

# Monthly water situation report: North East Area

## 1 Summary - February 2026

February was a wet month with all catchments recording above average rainfall, with totals classed as notably high or above normal. Monthly mean river flows fell within the normal, above normal, notably high and exceptionally high ranges. Soils across the area remained fully saturated. Reservoir stocks were healthy for February and were above average with the exception of Kielder reservoir which was just below average due to flood alleviation releases.

### 1.1 Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals were above the long term average (LTA) for all catchments. Totals ranged from 117% of the LTA in the Tyne catchment to 176% of the LTA in the Seaham catchment. February totals were classed as notably high for the Tweed, Northumbria North Sea Tribs and Seaham catchments, above normal for the Tyne, Wear and Tees catchments. Analysis of the daily rainfall totals shows that most days were wet during the first 2 weeks of February and some areas recorded rain on every day from 16 January to 23 February. On 22 February widespread rainfall was again recorded in the Tweed, Northumbria North Sea Tribs and Seaham catchments.

Cumulative 6 month totals were classed as notably high across all catchments with the exception of Northumbria North Sea Tribs which fell within the exceptionally high range. Cumulative 12 month totals fell within the normal range for the first time since March 2025.

### 1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Soil moisture deficits are slightly drier than the end of January. All catchments are fully saturated with soil moisture deficits just above zero across the North East area.

### 1.3 River flows

Monthly mean river flows fell within the normal, above normal, notably high and exceptionally high ranges for February. Monthly mean flows ranged from 113% of the LTA at Haydon Bridge in the South Tyne catchment to 257% of the LTA at Hartford Bridge on the River Blyth.

Analysis of daily mean flows shows that flows were elevated at the beginning of the month following a wet January and fell within the normal, above normal and notably high ranges. Daily mean flows increased at all indicator sites following prolonged rainfall during the first 2 weeks of February and exceptionally high flows were recorded at all sites. Daily mean flows decreased towards the end of the month with all indicator sites falling within the normal range.

## 1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels varied across the area this month. Levels increased at Aycliffe on the Skerne Magnesian Limestone aquifer and at Royalty Observation on the Till Fell Sandstone and both were classed as above normal. Groundwater levels remained the same as last month at other monitoring sites and fell within the normal or above normal range for February.

## 1.5 Reservoir stocks

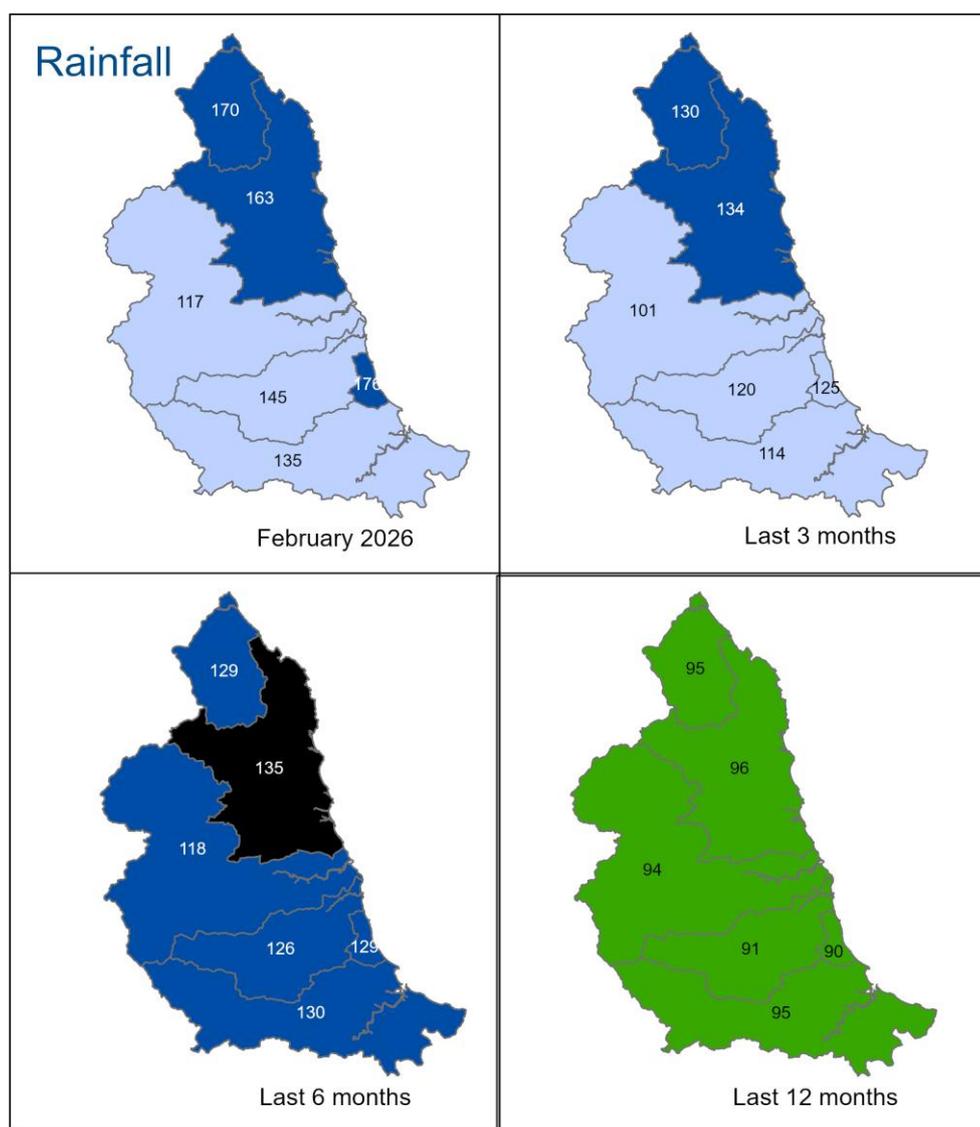
The Durham group, Lune and Balder group and Cow Green reservoir stocks remained the same as last month and were above average for the time of year. Derwent and the North Tynedale group recorded increases in stocks. Derwent reservoir recorded the largest increase from 70.8% to 91.9% which is above the average for February and resulted in flood alleviation releases being made.

