# Monthly water situation report: Devon and Cornwall Area

## 1 Summary - December 2025

Devon and Cornwall received 142% of the December long term average (LTA) rainfall, which was notably high for the time of year. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) increased overall during December. Monthly mean river flows were above normal to exceptionally high for the time of year across the area. Groundwater levels ended the month between normal and exceptionally high for the time of year. Total reservoir storage across Devon and Cornwall on 28 December was 80%, with Wimbleball, Colliford and Roadford at 73%, 65% and 86% respectively.

### 1.1 Rainfall

Devon and Cornwall received 216mm of rain during December (142% of the December LTA), which is notably high for the time of year. The first three weeks of December were unsettled, with 99% of the month's rain falling by the 21st December. The final week of the month was notably dry., with the highest periods of rainfall falling during the first three weeks of the month, before a notably dry final week.

All hydrological areas reported notably high rainfall for the time of year, except Taw and North Devon Streams which was normal for the time of year, and the Exe and Torridge and Hartland Streams which were above normal for the time of year.

Cumulative rainfall for the last 3 months was notably high across the area except for the Tamar, which experienced exceptionally high rainfall; and the Torridge and Hartland Streams, Taw and North Devon Streams and Exe hydrological areas, which experienced above normal rainfall. Over the last 6 to 12 months, rainfall was normal to notably high across all hydrological areas, generally trending drier towards eastern parts of Devon.

### 1.2 Soil moisture deficit

SMD decreased during the first half of December, before increasing towards the end of the month, reflecting the dry end to a generally wet month. SMD remained close to the LTA, ranging from 5mm lower (wetter) to 5mm higher (drier) than the long term average deficit for December across the area. The average SMD deficit at the end of December was below 10mm across the whole area.

## 1.3 River flows

December monthly mean river flows ranged from above normal to exceptionally high across Devon, with all sites in Cornwall experiencing exceptionally high flows except the Tamar (Gunnislake) which was notably high.

All sites showed exceptionally high daily flows in the first three weeks of the month, before receding in the final week. Daily mean flows on 31 December ranged from normal to below low across Devon and Cornwall, except for the Torridge (Torrington) which ended the month notably low.

## 1.4 Groundwater levels

On 31 December, groundwater levels were classed as follows:

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

Groundwater levels at all sites except Whitlands have begun their seasonal recovery after their summer and autumn recession. Winnards Perch's hydrograph is very 'noisy', as levels at this site respond quickly to rainfall variations due to the low storage of the Secondary Aquifer which it monitors.

## 1.5 Reservoir stocks

Total reservoir storage was 80% on 28 December, which is an overall increase of 15% since 30 November. This is higher than storage at the same time in 2022 (the most recent drought year), which was 57%. On 28 December, storage at Wimbleball, Colliford and Roadford was 73%, 65% and 86% respectively, compared to 63%, 33% and 49% at the same time in 2022.

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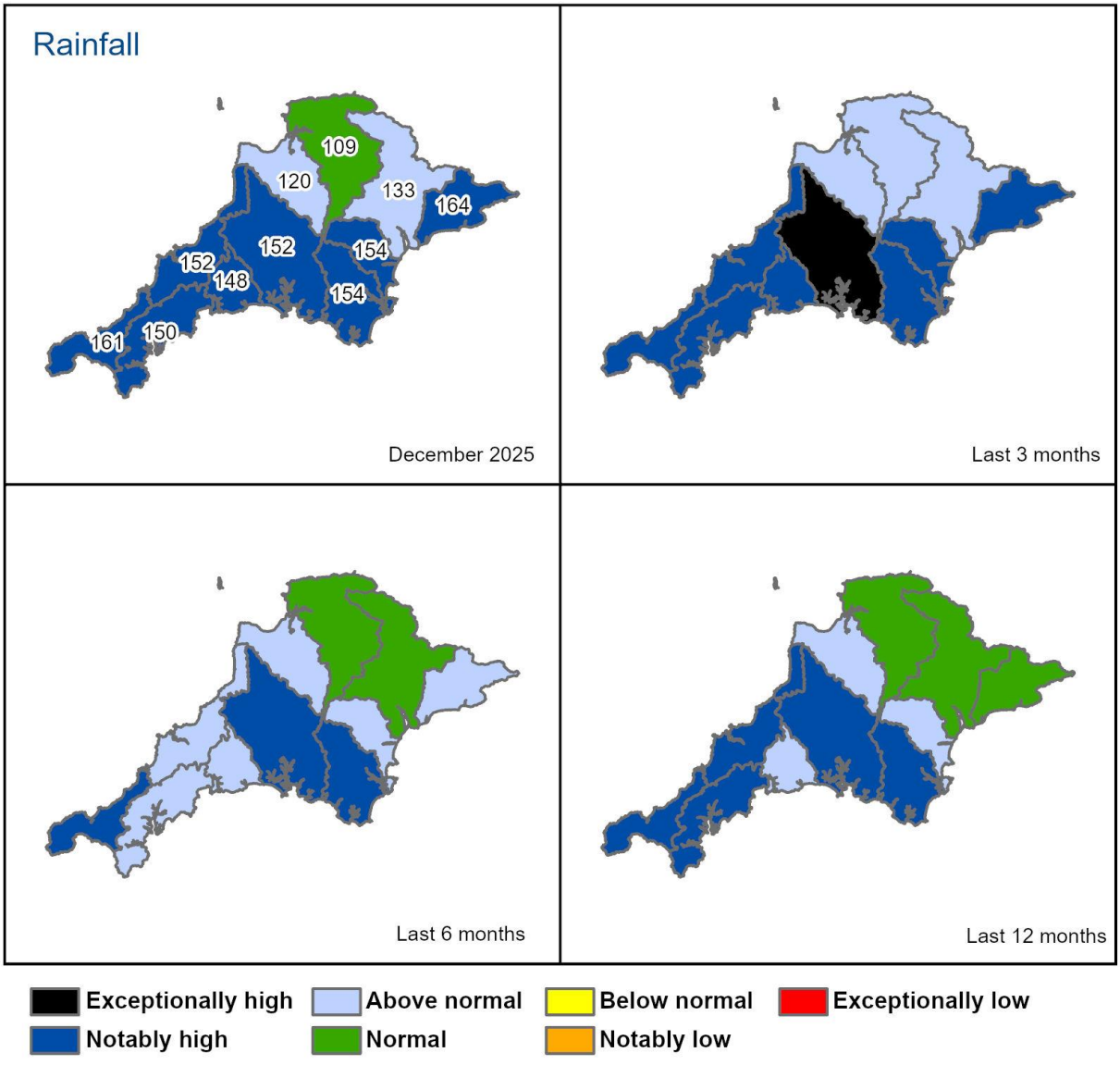
# 2 Rainfall

