Monthly water situation report: Wessex Area

1 Summary - December 2025

December was a second consecutive wet month with an average of 141mm of rain in Wessex, 139% of the long term average (LTA). Most rain in December fell towards the beginning and the middle of the month with little to none after 21 December. Soil moisture deficit (SMD), decreased through most of December but rose slightly at the end of the month due to the dry weather. Monthly mean flows recorded across Wessex in December were largely notably to exceptionally high except for in the Hampshire Avon catchment where flows were normal. Daily mean flows for most sites peaked earlier in the month and fell towards the end of December in response to the drier weather. Most groundwater sites on the Chalk aquifer reported normal levels at the end of the month. Groundwater levels in the rest of Wessex were largely normal or above normal. The two outliers were Kingston Russell Road (monitoring the Chalk) and Didmarton (monitoring the Inferior Oolite) which both recorded notably high levels. Overall reservoir levels for Wessex Water were close to 100% capacity at the end of December while for Bristol Water, levels were approximately 90% capacity.

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 141mm rain fell across Wessex in December (139% of the LTA). Most rain fell during two periods in the month, with 47% of the month's rain between 1 and 8 December and another 48% of the month's rain fell between 14 and 21 December. The highest relative rainfall was recorded in the Dorset Frome and West Dorset Streams which both received 169% of the LTA. The lowest relative rainfall was recorded in the West Somerset Streams which received 113% of the LTA. In December most hydrological areas in Wessex received above normal rainfall except for four hydrological areas to the south and west which received notably high rainfall and the West Somerset Streams and Mendips and Chew areas which received normal rainfall.

Over the past 3 months, most hydrological areas received above normal rainfall except for 4 which were notably high and 2 where were normal. Over the last 6 months, most areas of Wessex received normal rainfall except for a few areas to the north and south which received above normal rainfall. In the last 12 months all areas received normal rainfall.

1.2 Soil moisture

Soil moisture deficit (SMD) decreased through most of December but started to rise during the dry last week of the month. At the end of December SMD for Wessex was under 10mm for almost all of Wessex except the Bourne and Lower Hampshire Avon which were between 10-20mm. SMD at the end of December was within 5mm of the LTA for most hydrological areas

in Wessex except for the Lower Hampshire Avon and Wylye and Nadder areas where SMD is between 6-25mm greater than the LTA.

1.3 River flows

In December, most flow sites in Wessex recorded either notably or exceptionally high mean flows. Both the Dorset Frome at East Stoke Combined and Dorset Stour at Hammoon recorded the highest monthly mean flows for December on record. The main exceptions were flow sites in the Hampshire Avon catchment and the Bristol Avon at Bathford which recorded normal flows. The Hampshire Avon at Amesbury and the Wylye at South Newton were the only sites to record monthly mean flows below 100% of the LTA due to lower groundwater levels in the Salisbury Plain area. Daily mean flows for most sites peaked earlier in the month and fell towards the end of December in response to the drier weather.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of December, the majority of groundwater monitoring sites on the Chalk aquifer recorded normal levels. The exception was Kingston Russell Road to the south west of the aquifer which recorded notably high levels. While within the normal banding, Tilshead remains notably lower than other sites monitoring the Chalk and was close to returning to below normal at the end of December. Sites monitoring other geologies reported between normal and above normal levels at the end of the month except for Didmarton (monitoring the Inferior Oolite) which recorded notably high levels. Groundwater levels across most sites were rising for most of December but levelled off or started to fall at the end of the month in response to the drier weather.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Both Wessex Water and Bristol Water reservoir levels increased during December. The combined levels at the end of the month for Wessex Water were close to 100% capacity while for Bristol Water, combined levels were approximately 90% capacity. For Wessex Water levels are similar to this time last year while for Bristol Water they are slightly lower.

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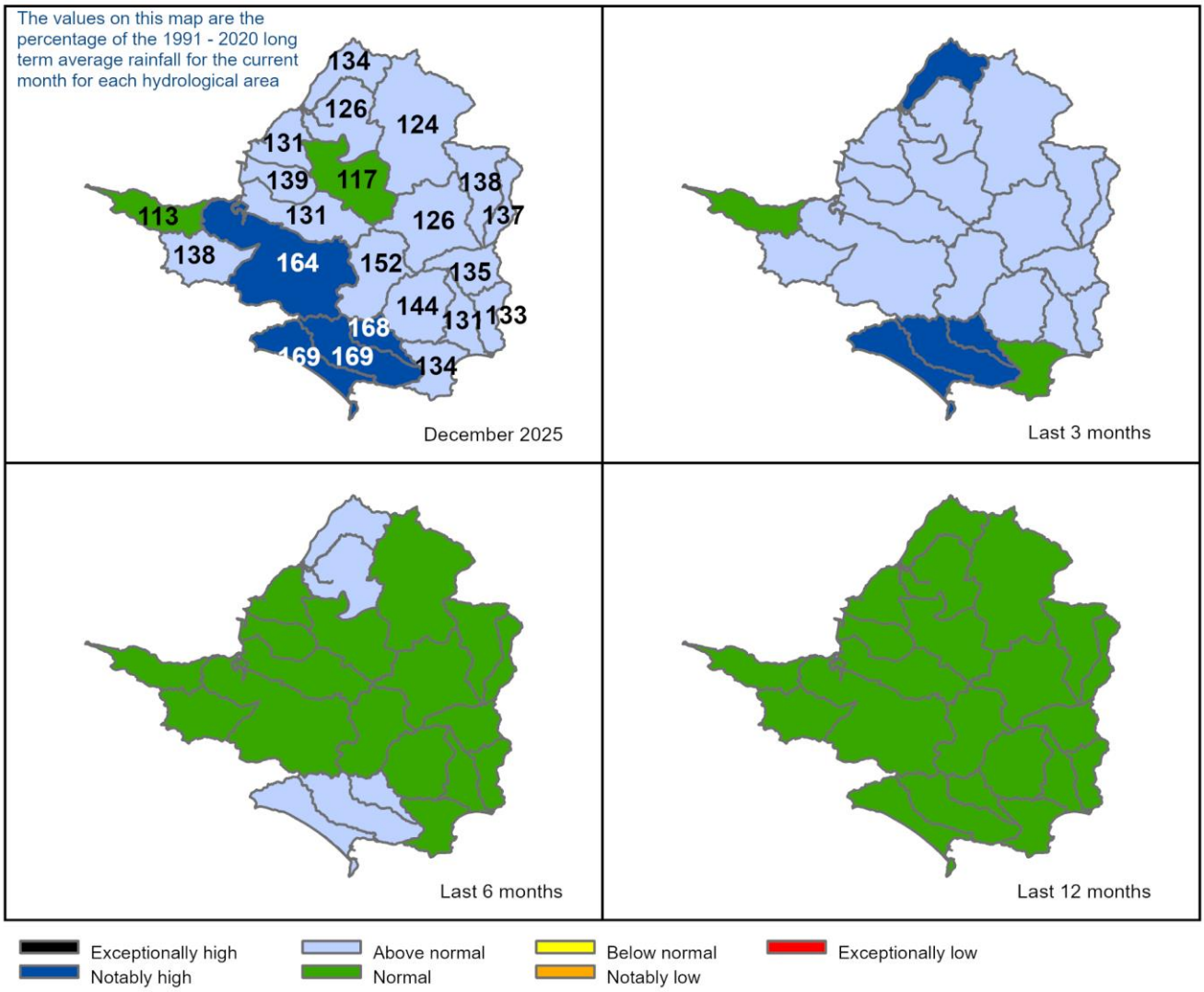
2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

