

Monthly water situation report: Midlands

1 Summary - July 2026

July was an exceptionally dry month, with all the hydrological areas receiving below average rainfall. The Midlands area received 3% of the long-term average (LTA) rainfall. Soil moisture deficits (SMD) continued to increase in all areas of the Midlands and by the end of July, soils across the midlands were drier than expected for the time of year. Monthly mean river flows decreased at all the indicator sites, and half of the sites were classed as notably low.

Groundwater levels were classed as normal or higher at most reported sites despite groundwater levels decreasing in all but one site. Reservoir storage decreased across all 10 reservoirs during July, with storage levels remaining below average for the time of year.

1.1 Rainfall

July was a dry month with rainfall classed as exceptionally low in all hydrological areas. The Midlands receiving 1.9mm of rainfall which represents 3% of the LTA. The driest hydrological area by percentage of LTA was Avon to Evesham in the West Midlands area which received 1% of LTA (0.9mm). By contrast, the hydrological area with the most rainfall was the Welsh Mountains also in the West Midlands which received 12% of the LTA (10.6mm).

Over the last three months, cumulative rainfall was classed as exceptionally low in parts of both the West and East Midlands, including the Lower Trent, Welsh Mountains and Mid Severn hydrological areas. Notably low rainfall totals were observed across much of the Midlands. In contrast, below normal rainfall totals were recorded in the Derwent, Dove, and Upper Trent hydrological areas, representing the highest rainfall classifications across the Midlands.

In the past 6 months, 8 of 12 hydrological areas recorded below normal rainfall totals. The remaining 4 hydrological areas situated around the north-central region of the Midlands recorded normal rainfall totals.

During the 12-month cumulative period, most hydrological areas recorded normal or higher rainfall totals. Derwent and Dove recorded notably high rainfall totals, and the Lower Trent, Upper Trent, Tame and Lower Severn recorded above normal rainfall totals.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit

Throughout the Midlands, SMD continued to increase during July due to sustained high temperatures combined with a lack of recent rainfall. At the end of July, most areas recorded between 101mm and 160mm of SMD.

Soils were considerably drier than expected for the time of year across all areas of the Midlands particularly in West Midlands.

1.3 River flows

In July, mean river flows decreased at all indicator sites and were predominantly classed as notably low or exceptionally low across the Midlands. Ten sites were classed as notably low. Six other sites were classed as exceptionally low. Two sites, Derwent at Derby St Mary's and Avon at Stareton were classed as below normal. A further 2 sites, Avon at Evesham and Ryton at Worksop recorded normal flows.

River flows were generally lowest across the western parts of the Midlands area, with several sites classed as notably low or exceptionally low. In contrast, flows were relatively higher across central and eastern hydrological areas, where sites predominantly recorded below normal or normal mean river flow.

With the exception of the Avon at Evesham, Torne at Auckley, and Ryton at Worksop which were classed as normal, all other indicator sites were classed as below normal or lower for the time of year.

As the Deerhurst gauging station is currently down, data from the nearby Haw Bridge station has been used to provide a representative indication of river flow conditions in this area. Wedderburn Bridge has been excluded from this report due to ongoing concerns regarding data reliability.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of July, all Midlands groundwater sites recorded normal or higher groundwater levels compared to the LTA. Ram Hall, St Mary's Church and Rider Point in the central part of the region were classed as normal. Two sites, Weir Farm and Four Crosses in the north-west of the Midlands, were classed as above normal. Anthonys Cross in south-western Midlands and Crossely Hill in the north-east of the Midlands were classed as notably high. Southards Lane was classed as below normal while Coxmoor also in the north-east of Midlands recorded exceptionally high groundwater levels.

Groundwater levels in sites within the sandstone aquifers were mostly classed as above normal or higher, including Anthonys Cross, Crossley Hill, Weir Farm, Four Crosses and Coxmoor. In contrast, groundwater levels in the Carboniferous limestone and mudstone aquifers were generally classed as normal or below normal. The highest groundwater levels were observed in the north and west of the area, Coxmoor was classed as exceptionally high, Crossley Hill and Anthonys Cross were classed as notably high.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

All 10 reservoirs are at below average storage for this time of the year.

All reservoirs had storage levels decrease compared to end of June. The biggest drop is Clywedog with 29% and the smallest is Draycote by 7%. All reservoirs had storage between 39% to 81% by the end of July.

1.6 Environmental impact

West Midlands area moved to drought incident status on 28-07-2026 whilst East Midlands moved into Prolonged Dry Weather on 29-07-2026. We continue to work with water companies and other abstractors to manage water resources and take precautionary actions to ensure the needs of water users and the environment are met.

1.7 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. Regulation was instigated when flows dropped below the threshold on 20 June 2026 and as of the end of July there have been 42 days of Severn Regulation so far.

Table 1.1: River Severn operational releases

Water supply (Ml/d)	Total releases	Normal releases	Regulation releases	Flood drawdown releases
Llyn Clywedog	495 Ml/d	18 Ml/d	477 Ml/d	0 Ml/d
Lake Vyrnwy	120 Ml/d	42 Ml/d	78 Ml/d	0 Ml/d

Water supply (MI/d)	Total releases	Normal releases	Regulation releases	Flood drawdown releases
Shropshire Groundwater scheme	190 MI/d	N/A	190 MI/d	N/A

1.8 River Wye operations

In July 2026, regulation releases were in operation. These occurred from 1 July to 31 July.

1.9 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 30 July, there are 137 water abstraction licence restrictions in place across the Midlands affecting 554 licences in total.

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

Author: Midlands Hydrology, midlandshydrology@environment-agency.gov.uk

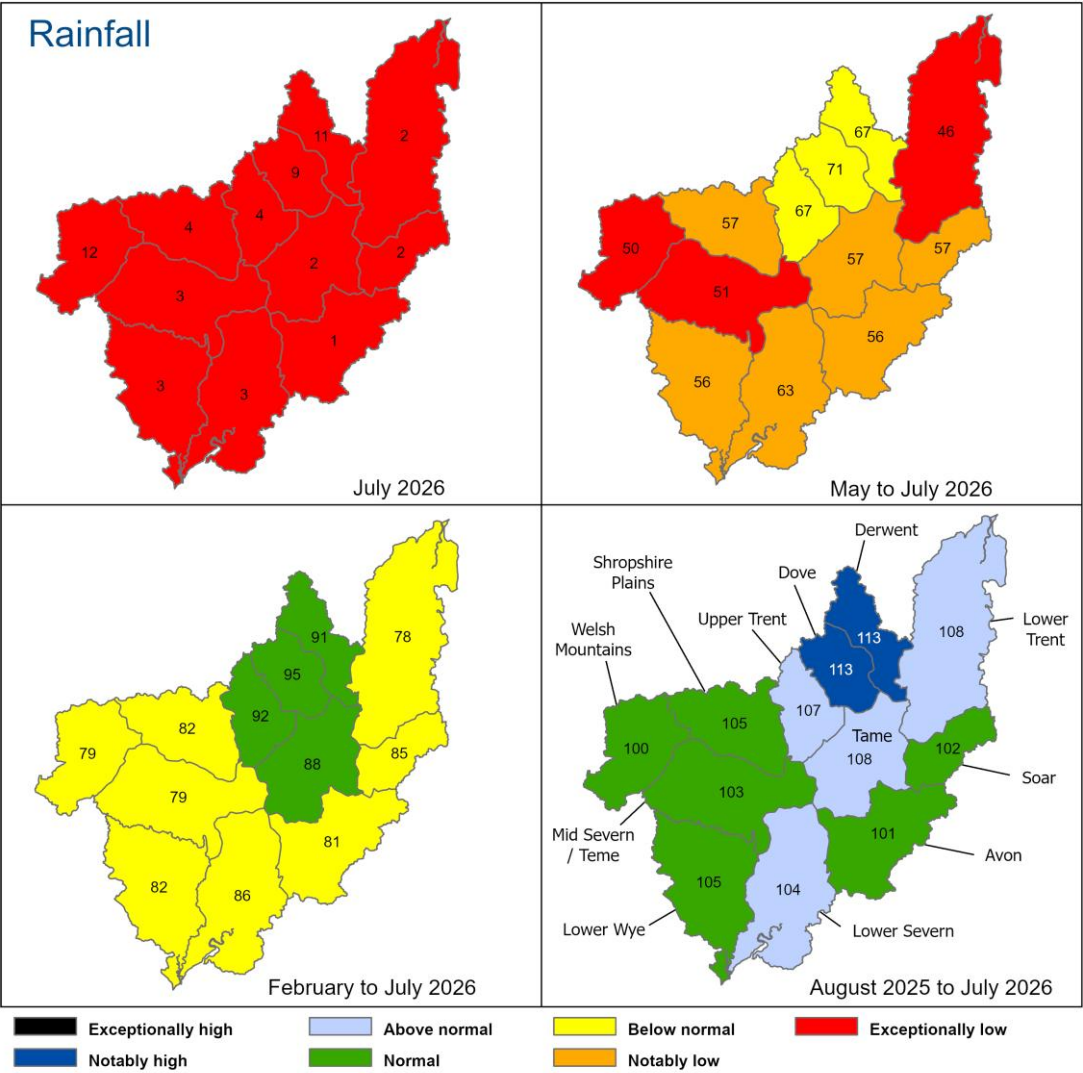
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