Reservoir or reservoir group	Percentage of current stocks	Percentage of previous month stocks
Kielder	90.3	90.7
North Tynedale group	98.1	92.4
Derwent	91.9	70.8
Durham group	100	100
Lune and Balder group	98.5	98.5
Cow Green	100	100

## 2 Rainfall

### 2.1 Rainfall map

2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 28 February 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. The number on the maps refer to the percentage of the 1991 to 2020 LTA. February totals were classed as notably high for the Tweed, Northumbria North Sea Tribs and Seaham catchments, above normal for the Tyne, Wear and Tees catchments. 12 month totals were classed as normal for the whole area. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



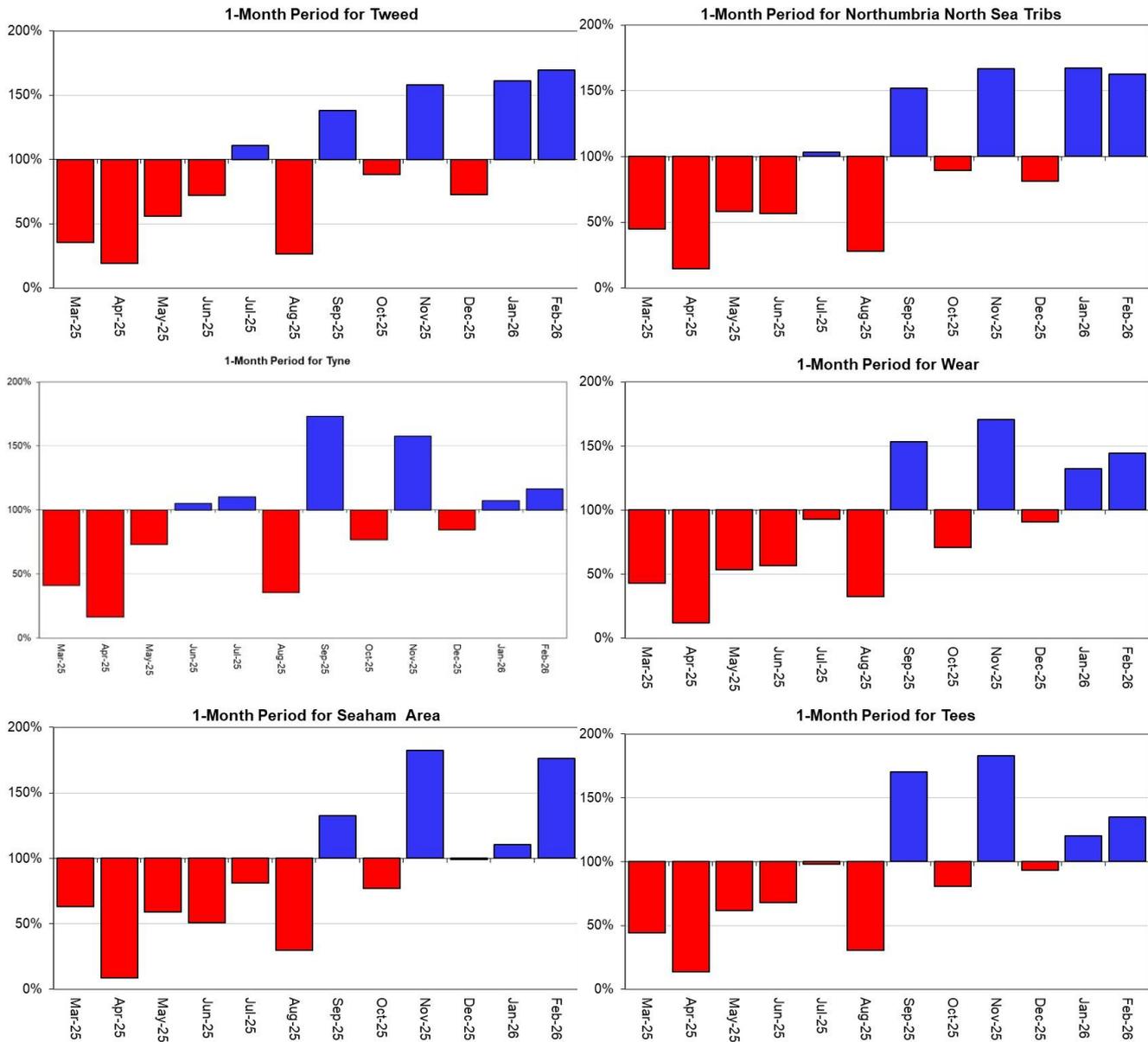
Rainfall data for January 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded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