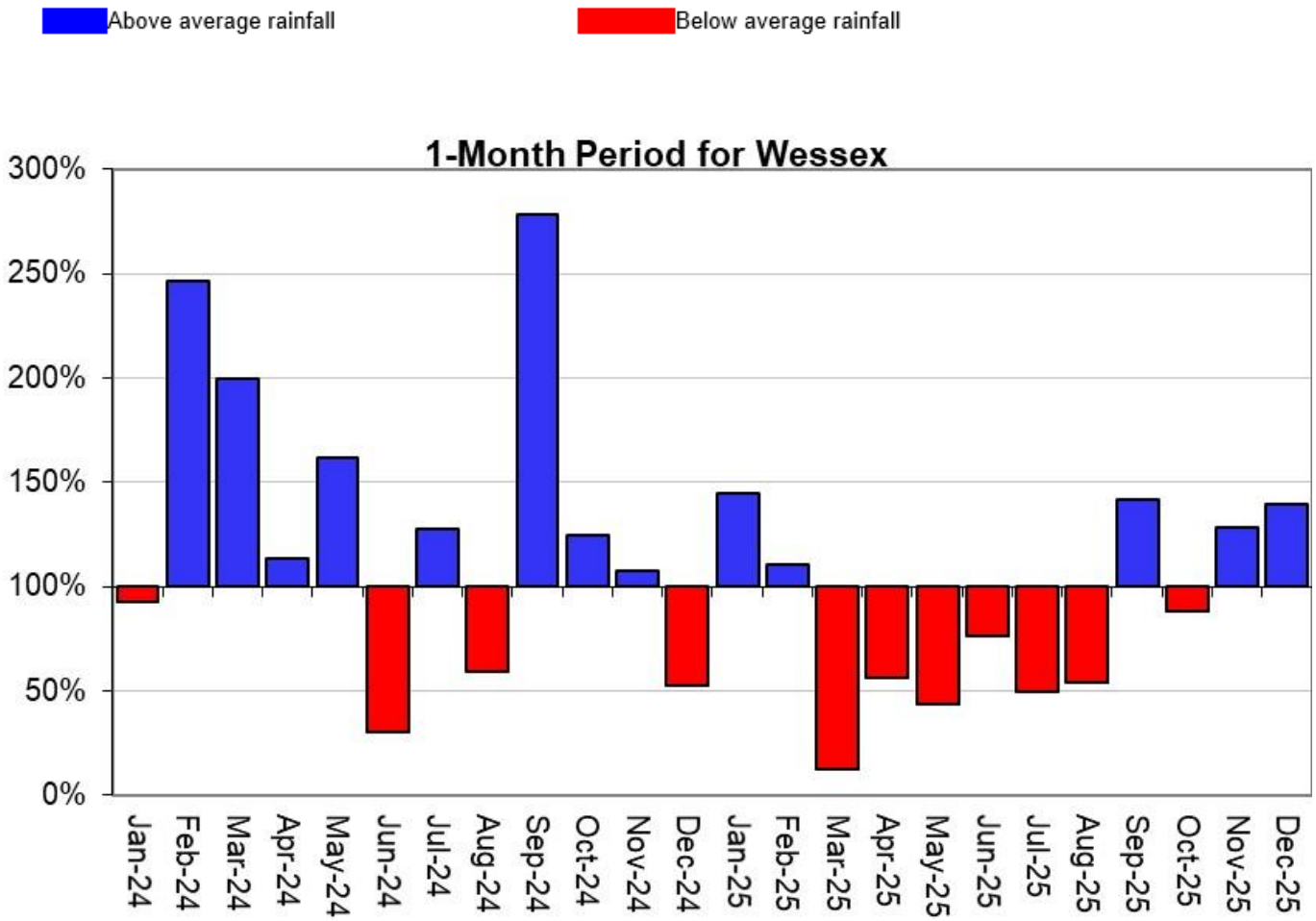
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 December 2025), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals between 1991 and 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



Rainfall data for January 2025 onwards, 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 each region and for England.

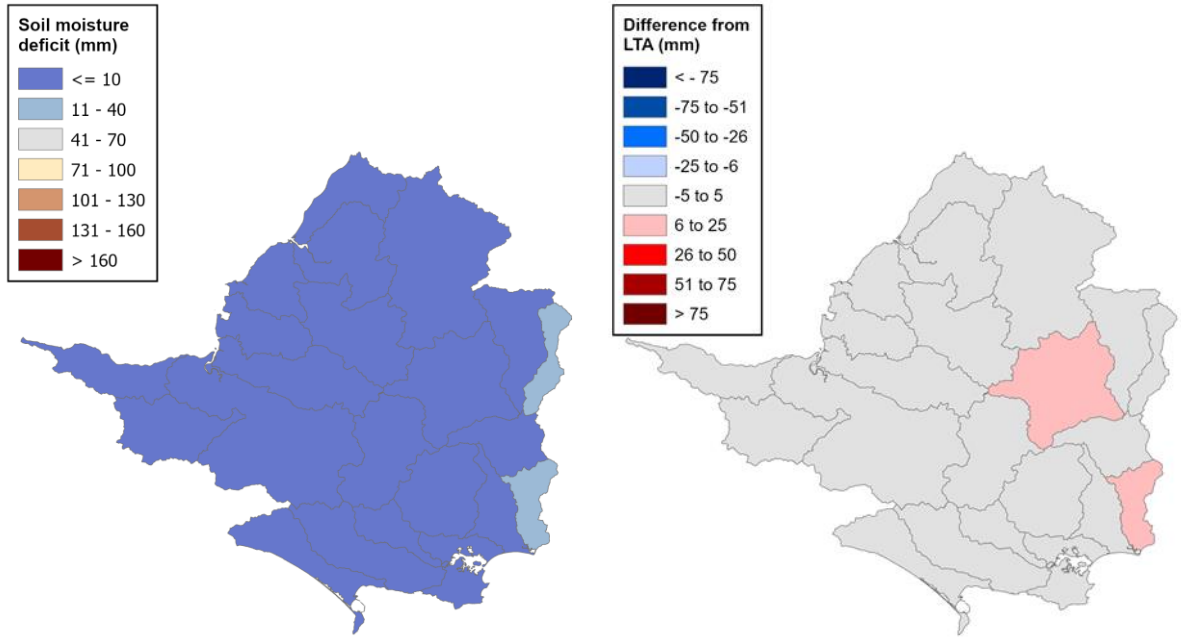


Rainfall data for January 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 100024198, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