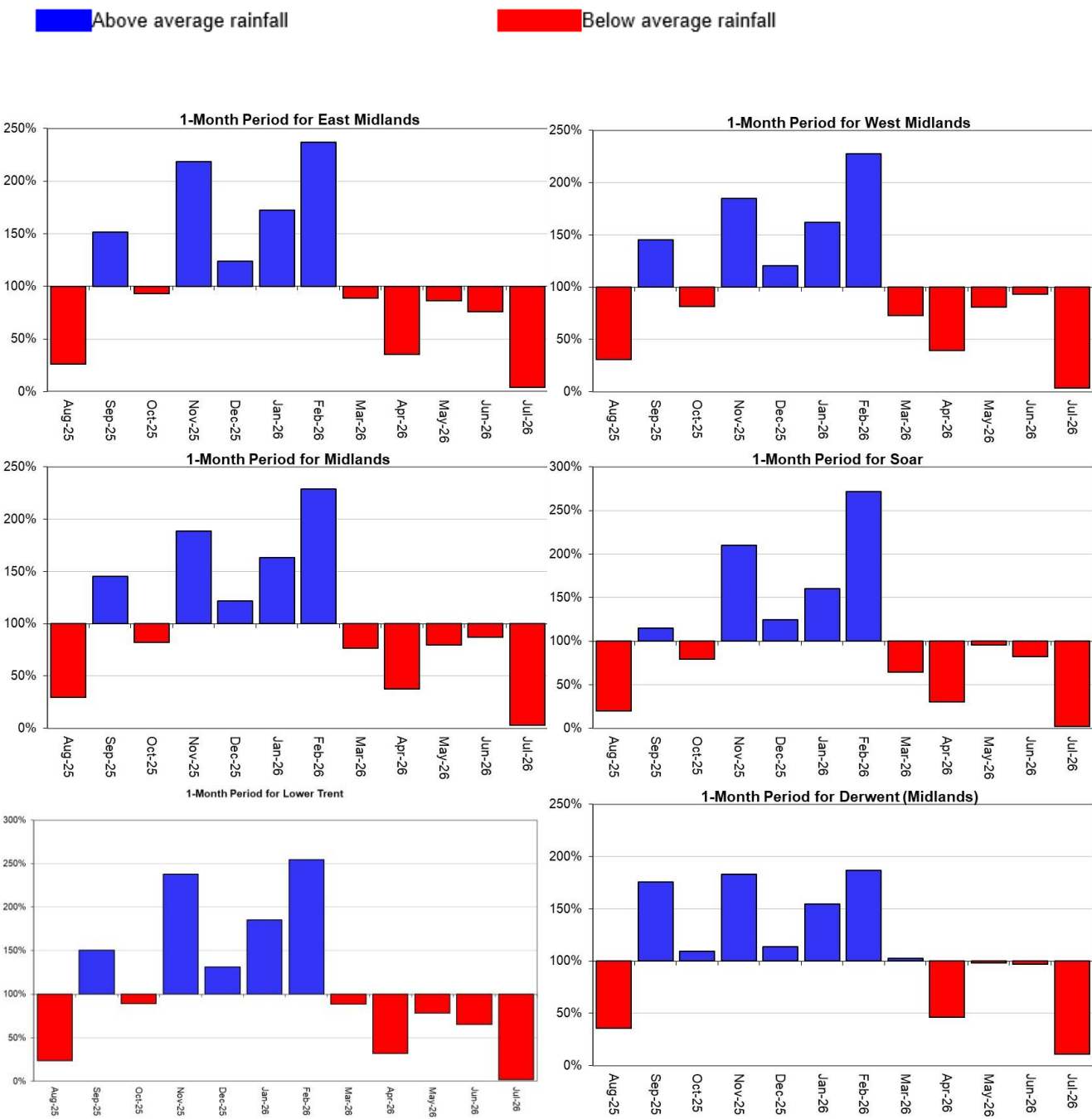
Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 July 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

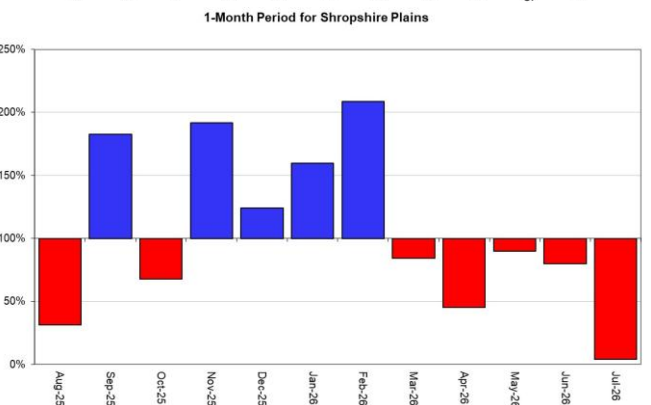
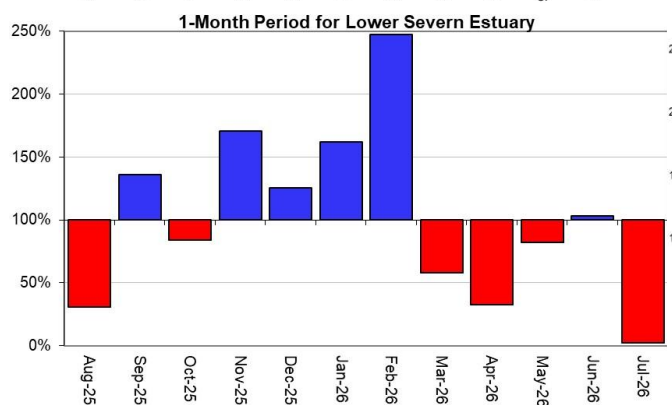
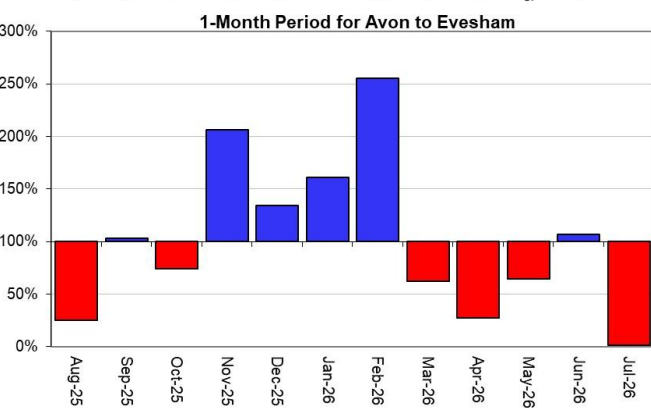
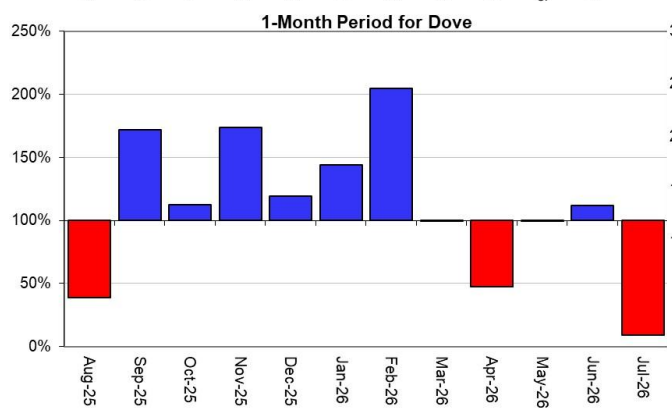
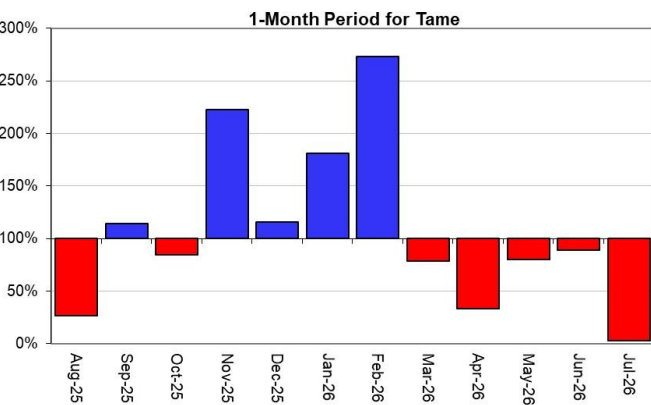
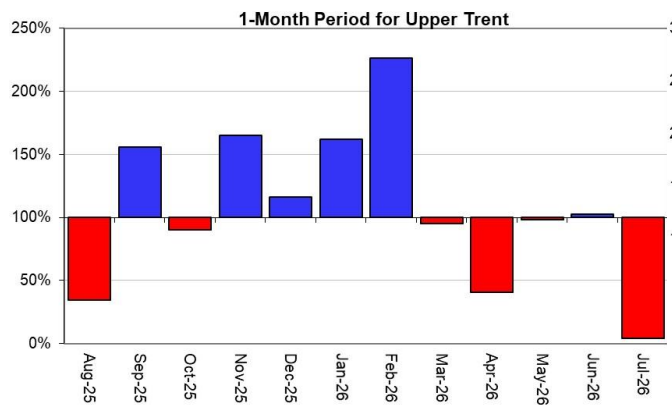


