

Monthly water situation report: Wessex Area

1 Summary - February 2026

February 2026 was the ninth wettest on record for Wessex. An average of 144mm fell across Wessex, 210% the long term average (LTA). For most hydrological areas of Wessex, February 2026 was amongst the ten wettest on record. For both the Dorset Frome and West Dorset Streams, this month was the fourth wettest February on record. Persistent rain throughout early to mid-February and monthly mean river flows responded recording exceptionally high or notably high across the whole of Wessex. Groundwater levels are above normal to exceptionally high levels across Wessex. On the Chalk aquifer all are notably high or exceptionally high. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) in February remained between 0 to 10mm at the end of the month and are similar to the LTA for this time of year. At the end of the month, reservoir levels for Wessex Water and Bristol Water were approximately 100% capacity. These are in line with the LTA for this time of year.

1.1 Rainfall

February was the ninth wettest on record, an average of 144mm rain fell across Wessex (210% LTA). There was persistent rainfall throughout early to mid-February with 3 larger rainfall events occurring on 5, 8 and 18 February. All hydrological areas received notably high or exceptionally high rainfall across Wessex. Most hydrological areas received close to or above 200% LTA through February and are within the top ten wettest February's on record. The highest cumulative rainfall for February was recorded in the Dorset Frome which received 182mm (219% LTA). For both the Dorset Frome and West Dorset Streams, this month was the fourth wettest February on record. The Bruton Dam rain gauge in the Brue and Axe catchment recorded the highest relative rainfall, 279% LTA (147mm).

Over the past 3 and 6 months, most hydrological areas in Wessex received exceptionally high rainfall. For Wessex, the past 3 months are the second wettest on record with 475mm (179% LTA). The past 6 months are the third wettest on record for the same period with 792mm (148% LTA).

For the past 12 months, all hydrological areas across Wessex received normal or above rainfall. In general, the south of Wessex has recorded more rainfall than the north with the south west of the region reporting notably high rainfall for the period.

1.2 Soil moisture

Soil moisture deficit (SMD) remains low across Wessex in response to continuing rainfall. At the end of February all hydrological areas in Wessex recorded an SMD between 0 to 10mm. SMD was within 5mm of the LTA across all areas in Wessex.

1.3 River flows

In February, the river flows responded to the continuing wet weather, recording exceptionally high monthly mean flows for the majority of Wessex. In all areas the monthly mean flow was close to or larger than 200% LTA. The Chalk aquifer catchments recorded persistently high daily mean flows in response to high groundwater levels with the River Wylfe and Hampshire Avon peaking around 11 February. The Asker at Bridport East Bridge and Sydling Water at Sydling St Nicholas both recorded their highest monthly mean flows for February.

The surface water catchments, including the Somerset Levels and Moors, reported rapid response to rainfall events throughout February due to rain falling on saturated ground.

In general, daily mean flow has peaked and has been falling towards the end of the month but remain above normal or higher for all of the Wessex area.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels increased rapidly in response to rainfall throughout February resulting in widespread groundwater flooding. At the end of February, groundwater sites in Wessex were reporting between exceptionally high and above normal levels. Groundwater levels across the Chalk aquifer rose at Chitterne Down, Kingston Russell Road and Tilshead throughout February and peaked around the middle of the month contributing to high monthly mean flows across the area. By the end of the month all but Tilshead were lower than the end of January. Delcombe levels recorded the highest levels at the end of February since records began.

In north Wessex, Allington and Didmarton monitoring the great and inferior Oolite have risen through February with Didmarton peaking towards the end of the month.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Both Wessex Water and Bristol Water reservoir levels remain at capacity in February. The combined levels at the end of the month for both Wessex Water and Bristol Water were approximately 100% capacity. These levels are typical for this time of year.

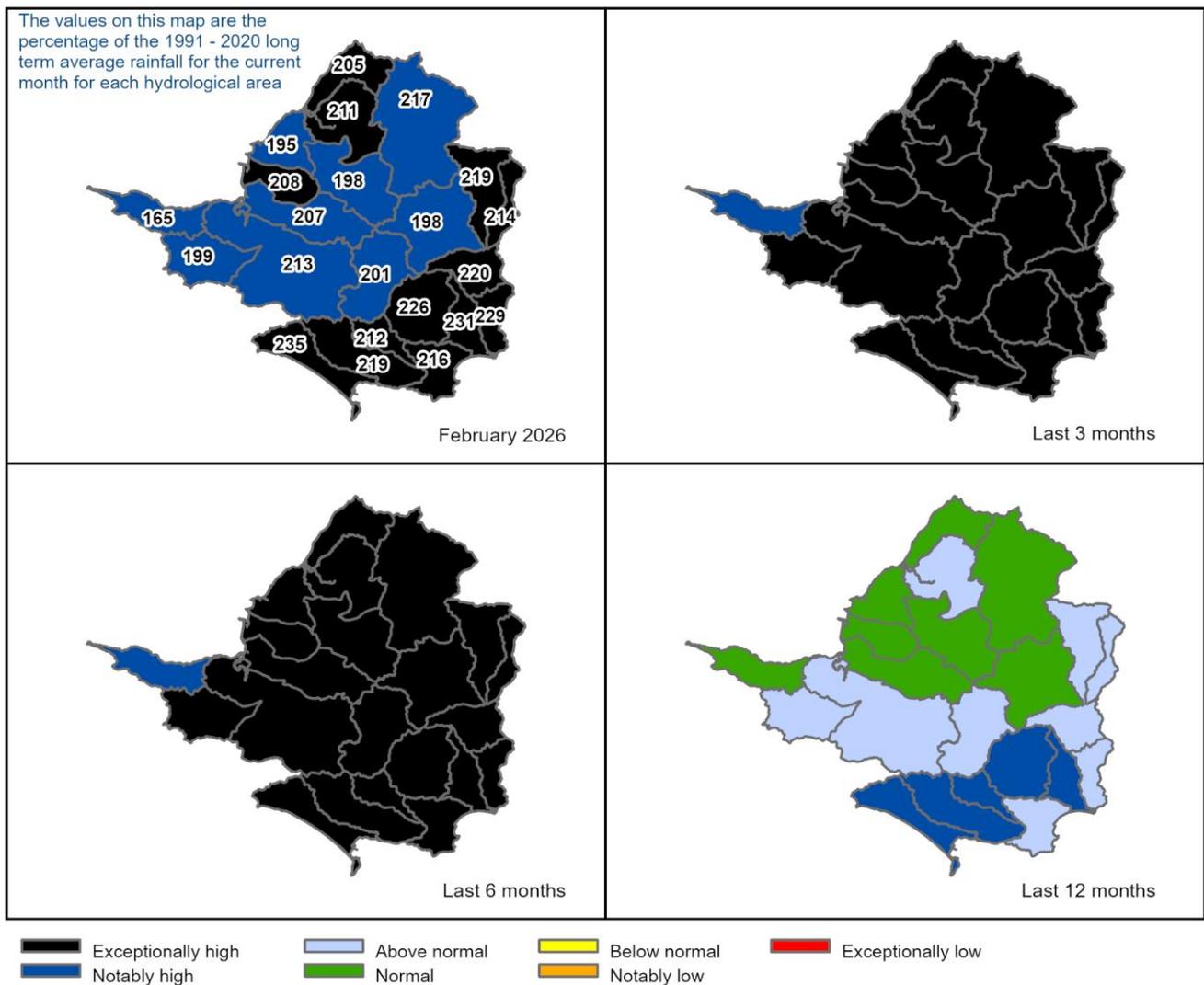
Author: Wessex Hydrology, hydrologywessex@environment-agency.gov.uk