3 Soil moisture deficit

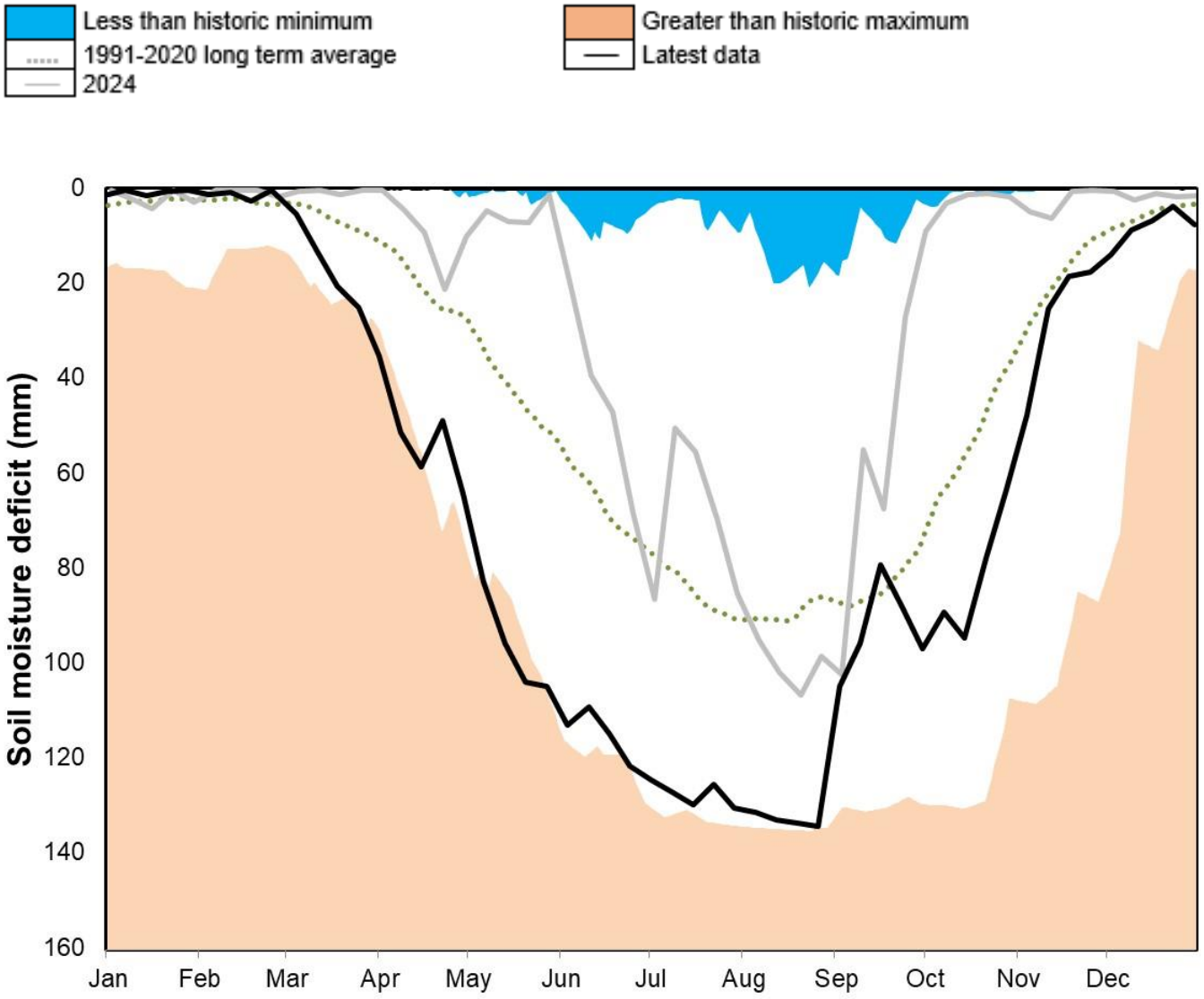
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 December 2025. Shows the difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

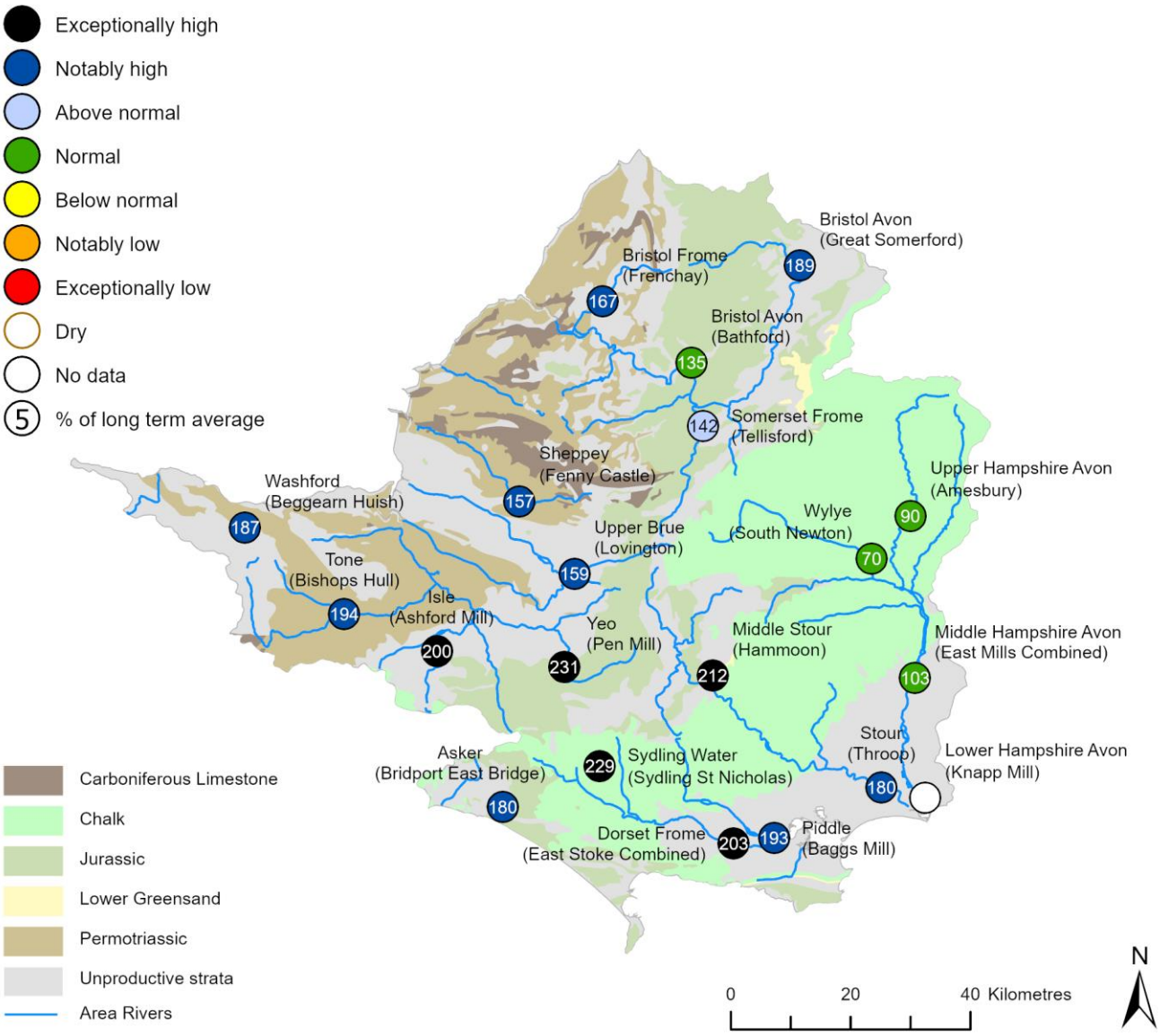
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to previous year, maximum, minimum, and 1991 to 2020 long term average. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