## 2.1 Rainfall map

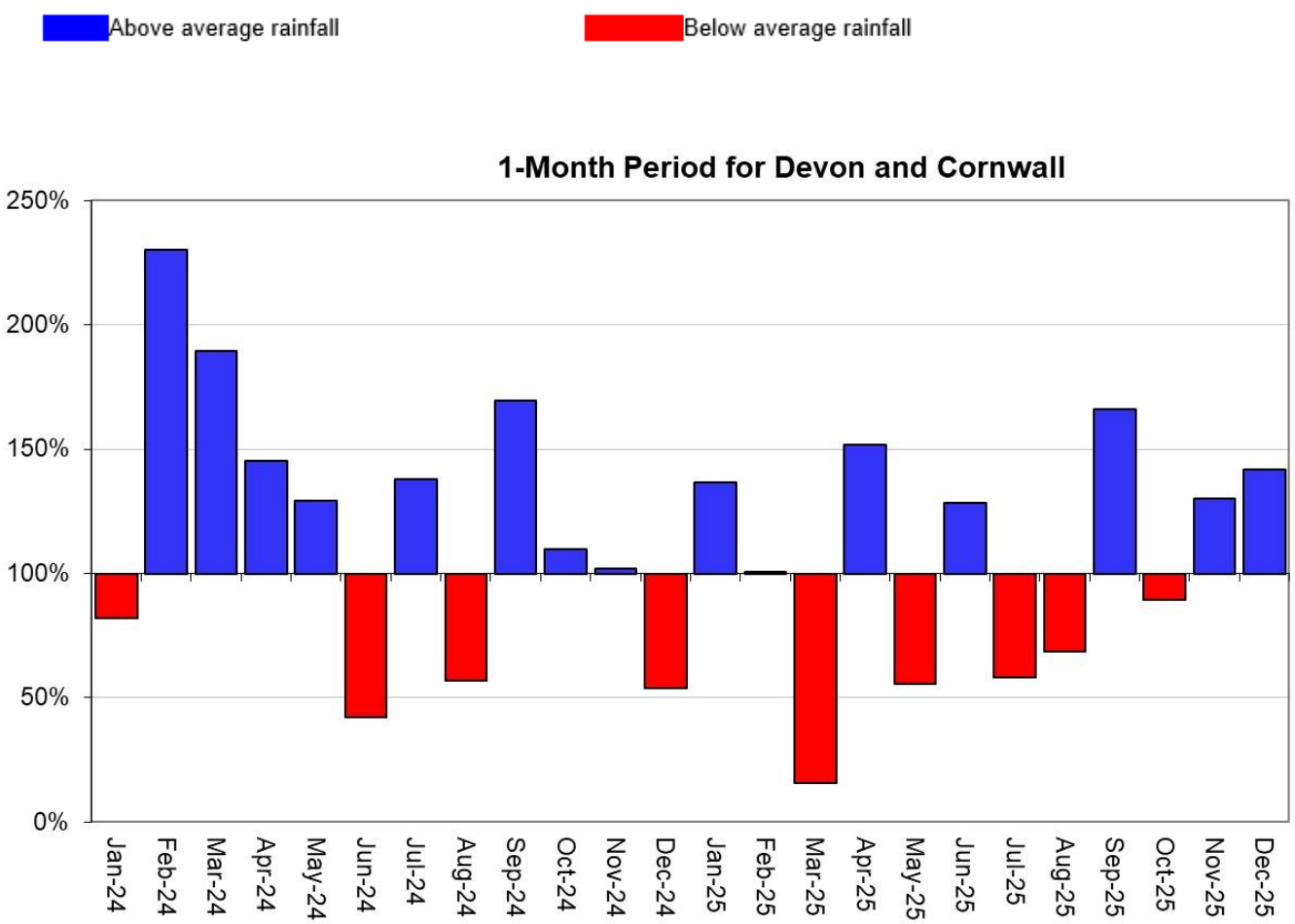
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 December 2025), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.




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, 2026). 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, 2026).