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

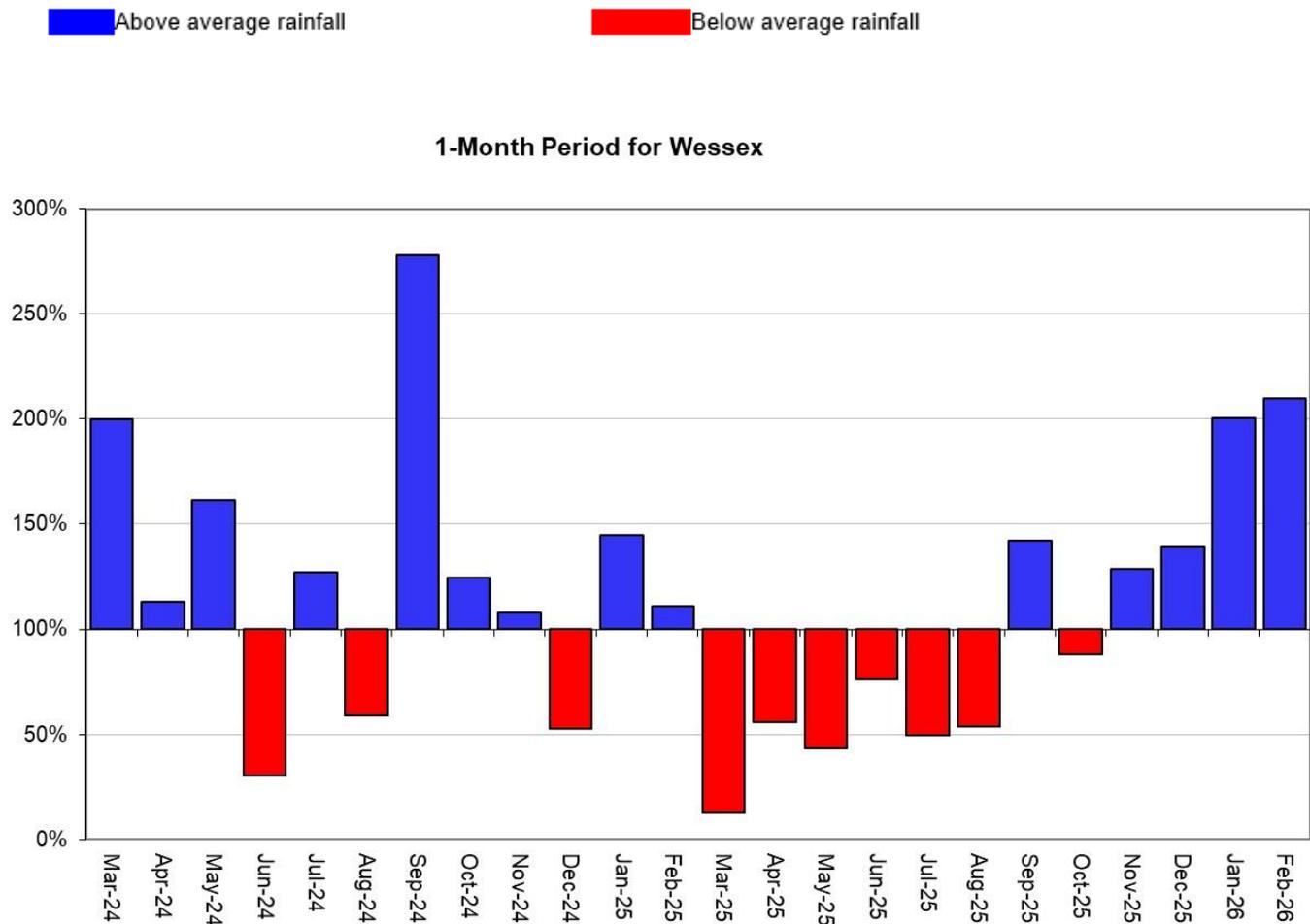
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 28 February 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals between 1991 and 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



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.

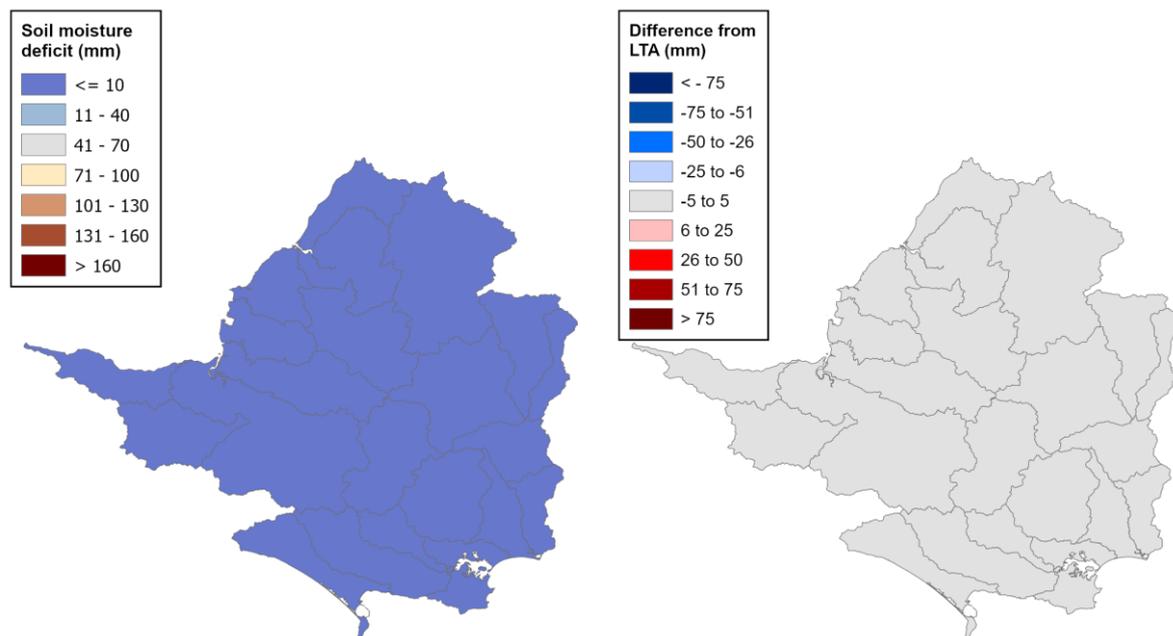


Rainfall data for January 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 100024198, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