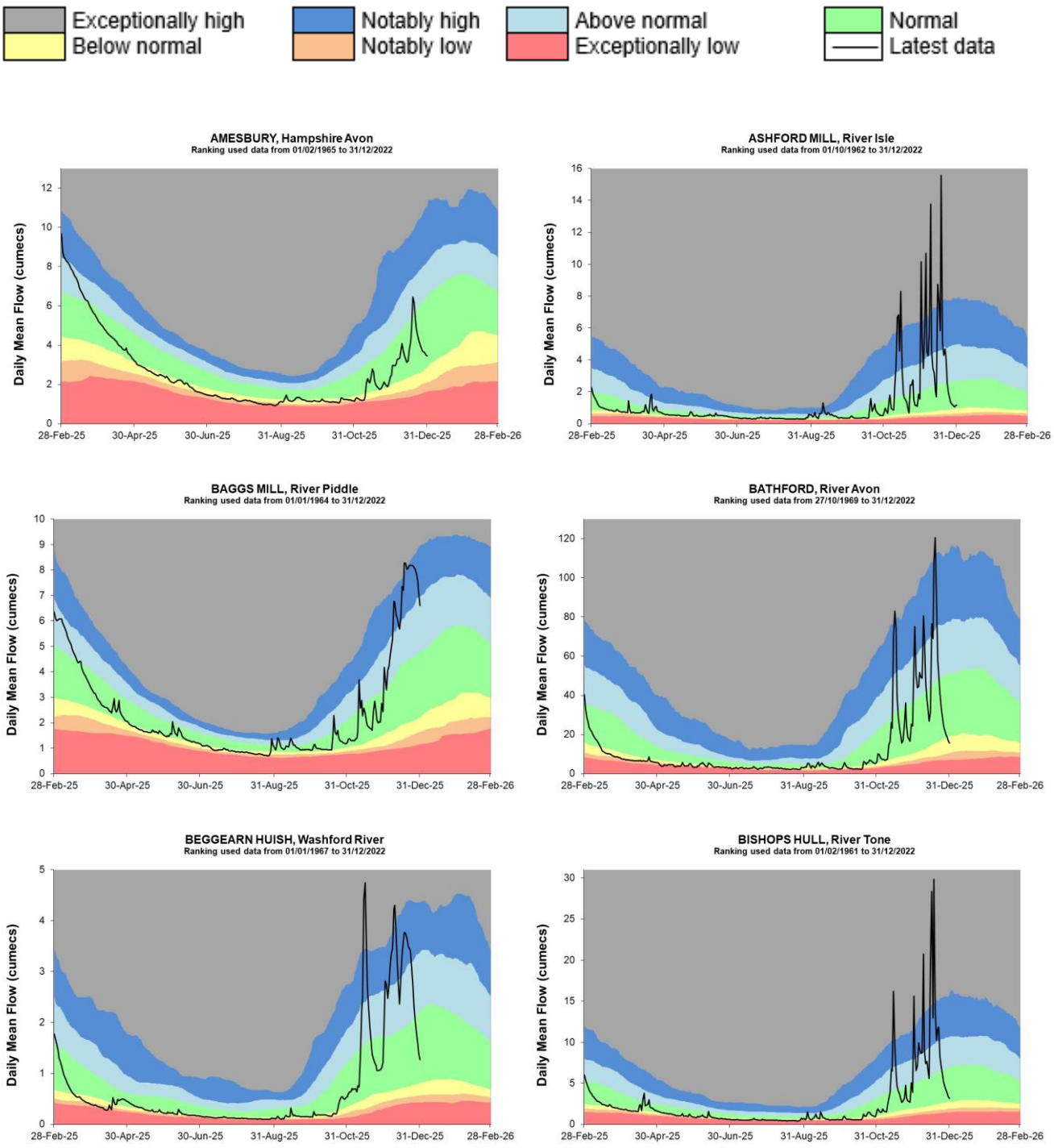
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for December 2025, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic December monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



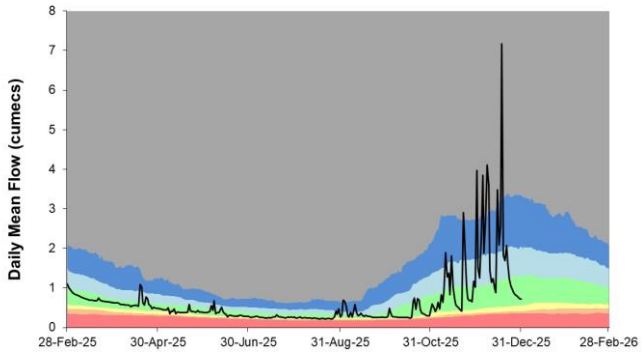
(Source: Environment Agency). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026. Knapp Mill has been omitted due to data issues

4.2 River flow charts

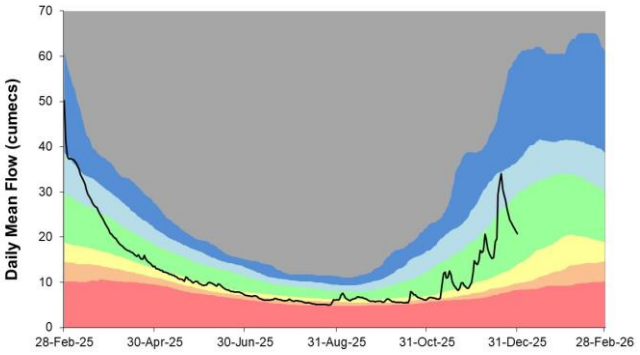
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows.



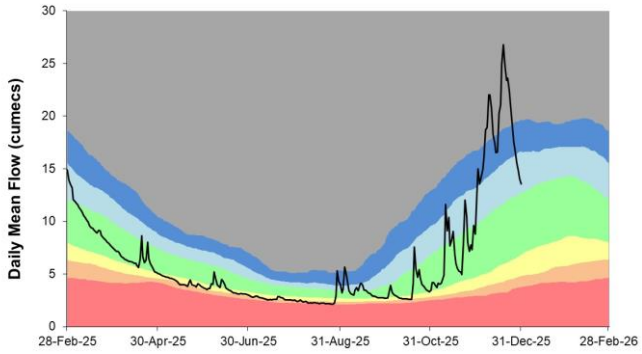
BRIDPORT EAST BRIDGE, River Asker
Ranking used data from 01/03/1996 to 31/12/2022



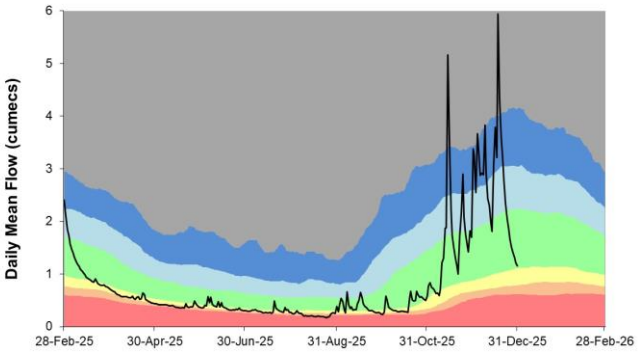
EAST MILLS COMBINED, Hampshire Avon
Ranking used data from 01/11/1965 to 31/12/2022



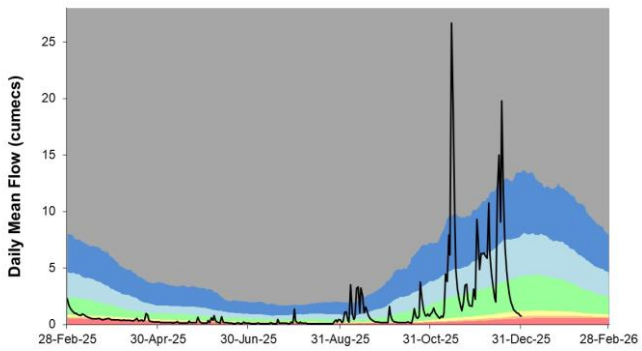
EAST STOKE COMBINED, Dorset Frome
Ranking used data from 01/10/1965 to 31/12/2022