## 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.

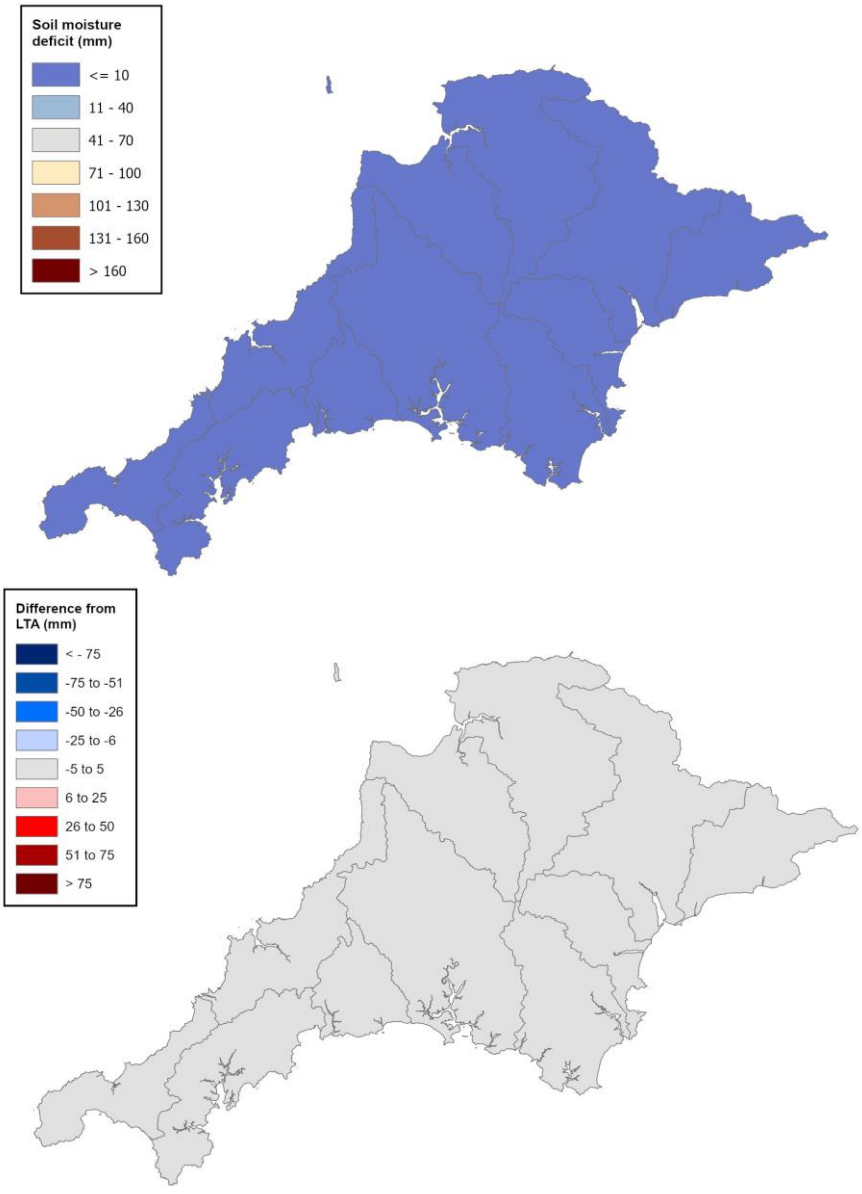



Rainfall data for 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to 2023, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

# 3 Soil moisture deficit

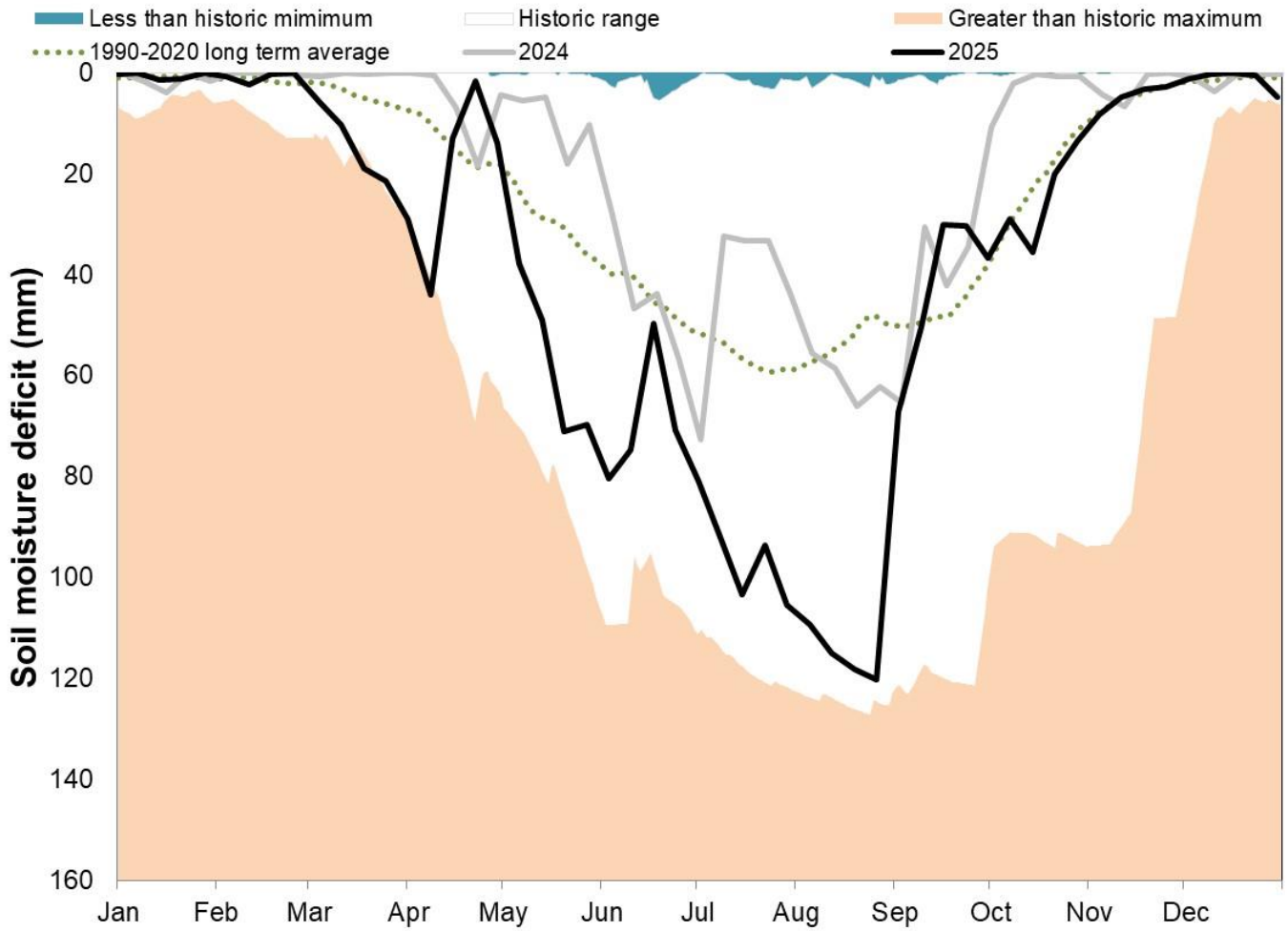
## 3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Top map shows soil moisture deficit for week ending 30 December 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