## 2.2 Rainfall charts

2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each catchment.

■ Above average rainfall

■ Below average rainfall



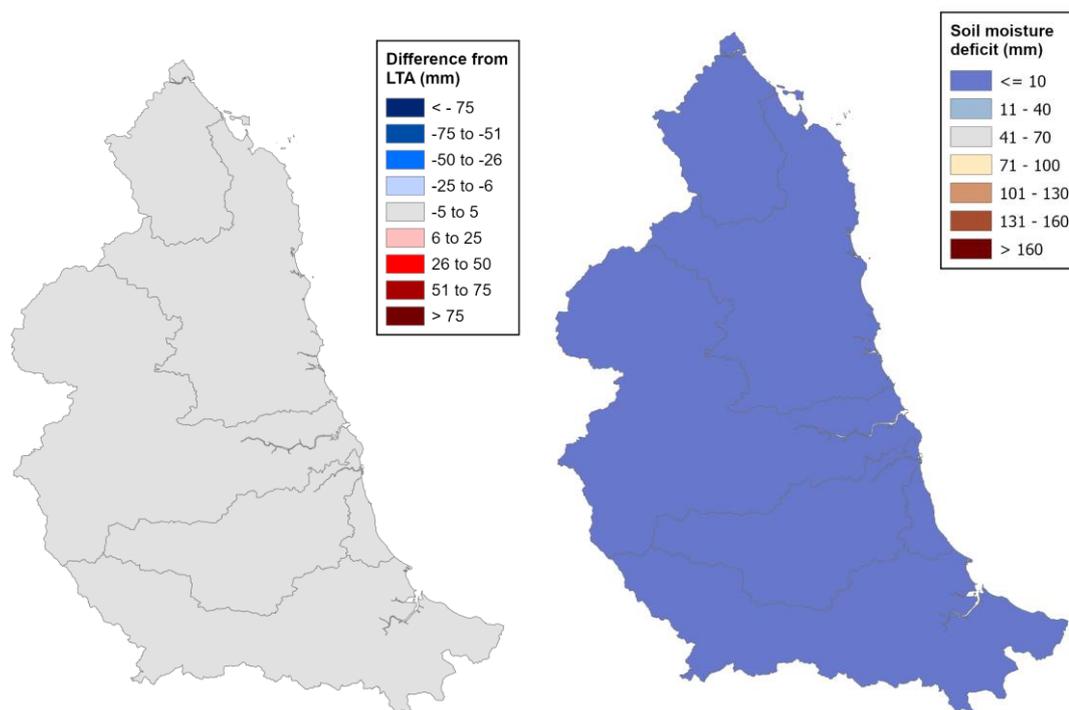
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Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

### 3 Soil moisture deficit

#### 3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

3.1: Soil moisture deficits for week ending 28 February 2026. Map on the left shows the difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. The whole area is classed as fully saturated. MORECS data for real land use.

