

Monthly water situation report: East Anglia

1 Summary - August 2026

East Anglia rainfall for August 2026 ranged from 44% to 106% of the long term average (LTA) for the month, with the wettest catchments towards the north-west of the area. Across East Anglia this was the fourth driest March to August period on record (1871 to 2026), receiving only 51% of the LTA. For more than half of the hydrological areas, this was either the driest or second driest 6 month period since records began in 1871. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) decreased slightly towards the end of the month in response to rainfall, although remains notably high for the time of year. River flows continued to recede in August, with all catchments responding to rainfall received towards the end of the month. Month mean flows were predominantly below normal or exceptionally low for the time of year. Groundwater levels fell in August, with the majority of report sites recording below normal to exceptionally low levels. Public water supply reservoirs within East Anglia ended August 2026 with levels ranging from 48% to 65% of full storage capacity.

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 41mm of rain fell across East Anglia in August, 68% of the LTA. The start of the month was a continuation of dry weather, with the majority of rainfall received between 26 to 29 August. The 29 August was the only day recording rainfall above 10mm. The highest rainfall totals were recorded towards the north-west of the area, with Central Area Fenland receiving 66mm across the month, 106% of the LTA. The lowest rainfall total was recorded in the Upper Bedford Ouse hydrological area, receiving only 44% of the historic LTA.

Over the past 6 months, all hydrological areas in East Anglia recorded exceptionally low rainfall. The East Anglia rainfall total for the 6 months covering meteorological spring and summer, from March 2026 to August 2026 was 149mm, which ranks as the fourth driest March to August period on record (1871 to 2026). For NW Norfolk and Wissey and North Norfolk this 6 month period was the driest on record. Five other East Anglia hydrological areas, Little Ouse and Lark, Broadlands, East Suffolk, North Essex and South Essex, recorded the second driest on record for this 6 month period from March 2026 to August 2026 (1871 to 2026). Over the past 12 months, East Anglia has received 90% of the LTA rainfall.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit

The SMD for East Anglia at the end of August 2026 was 121mm. The SMD decreased slightly following rainfall in the latter half of the month, although remains notably high for the time of

year. Most hydrological areas in East Anglia recorded SMD levels between 71mm and 130mm, with the exception of South Essex which recorded an SMD level more than 160mm. The SMD was 6mm to 25mm greater than the LTA at the end of the month for the majority of hydrological areas.

1.3 River flows

Daily mean river flows continued to recede through August, with river flows responding towards the end of the month following rainfall. Monthly mean river flows varied across East Anglia during August, ranging between 3% and 80% of the LTA. Most flow monitoring sites in East Anglia reported either below normal or exceptionally low monthly mean flows in August 2026. The lowest flows were concentrated towards the centre of the area, with report sites on the Ely Ouse and its tributaries, such as the Wissey and Little Ouse, recording exceptionally low flows for the time of year. Most notably, the August 2026 month mean flow for the Ely Ouse at Denver was 3% of the LTA.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels continued to fall across all of East Anglia in August as a result of minimal rainfall. More than half of our groundwater sites for which data was available, are now recording below normal to exceptionally low levels for the time of year. Sites with normal levels are mostly found at the south of the chalk unit, and Bath Spring which is above normal for the time of year in the south-west. Both Hindolveston in the Norfolk Chalk and Rook Hall in the Suffolk Chalk recorded exceptionally low levels in August 2026.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoir storage has continued to fall through August, with all reservoir levels below their target curves for the time of year. Storage capacity ranged from 48% capacity at Hanningfield to 65% capacity at Grafham reservoir.

