

Monthly water situation report: Midlands

1 Summary - May 2026

Please see Section 7.3 for a map detailing the Midlands regional coverage of this report.

Rainfall – In May, all but one catchment recorded normal rainfall totals compared to their May long term average (LTA). The Avon catchment recorded below normal rainfall totals for this time of year.

Soil moisture deficit – Soil moisture deficits (SMD) in May recorded higher than average across all Midlands catchments. This means soils were drier than average. Most catchments increased their SMD compared to April.

River flows – The majority of sites recorded below normal flows in May. Seven sites recorded normal, and two sites recorded notably low flows for this time of year. All sites recorded below 100% of their LTA.

Groundwater levels - Groundwater sites in May ranged from exceptionally high groundwater levels to normal groundwater levels. The most common groundwater level banding in May was notably high.

Reservoir stocks – Reservoir storage levels across the Midlands ranged from 73% to 99% by the end of May.

1.1 Rainfall

In May, all but one catchment recorded normal rainfall totals compared to their May LTA. These ranged from 74% to 100% of their LTAs. The Avon catchment was the exception, recording below normal rainfall totals compared to its LTA at 64%.

Over the last 3 months, most catchments recorded notably low rainfall totals compared to the 3-month LTA. The Upper Trent and Shropshire Plains recorded below normal rainfall totals, and the Derwent, Dove and Welsh Mountains recorded normal rainfall totals. These are all compared to the 3-month March to May LTAs.

Over the past 6 months, most catchments recorded notably high rainfall totals. Four of the remaining catchments, the Lower Severn, Shropshire Plains, Mid Severn and the Lower Wye all recorded above normal rainfall totals. The Welsh Mountains recorded normal rainfall totals. These are all compared to their 6-month December to May LTAs.

Over the past year, most catchments recorded above normal rainfall totals. The exceptions were the Shropshire Plains, Mid Severn, the Soar and the Avon catchments, all recording normal rainfall totals compared to their 1-year LTAs.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

In May, SMD generally has increased across most areas in the Midlands since April. Most sites are recording between 71mm and 10mm of SMD. The exceptions to this are the Welsh Mountains, the Mid Severn, and the Lower Wye. These all recorded between 41mm and 70mm of SMD. This means that soils have generally gotten drier over May. For the majority of areas, soils were recording a 26mm to 50mm difference in SMD compared to the LTA. Three areas, the Welsh Mountains, Lower Wye, and Lower Severn recorded a 6mm to 25mm difference compared to the LTA. Overall, this shows soils are drier compared to the average for this time of year.

1.3 River flows

In May, most sites recorded below normal flows for this time of year. Seven additional sites recorded normal flows compared to the May LTA. Two sites, Tenbury and Butts Bridge in the west, both recorded notably low flows for this time of year. Overall, the flows in the Midlands ranged from 39% to 83% of their LTA.

Deerhurst gauging station is currently down, and the data has been substituted with flows from the nearby gauging station Haw Bridge. Wedderburn Bridge has been showing unreliable data from September 2024 onwards; therefore, its data has been removed from this report.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of May, all of the Midlands groundwater sites recorded normal or higher groundwater levels compared to the LTA. Coxmoor in the north-east recorded exceptionally high groundwater levels at the end of May relative to its LTA. Anthonys Cross, Four Crosses, St Mary's Church and Weir Farm all recorded notably high groundwater levels relative to the LTA. A further 3 sites, Ram Hall, Riders Point and Southards Lane recorded normal groundwater levels.

Out of all reported groundwater sites, the majority of sites had a slight decrease in groundwater levels since April. The only exception was Coxmoor and Crossley Hill.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

All reservoirs had storage between 73% and 99% by the end of May. Six reservoirs are at below average storage for this time of year. Two sites are at average storage, and the remaining 2 sites are at above average storage for this time of year.

Most reservoirs had storage levels decrease compared to April. Storage at Clywedog and Vyrnwy remained at similar levels to the previous month end, while the Dove reservoir had an increased storage level compared to April.

1.6 River Severn operations

The River Severn is regulated to maintain a minimum flow at Bewdley gauging station. This ensures sufficient water flows along the river to support environmental and water supply requirements. Regulation is instigated when flows drop below a threshold. River Severn regulation was not instigated in May.

1.7 River Wye operations

In May 2026, regulation releases were in operation. These occurred from 14 May to 16 May, and then from 28 May, continuing through to the end of May.

1.8 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 31 May there are 33 water abstraction licence restrictions in place across the Midlands affecting 67 licences in total.

Please refer to the appendices for a full list of water abstraction licence restrictions.

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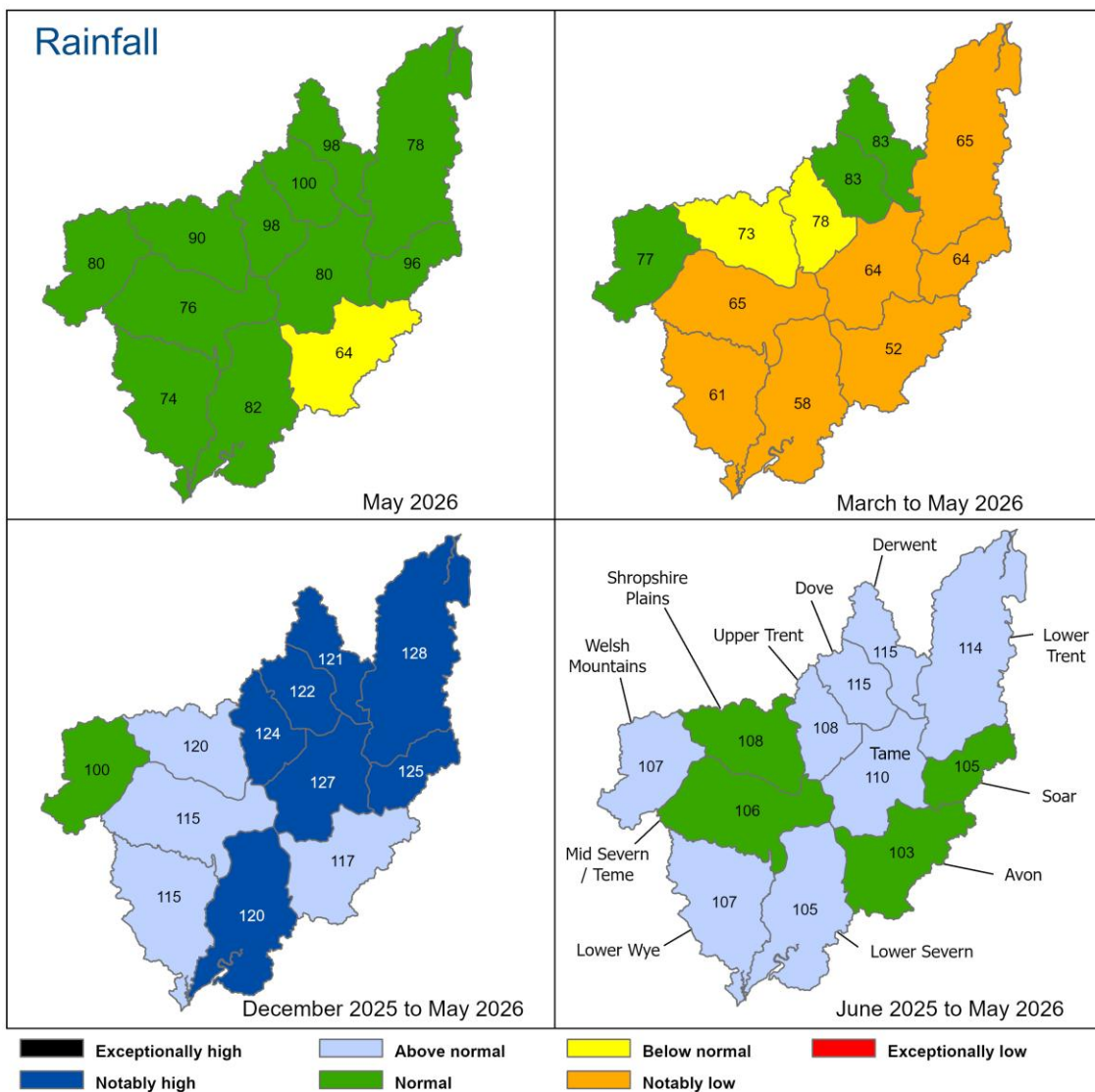
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 May 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