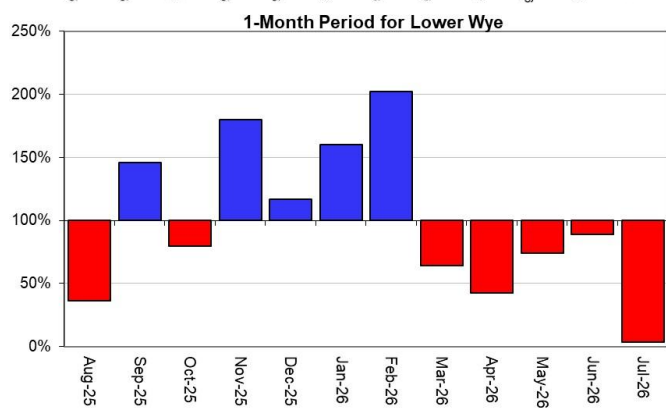
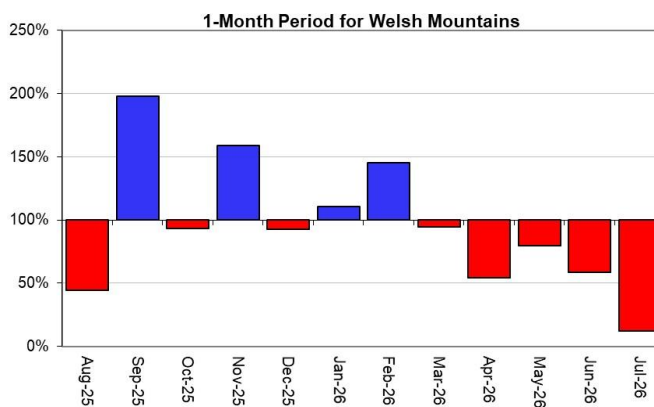
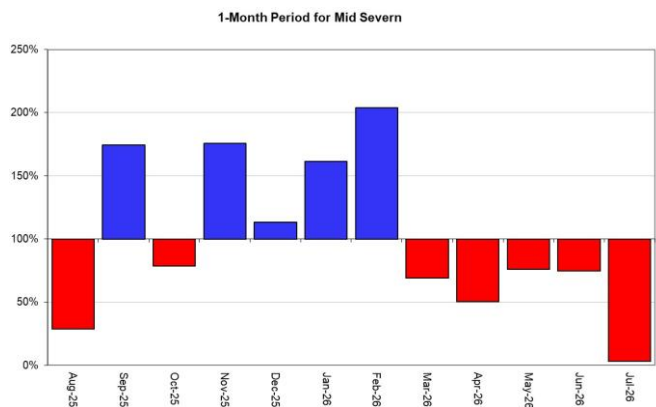
Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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





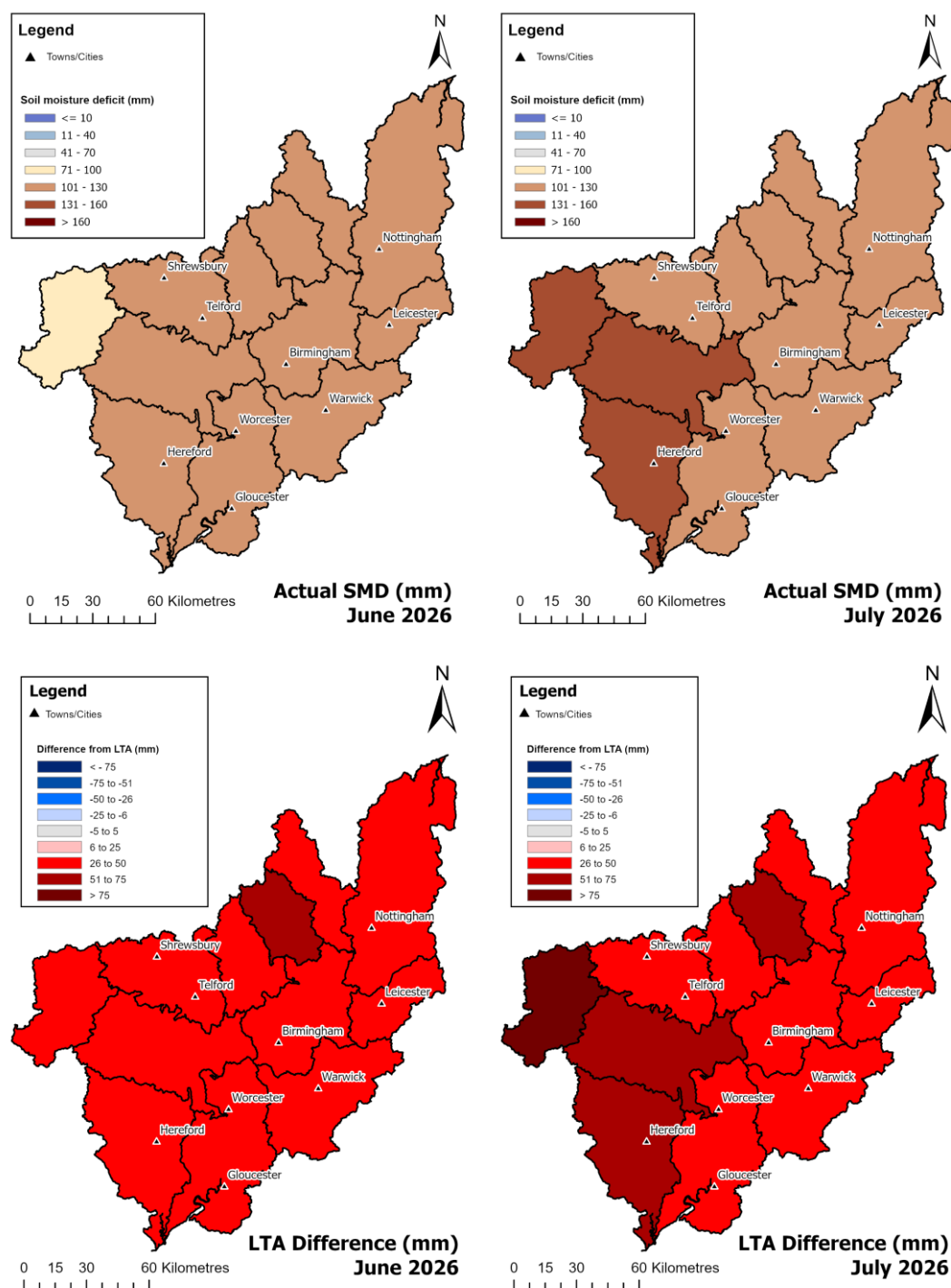


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

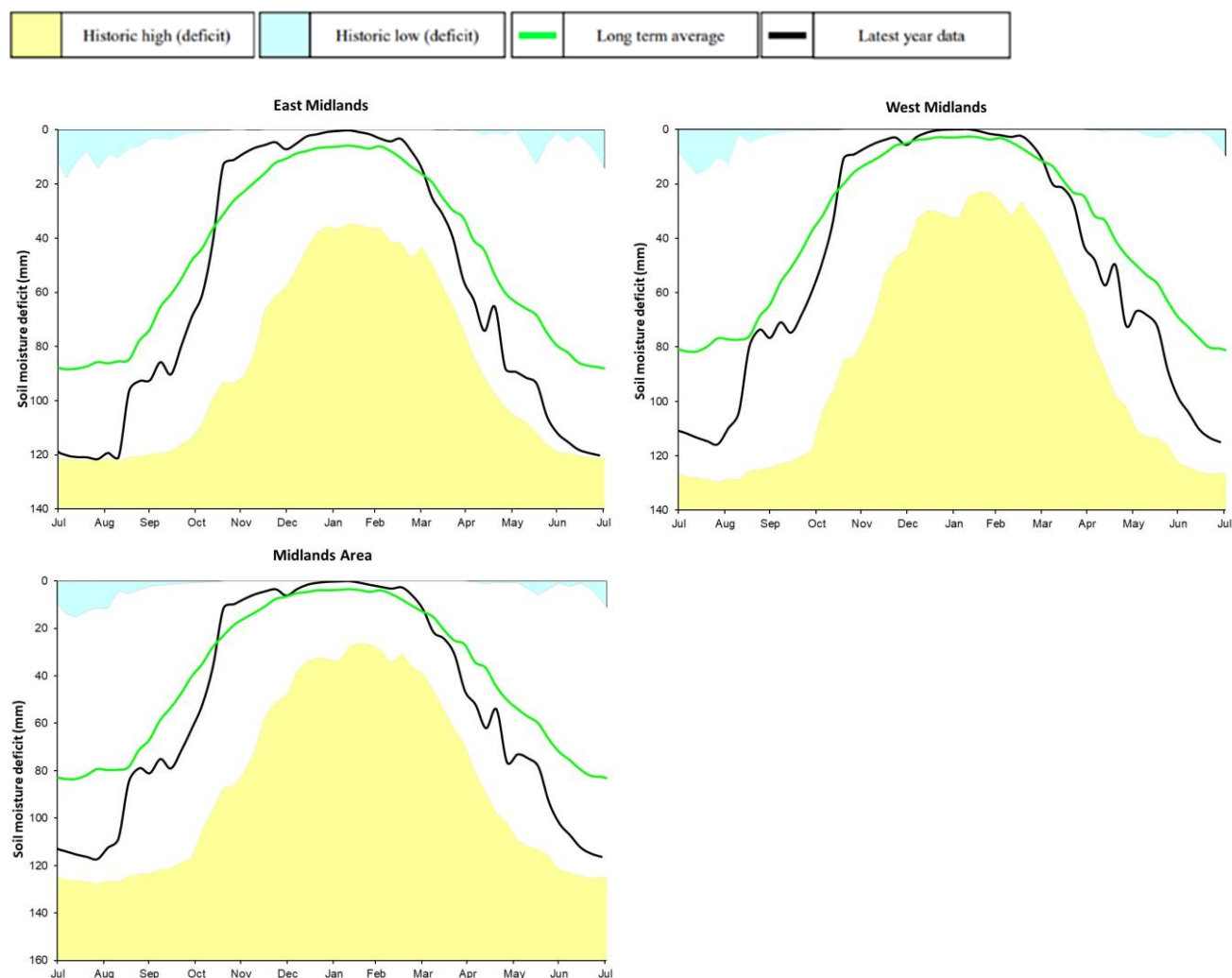
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 30 June 2026 (left pane) and 31 July 2026 (right panel). Top row shows actual soil moisture deficits (mm) and bottom row shows the difference (mm) between the actual and the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. Calculated from MORECS 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 compared to 1991 to 2020 long term average, and historic maximums and minimums (1961 to 2025). Weekly 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