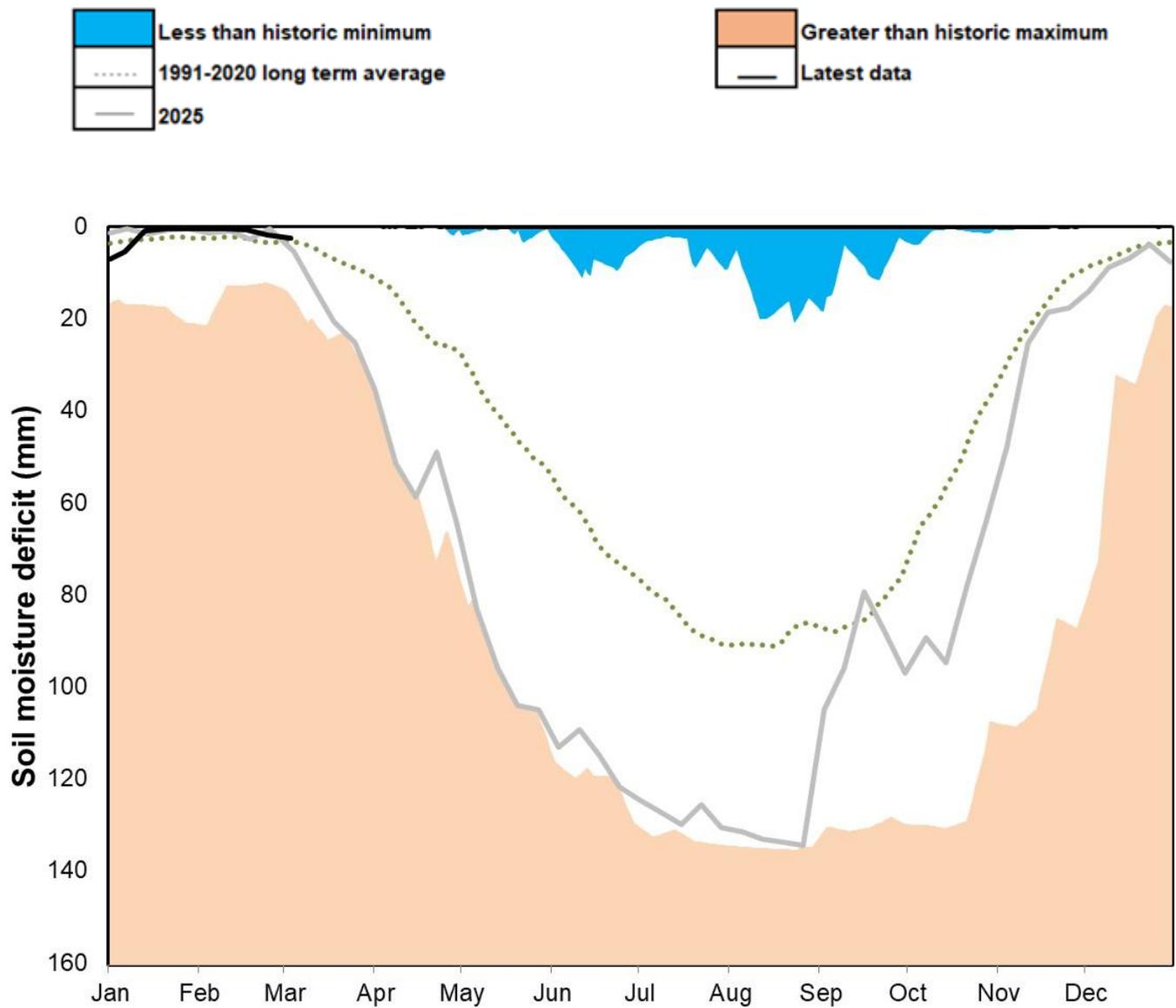
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 28 February 2026. Shows the difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



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

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.