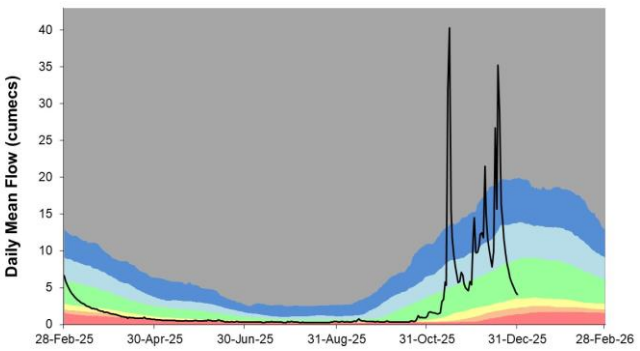
FENNY CASTLE , River Sheppey
Ranking used data from 01/01/1964 to 31/12/2022



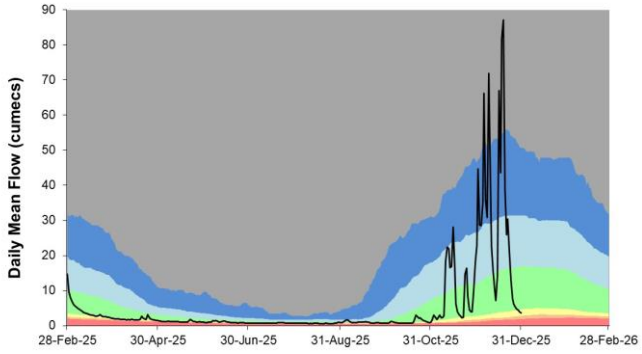
FRENCHAY, Bristol Frome
Ranking used data from 01/09/1961 to 31/12/2022



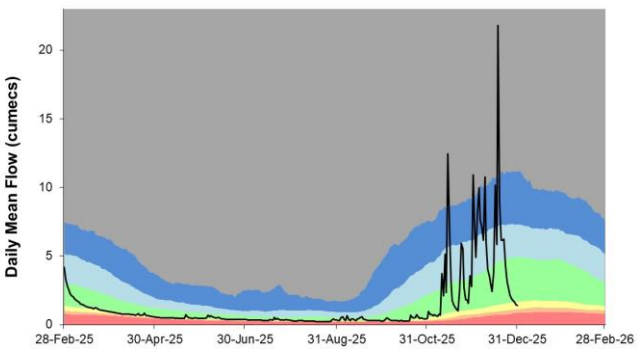
GREAT SOMERFORD, River Avon
Ranking used data from 16/12/1963 to 31/12/2022

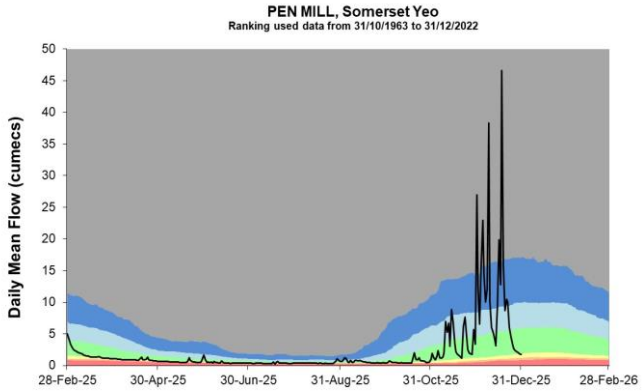


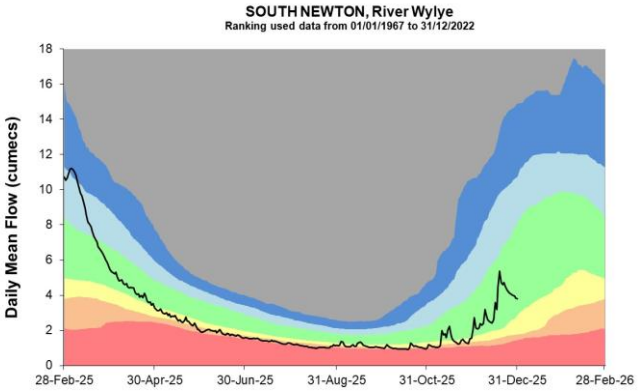
HAMMOON, River Stour
Ranking used data from 01/03/1968 to 31/12/2022

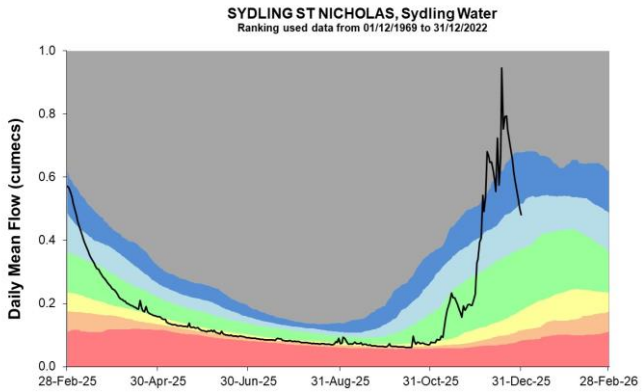


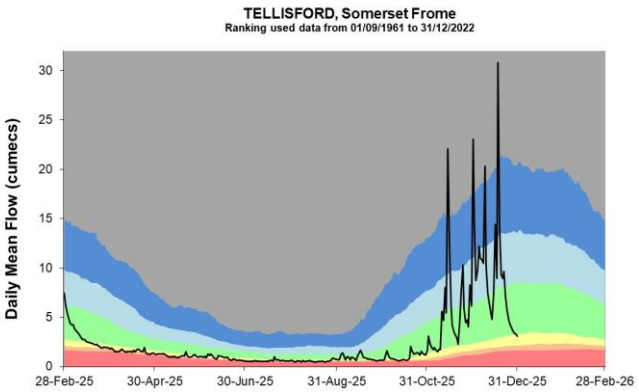
LOVINGTON, River Brue
Ranking used data from 01/10/1964 to 31/12/2022