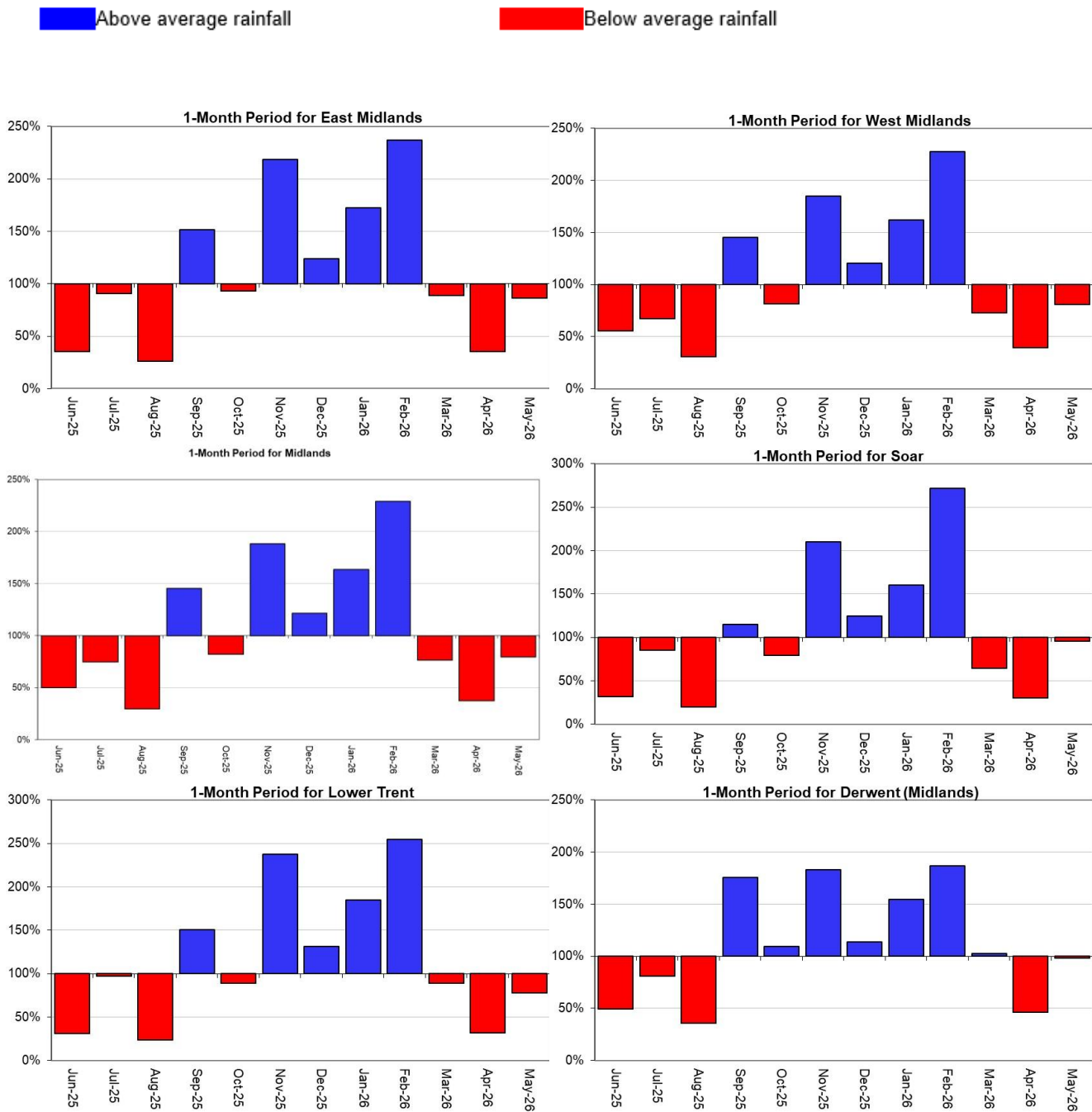


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025,

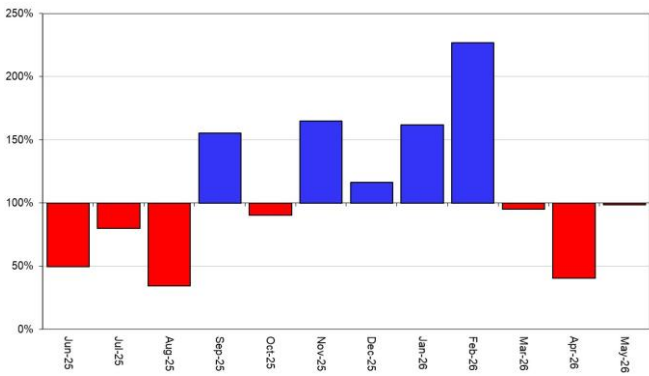
extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

2.2 Rainfall charts

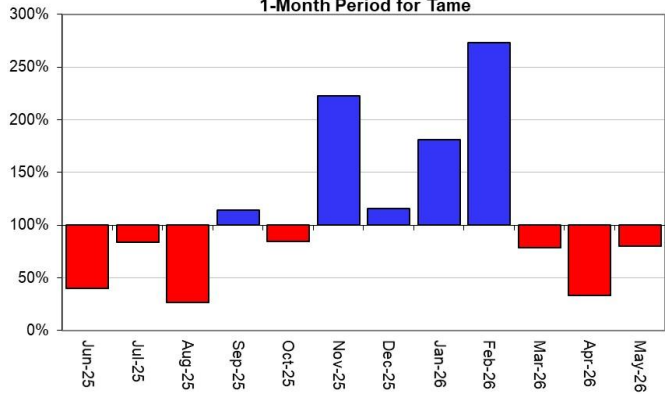
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for hydrological areas across the Midlands region.



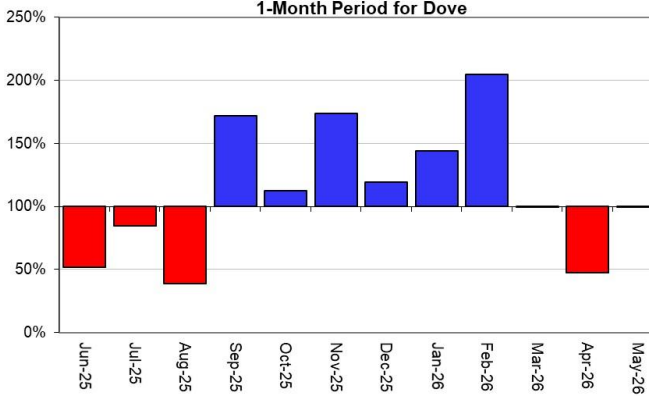
1-Month Period for Upper Trent



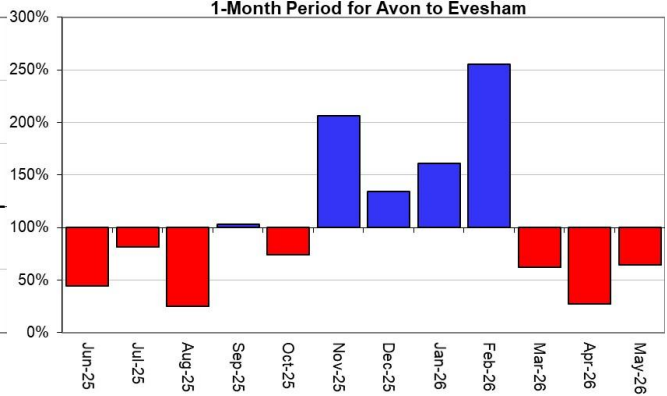
1-Month Period for Tame



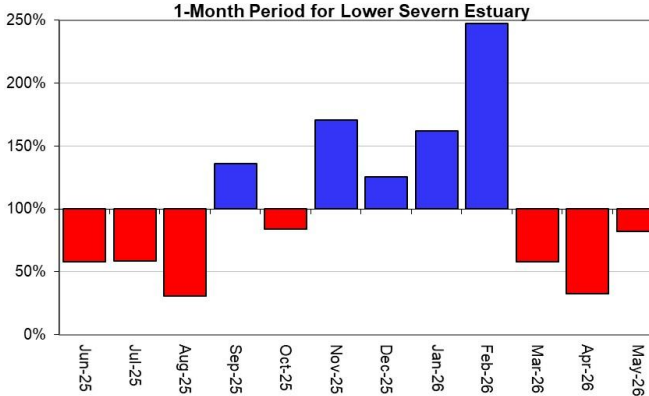
1-Month Period for Dove



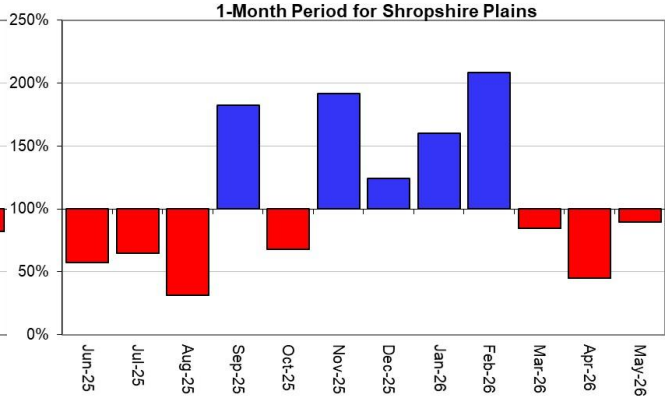
1-Month Period for Avon to Evesham

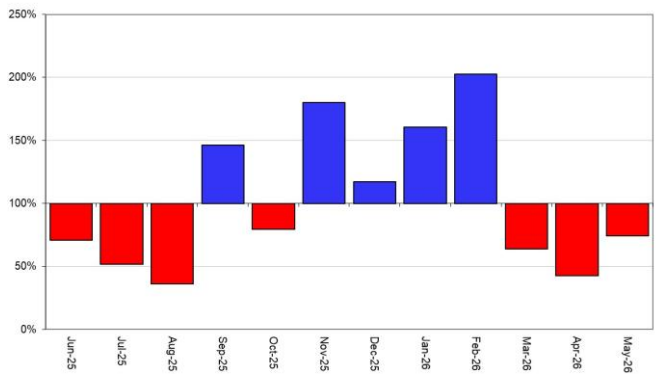
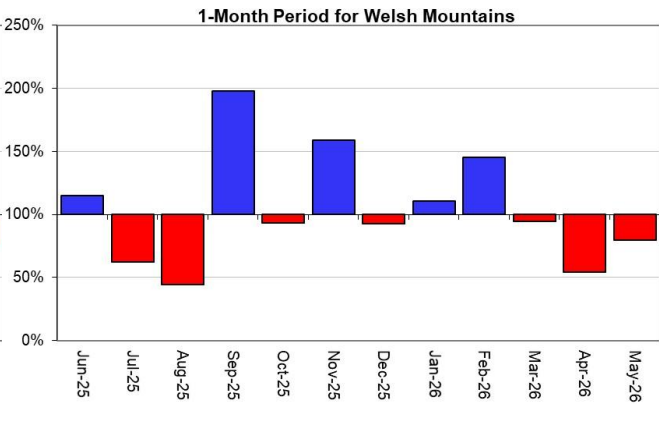
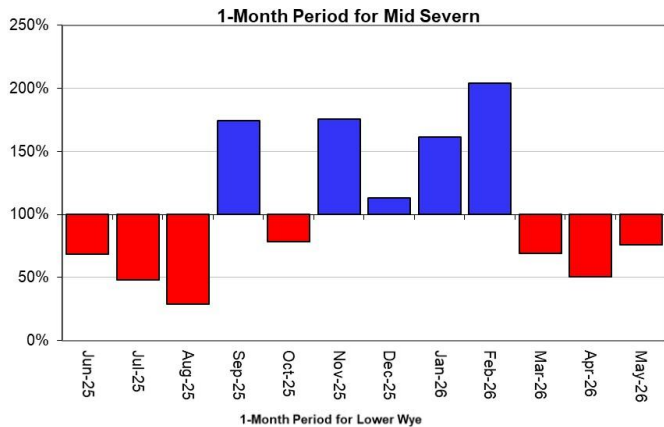