Author: Hydrology Team, hydrology-ean-and-lna@environment-agency.gov.uk

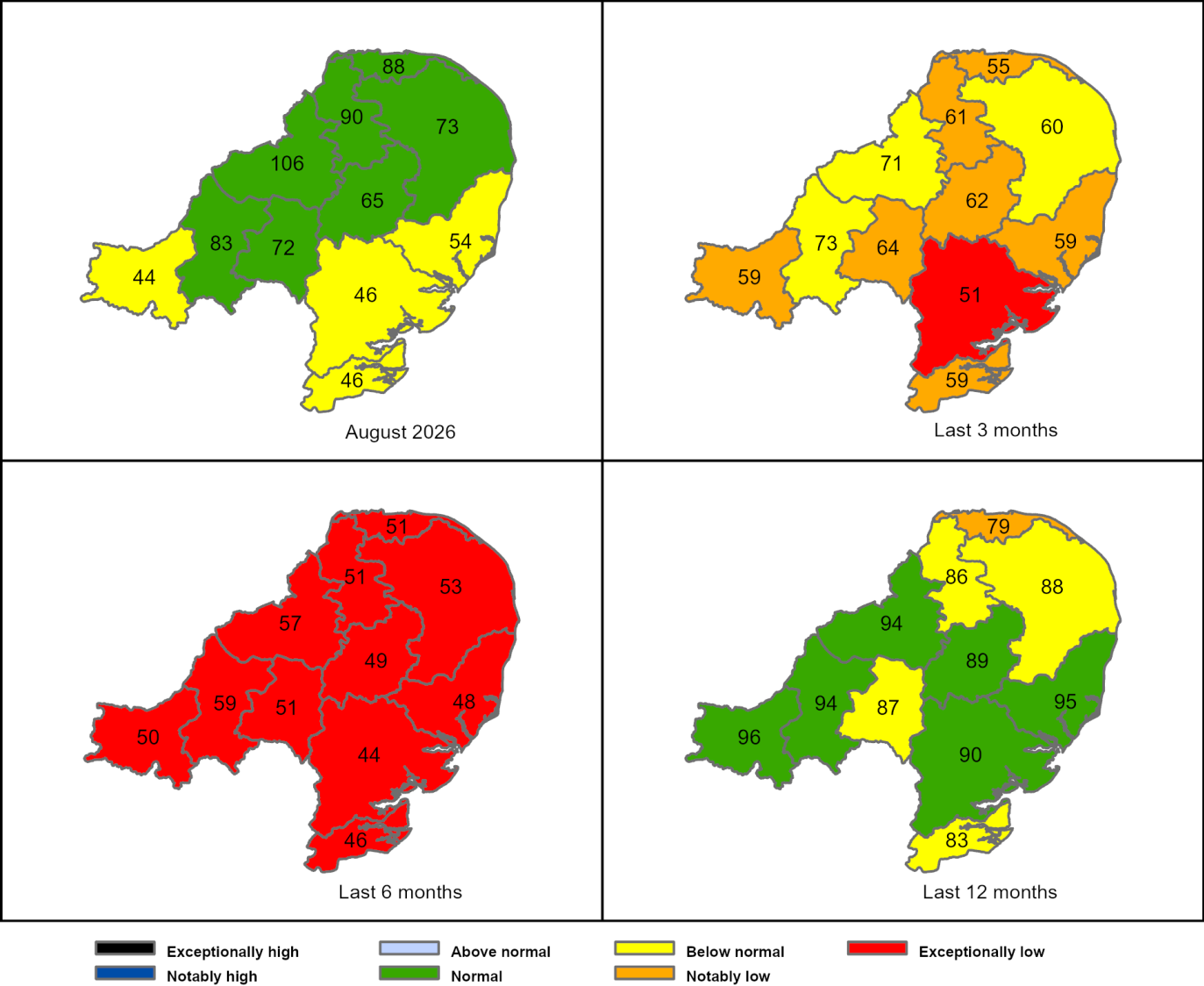
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