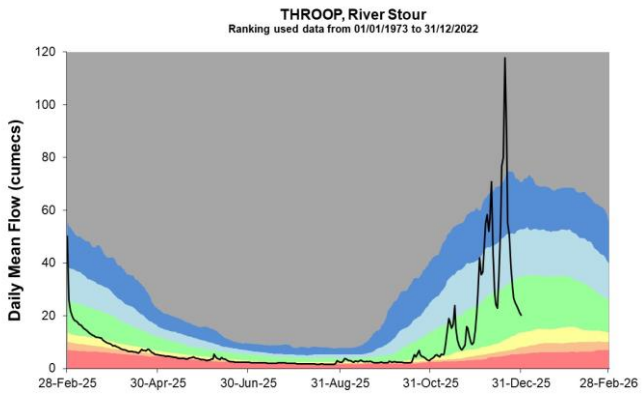










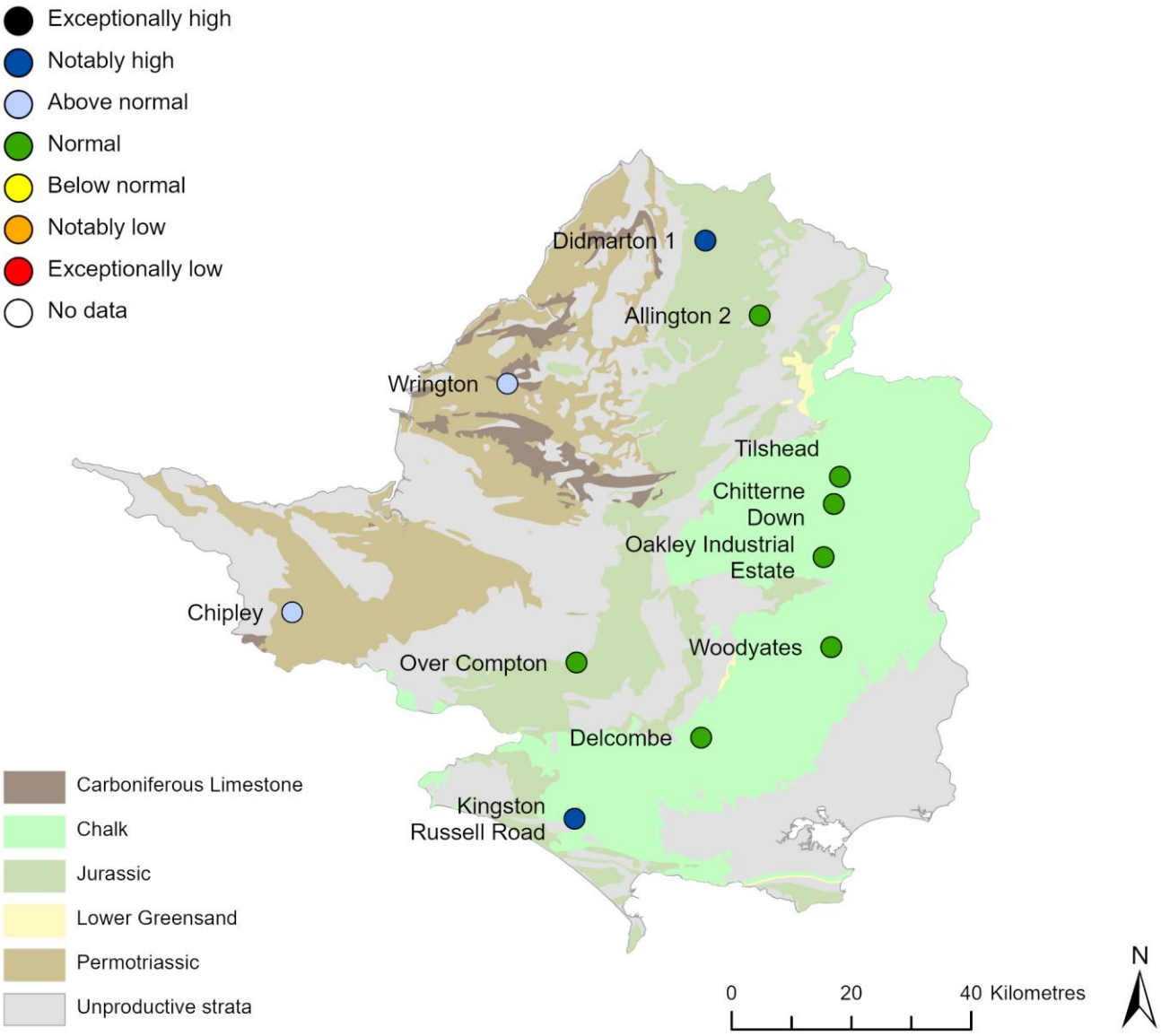


Source: Environment Agency, 2026. Knapp Mill has been omitted due to data issues.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

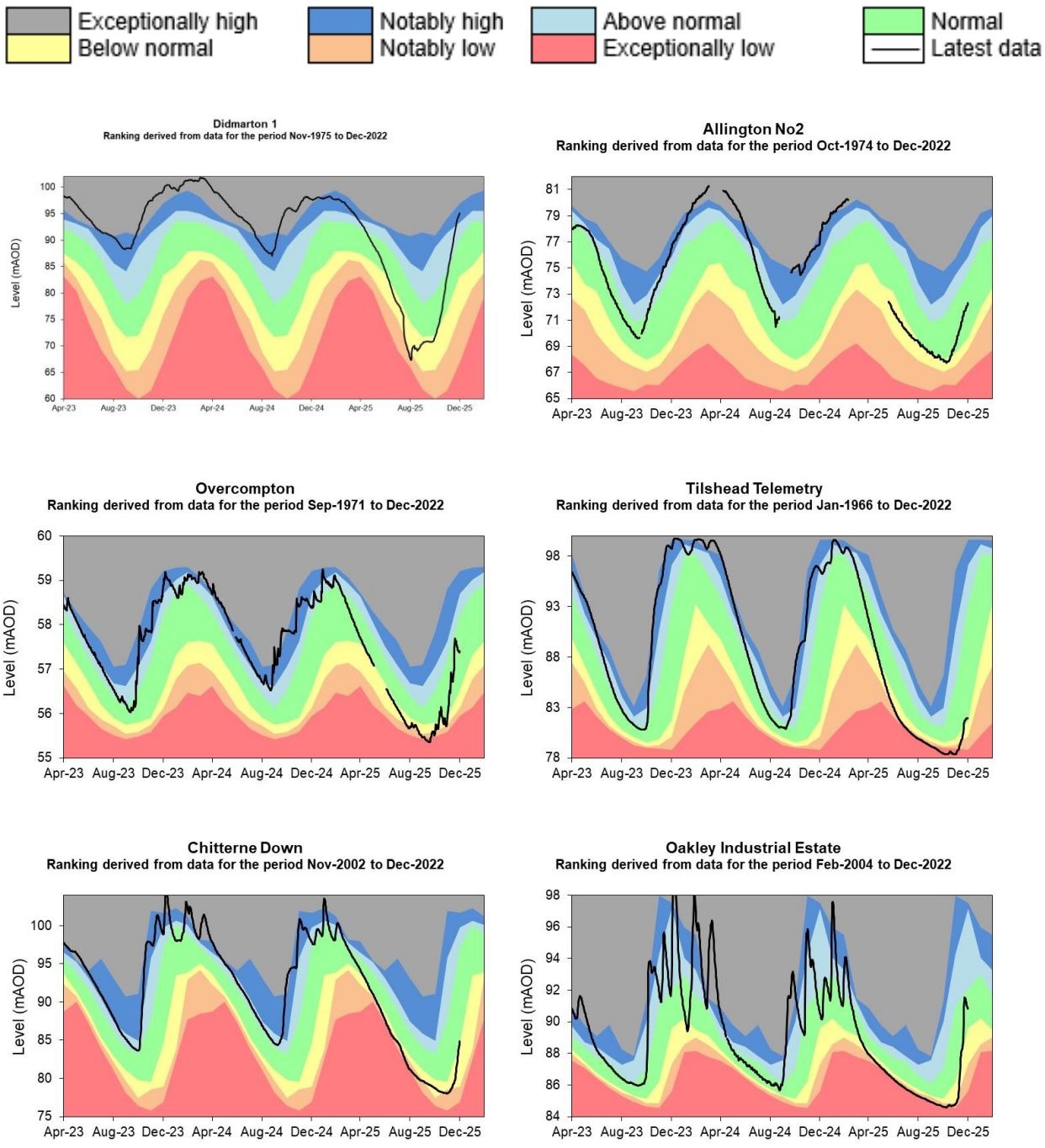
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of December 2025, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic December levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