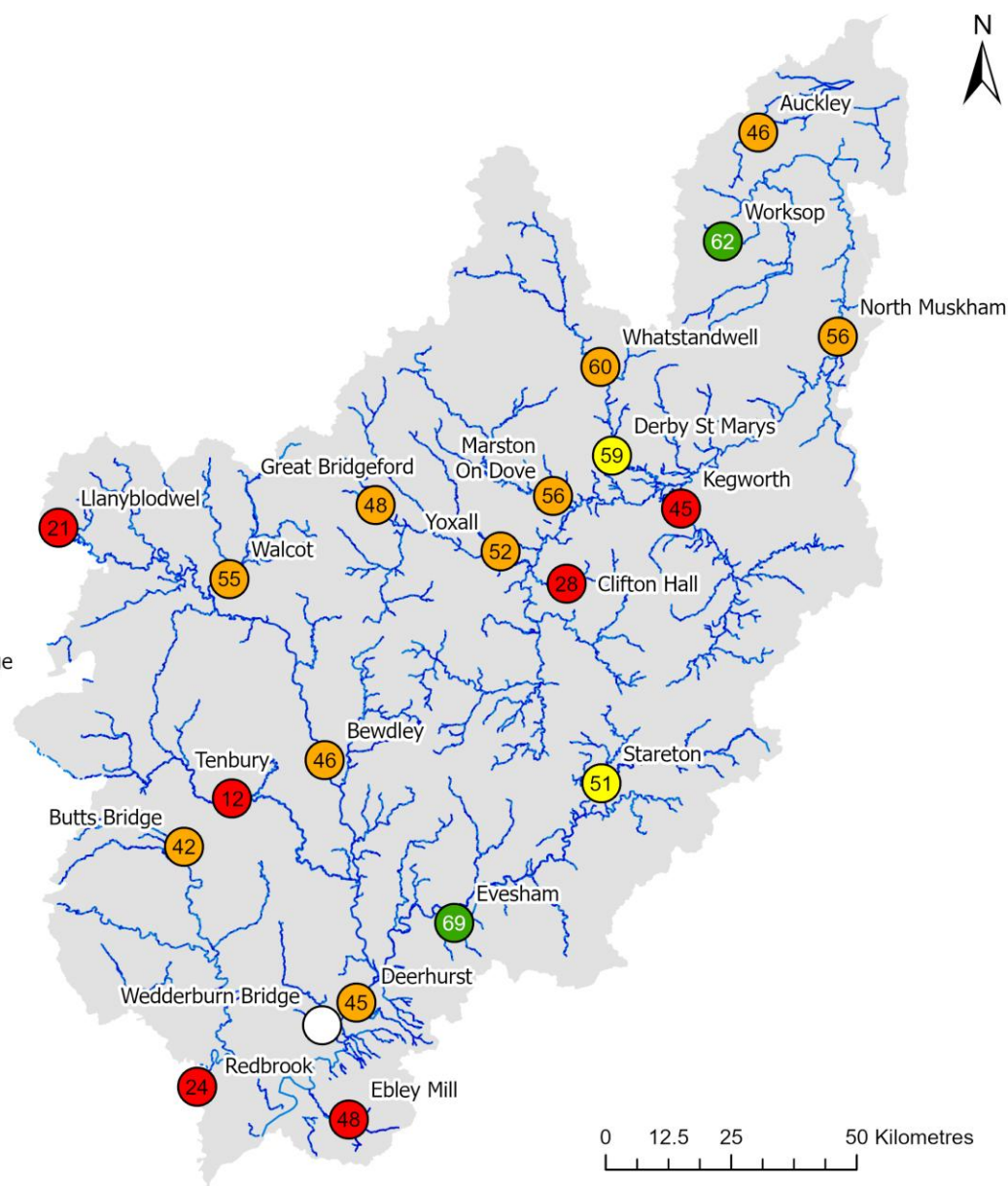
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for July 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic July monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

Legend

Area Rivers

Surface water sites

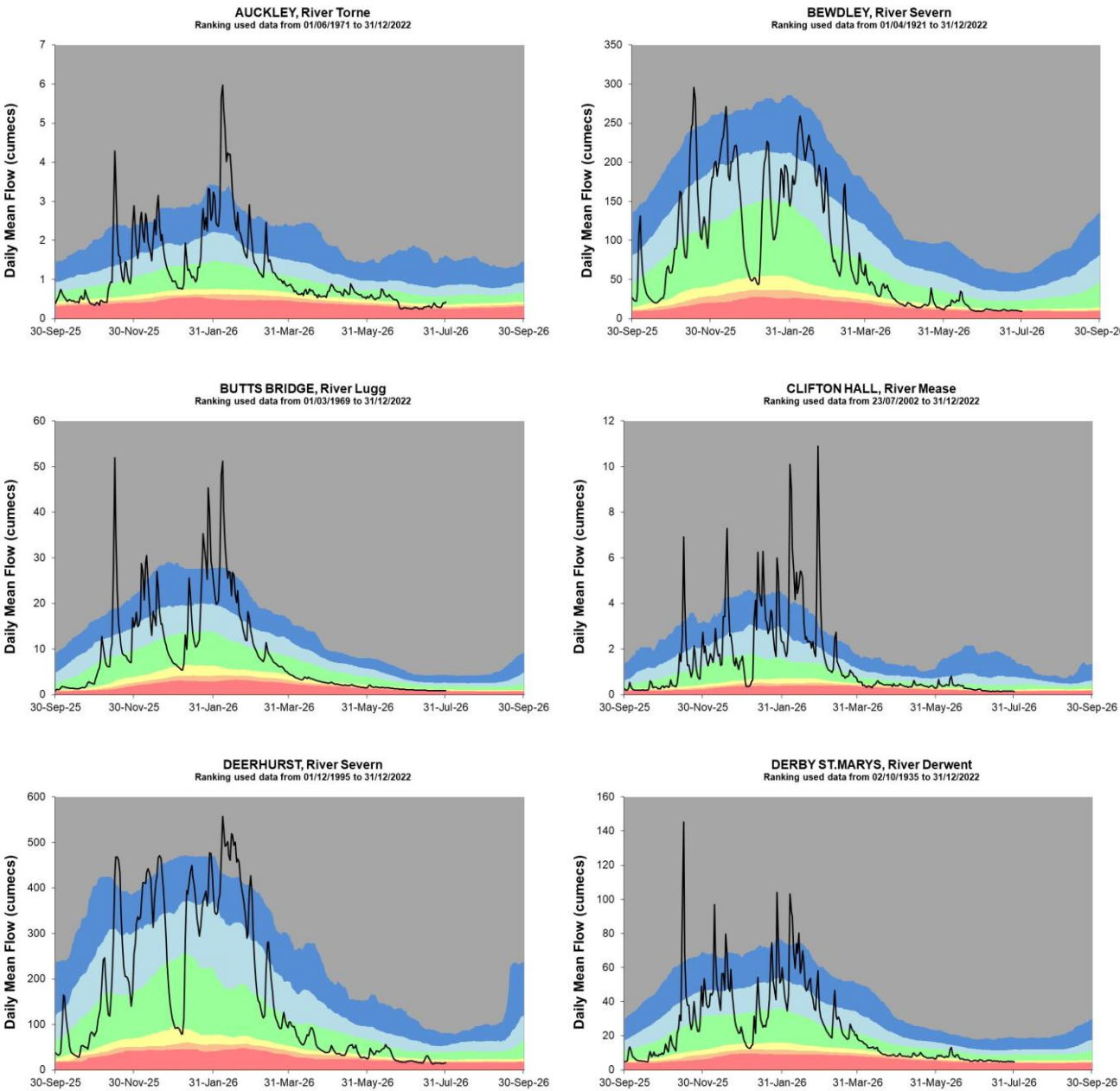
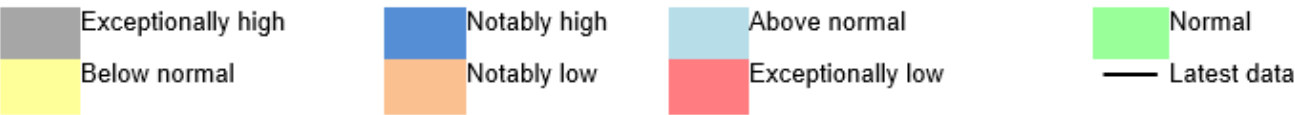
- Exceptionally high
- Notably high
- Above normal
- Normal
- Below normal
- Notably low
- Exceptionally low
- Dry
- No data
- ⑤ % of long term average