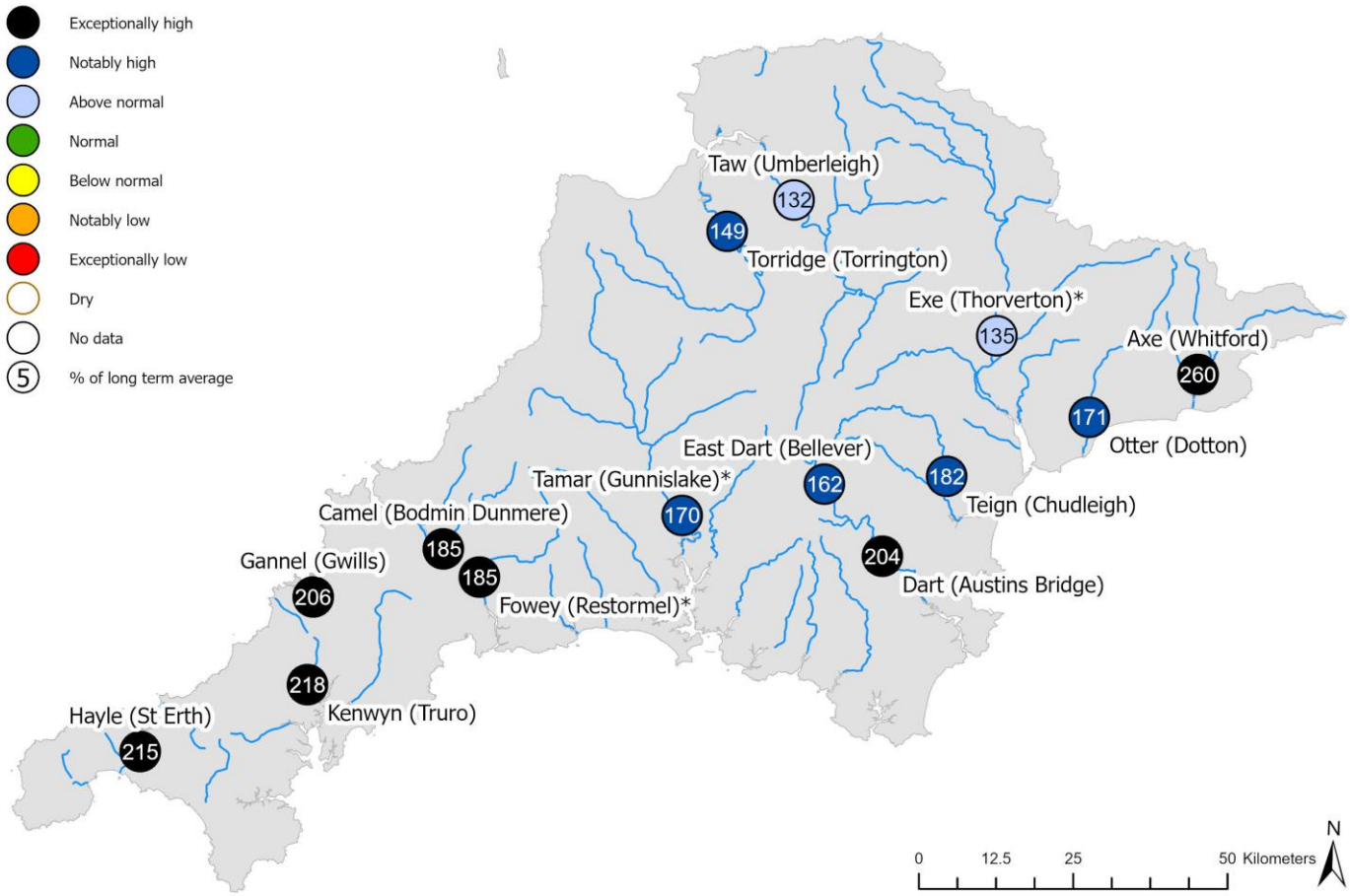
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to previous year, maximum, minimum, and 1991 to 2020 long term average. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