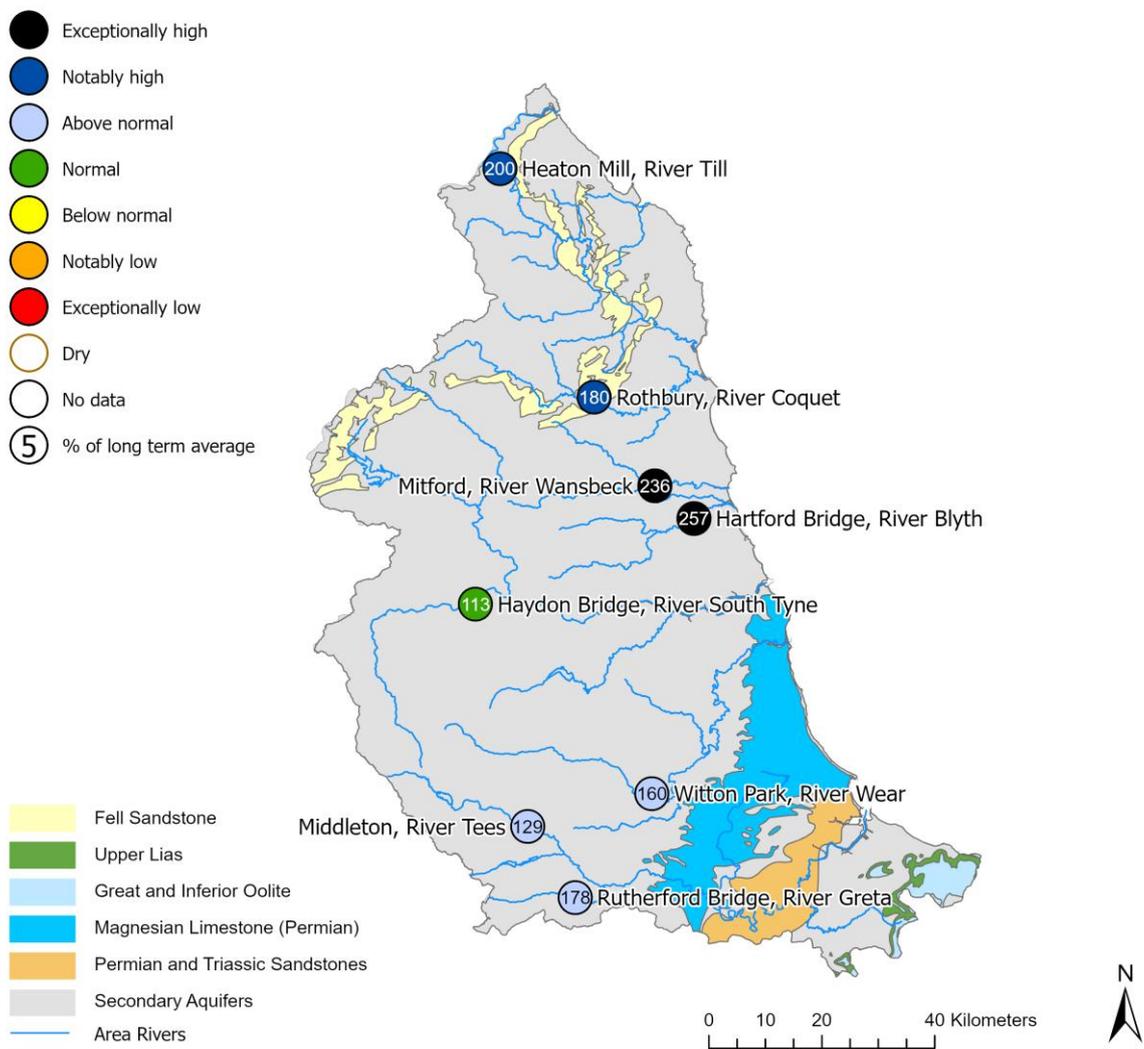


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

# 4 River flows

## 4.1 River flows map

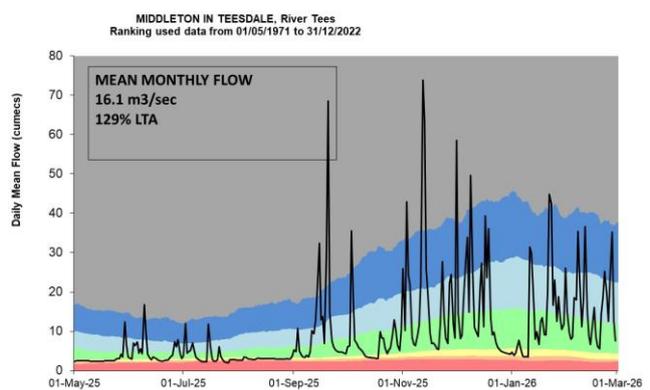
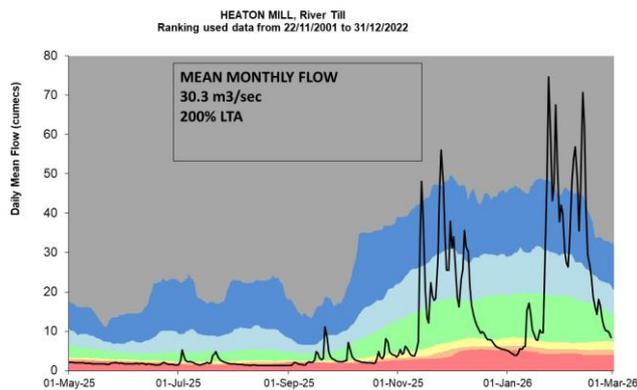
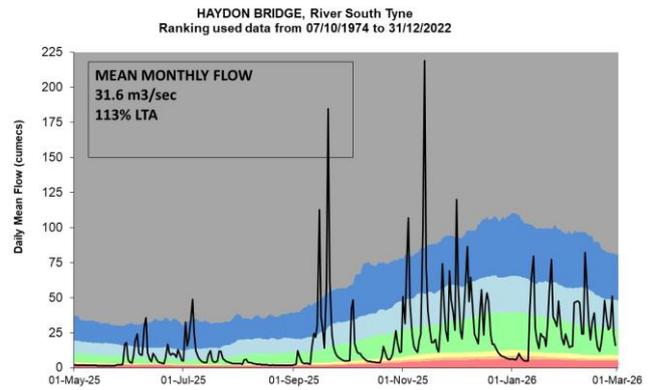
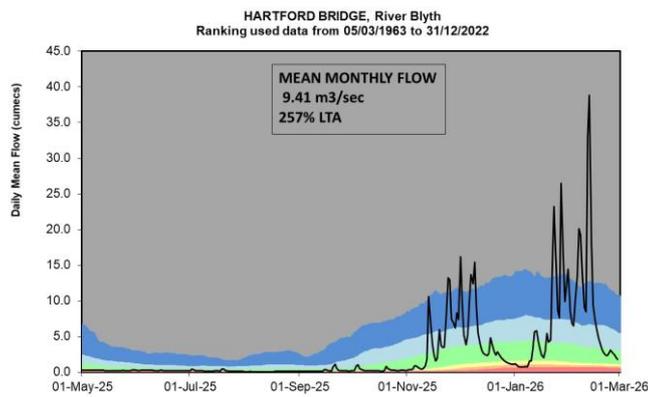
4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for February 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic February monthly means. Monthly mean flows are classed as exceptionally high at Mitford on the River Wansbeck and Hartford Bridge on the River