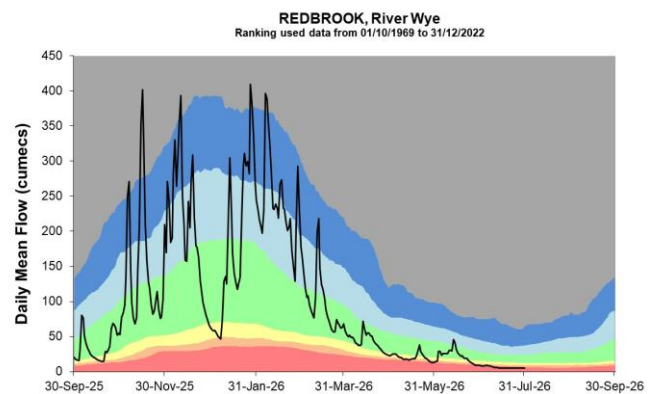
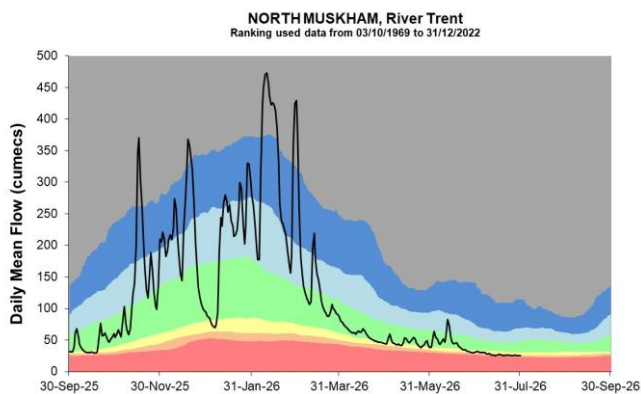
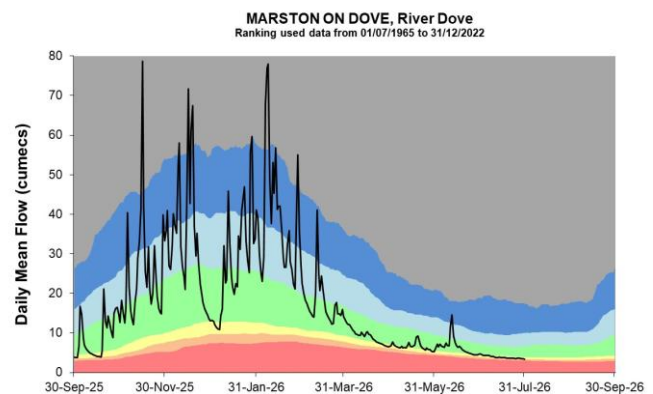
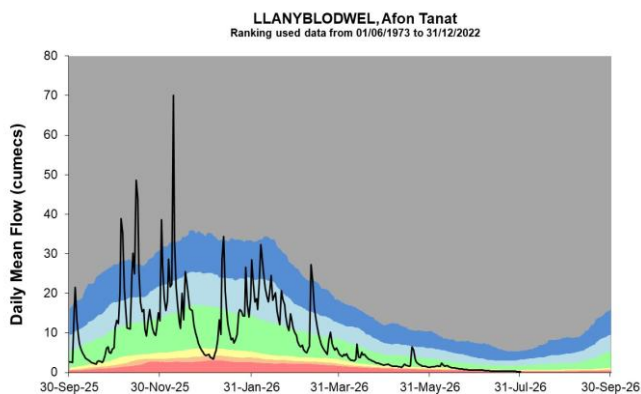
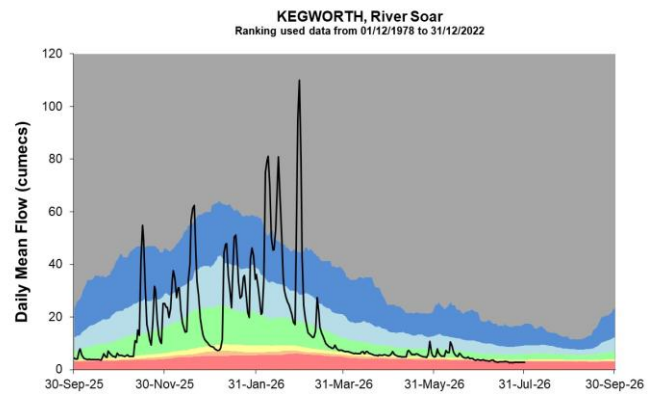
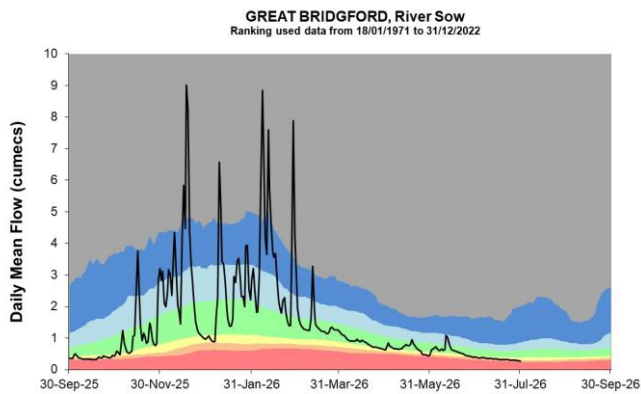
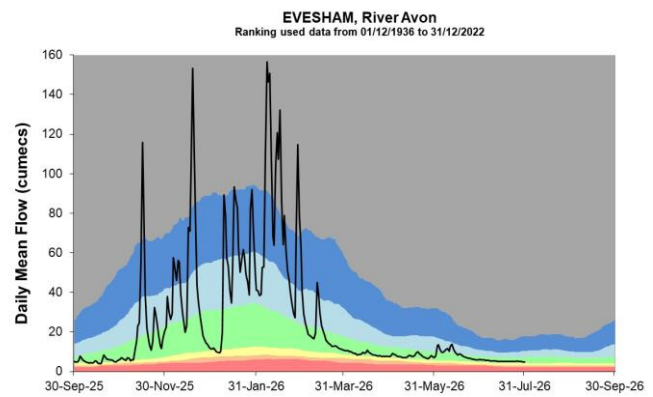
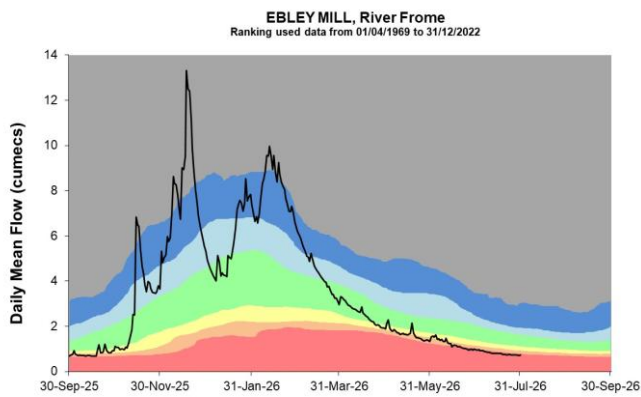


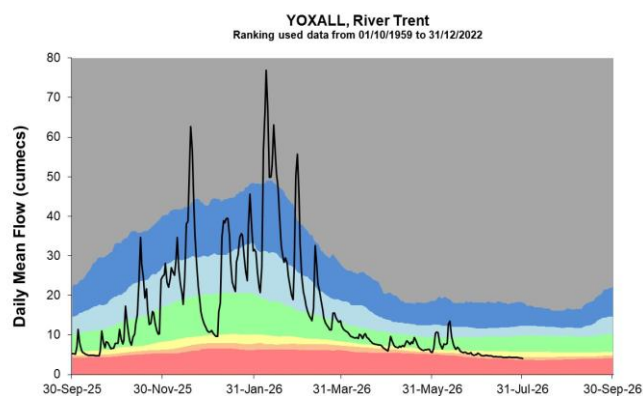
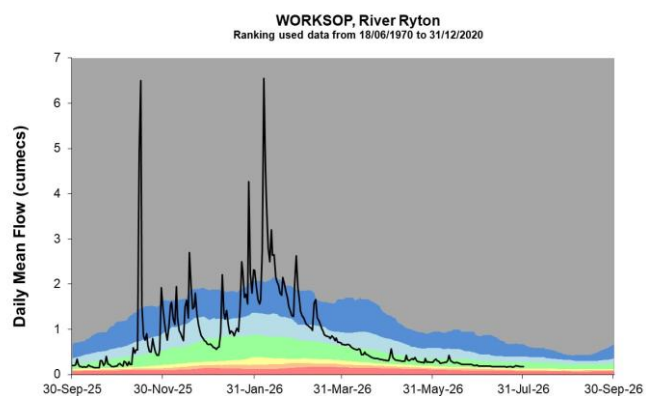
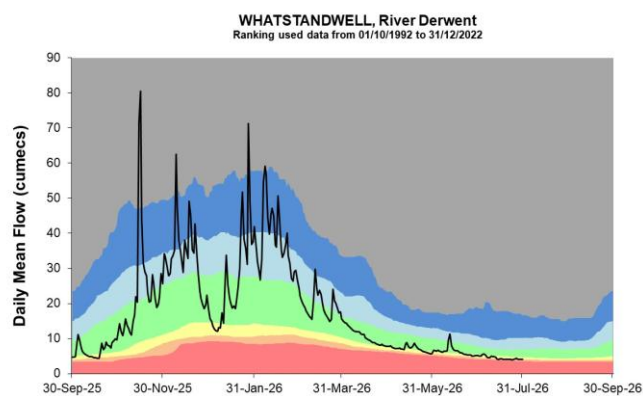
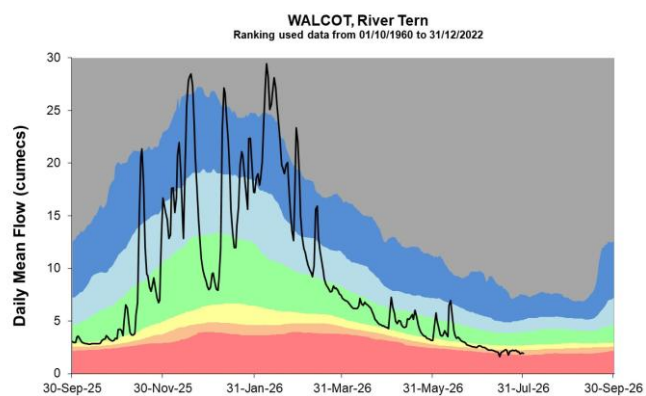
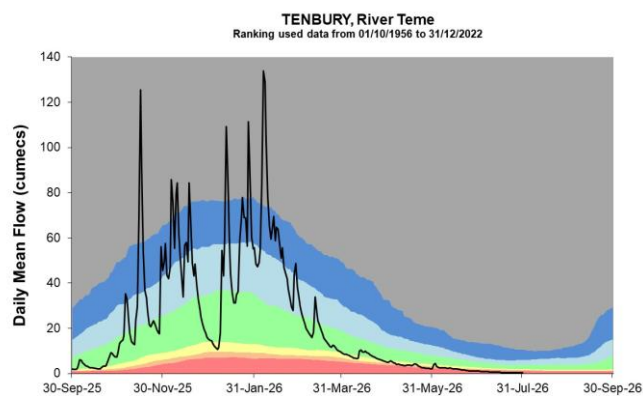
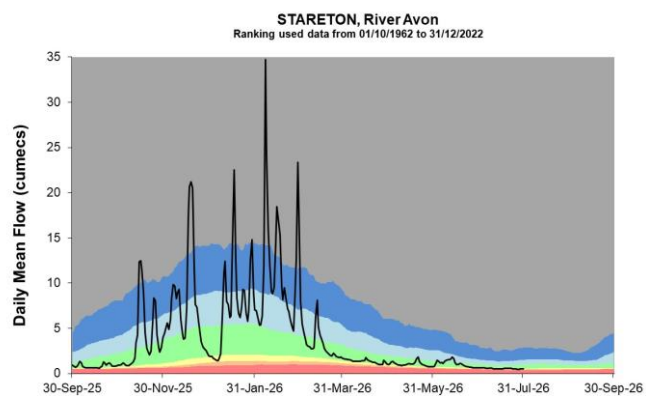
Source: Environment Agency). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