1-Month Period for Lower Severn Estuary



1-Month Period for Shropshire Plains



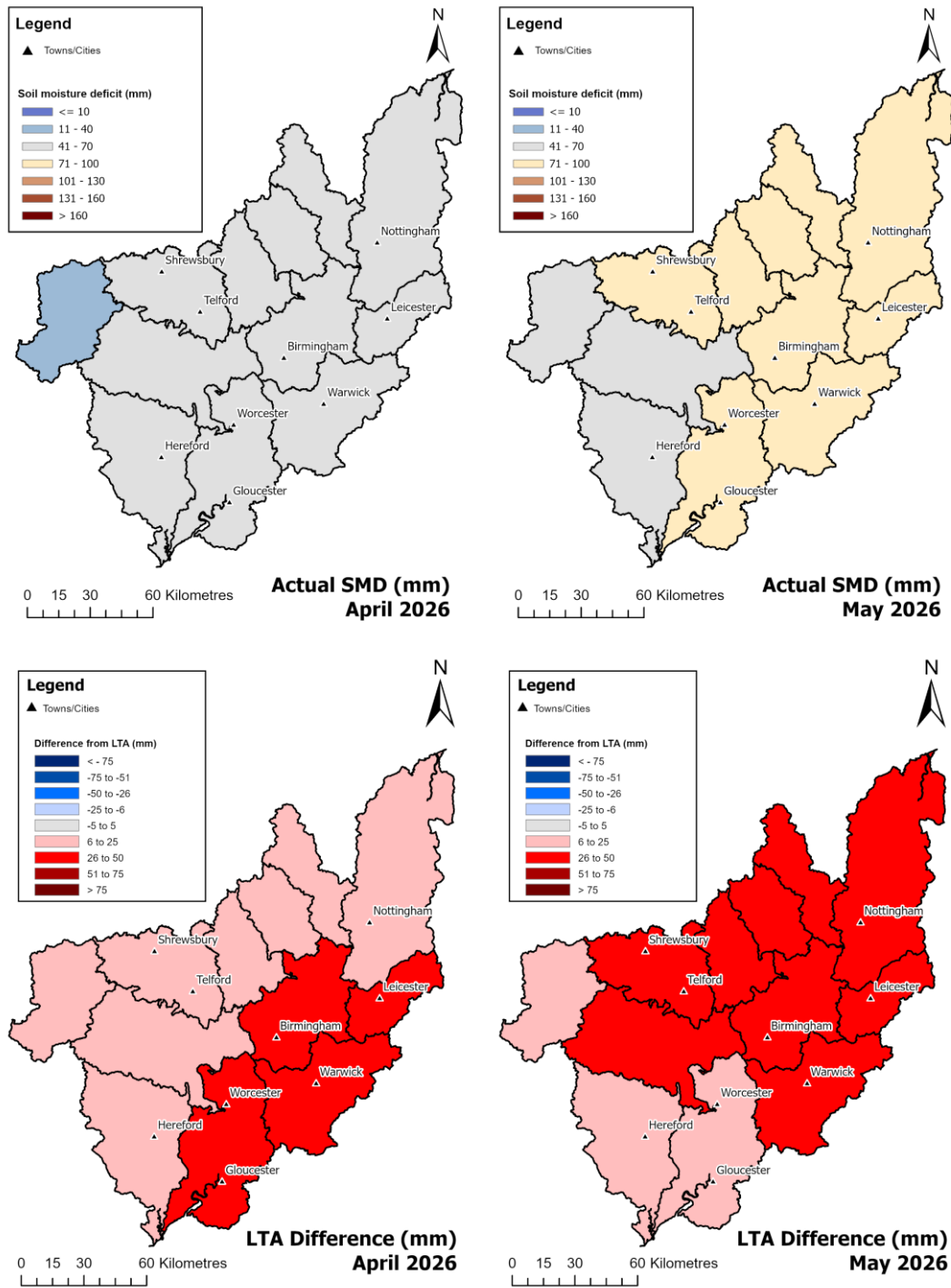


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

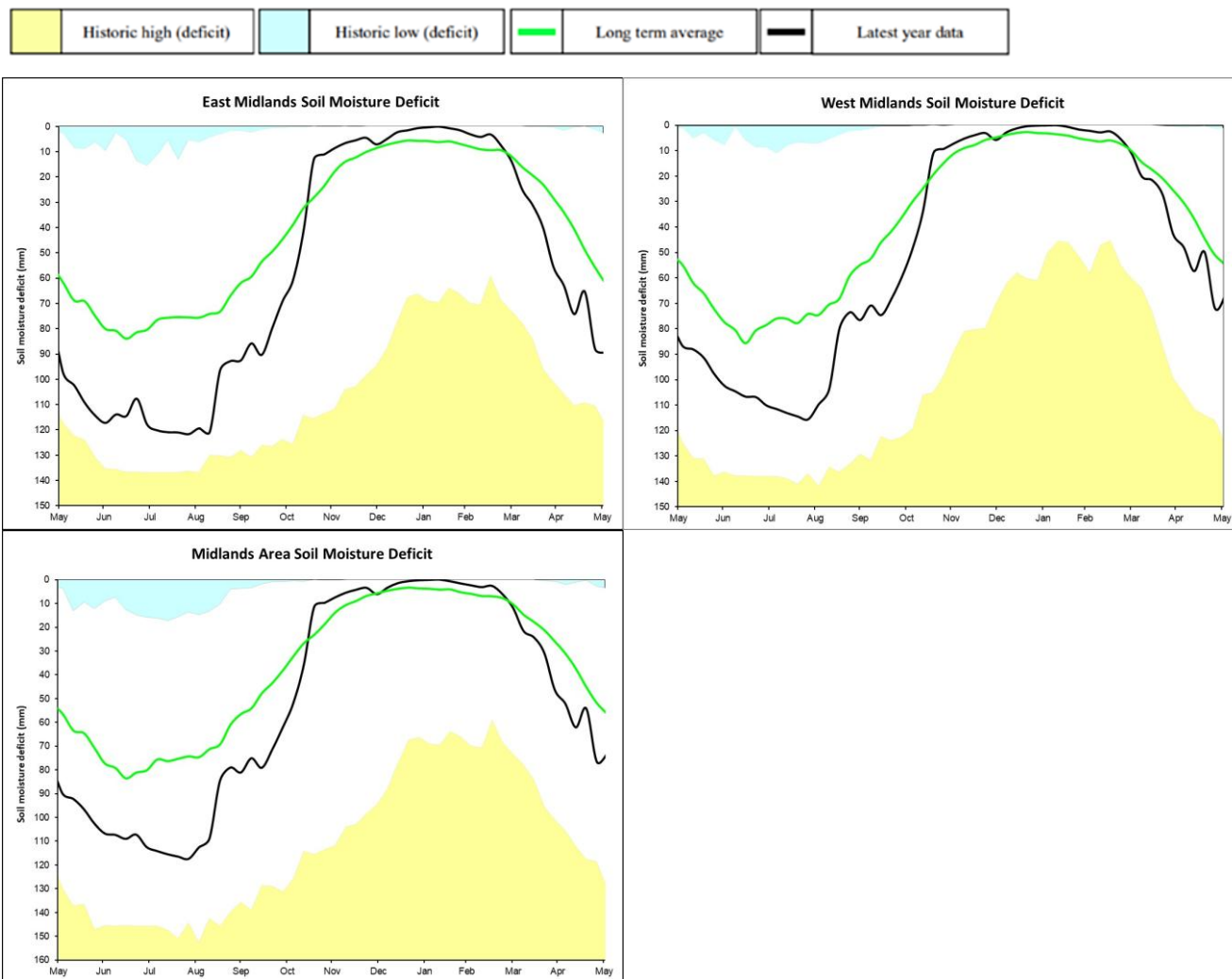
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 May 2026. The difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