Blyth. Heaton Mill on the River Till and Rothbury on the River Coquet are classed as notably high. Witton Park on the River Wear, Middleton on the River Tees and Rutherford Bridge on the River Greta are classed as above normal. Haydon Bridge on the River South Tyne is classed as normal. Haydon Bridge on the River South Tyne is classed as normal. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

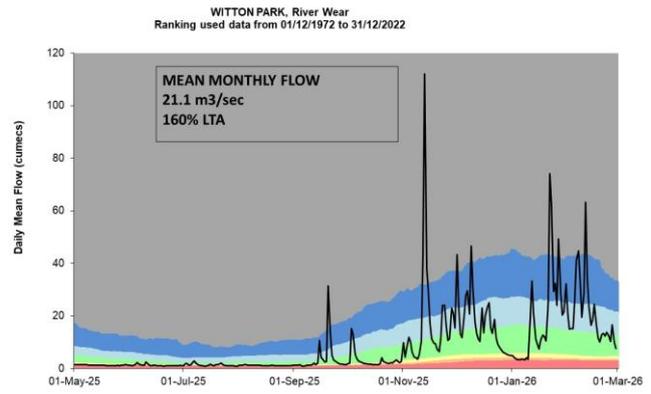
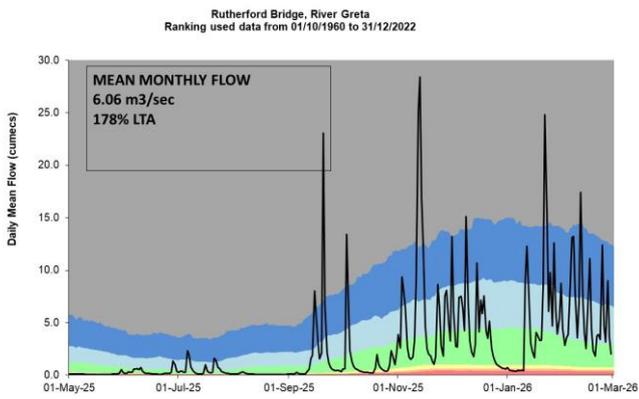
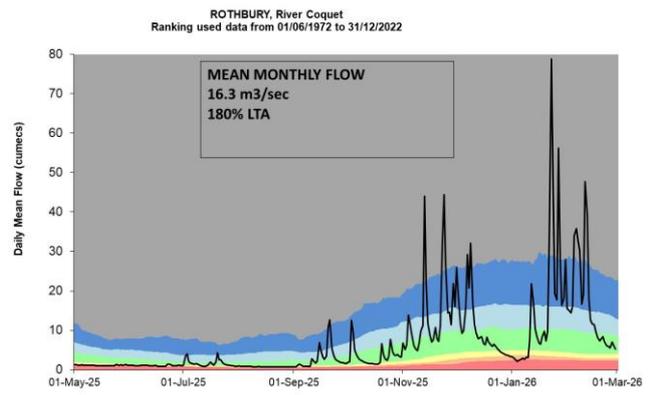
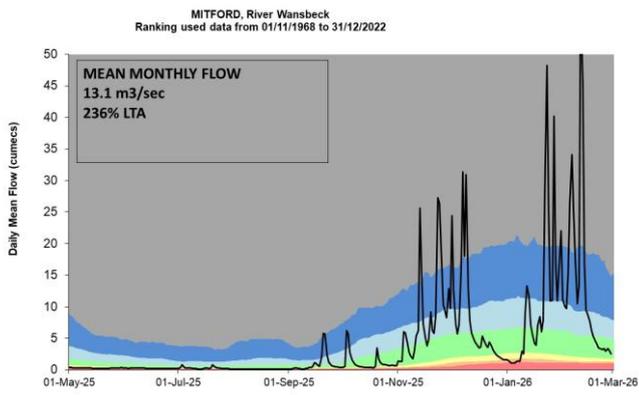