# 4 River flows

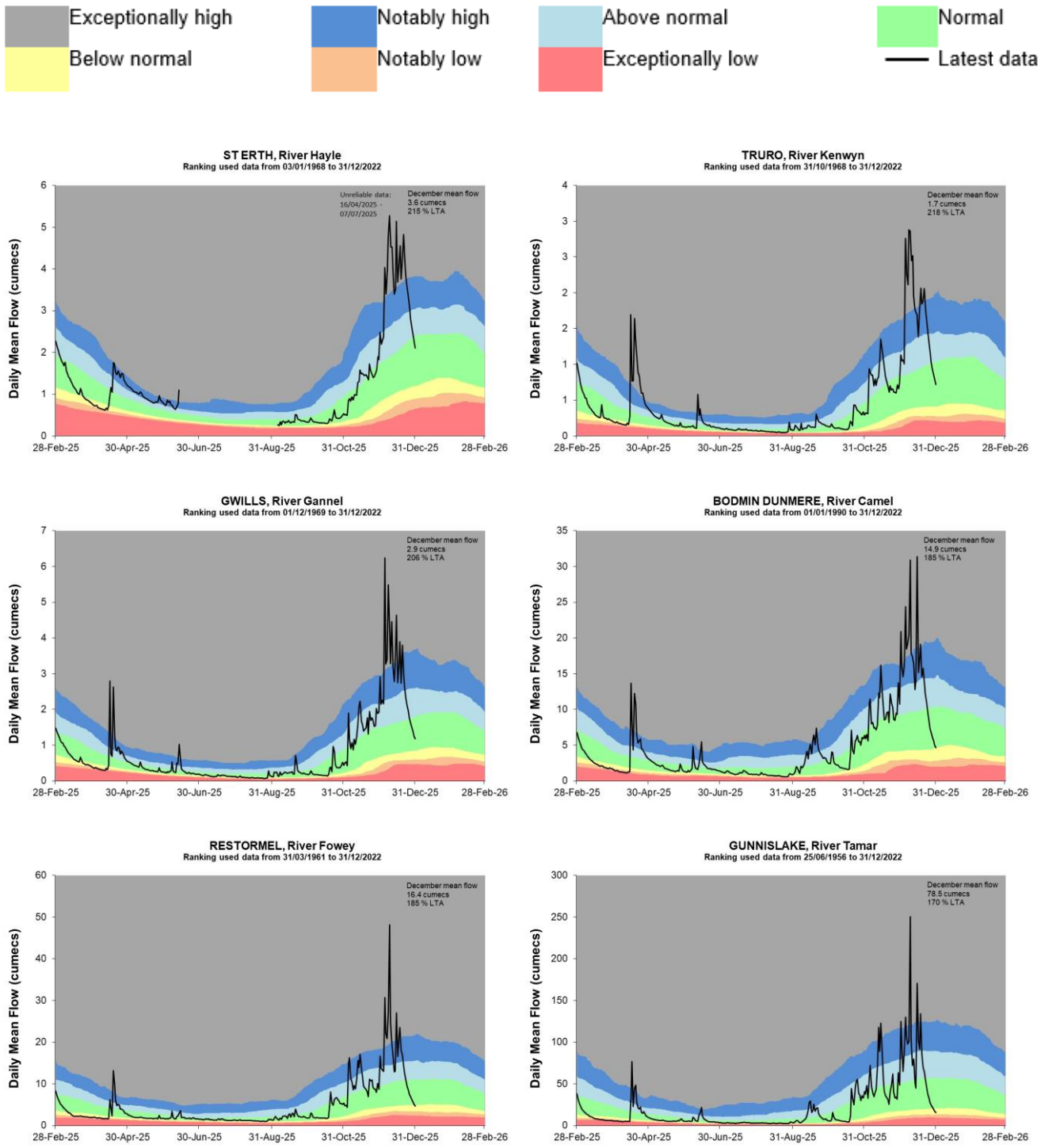
## 4.1 River flows map

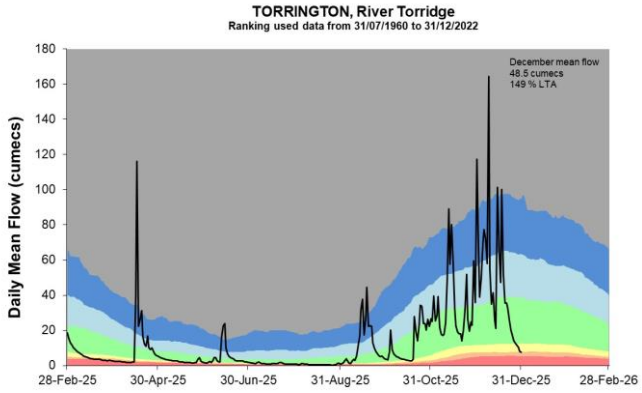
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for December 2025, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic December monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

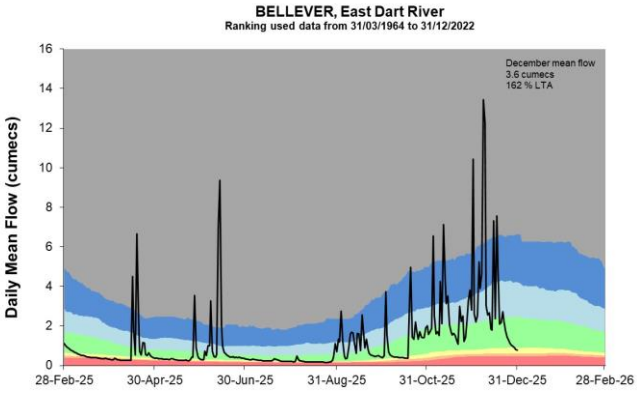


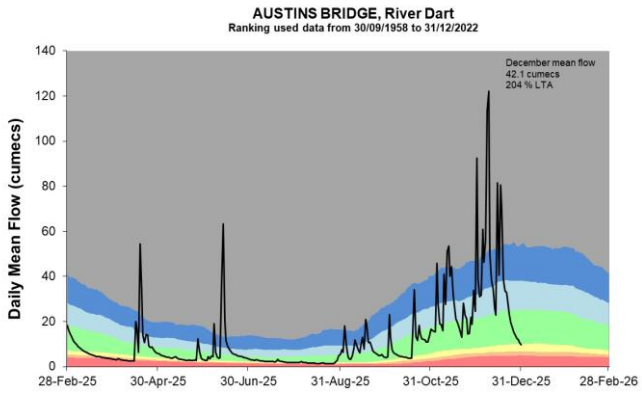
## 4.2 River flow charts

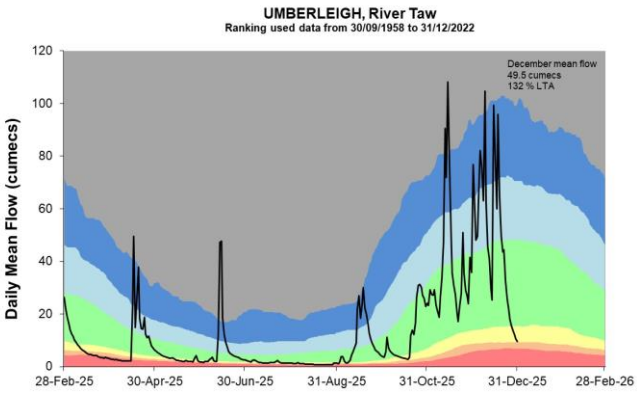
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for indicator sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