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

3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

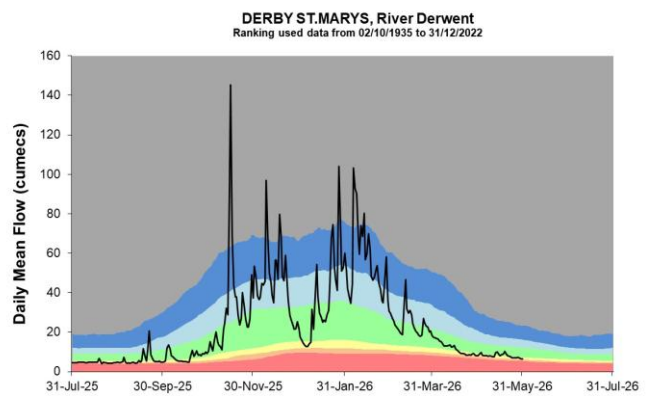
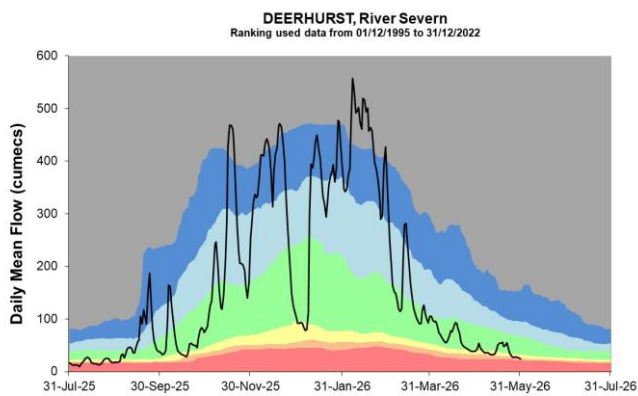
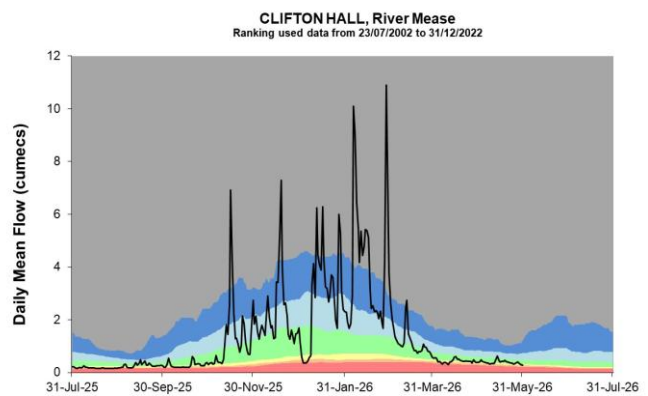
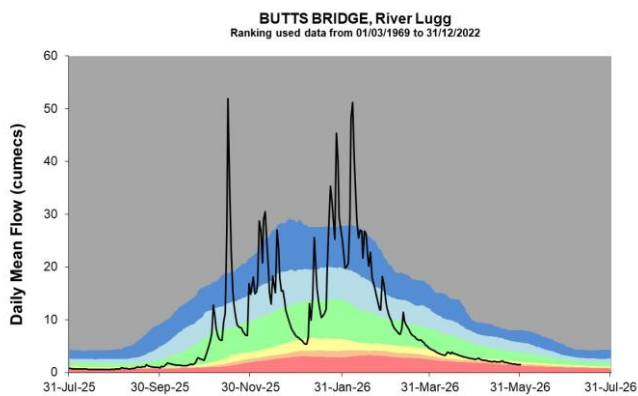
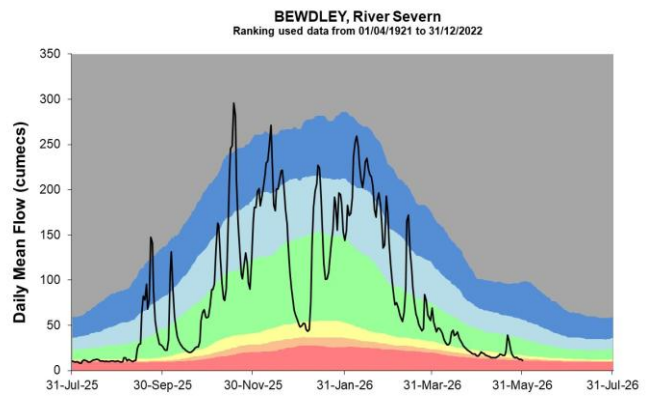
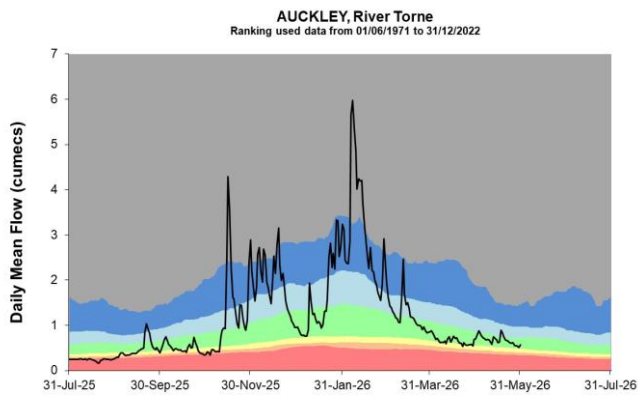
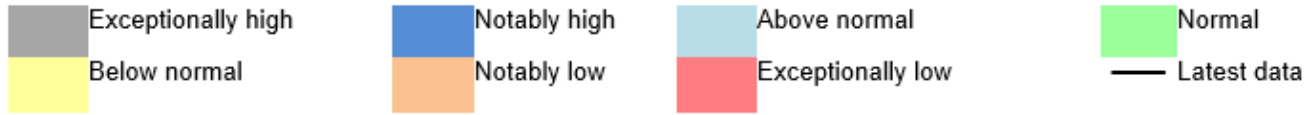
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit charts for selected areas across the Midlands.

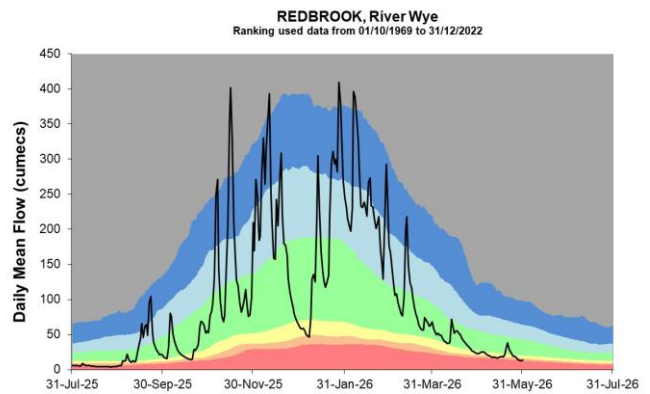
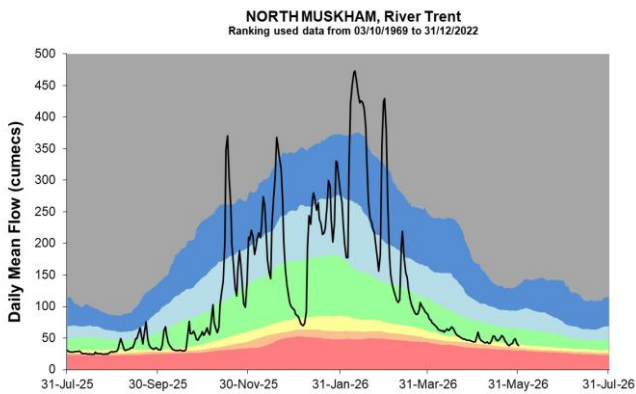
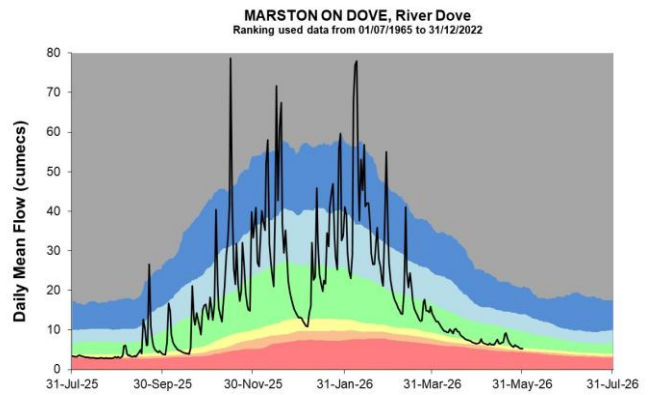
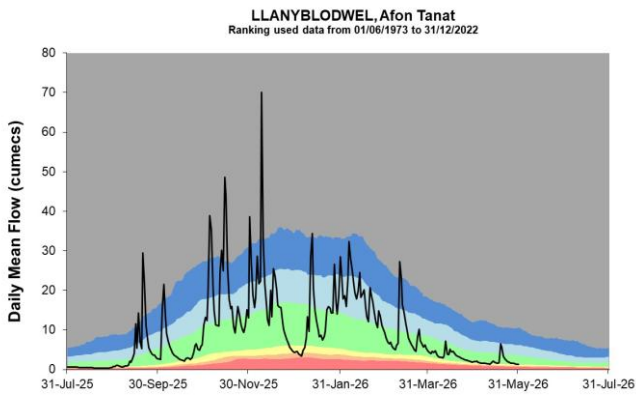
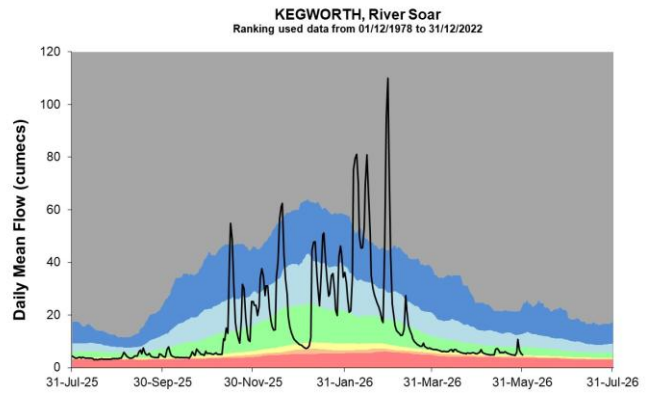
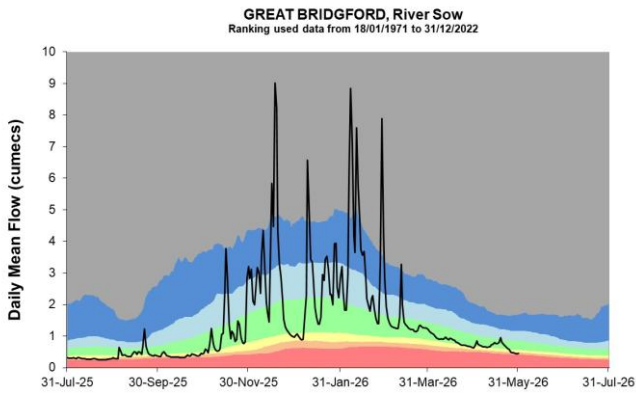
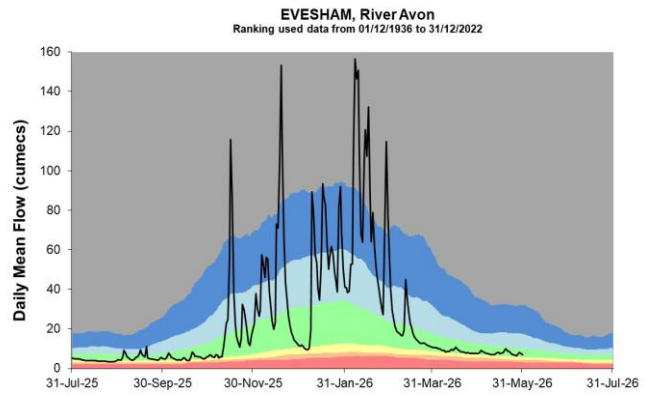
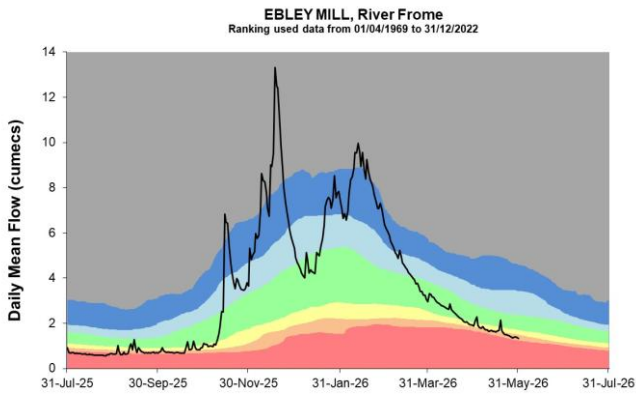