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## 4.2 River flow charts

4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past 10 months, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



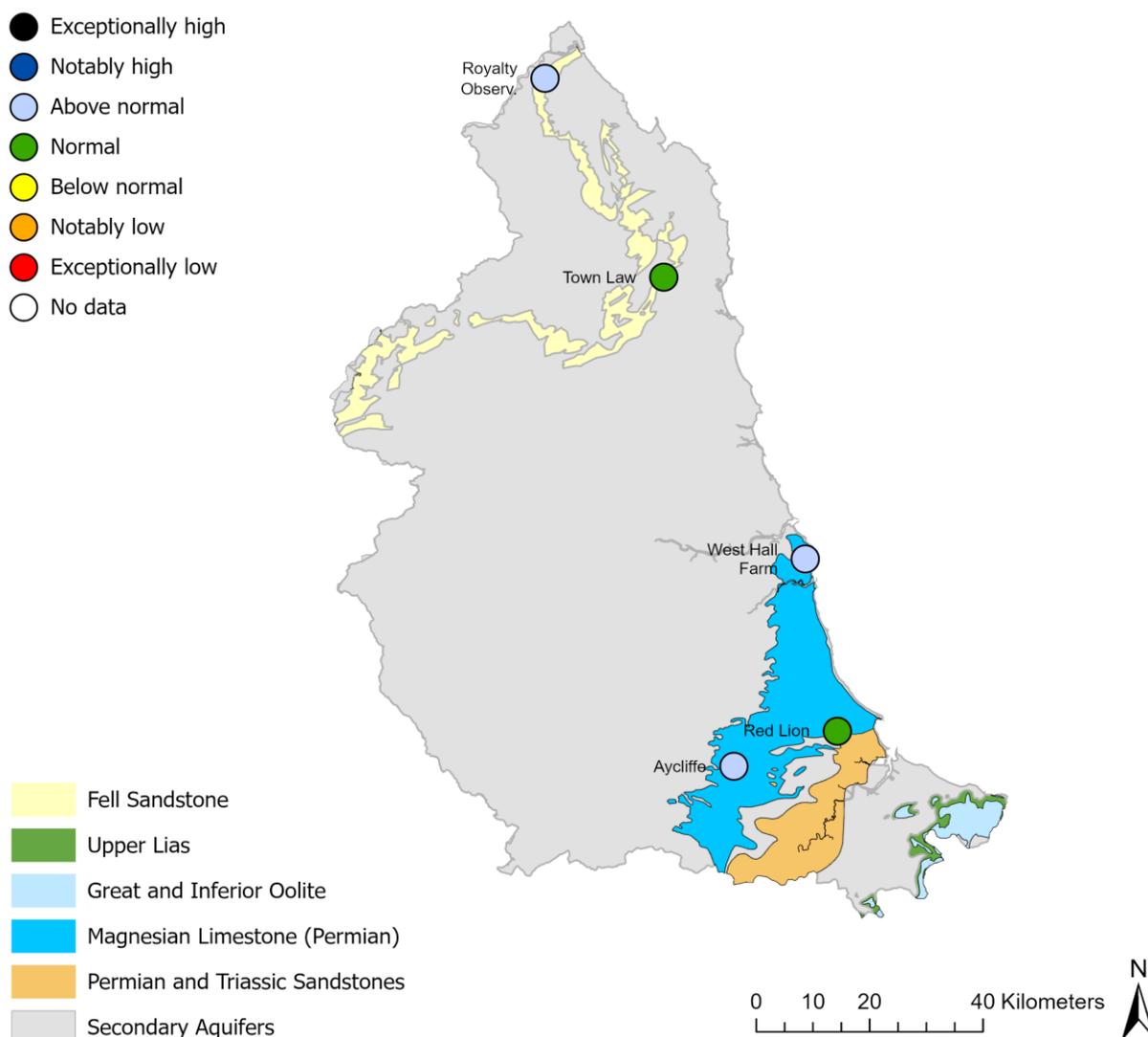


(Source: Environment Agency).