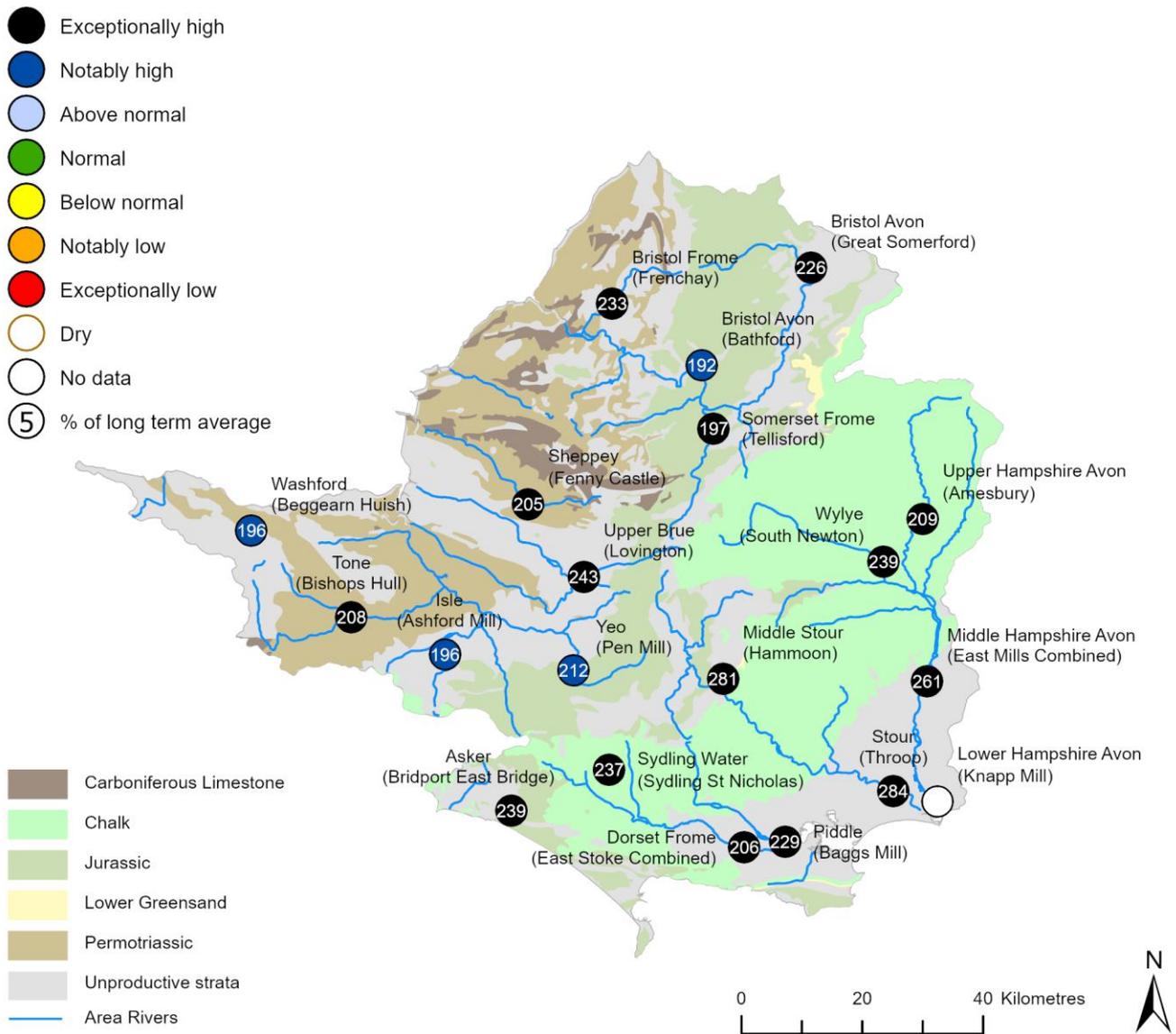


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

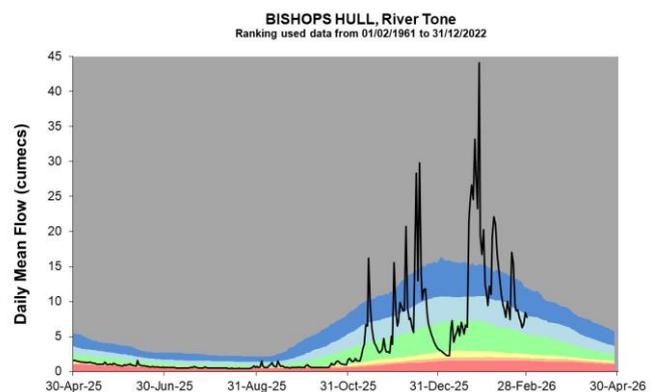
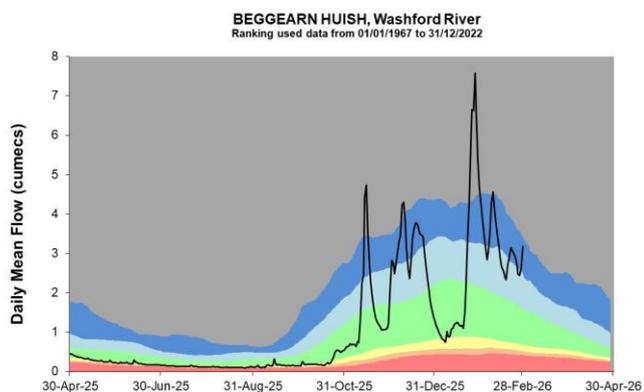
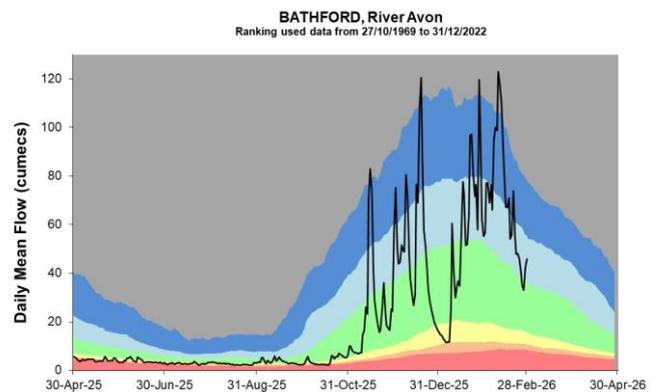
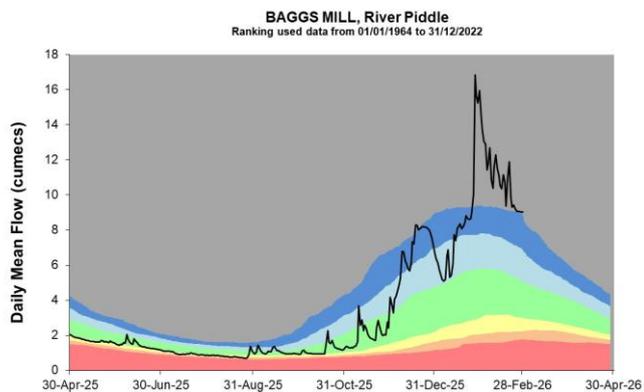
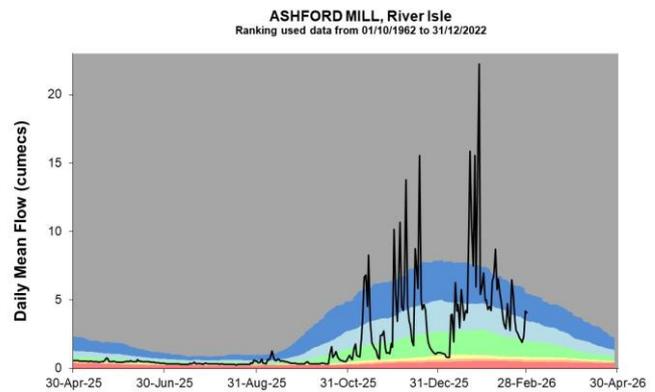
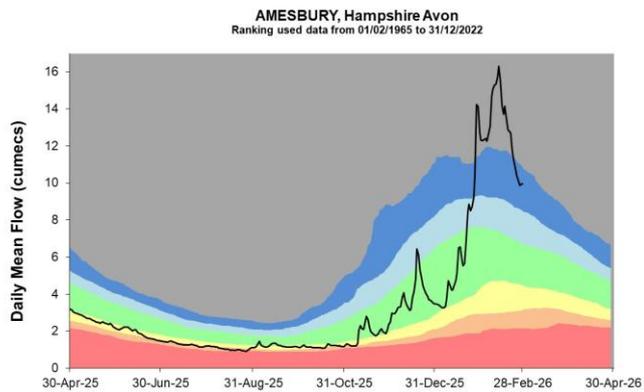
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for February 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic February monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



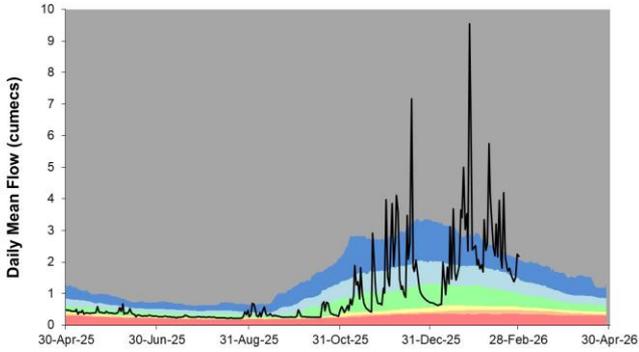
(Source: Environment Agency). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026. The Stour at Throop, Dorset Frome at East Stoke and Hampshire Avon at East Mills should be treated with caution. The Hampshire Avon at Knapp Mill is omitted due to data issues.

4.2 River flow charts

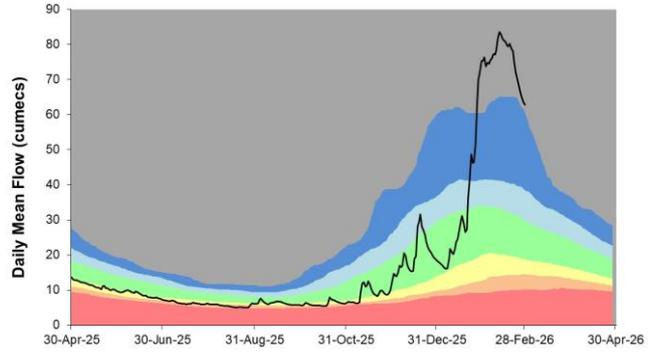
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows.