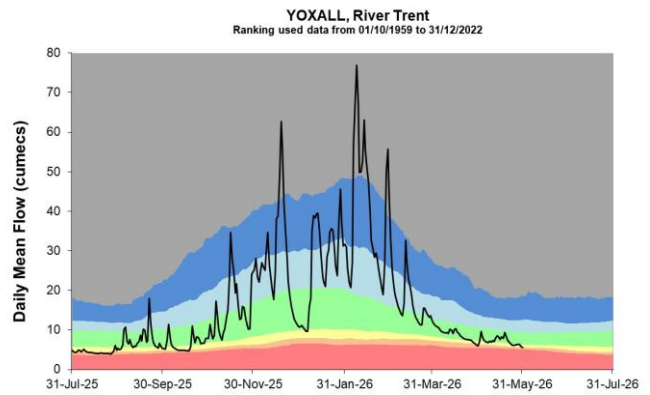
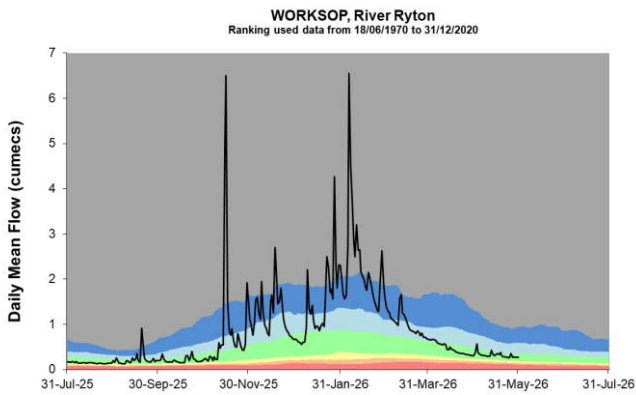
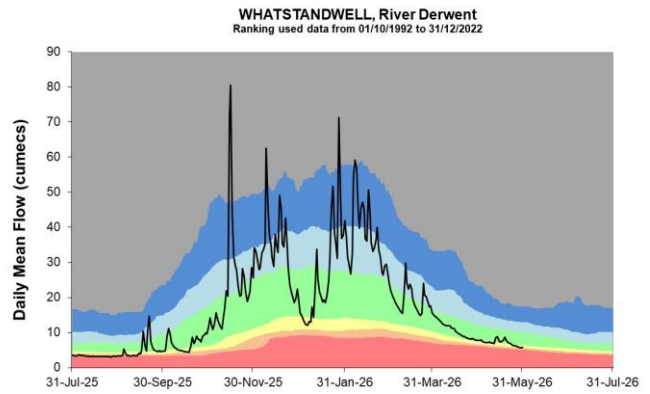
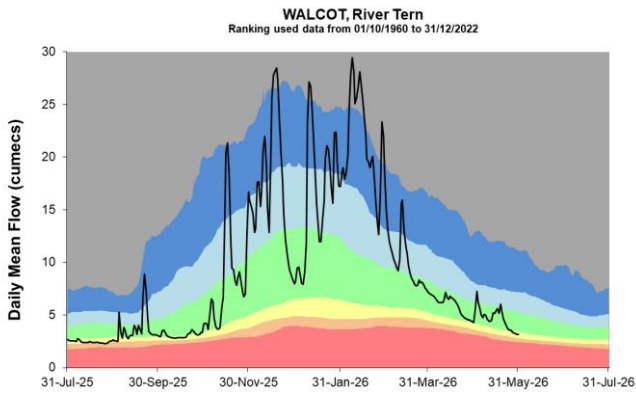
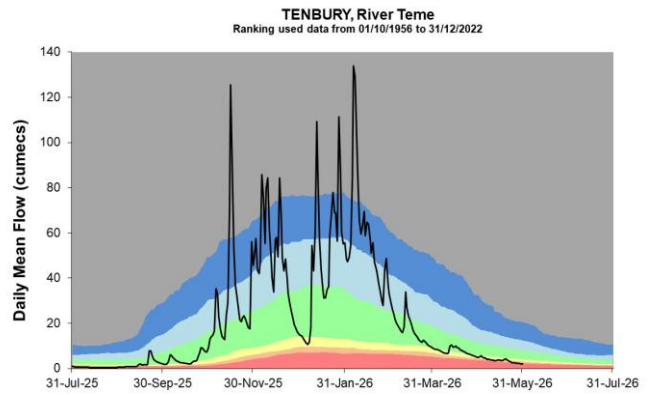
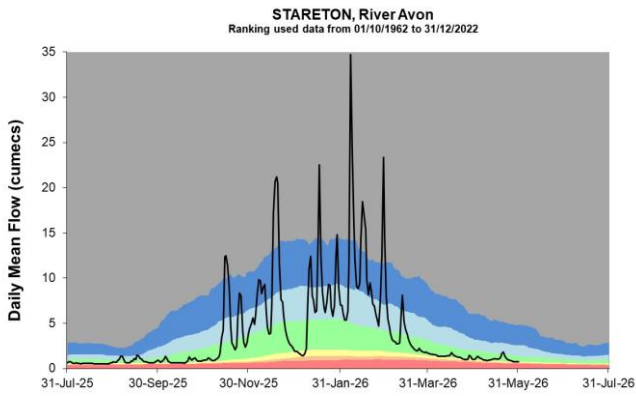
(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

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, and long term maximum and minimum flows.