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.





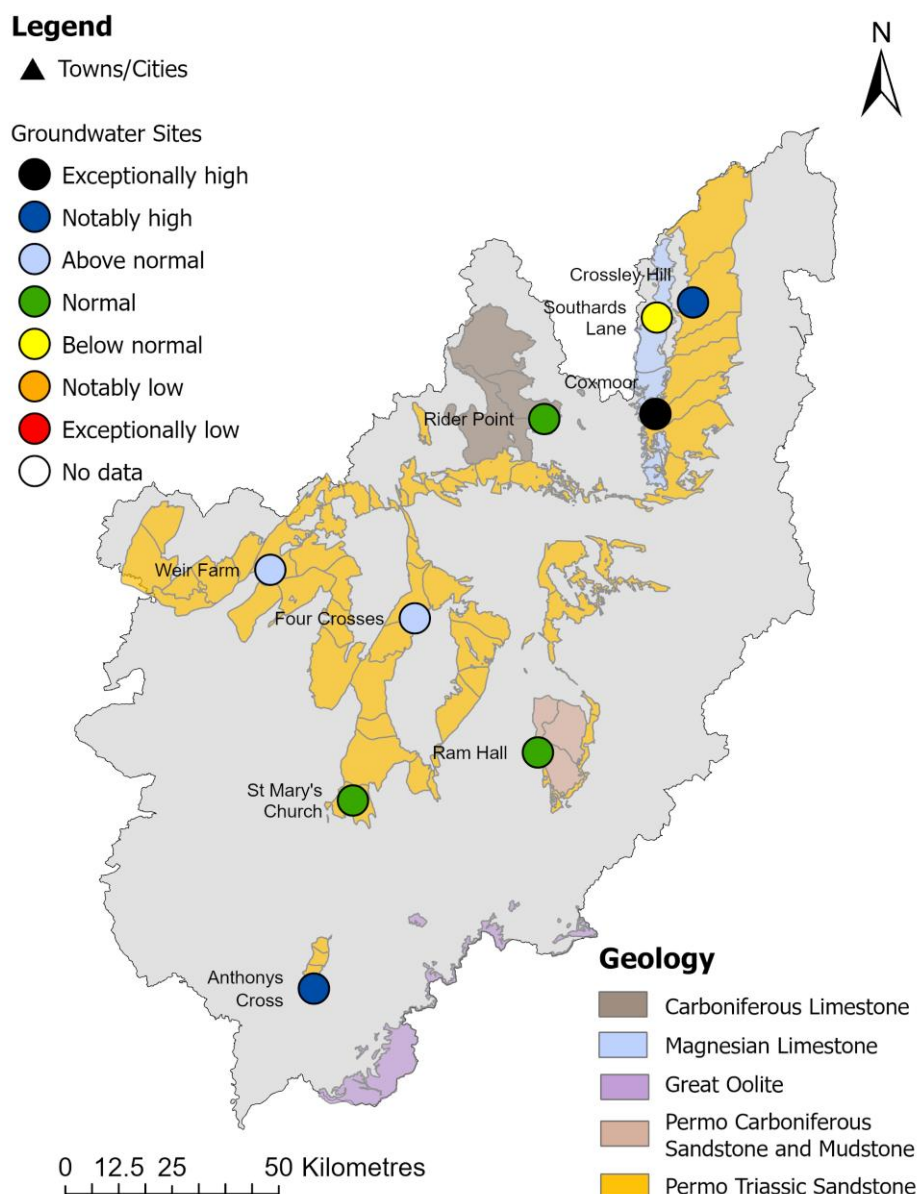


Source: Environment Agency, (2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

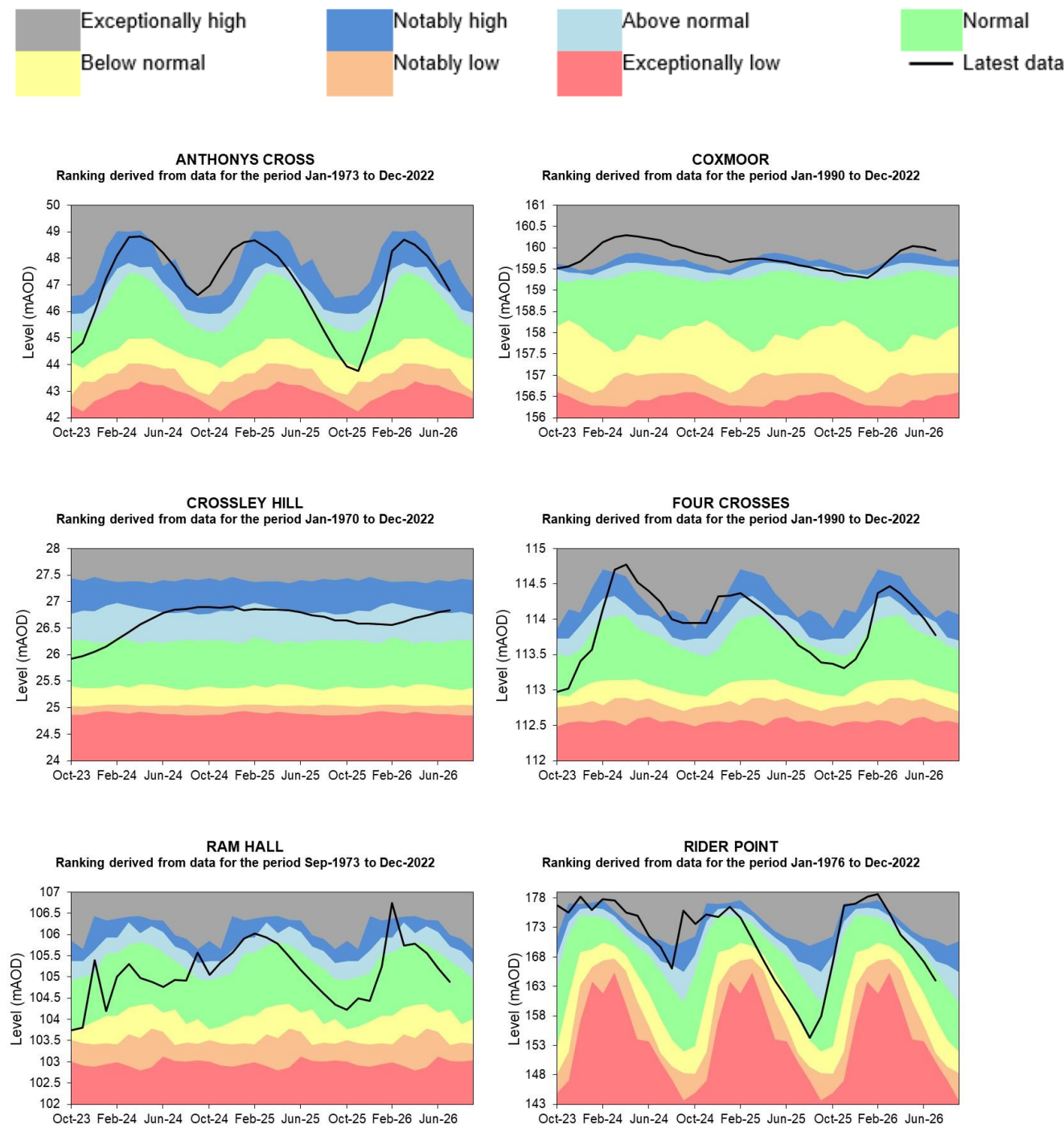
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of July 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic end of July levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information, including aquifer type.