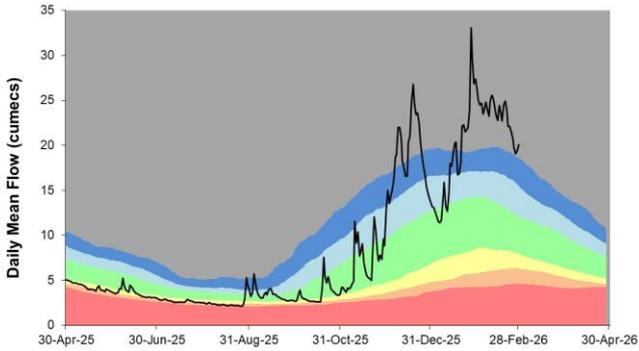
BRIDPORTEAST BRIDGE, River Asker
Ranking used data from 01/03/1996 to 31/12/2022



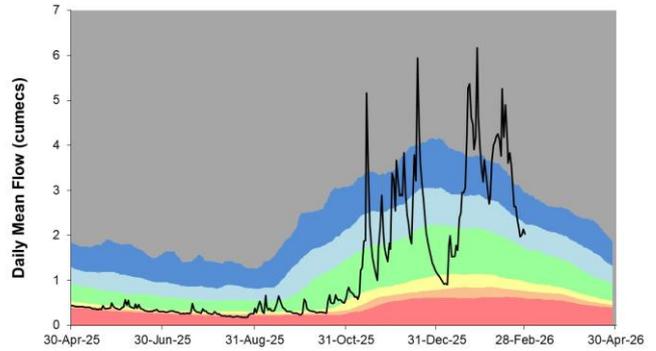
EAST MILLS COMBINED, Hampshire Avon
Ranking used data from 01/11/1965 to 31/12/2022



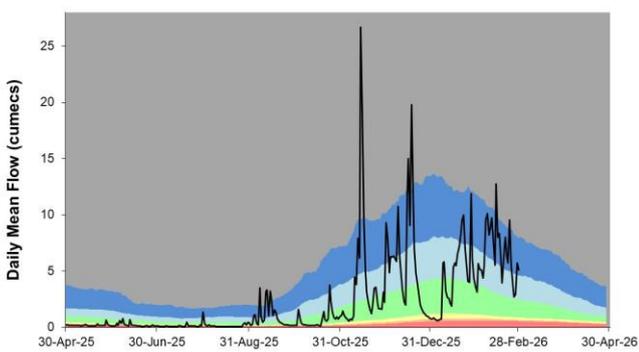
EAST STOKE COMBINED, Dorset Frome
Ranking used data from 01/10/1965 to 31/12/2022



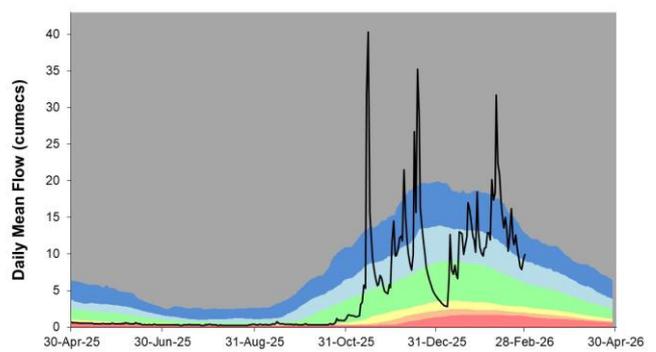
FENNY CASTLE, River Sheppey
Ranking used data from 01/01/1964 to 31/12/2022



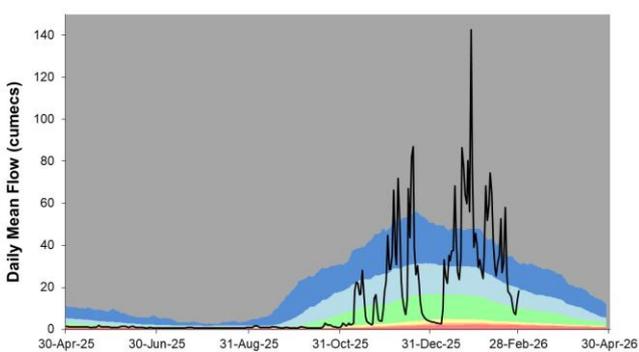
FRENCHAY, Bristol Frome
Ranking used data from 01/09/1961 to 31/12/2022



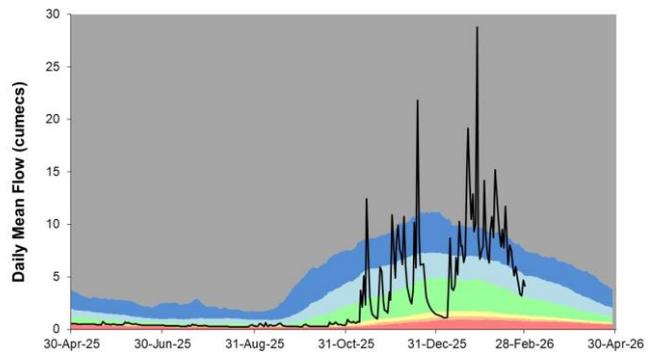
GREAT SOMERFORD, River Avon
Ranking used data from 16/12/1963 to 31/12/2022

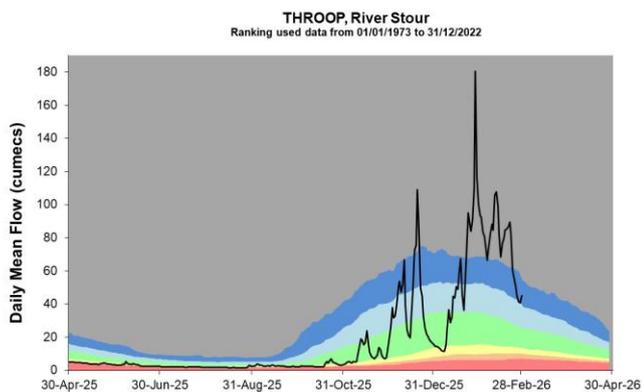
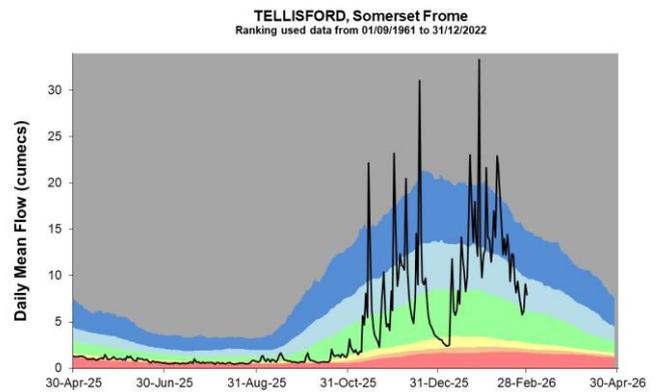
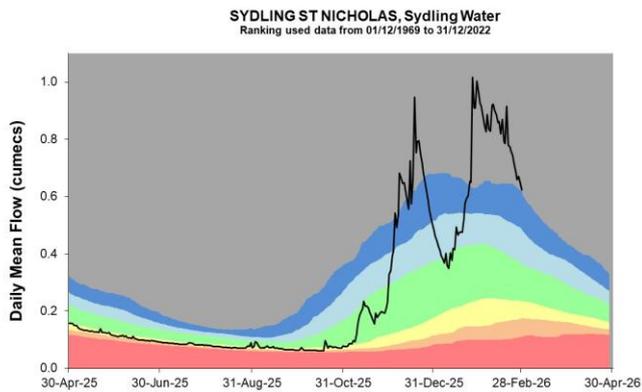
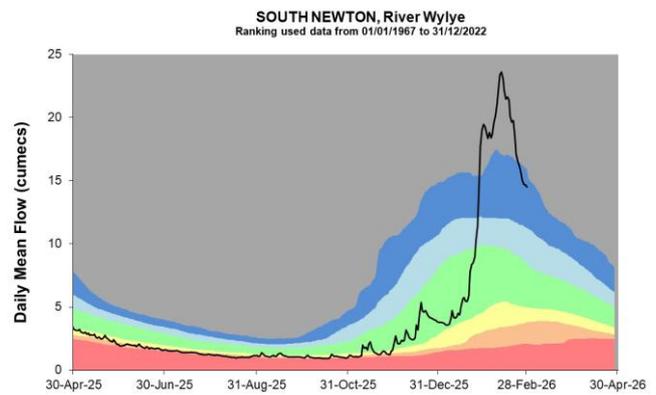
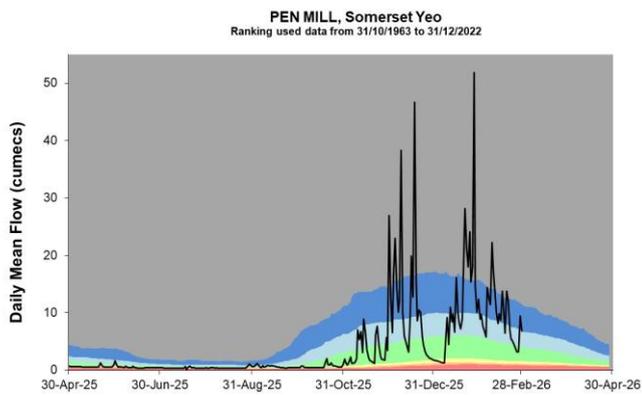