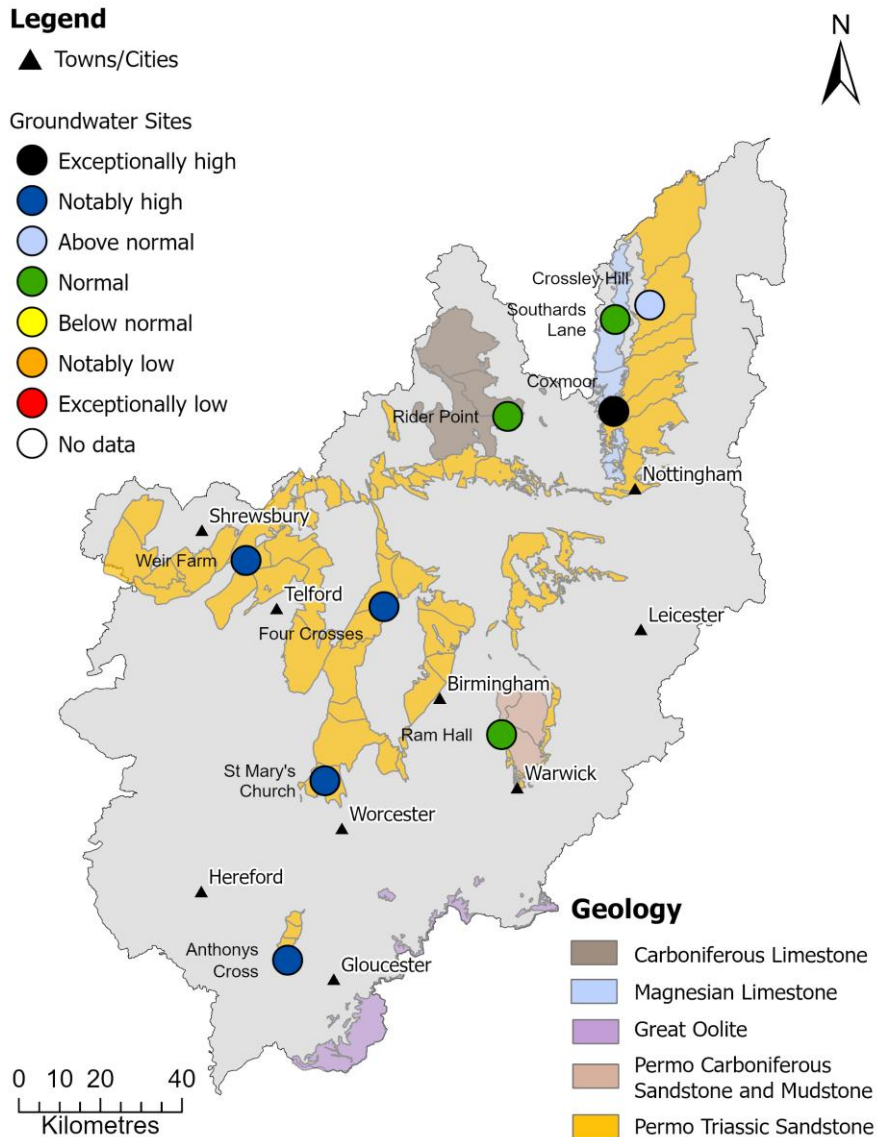


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

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

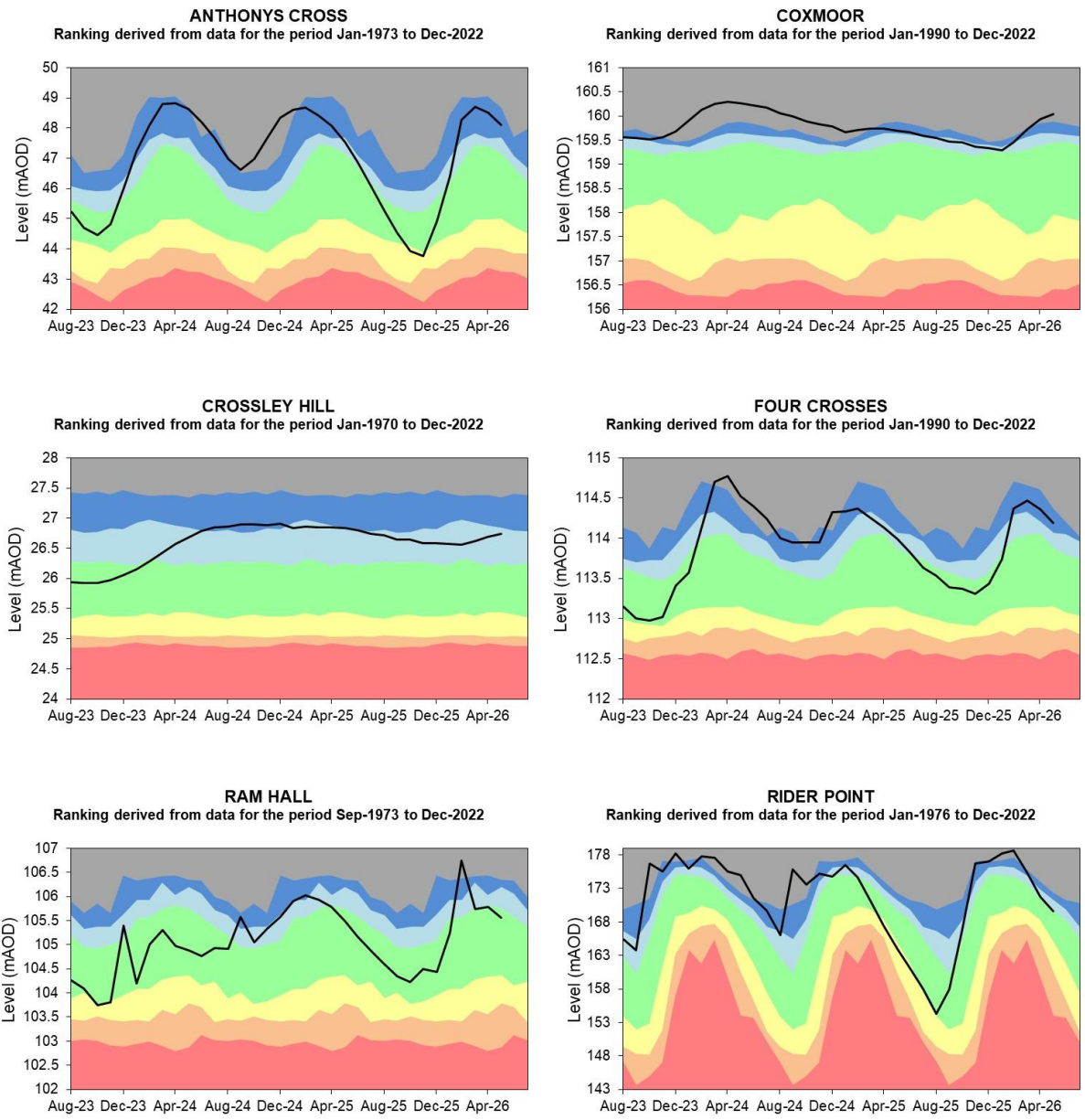
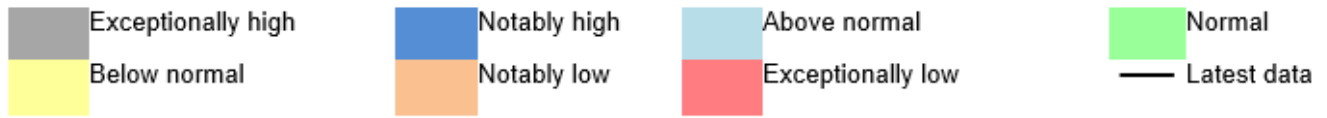


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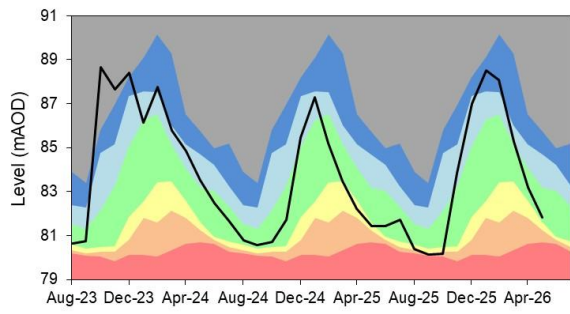
5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.



