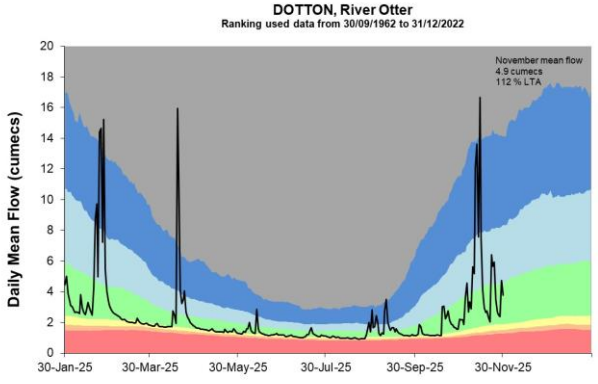


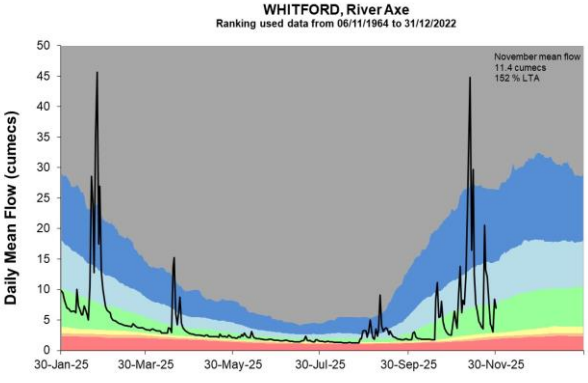










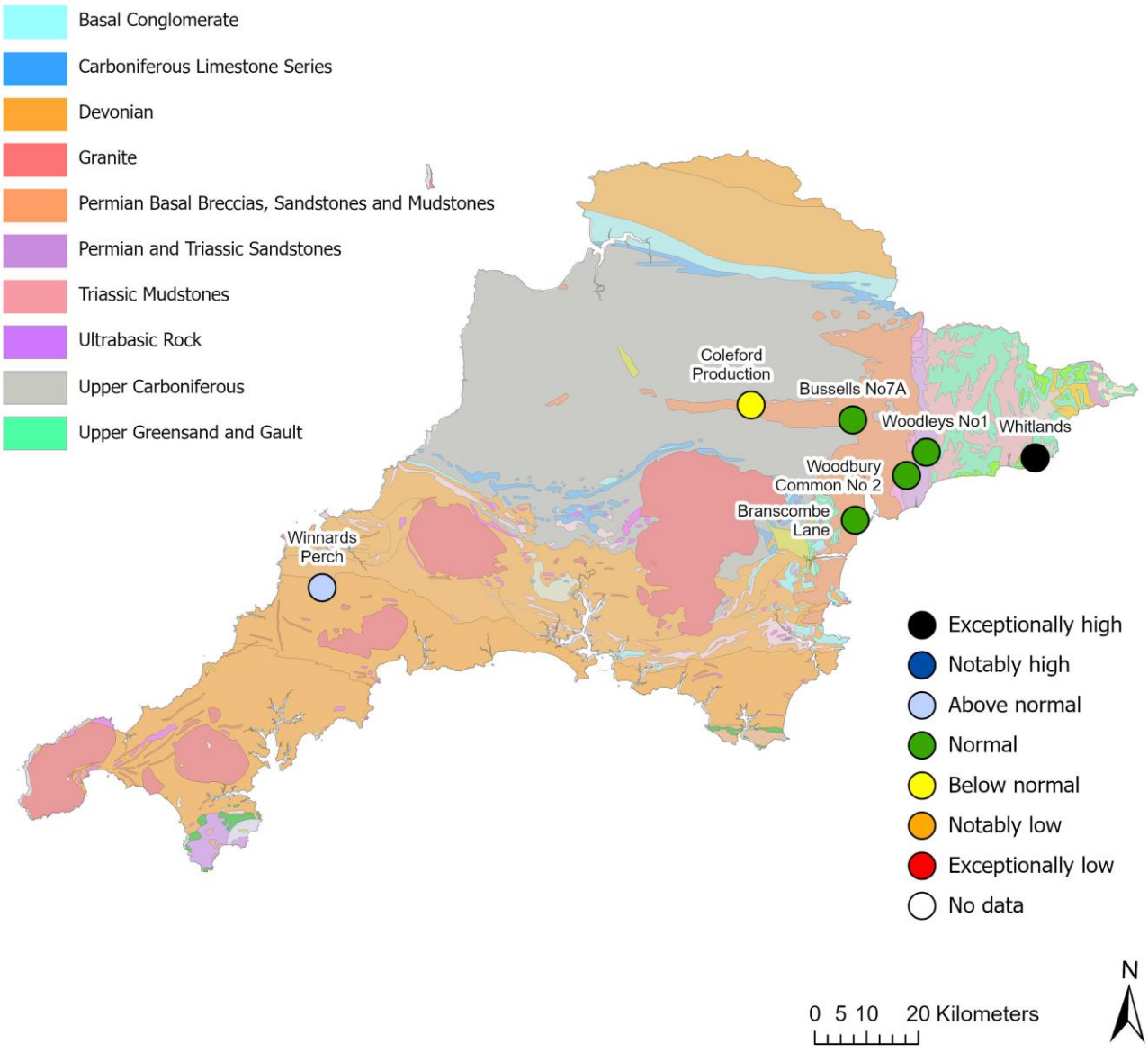


Source: Environment Agency.