HAMMOON, River Stour
Ranking used data from 01/03/1968 to 31/12/2022



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



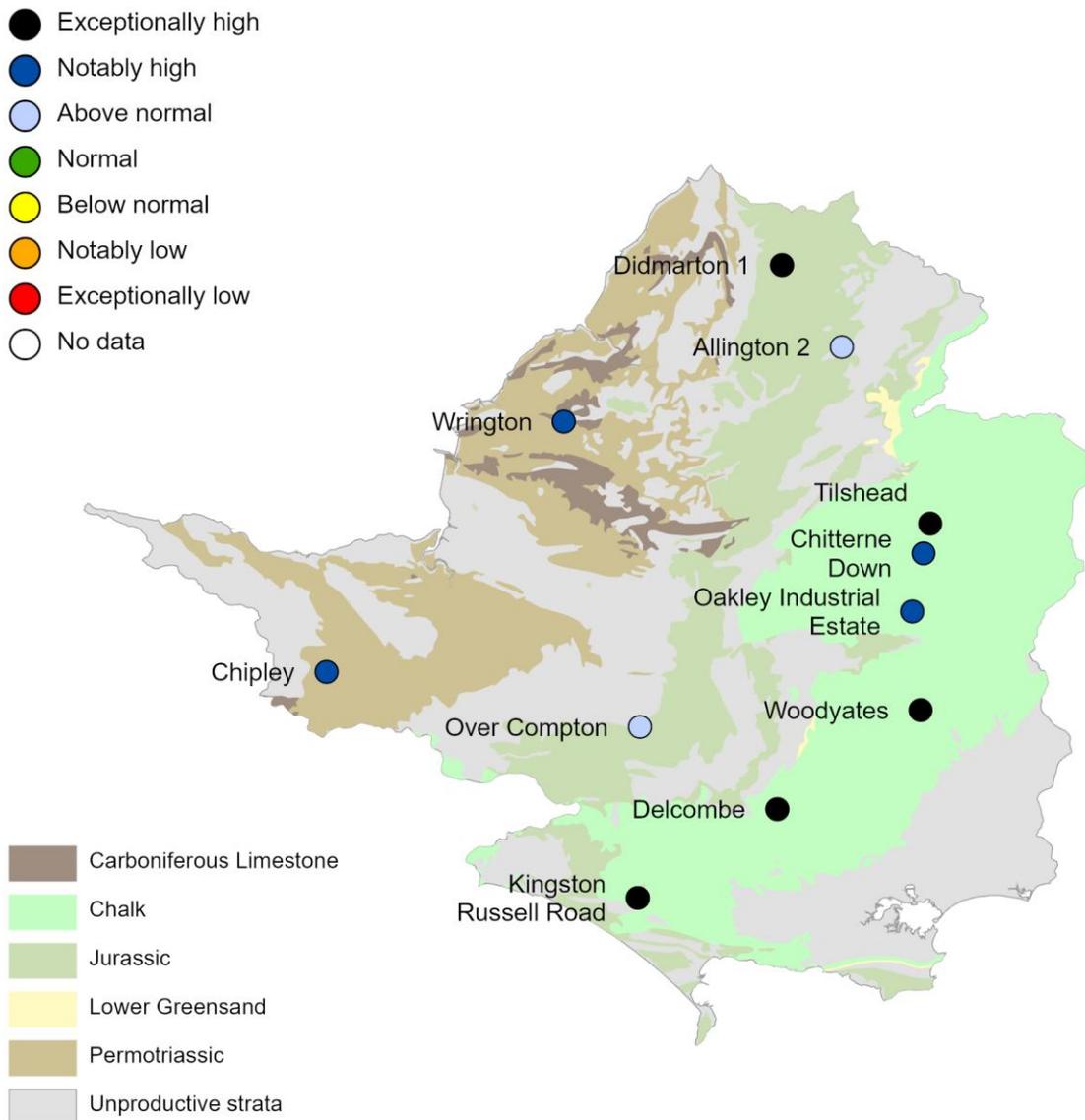


Source: Environment Agency, 2026. The Stour at Throop, Dorset Frome at East Stoke and Hampshire Avon at East Mills should be treated with caution. The Hampshire Avon at Knapp Mill is omitted due to data issues.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