## 5 Groundwater levels

### 5.1 Groundwater levels map

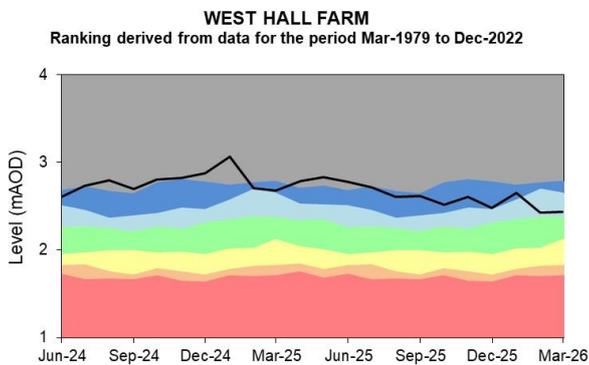
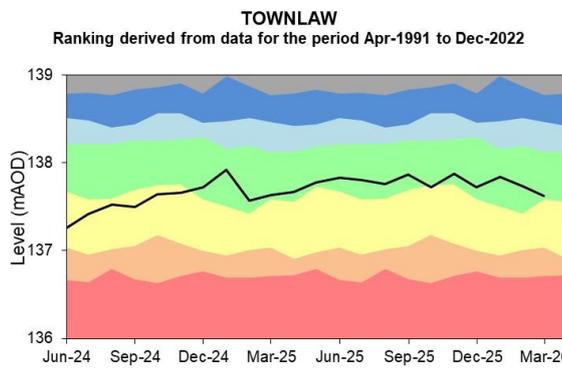
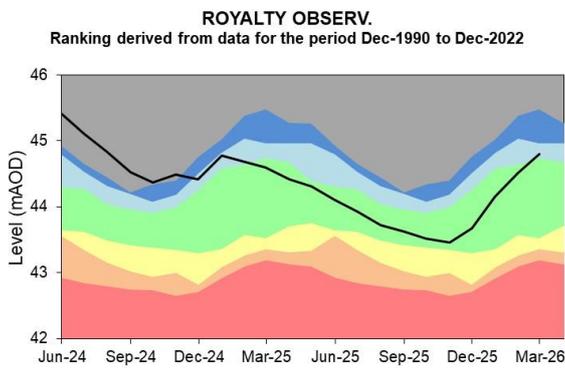
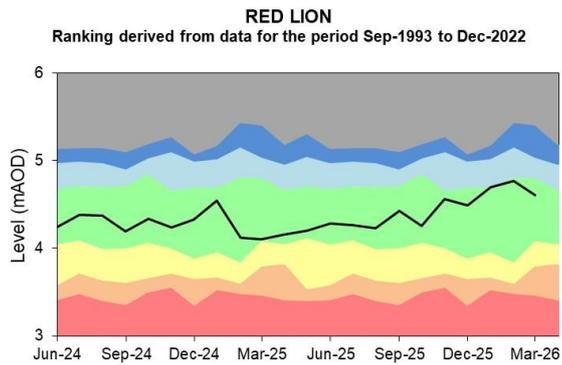
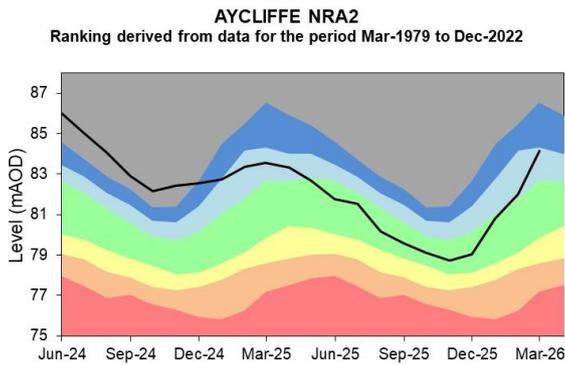
5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of February 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic February levels. Groundwater levels are above normal at Royalty Observation, West Hall Farm and Aycliffe. Town Law and Red Lion are classed as normal for the time of year. Table 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