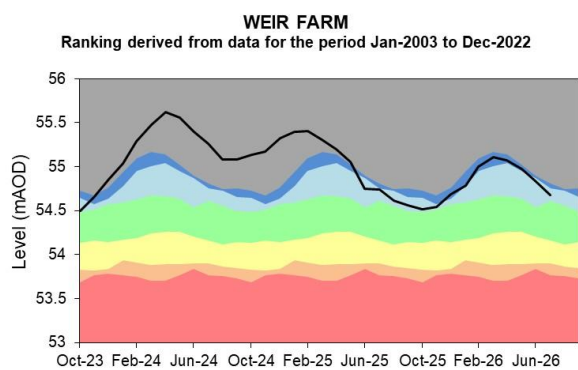
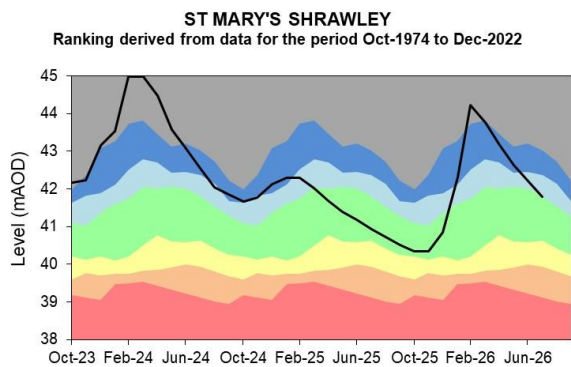
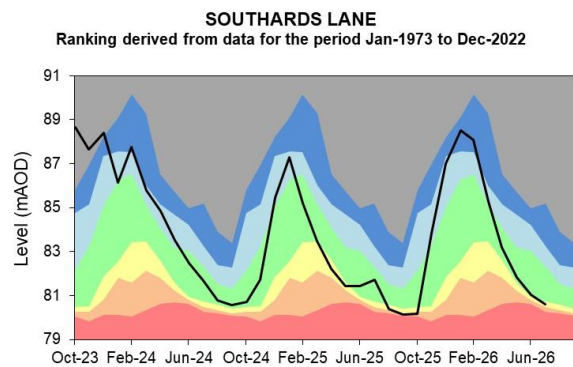


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5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.

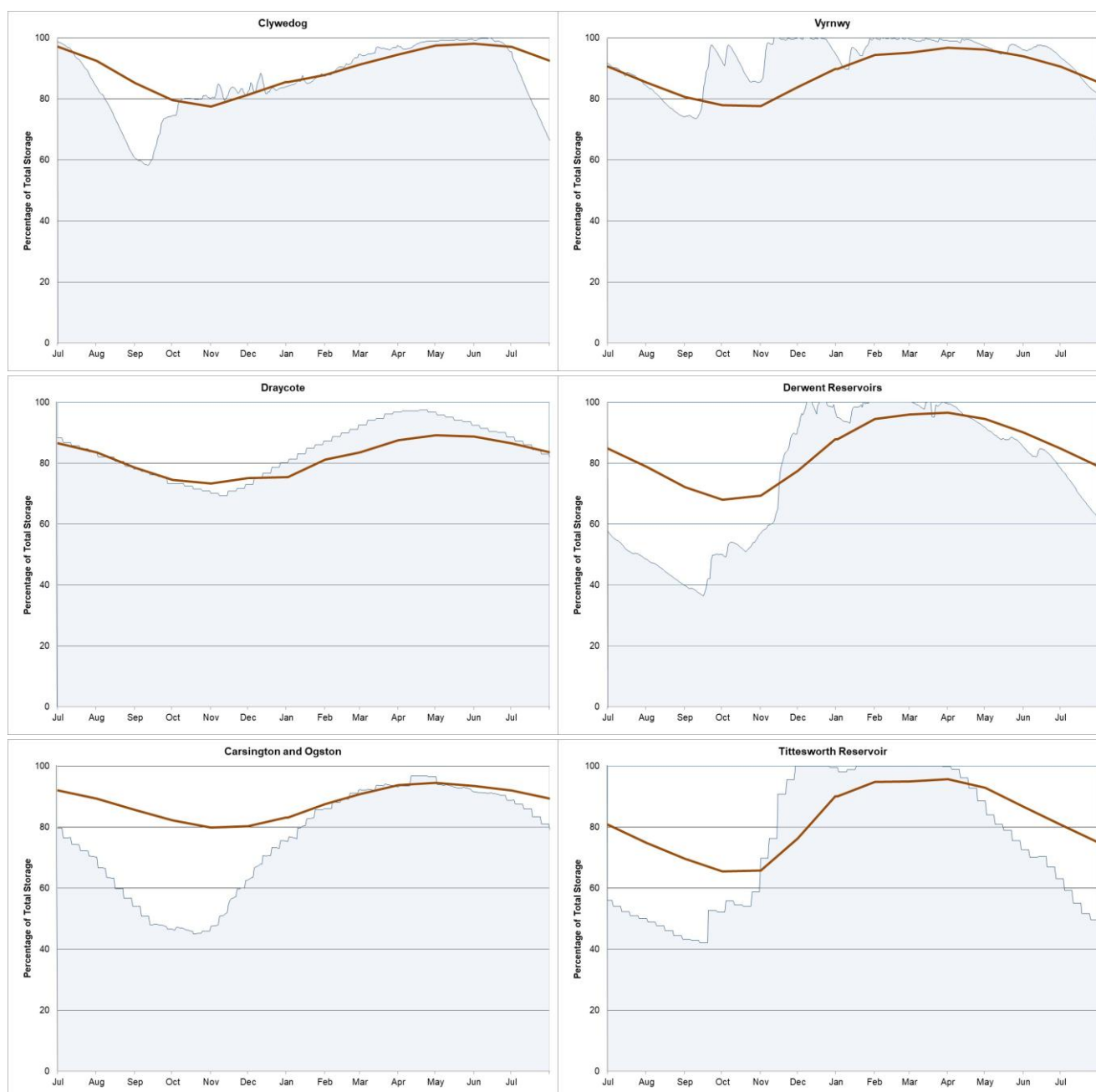


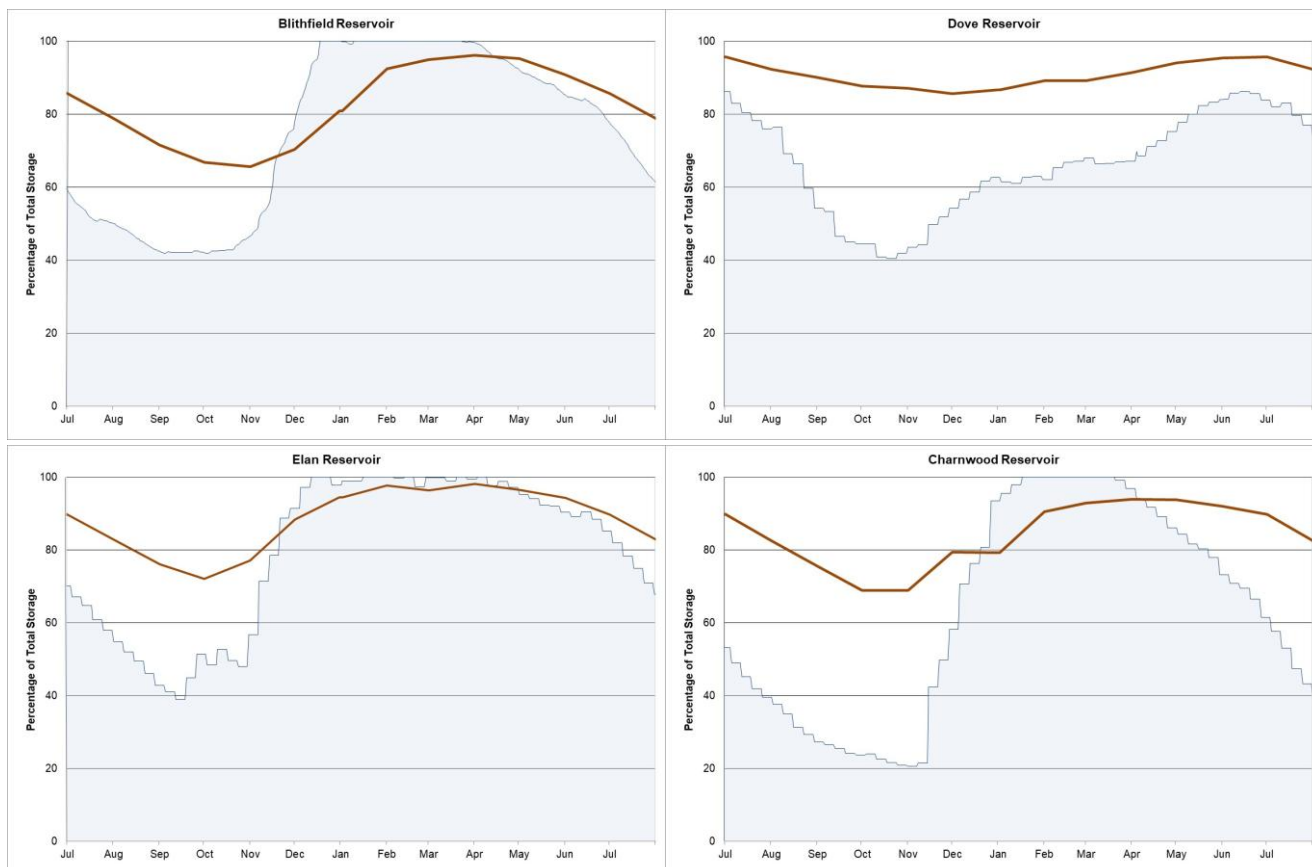


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month 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} or m^3/s)

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 1km 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