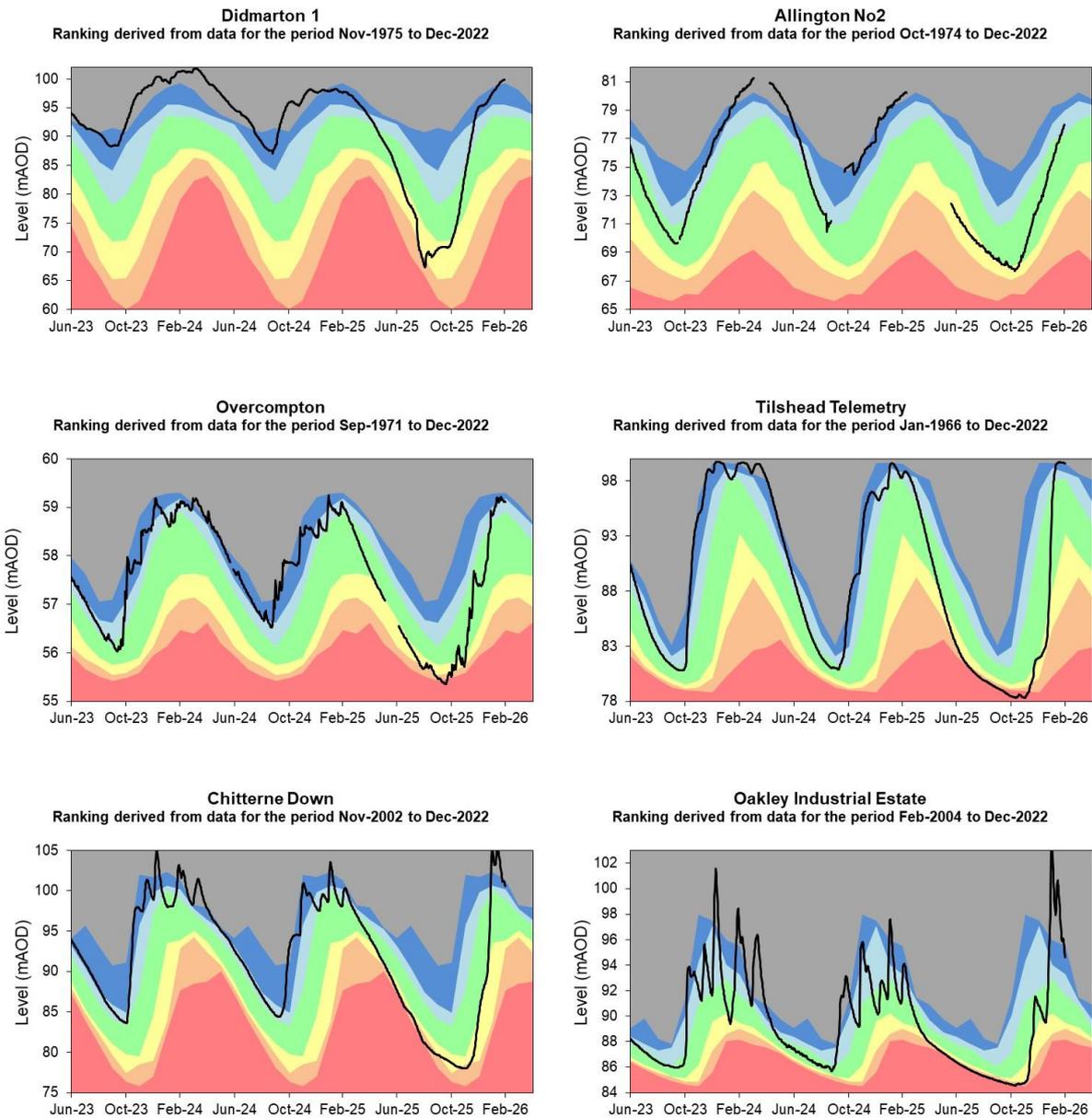
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of February 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic February levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

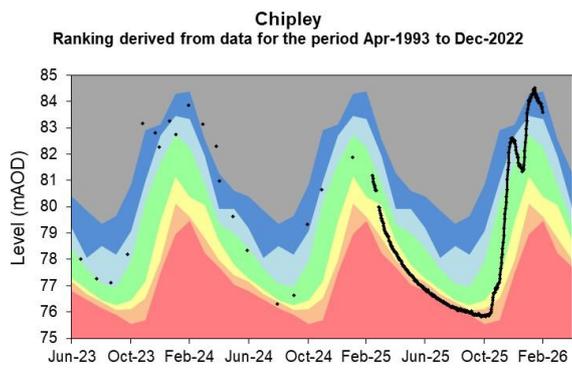
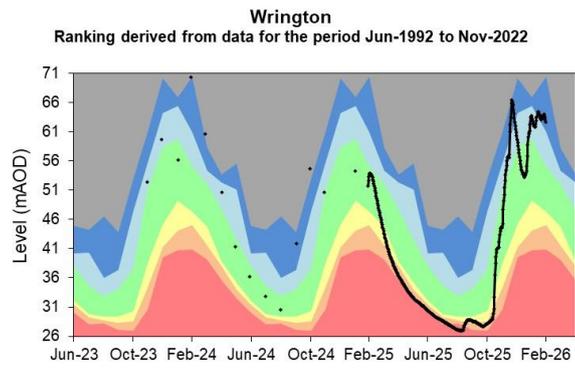
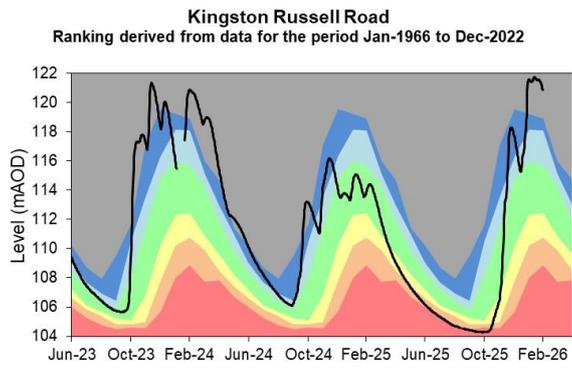
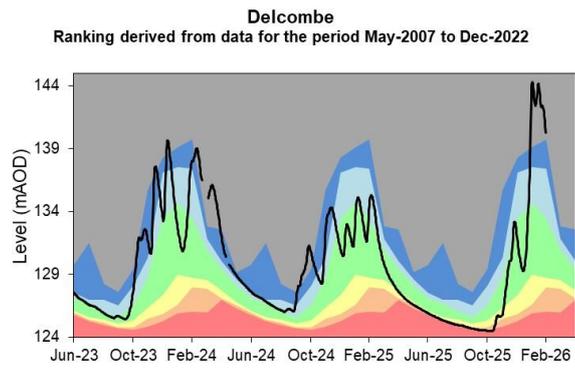
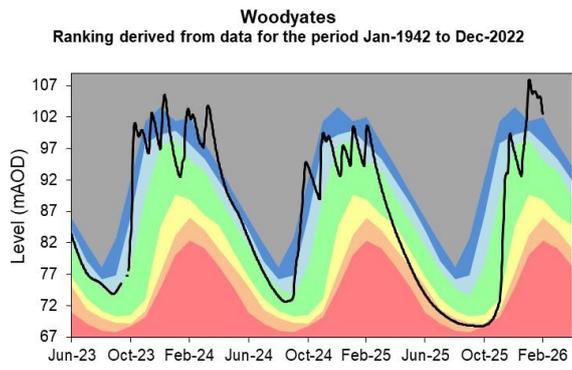


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5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.