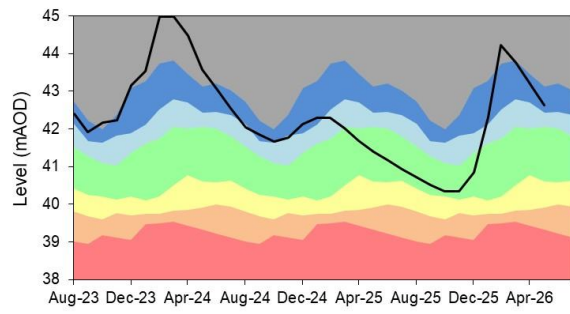
SOUTHARDS LANE

Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1973 to Dec-2022



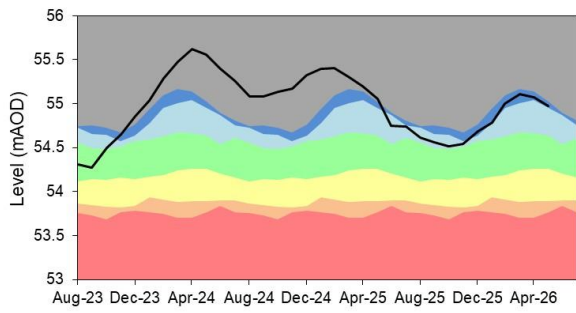
ST MARY'S SHRAWLEY

Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1974 to Dec-2022



WEIR FARM

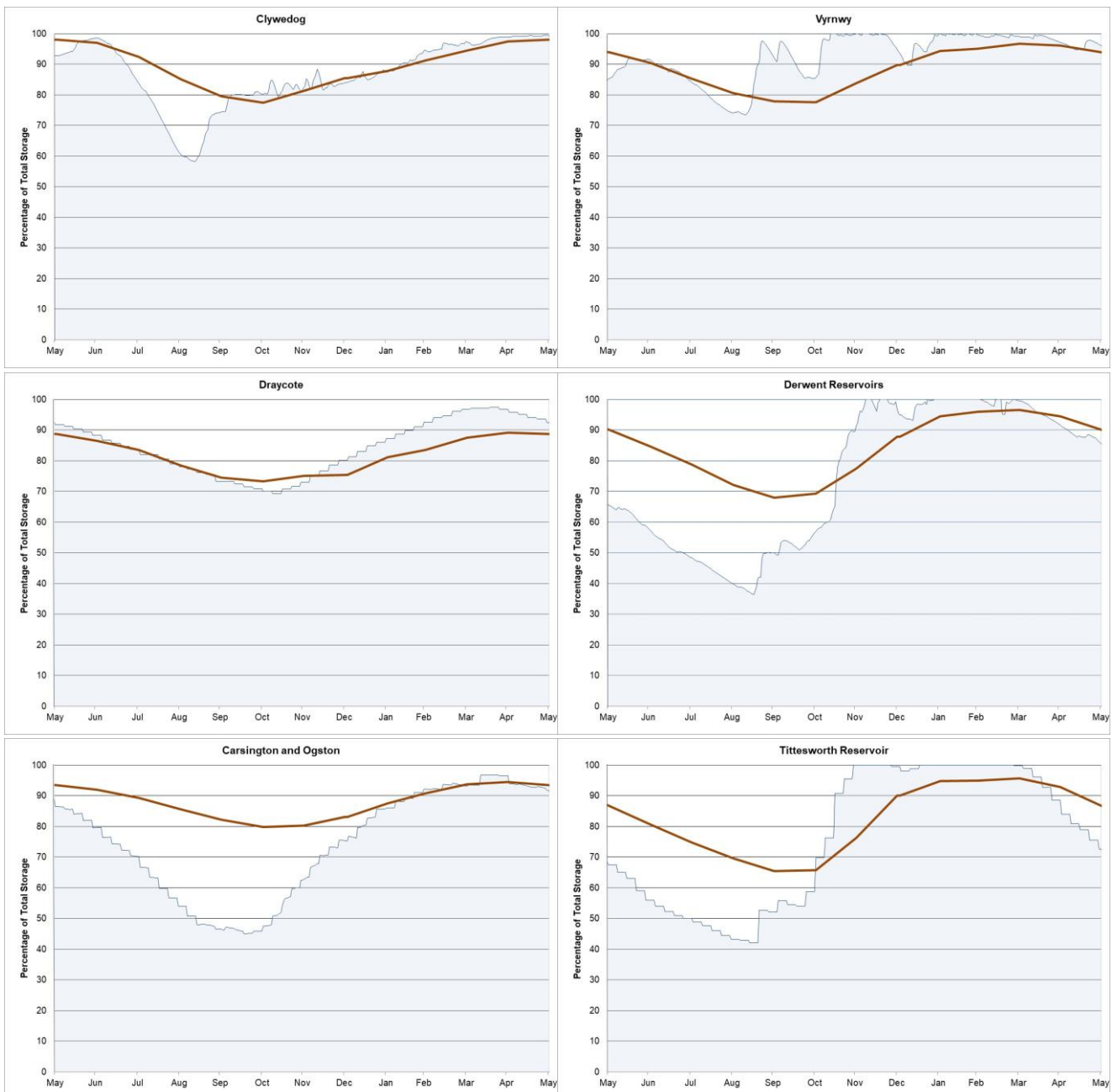
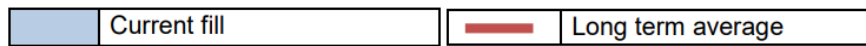
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-2003 to Dec-2022

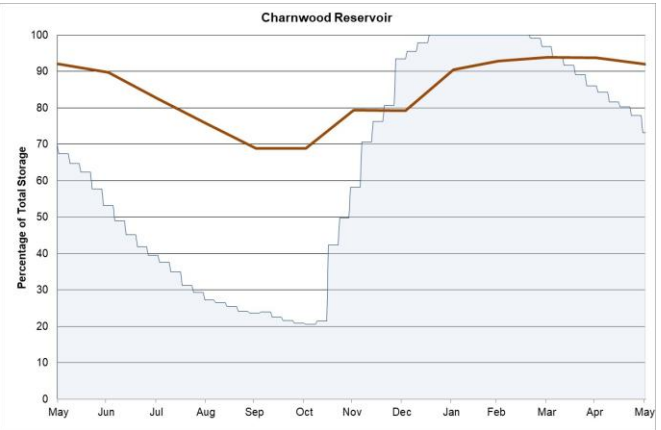
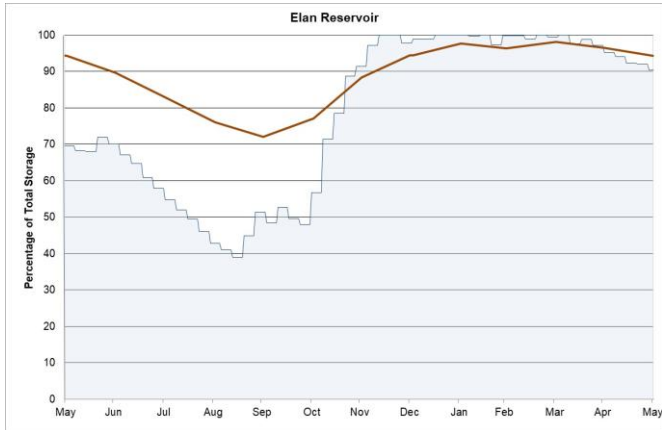
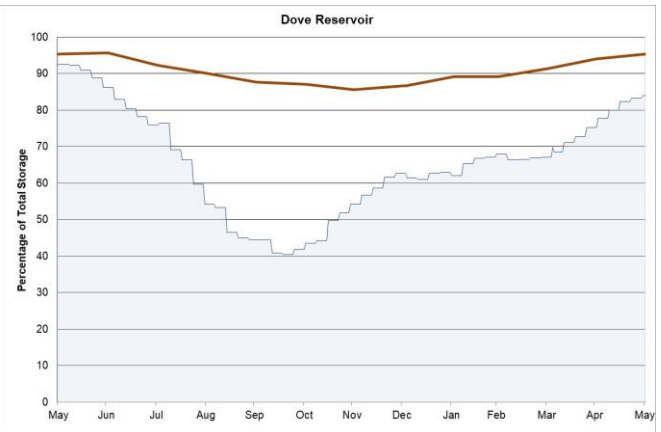
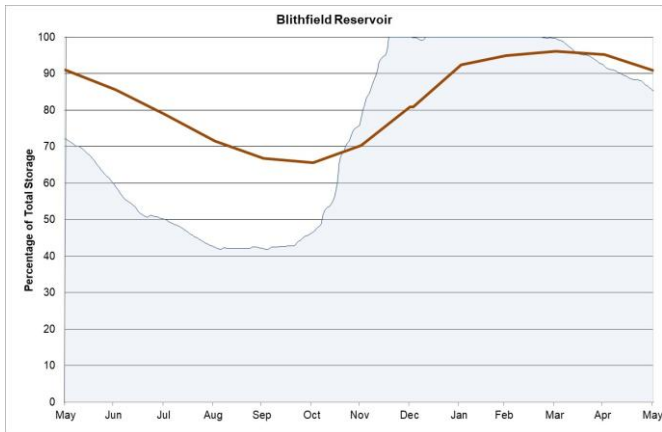


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to long term average stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length. Please see Section 7.4 for a map detailing the locality of the Midlands reservoirs reported on.





(Source: water companies).

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).

Field capacity

Soil at field capacity is holding all of the water which it can hold against gravity.

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

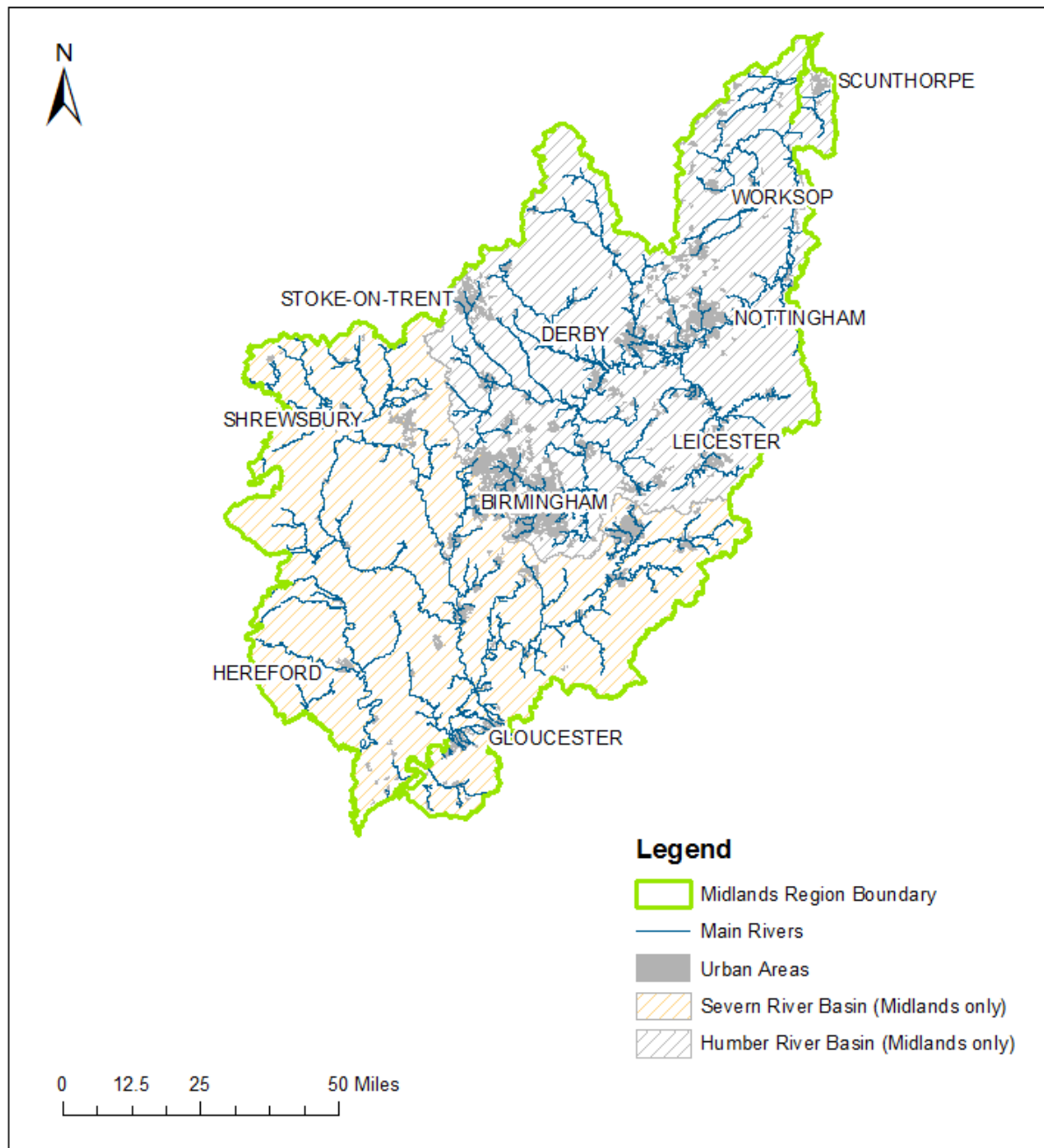
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