5 Groundwater levels

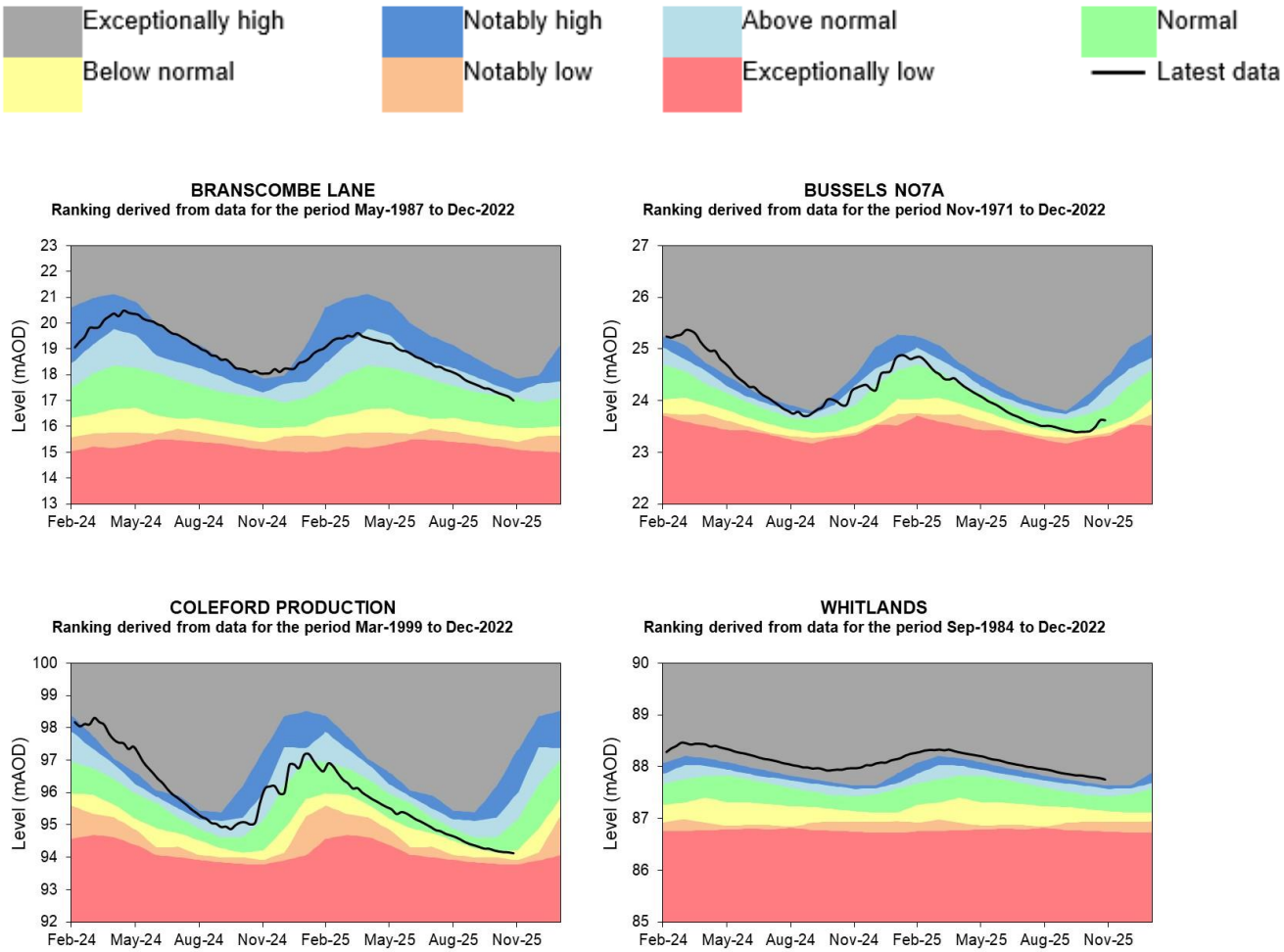
5.1 Groundwater levels map

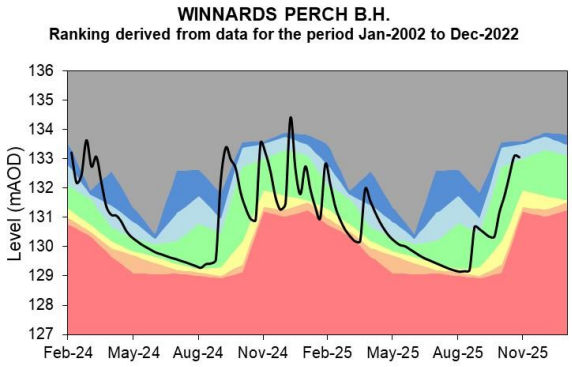
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of November 2025, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic November levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

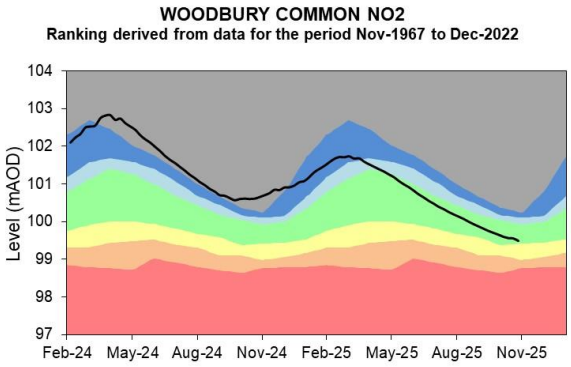


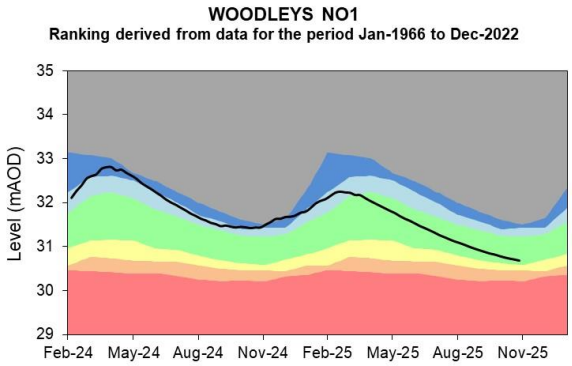
5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.