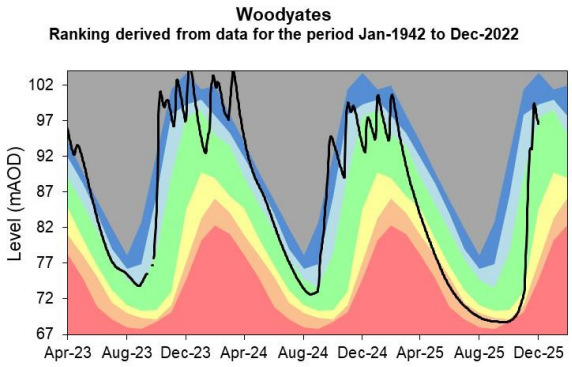


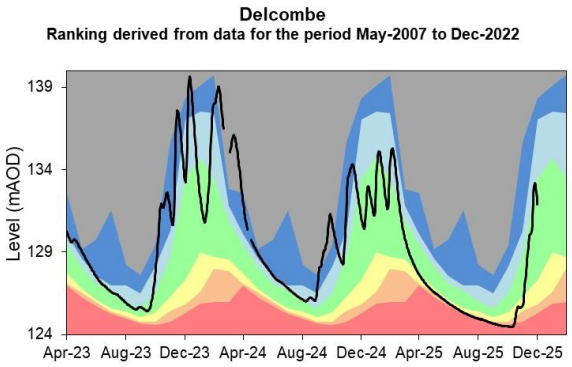
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

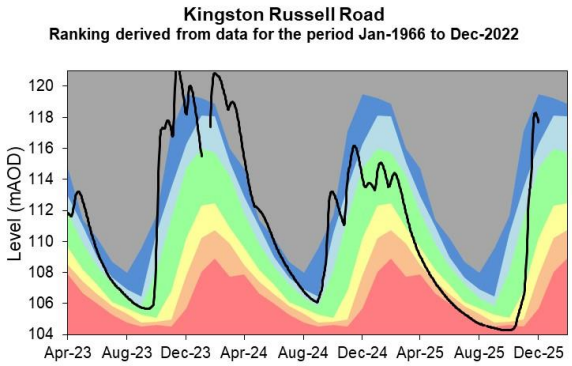
5.2 Groundwater level charts

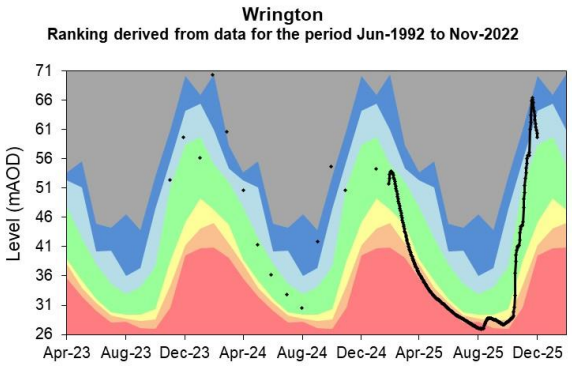
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 34 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels.

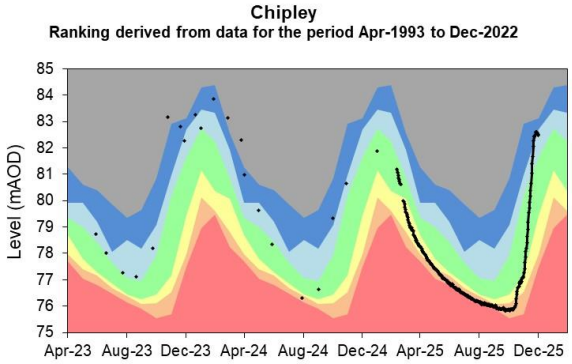








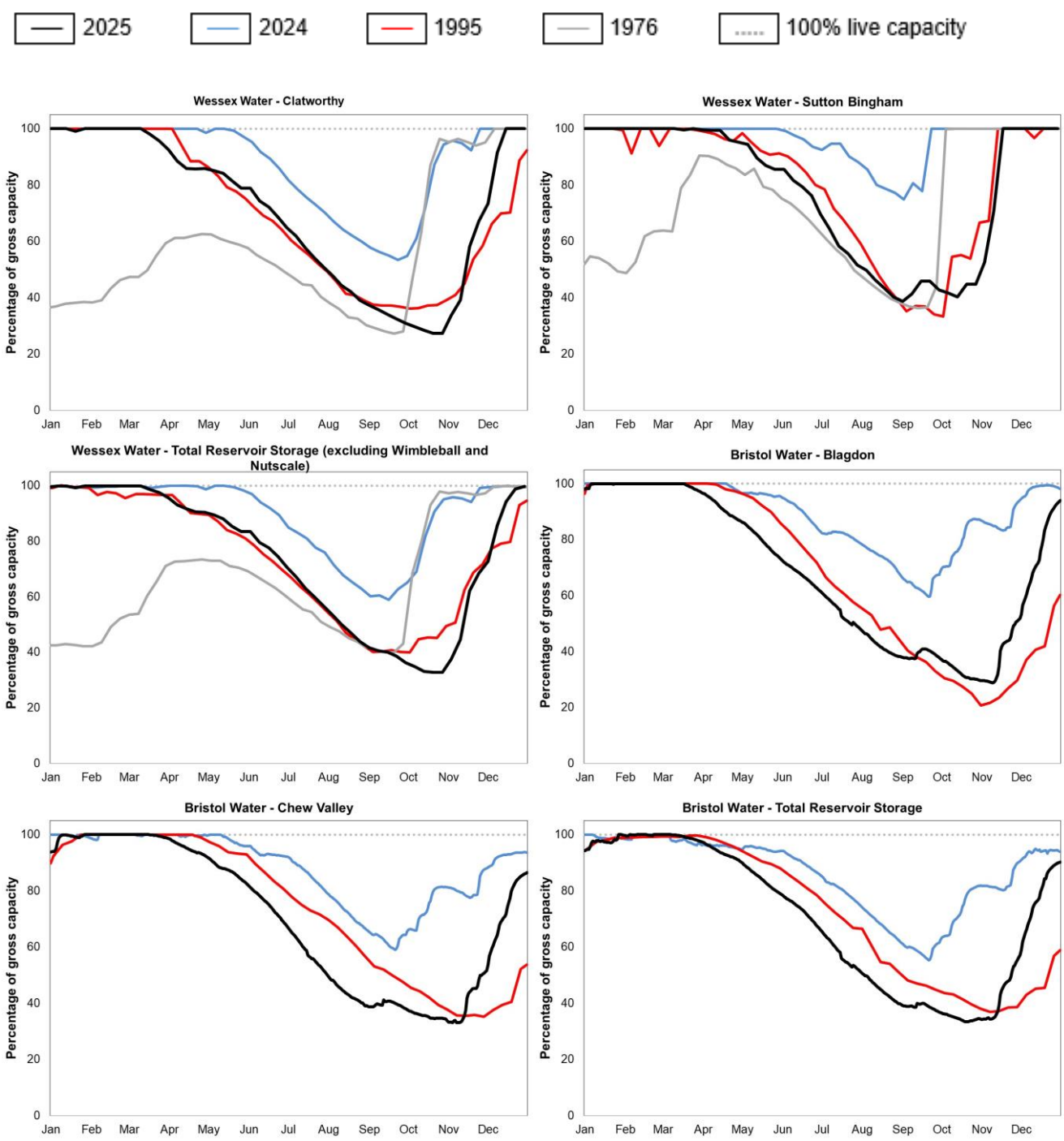




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the previous year, and if available, also a comparison to reservoir stocks in 1995 and 1976.