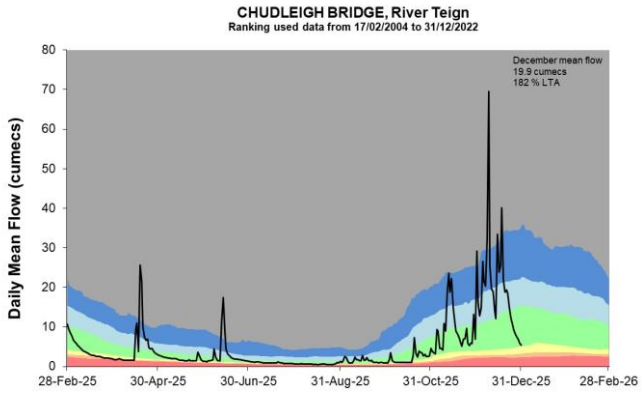


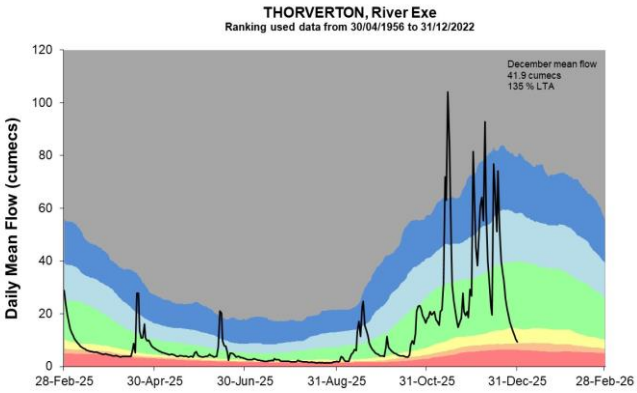


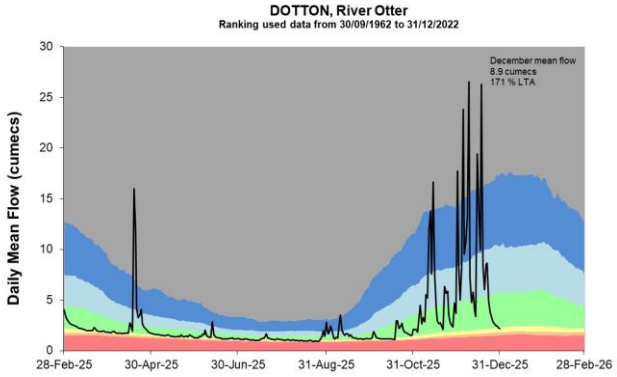



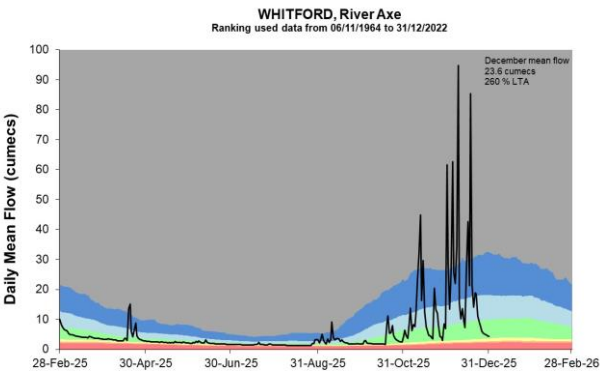



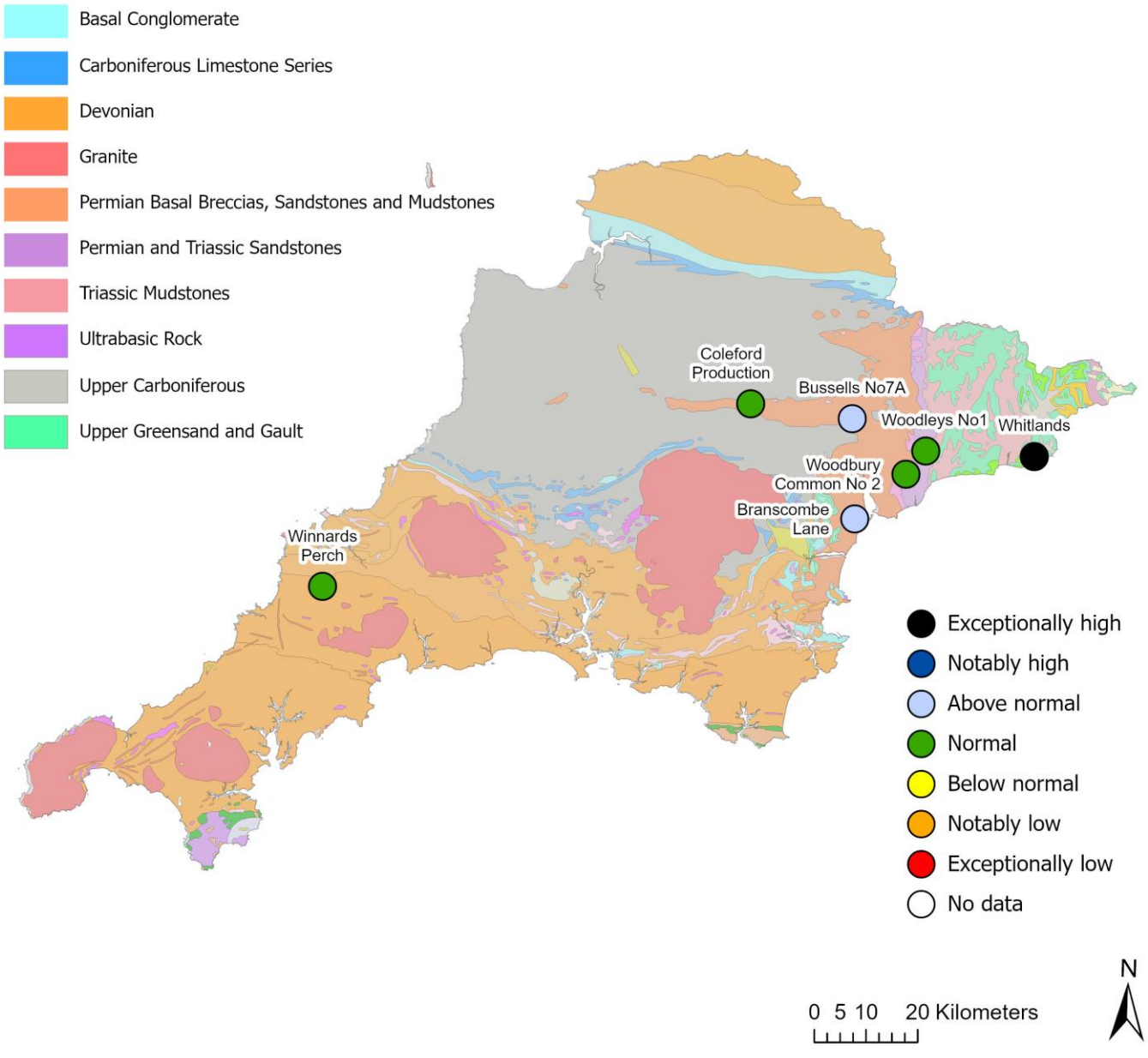




Source: Environment Agency.