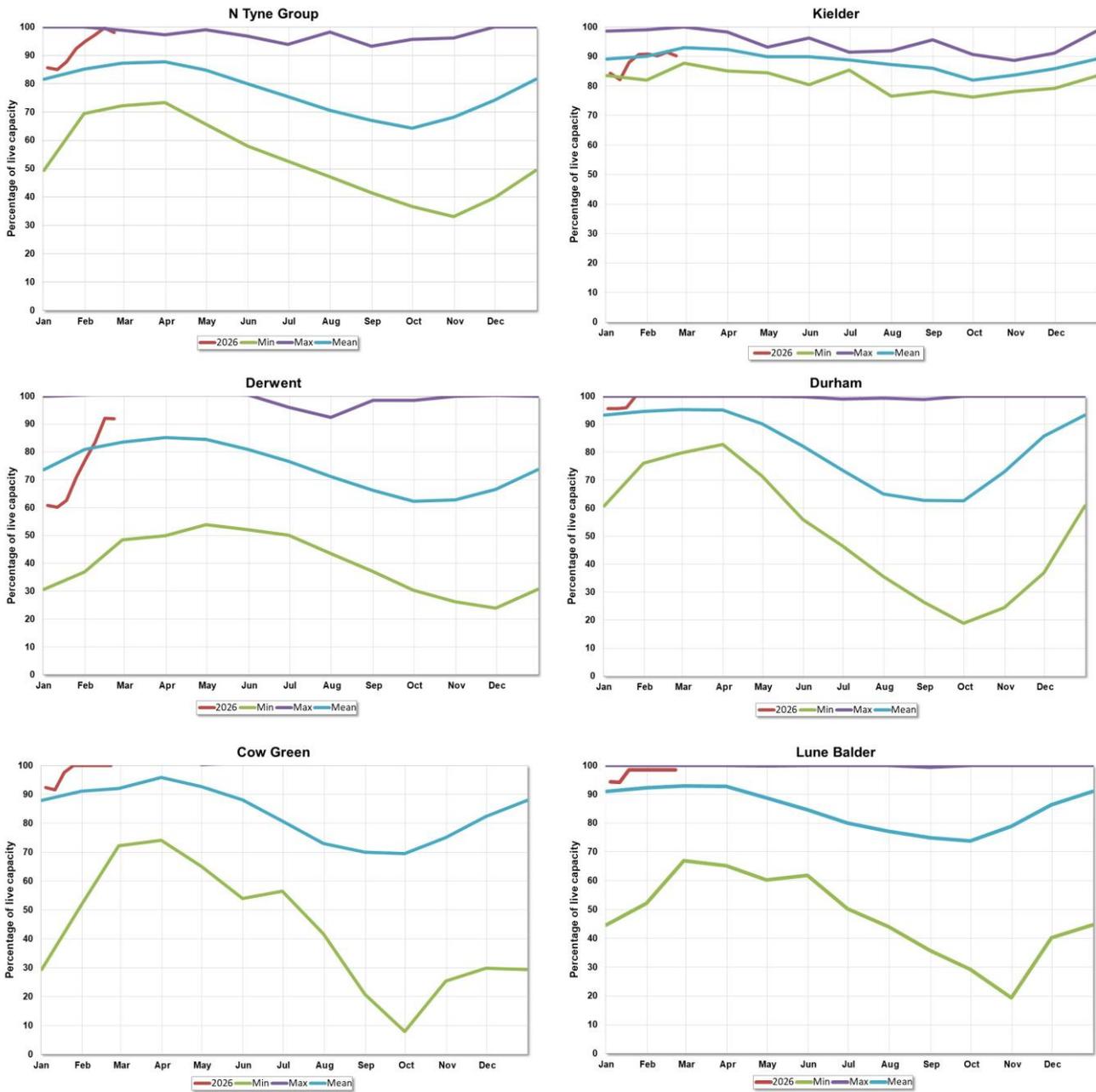
5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

## 6 Reservoir stocks

6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to long term maximum, minimum and average stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length.



(Source: water company).

## 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 ( $\text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ ).

#### **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	Feb 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Feb 2026 band	Dec 2025 to February cumulative band	Sep 2025 to February cumulative band	Mar 2025 to February cumulative band
Northumbria North Sea Tribs	163	Notably High	Notably high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Seaham Area	176	Notably High	Above normal	Notably high	Normal
Tees	135	Above Normal	Above normal	Notably high	Normal
Tweed	170	Notably High	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Tyne	117	Above Normal	Above normal	Notably high	Normal
Wear	145	Above Normal	Above normal	Notably high	Normal

## 8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Feb 2026 band	Jan 2026 band
Hartford Bridge	Blyth	Blyth	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Haydon Bridge	South Tyne	South Tyne	Normal	Normal
Heaton Mill	Till	Till	Notably high	Normal
Middleton In Teesdale	Tees	Tees	Above normal	Normal
Mitford	Wansbeck	Wansbeck	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Rothbury	Coquet	Coquet	Notably high	Notably high
Rutherford Bridge	Greta	Greta	Above normal	Above normal
Witton Park	Wear	Wear	Above normal	Normal

### 8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Feb 2026 band	End of Jan 2026 band
Aycliffe Nra2	Skerne Magnesian Limestone	Above normal	Above normal
Red Lion	Skerne Magnesian Limestone	Normal	Normal
Royalty Observ.	Till Fell Sandstone	Above normal	Normal
Townlaw	Till Fell Sandstone	Normal	Normal
West Hall Farm	Wear Magnesian Limestone	Above normal	Above normal