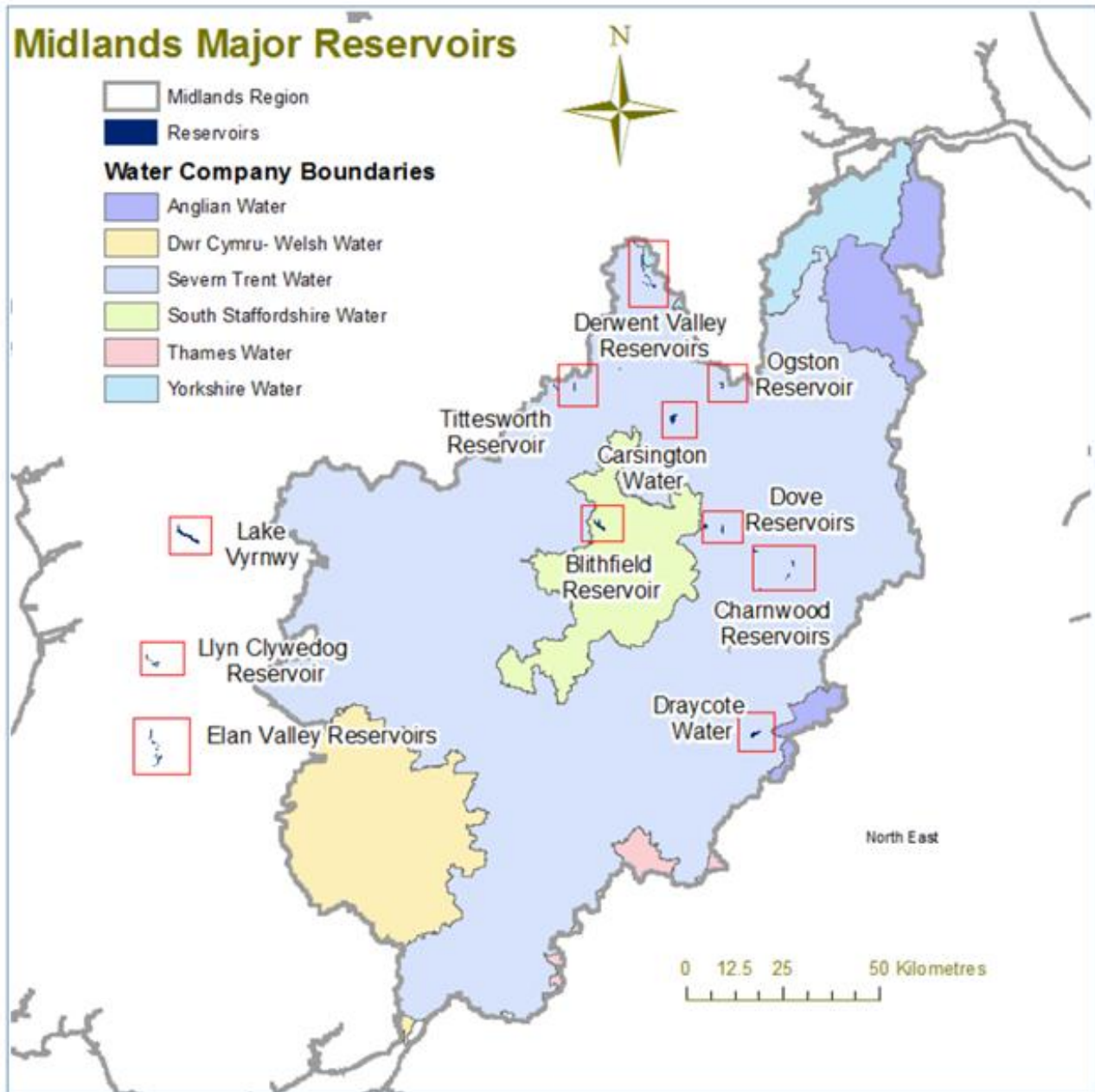
7.3 Midlands regional coverage

Figure 7.1: The Midlands regional boundary and the hydrological boundaries of the River Severn and River Trent.



7.4 Midlands major reservoirs

Figure 7.2: Location of major reservoirs in the Midlands.



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8 Appendices

8.1 Water abstraction licence restrictions table

Area	Rivers and stations restricted
East Midlands	River Derwent at Derby St Mary's Rothley Brook at Rothley Ryton at Blyth
West Midlands	Basey Brook at Offenham Glynch Brook at Bromsberrow Mor Brook at Dowles Brook at Oak Cottage River Arrow at Broom River Arrow at Titley Mill River Cole at Coleshill River Isbourne at Hinton River Leadon at Wedderburn River Lugg at Butts Bridge River Severn at Bewdley River Sow at Great Bridgford River Stour at Puxton River Strine at Crudgington River Teme at Knightsford Bridge River Teme at Tenbury River Tern at Ternhill

Area	Rivers and stations restricted
	River Tern at Walcot River Trent at Darlaston River Wye at Belmont River Wye at Redbrook

8.2 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	May 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	May 2026 band	Mar 2026 to May cumulative band	Dec 2025 to May cumulative band	Jun 2025 to May cumulative band
Avon To Evesham	64	Below Normal	Notably low	Above normal	Normal
Derwent (Midlands)	98	Normal	Normal	Notably high	Above normal
Dove	100	Normal	Normal	Notably high	Above normal
Lower Severn Estuary	82	Normal	Notably low	Notably high	Above normal
Lower Trent	78	Normal	Notably low	Notably high	Above normal
Lower Wye	74	Normal	Notably low	Above normal	Above normal
Mid Severn	76	Normal	Notably low	Above normal	Normal
Shropshire Plains	90	Normal	Below normal	Above normal	Normal
Soar	96	Normal	Notably low	Notably high	Normal
Tame	80	Normal	Notably low	Notably high	Above normal
Upper Trent	98	Normal	Below normal	Notably high	Above normal

Hydrological area	May 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	May 2026 band	Mar 2026 to May cumulative band	Dec 2025 to May cumulative band	Jun 2025 to May cumulative band
Welsh Mountains	80	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal

8.3 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	May 2026 band	Apr 2026 band
Auckley	Torne	Torne	Normal	Normal
Bewdley	Severn	Severn Lower Mid	Below normal	Normal
Butts Bridge	Lugg	Lugg	Notably low	Below normal
Clifton Hall	River Mease	Mease	Below normal	Below normal
Deerhurst	Severn	Severn Lower	Below normal	Normal
Derby St. Marys	Derwent	Derwent Der to Markeaton confl.	Below normal	Below normal
Ebley Mill	Frome (Gloucs.)	Frome Gloucs.	Below normal	Normal
Evesham	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Lower	Normal	Normal
Great Bridgford	Sow	Sow Upper	Below normal	Normal
Kegworth	Soar	Soar to Kingston Brook confl.	Below normal	Below normal
Llanyblodwel	Tanat	Severn Upper River Tanat	Normal	Normal
Marston On Dove	Dove (Midlands)	Dove Derb to Hilton Br confl.	Below normal	Normal

Site name	River	Catchment	May 2026 band	Apr 2026 band
North Muskham	Trent	Trent to Cromwell	Below normal	Normal
Redbrook	Wye (Herefordshire)	Wye H and W d s Lugg	Below normal	Normal
Stareton	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Upper	Normal	Below normal
Tenbury	Teme	Teme	Notably low	Below normal
Walcot	Tern	Tern	Normal	Normal
Wedderburn Bridge	Leadon	Leadon	No data	No data
Whatstandwell	Derwent	Derwent Derb to Amber confl.	Normal	Normal
Worksop	Ryton	Ryton Upper to Oldcoates Dyke	Normal	Normal
Yoxall	Trent	Trent to Tame Mease confl.	Below normal	Normal

8.4 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of May 2026 band	End of Apr 2026 band
Anthony's Cross	Severn Vale Permo Triassic Sandstone	Notably high	Notably high
Coxmoor	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Crossley Hill	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Above normal	Above normal
Four Crosses	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Notably high	Notably high
Ram Hall, Meriden	Permo Carboniferous Sandstones and Mudstones	Normal	Normal
Rider Point Via Gellia	Carboniferous Limestone	Normal	Above normal
Southards Lane, Bolsover	Magnesian Limestone	Normal	Normal
St Mary's Church, Shrawley	Triassic Sandstone	Notably high	Notably high
Weir Farm	Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation	Notably high	Notably high