# 5 Groundwater levels

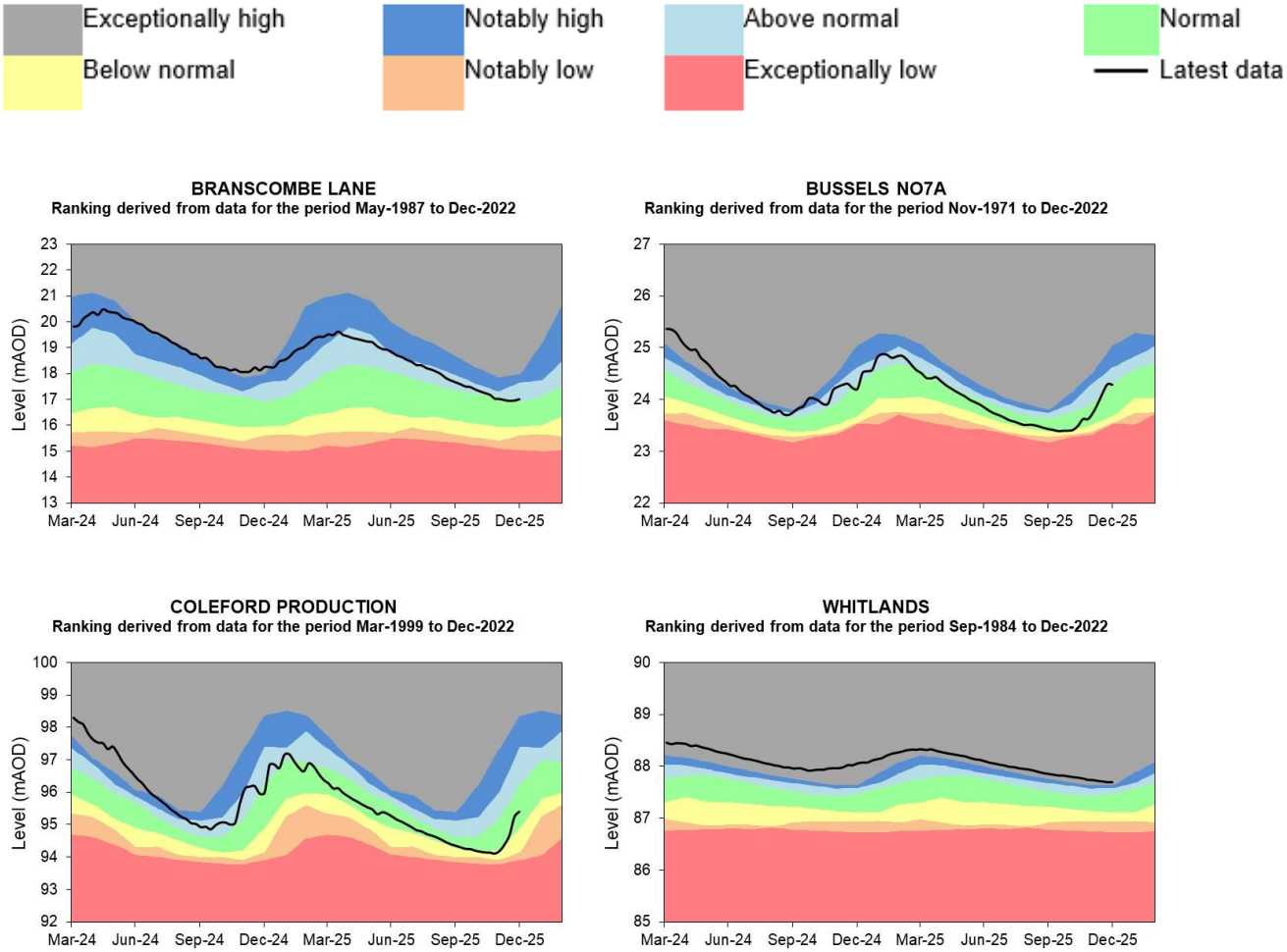
## 5.1 Groundwater levels map

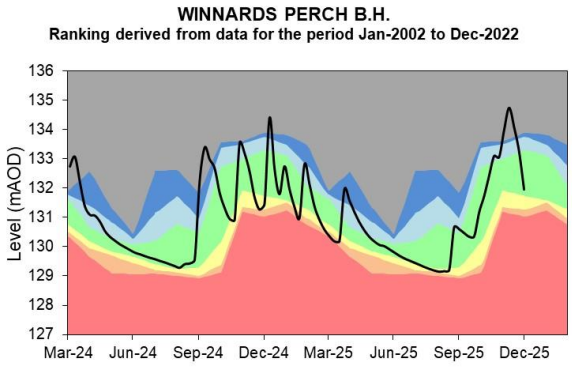
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of December 2025, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic December levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

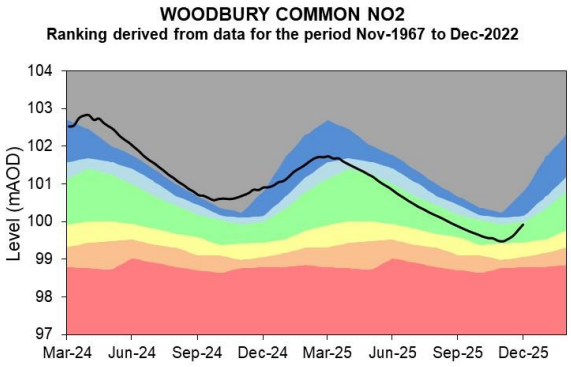


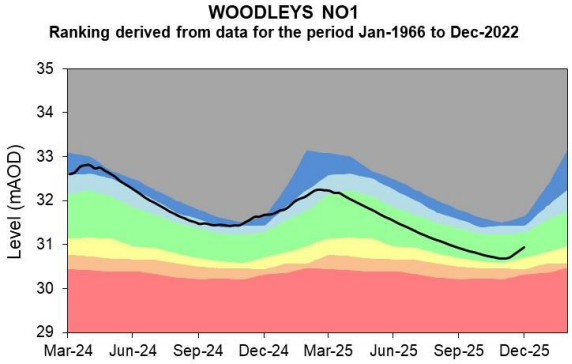
## 5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.