(Source: Wessex Water and Bristol Water).

7 Flood alerts and warnings

7.1 Flood alerts

Table 1: Fluvial, coastal and groundwater flood alerts issued during December

Area	Number of fluvial flood alerts in December	Number of coastal flood alerts in December	Number of groundwater flood alerts in December
North Wessex	33	7	0
South Wessex	31	16	2

7.2 Flood warnings

Table 2: Fluvial, coastal and groundwater flood warnings issued during December

Area	Number of fluvial flood warnings in December	Number of coastal flood warnings in December	Number of groundwater flood warnings in December
North Wessex	26	0	0
South Wessex	24	2	4

7.3 Severe flood warnings

Table 3: Fluvial, coastal and groundwater severe flood warnings issued during December

Area	Number of fluvial severe flood warnings in December	Number of coastal severe flood warnings in December	Number of groundwater severe flood warnings in December
North Wessex	0	0	0
South Wessex	0	0	0

8 Stream support

8.1 Sites providing stream support

Table 4: End of December status for stream support sites.

Catchment	River	Stream support site	Gauging station	End of December status
Bristol Avon	Chalfield Brook	South Wraxall	Great Chalfield (Wessex Water)	Off
Bristol Avon	Chalfield Brook	Little Chalfield	Great Chalfield (Wessex Water)	Off
Bristol Avon	Charlton Stream	Charlton	Crabb Mill	Off
Bristol Avon	Gauze Brooke	Hullavington	Rodbourne	Off
Bristol Avon	Horscombe Stream	Tucking Mill	No Gauge	Off
Bristol Avon	Luckington Brook	Luckington	Fossway	Off
Bristol Avon	Rodbourne Brook	Lower Stanton St. Quinton	Startley	Off
Bristol Avon	Semington Brook	Easterton	No Gauge	Off
Bristol Avon	Sherston Avon	Stanbridge	Fossway	Off
Bristol Avon	Tetbury Avon	Tetbury	Brokenborough	Off
Dorset Frome	South Winterbourne	Winterbourne Abbas	Winterbourne Steepleton	Off

Catchment	River	Stream support site	Gauging station	End of December status
Dorset Frome	Watergates Stream	Watergates	No Gauge	Off
Piddle	Devil's Brook	Dewlish	Dewlish Woodsdown Cross	Off
Piddle	Piddle	Alton Mill	South House & Little Puddle	Off
Piddle	Piddle	Morningwell	South House & Little Puddle	Off
Piddle	Piddle	Briantspuddle	Briantspuddle	Off
Dorset Stour	Crichel Stream	Long Crichel	No Gauge	Off
Dorset Stour	Gussage Stream	Gussage All Saints	Bowerswain	Off
Dorset Stour	Allen	Wyke Down	All Hallows	Off
Dorset Stour	Pimperne Stream	Pimperne	No Gauge	Off
Hampshire Avon	Bourne	Porton	Salisbury Bourne	On
Hampshire Avon	Chitterne Brook	Codford Road	Codford	On
Hampshire Avon	Wylye	Brixton Deverill	Brixton Deverill & Heytesbury	Off

Catchment	River	Stream support site	Gauging station	End of December status
Hampshire Avon	Wylye	Kingston Deverill	Brixton Deverill & Heytesbury	Off

9 Abstraction licences subject to restrict or cease

9.1 Abstraction licences subject to restrict or cease

Table 5: Number of licences at restrict or cease at the end of December.

Catchment	Number of licences at restrict at the end of December	Number of licences at cease at the end of December
Bristol Avon	0	0
Dorset	0	0
Hampshire Avon	0	0
Somerset	0	0

10 Glossary

10.1 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).

10.2 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.

10.3 Rainfall Areas Map

Figure 6.2 Rainfall catchments in Wessex.

11 Appendices

11.1 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
Axe	139	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Brue	131	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Little Avon	134	Above Normal	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Lower Bristol Avon And Bristol Frome	126	Above Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal
Lower Dorset Stour And River Crane	131	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Lower Hampshire Avon	133	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Mendips And River Chew	117	Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Middle And Upper Bristol Avon	124	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	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
Middle Dorset Stour	144	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Middle Hampshire Avon	135	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Parrett	164	Notably High	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Poole Harbour And Purbeck	134	Above Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
River Bourne	137	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
River Frome	169	Notably High	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
River Piddle	168	Notably High	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Tone	138	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Upper Dorset Stour	152	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Upper Hampshire Avon	138	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
West Dorset Streams	169	Notably High	Notably high	Above normal	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
West Somerset Streams	113	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Wylye And Nadder	126	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal
Yeo And Kenn	132	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Normal

11.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Dec 2025 band	Nov 2025 band
Amesbury	Upper Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Normal	Normal
Ashford Mill	Isle	Parrett	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Baggs Mill	Piddle	Piddle	Notably high	Normal
Bathford	Bristol Avon	Bristol Avon	Normal	Normal
Beggearn Huish	Washford	Washford River	Notably high	Normal
Bishops Hull	Tone	Tone	Notably high	Normal
Bridport East Bridge	Asker	Asker	Notably high	Normal
Fenny Castle	Sheppey	Brue	Notably high	Normal
East Mills Combined	Middle Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Normal	Below normal
East Stoke Combined	Dorset Frome	Dorset Frome	Exceptionally high	Normal
Frenchay	Bristol Frome	Bristol Frome	Notably high	Above normal
Great Somerford	Bristol Avon	Bristol Avon	Notably high	Above normal

Site name	River	Catchment	Dec 2025 band	Nov 2025 band
Hammoon	Middle Stour	Dorset Stour	Exceptionally high	Normal
Knapp Mill	Lower Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Lovington	Upper Brue	Brue	Notably high	Normal
Pen Mill	Yeo	Parrett	Exceptionally high	Normal
South Newton	River Wylye	Hampshire Avon	Normal	Below normal
Sydling St Nicholas	Sydling Water	Dorset Frome	Exceptionally high	Normal
Tellisford	Somerset Frome	Bristol Avon	Above normal	Normal
Throop	Lower Stour	Dorset Stour	Notably high	Normal

11.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Dec 2025 band	End of Nov 2025 band
Allington No2	Upper Bristol Avon Great Oolite	Normal	Normal
Chitterne Down	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Normal	Notably low
Delcombe	Dorset Frome And Piddle Chalk/upper Greensand	Normal	Below normal
Didmarton 1	Upper Bristol Avon Inferior Oolite	Notably high	Normal
Kingston Russell Road	Dorset Frome Chalk	Notably high	Below normal
Overcompton	Somerset Yeo Bridport Sand	Normal	Below normal
Tilshead	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Normal	Exceptionally low
Woodyates	Dorset Stour Chalk	Normal	Below normal
Oakley Industrial Estate	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Normal	Notably low
Chipley	Somerset Tone Otter Sandstone	Above normal	Below normal

Site name	Aquifer	End of Dec 2025 band	End of Nov 2025 band
Wrington	North Somerset Carboniferous Limestone	Above normal	Normal