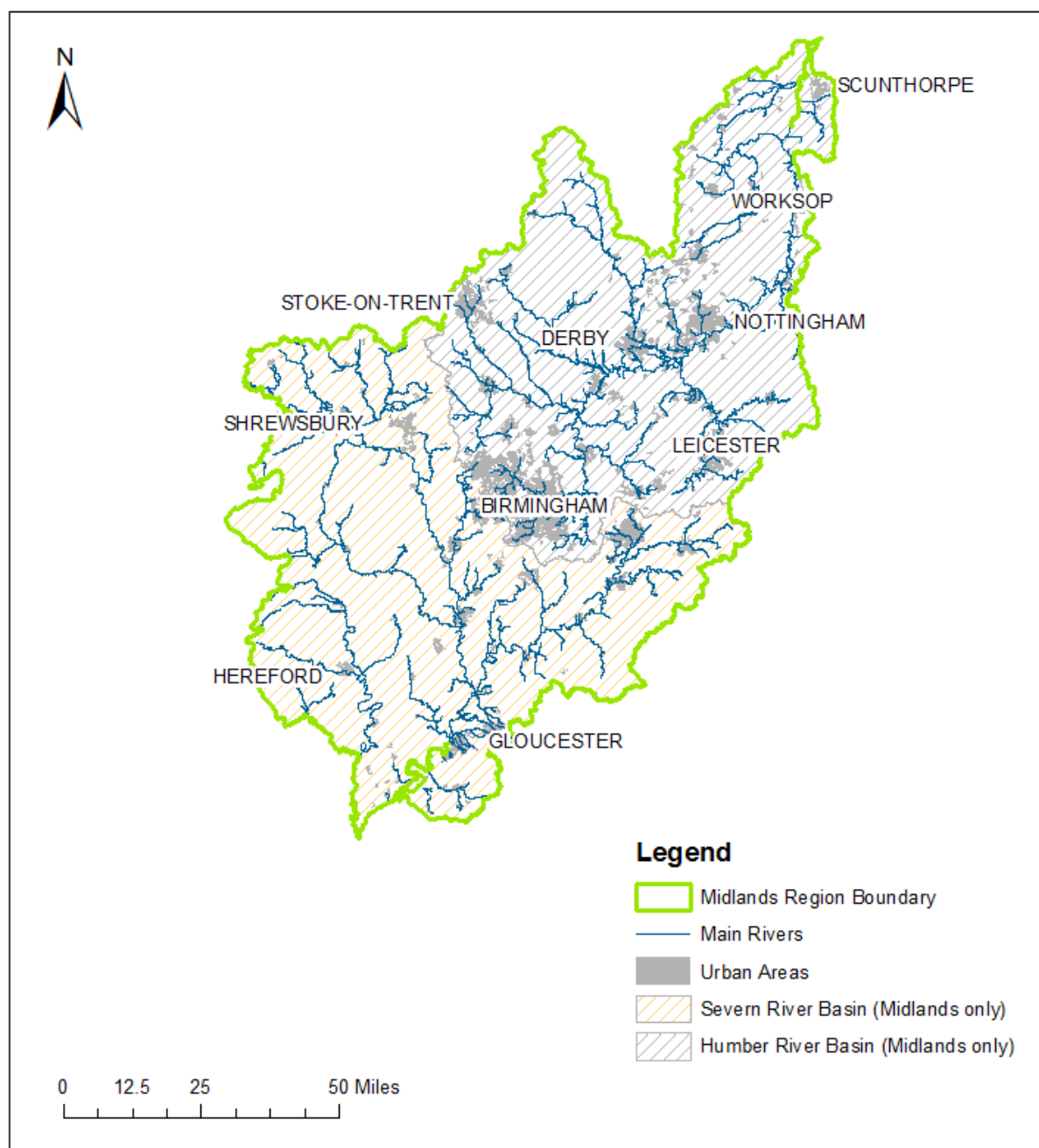
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

7.3 Midlands regional coverage

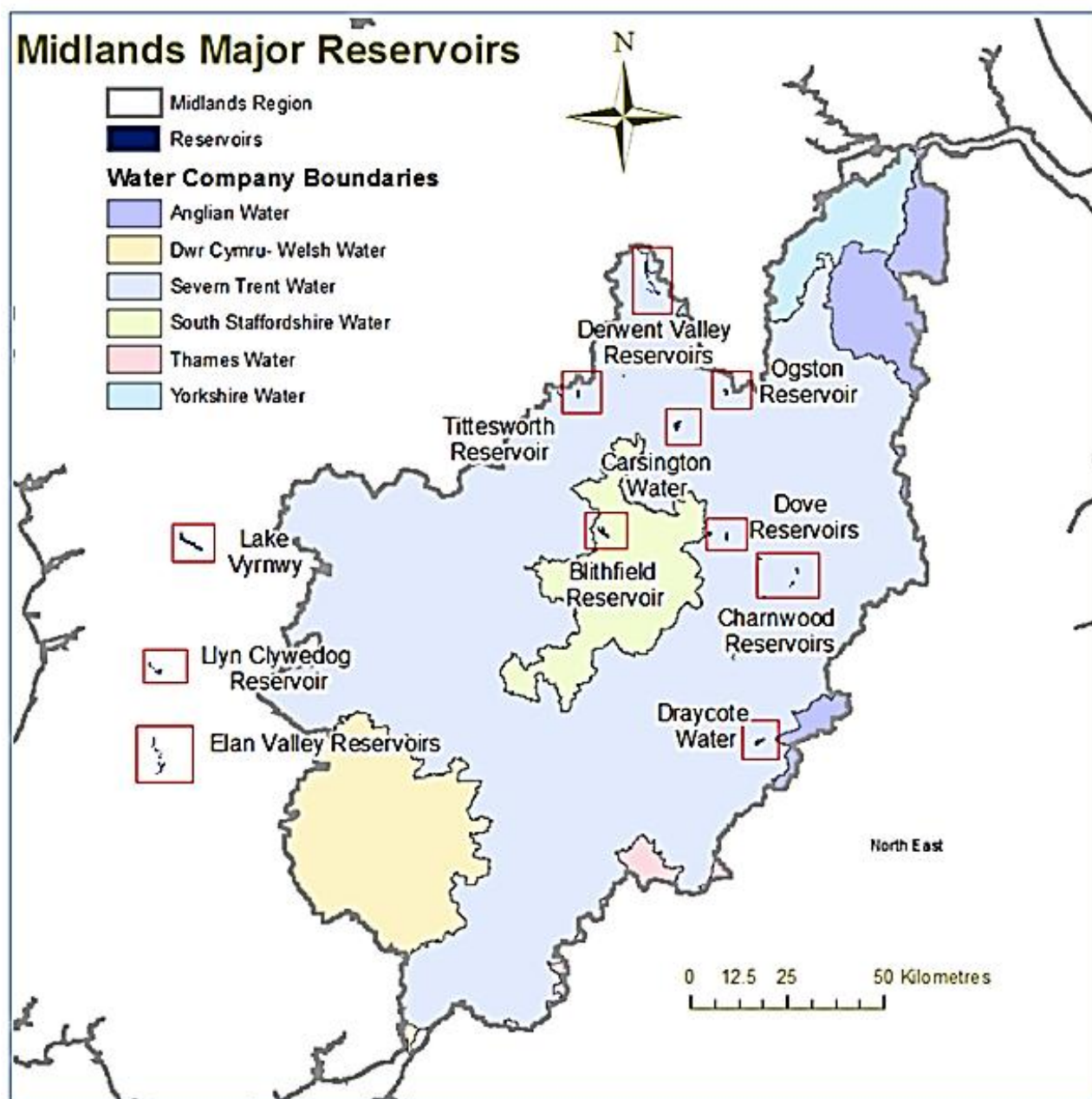
Figure 7.3: The Midlands regional boundary and the hydrological boundaries of the River Severn and River Trent.



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7.4 Midlands major reservoirs

Figure 7.4: Location of major reservoirs in the Midlands.



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8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Jul 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jul 2026 band	May 2026 to July cumulative band	Feb 2026 to July cumulative band	Aug 2025 to July cumulative band
Avon To Evesham	1	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Normal
Derwent (Midlands)	11	Exceptionally Low	Below normal	Normal	Notably high
Dove	9	Exceptionally Low	Below normal	Normal	Notably high
Lower Severn Estuary	3	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Above normal
Lower Trent	2	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Below normal	Above normal
Lower Wye	3	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Normal
Mid Severn	3	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Below normal	Normal
Shropshire Plains	4	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Normal

Hydrological area	Jul 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jul 2026 band	May 2026 to July cumulative band	Feb 2026 to July cumulative band	Aug 2025 to July cumulative band
Soar	2	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Normal
Tame	2	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Normal	Above normal
Upper Trent	4	Exceptionally Low	Below normal	Normal	Above normal
Welsh Mountains	12	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Below normal	Normal

8.2 River flows table

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

Site name	River	Catchment	Jul 2026 band	Jun 2026 band
North Muskham	Trent	Trent to Cromwell	Notably low	Normal
Redbrook	Wye (Herefordshire)	Wye H and W d s Lugg	Exceptionally low	Normal
Stareton	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Upper	Below normal	Normal
Tenbury	Teme	Teme	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Walcot	Tern	Tern	Notably low	Normal
Whatstandwell	Derwent	Derwent Derb to Amber confl.	Notably low	Normal
Worksop	Ryton	Ryton Upper to Oldcoates Dyke	Normal	Normal
Yoxall	Trent	Trent to Tame Mease confl.	Notably low	Normal

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Jul 2026 band	End of Jun 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	Notably high	Notably high
Four Crosses	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Above normal	Above normal
Ram Hall, Meriden	Permo Carboniferous Sandstones and Mudstones	Normal	Normal
Rider Point Via Gellia	Carboniferous Limestone	Normal	Normal
Southards Lane, Bolsover	Magnesian Limestone	Below normal	Normal
St Mary's Church, Shrawley	Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Above normal
Weir Farm	Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation	Above normal	Above normal