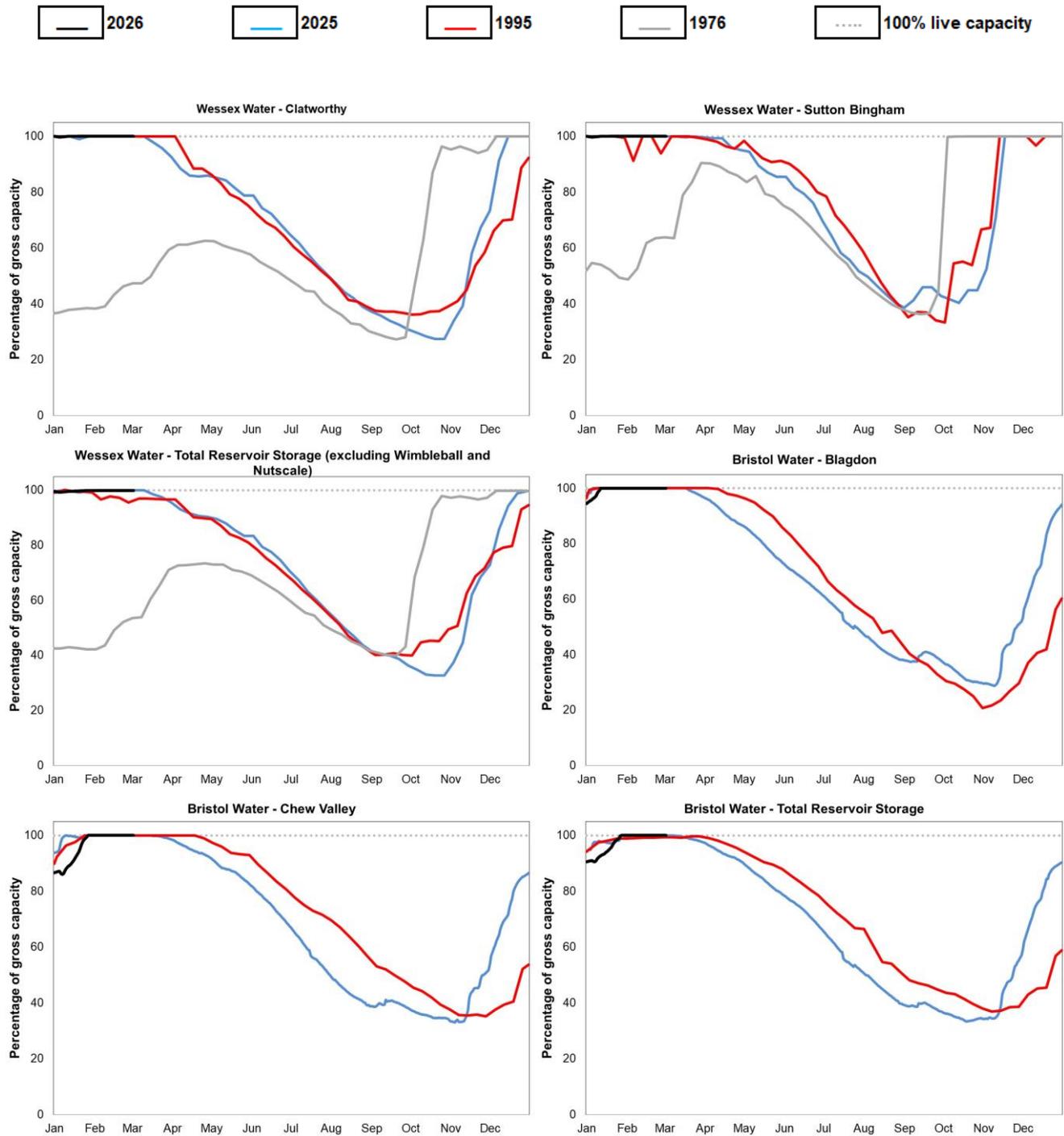




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

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 February

Area	Number of fluvial flood alerts in February	Number of coastal flood alerts in February	Number of groundwater flood alerts in February
North Wessex	8	3	0
South Wessex	15	9	0*

*2 groundwater alerts were in effect from previous months

7.2 Flood warnings

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

Area	Number of fluvial flood warnings in February	Number of coastal flood warnings in February	Number of groundwater flood warnings in February
North Wessex	1	0	0
South Wessex	19	3	2*

*32 groundwater flood warnings were in effect from previous months

7.3 Severe flood warnings

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

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

8 Stream support

8.1 Sites providing stream support

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

Catchment	River	Stream support site	Gauging station	End of February 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 February 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	Off
Hampshire Avon	Wylde	Brixton Deverill	Brixton Deverill & Heytesbury	Off
Hampshire Avon	Wylde	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 February

Catchment	Number of licences at restrict at the end of February	Number of licences at cease at the end of February
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.



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11 Appendices

11.1 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
Axe	208	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Brue	207	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Little Avon	205	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Lower Bristol Avon And Bristol Frome	211	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Lower Dorset Stour And River Crane	231	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Lower Hampshire Avon	229	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Mendips And River Chew	198	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Middle And Upper Bristol Avon	217	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal

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
Middle Dorset Stour	226	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Middle Hampshire Avon	220	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Parrett	213	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Poole Harbour And Purbeck	216	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
River Bourne	214	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
River Frome	219	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Notably high
River Piddle	212	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Tone	199	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Upper Dorset Stour	201	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Upper Hampshire Avon	219	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Above normal

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
West Dorset Streams	235	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Notably high
West Somerset Streams	165	Notably High	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Wylfe And Nadder	198	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Yeo And Kenn	195	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal

11.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Feb 2026 band	Jan 2026 band
Amesbury	Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Exceptionally high	Normal
Ashford Mill	Isle	Parrett	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Baggs Mill	Piddle	Piddle	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Bathford	Bristol Avon	Bristol Avon	Notably high	Above normal
Beggearn Huish	Washford River	Washford River	Notably high	Above normal
Bishops Hull	Tone	Tone	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Bridport East Bridge	Asker	Asker	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Fenny Castle	Sheppey	Brue	Exceptionally high	Notably high
East Mills Combined	Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Exceptionally high	Above normal
East Stoke Combined	Dorset Frome	Dorset Frome	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Frenchay	Bristol Frome	Bristol Frome	Exceptionally high	Above normal

Site name	River	Catchment	Feb 2026 band	Jan 2026 band
Great Somerford	Bristol Avon	Bristol Avon	Exceptionally high	Above normal
Hammoon	Dorset Stour	Dorset Stour	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Knapp Mill	Hampshire Avon	Hampshire Avon	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Lovington	Brue	Brue	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Pen Mill	Somerset Yeo	Parrett	Notably high	Exceptionally high
South Newton	Wylde	Hampshire Avon	Exceptionally high	Normal
Sydling St Nicholas	Sydling Water	Dorset Frome	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Tellisford	Somerset Frome	Bristol Avon	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Throop	Lower Stour	Dorset Stour	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high

11.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Feb 2026 band	End of Jan 2026 band
Allington No2	Upper Bristol Avon Great Oolite	Above normal	Normal
Chitterne Down	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Delcombe	Dorset Frome And Piddle Chalk/upper Greensand	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Didmarton 1	Upper Bristol Avon Inferior Oolite	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Kingston Russell Road	Dorset Frome Chalk	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Overcompton	Somerset Yeo Bridport Sand	Above normal	Above normal
Tilshead	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Exceptionally high	Normal
Woodyates	Dorset Stour Chalk	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Oakley Industrial Estate	Upper Hampshire Avon Chalk	Notably high	Exceptionally high
Chipley	Triassic Otter Sandstone	Notably high	Notably high
Wrington	Carboniferous Limestone	Notably high	Above normal