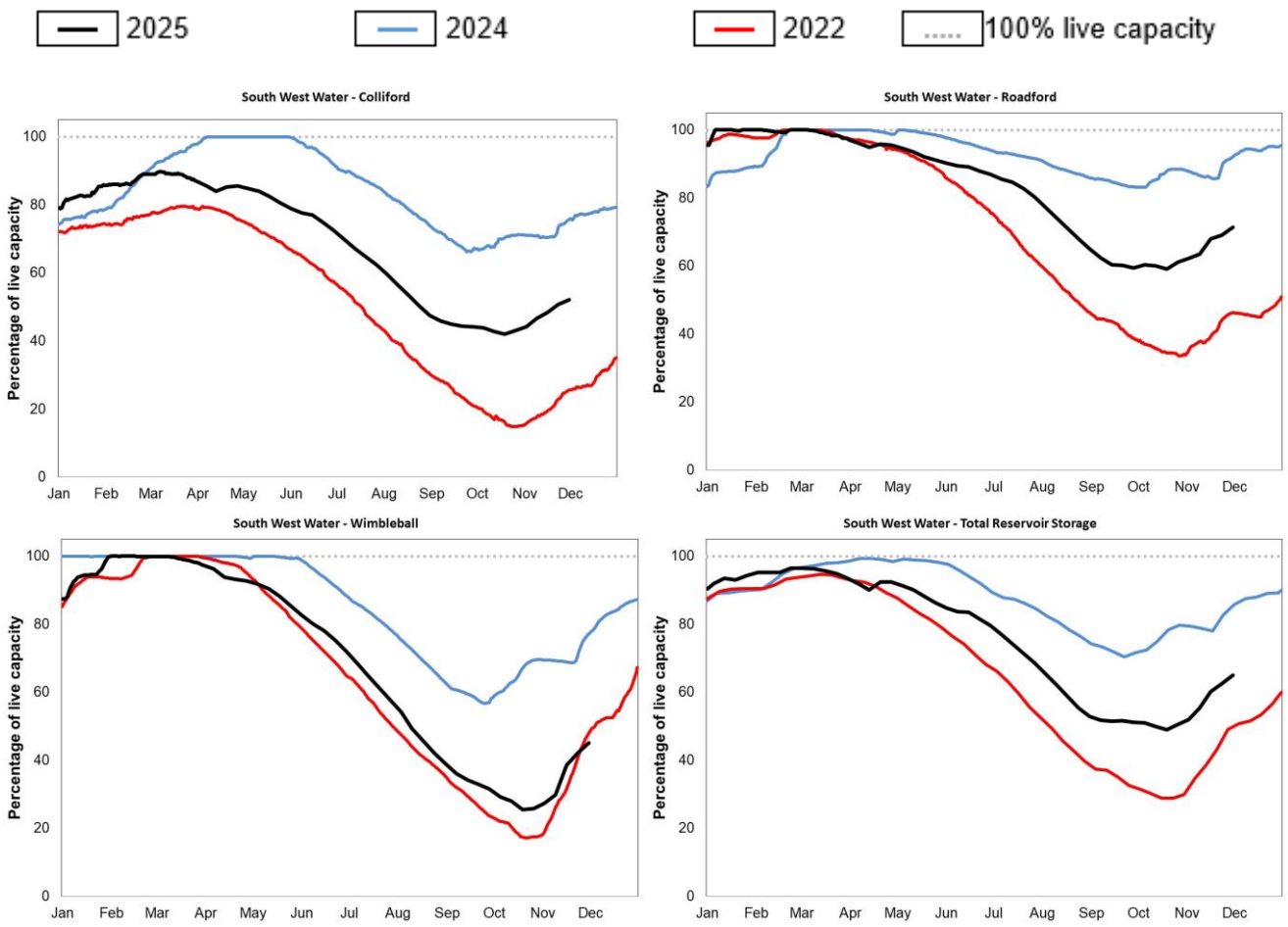




Source: Environment Agency, 2025.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month reservoir storage compared to previous year and a historic drought year. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs vary in length.



(Source: South West Water).

7 Glossary

7.1 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 1991 to 2020. 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).

7.2 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.

8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Nov 2025 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Nov 2025 band	Sep 2025 to November cumulative band	Jun 2025 to November cumulative band	Dec 2024 to November cumulative band
Avon Dart And Erme	126	Above Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Exe	129	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Fal And St Austell	134	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
North Cornwall	123	Above Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Otter Sid Axe And Lim	135	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Seaton Looe And Fowey	134	Above Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Tamar	138	Above Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Taw And North Devon Streams	124	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Teign And Torbay	128	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal

Hydrological area	Nov 2025 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Nov 2025 band	Sep 2025 to November cumulative band	Jun 2025 to November cumulative band	Dec 2024 to November cumulative band
Torridge And Hartland Streams	124	Above Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
West Cornwall	136	Above Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Nov 2025 band	Oct 2025 band
Austins Bridge	Dart	Dart	Above normal	Normal
Bellever	East Dart	Dart	Above normal	Normal
Bodmin Dunmere	Camel	Camel	Above normal	Normal
Chudleigh Bridge	Teign	Teign Upper	Normal	Below normal
Dotton	Otter	Otter	Normal	Normal
Gunnislake	Tamar	Tamar Lower	Normal	Normal
Gwills	Gannel	Gannel	Above normal	Normal
Restormel	Fowey	Fowey	Above normal	Normal
St Erth	Hayle	Hayle	Normal	Normal
Thorverton	Exe	Exe Lower	Above normal	Normal
Torrington	Torridge	Torridge Middle	Normal	Normal
Truro	Kenwyn	Tresillian Trevella Kenwyn	Above normal	Normal
Umberleigh	Taw	Taw Middle	Normal	Normal
Whitford	Axe	Axe Devon Middle	Above normal	Normal

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Nov 2025 band	End of Oct 2025 band
Branscombe Lane	Dawlish Sandstone	Normal	Above normal
Bussels No7a	Dawlish Sandstone	Normal	Normal
Coleford Production	Permian Breccias And Sandstones	Below normal	Normal
Whitlands	Upper Greensand	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Winnards Perch B.h.	Staddon Formation	Above normal	Normal
Woodbury Common No2	Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds	Normal	Normal
Woodleys No1	Otterton Sandstone Formation	Normal	Normal

8.4 Hydrological Areas