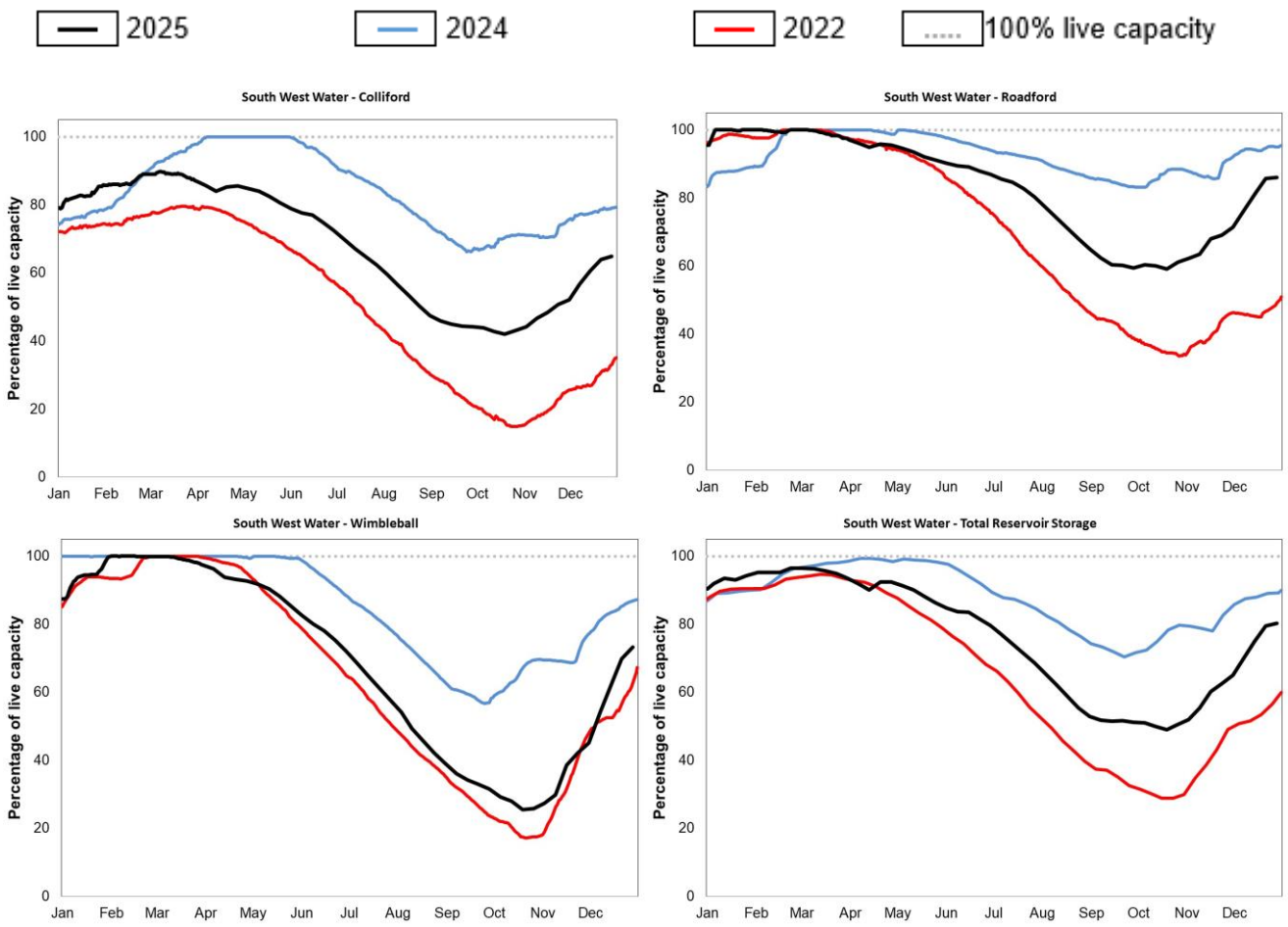




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

# 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 | Dec 2025 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020 | Dec 2025 band | Oct 2025 to December cumulative band | Jul 2025 to December cumulative band | Jan 2025 to December cumulative band |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon Dart And Erme | 154 | Notably High | Notably high | Notably high | Notably high |
| Exe | 133 | Above Normal | Above normal | Normal | Normal |
| Fal And St Austell | 150 | Notably High | Notably high | Above normal | Notably high |
| North Cornwall | 152 | Notably High | Notably high | Above normal | Notably high |
| Otter Sid Axe And Lim | 164 | Notably High | Notably high | Above normal | Normal |
| Seaton Looe And Fowey | 148 | Notably High | Notably high | Above normal | Above normal |
| Tamar | 152 | Notably High | Exceptionally high | Notably high | Notably high |
| Taw And North Devon Streams | 109 | Normal | Above normal | Normal | Normal |
| Teign And Torbay | 154 | Notably High | Notably high | Above normal | Above normal |

| Hydrological area | Dec 2025 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020 | Dec 2025 band | Oct 2025 to December cumulative band | Jul 2025 to December cumulative band | Jan 2025 to December cumulative band |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Torridge And Hartland Streams | 120 | Above Normal | Above normal | Above normal | Above normal |
| West Cornwall | 161 | Notably High | Notably high | Notably high | Notably high |

## 8.2 River Flows Table

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

## 8.3 Groundwater table

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

## 8.2 Hydrological Areas