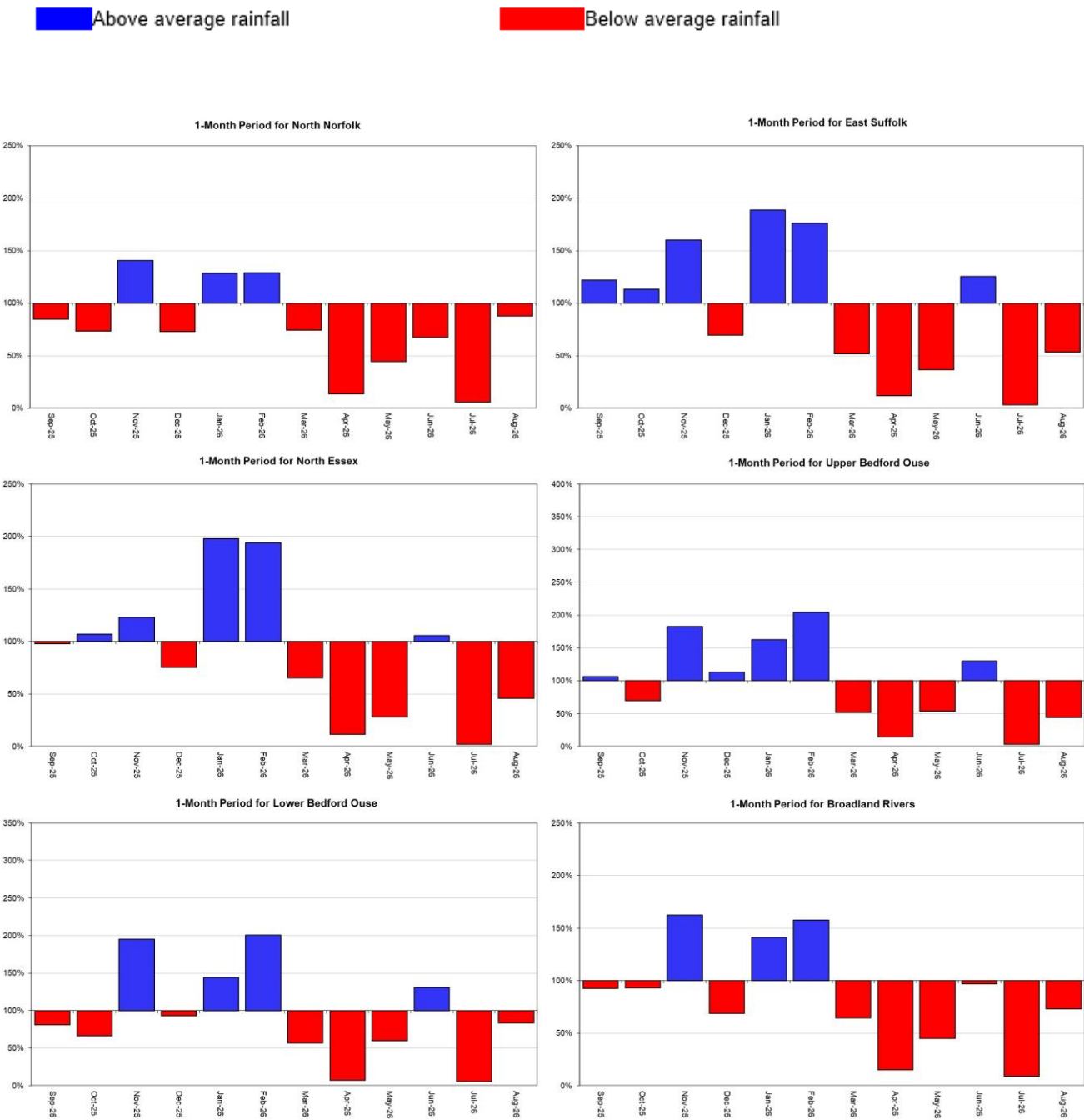
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across East Anglia, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 August 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

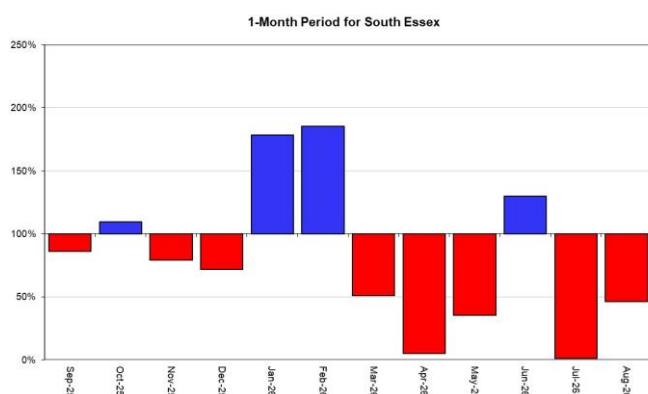
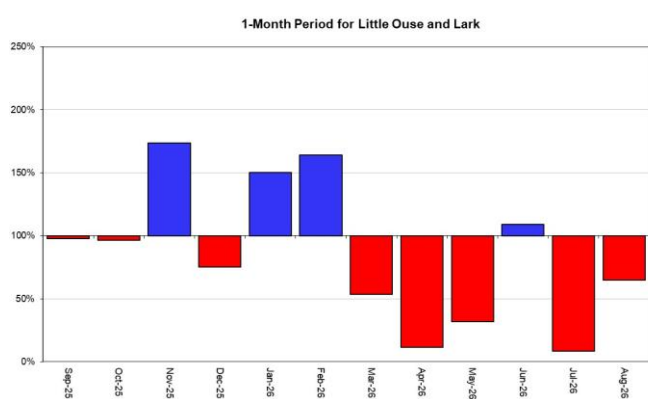
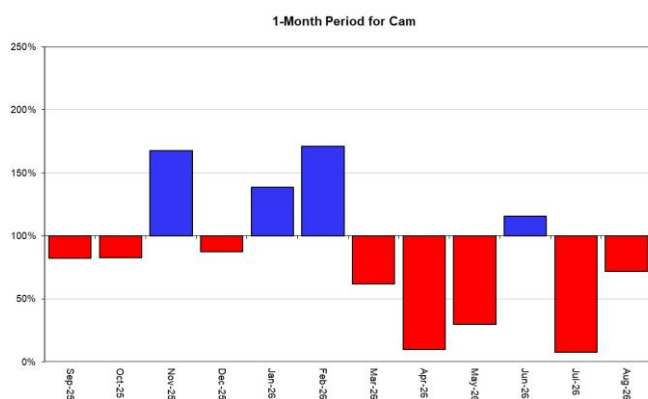
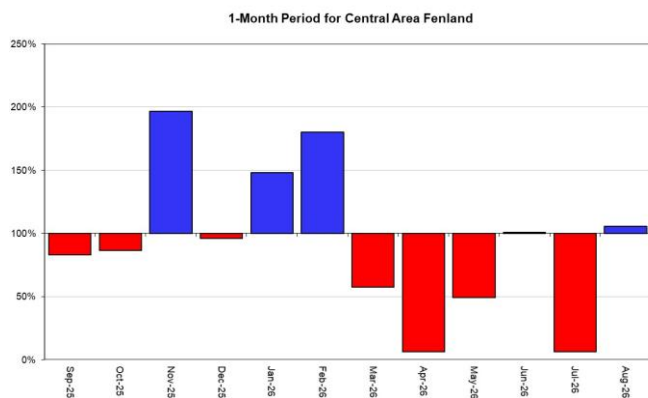
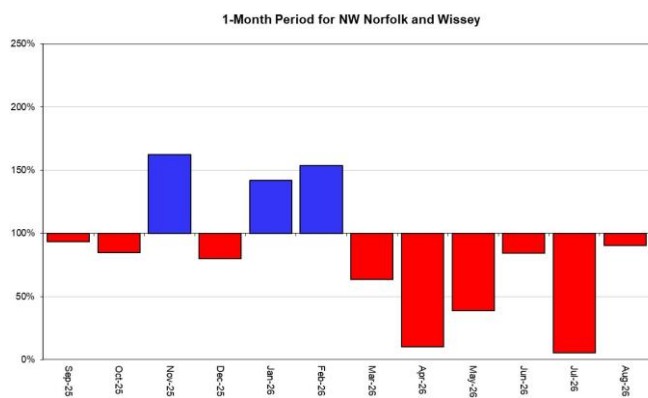


Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

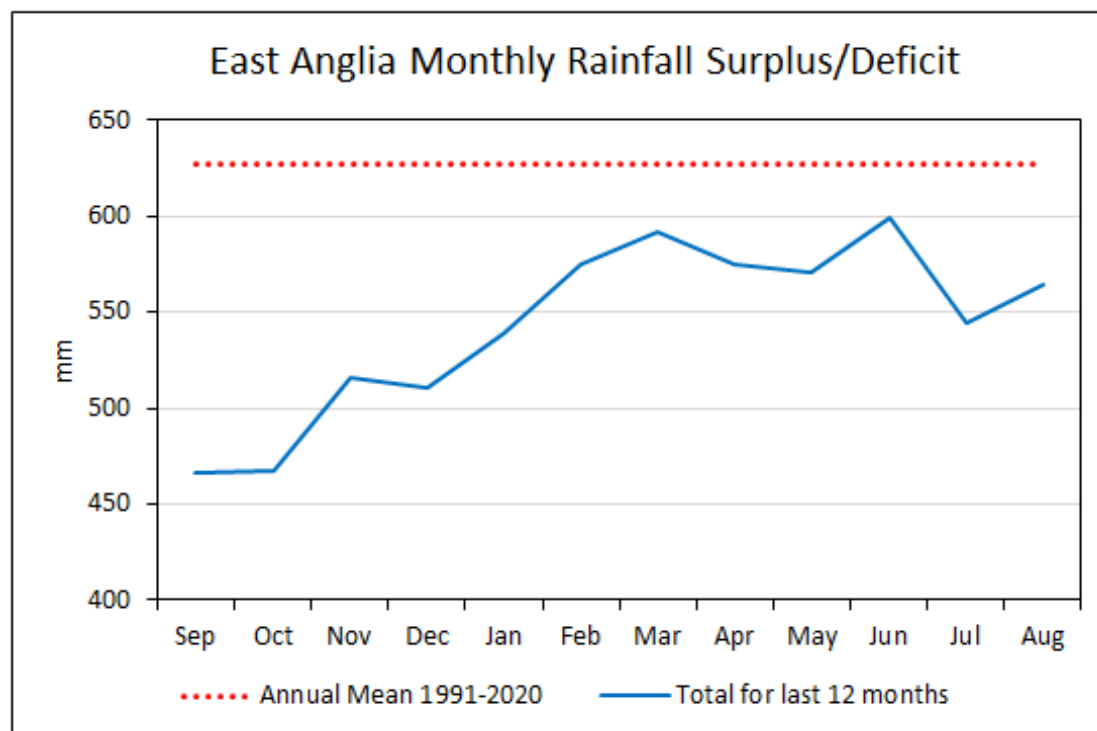




Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset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

2.3 Monthly rainfall surplus deficit chart

Figure 2.3: Rainfall total for the last 12 months compared to the 1991 to 2020 long term average for East Anglia.

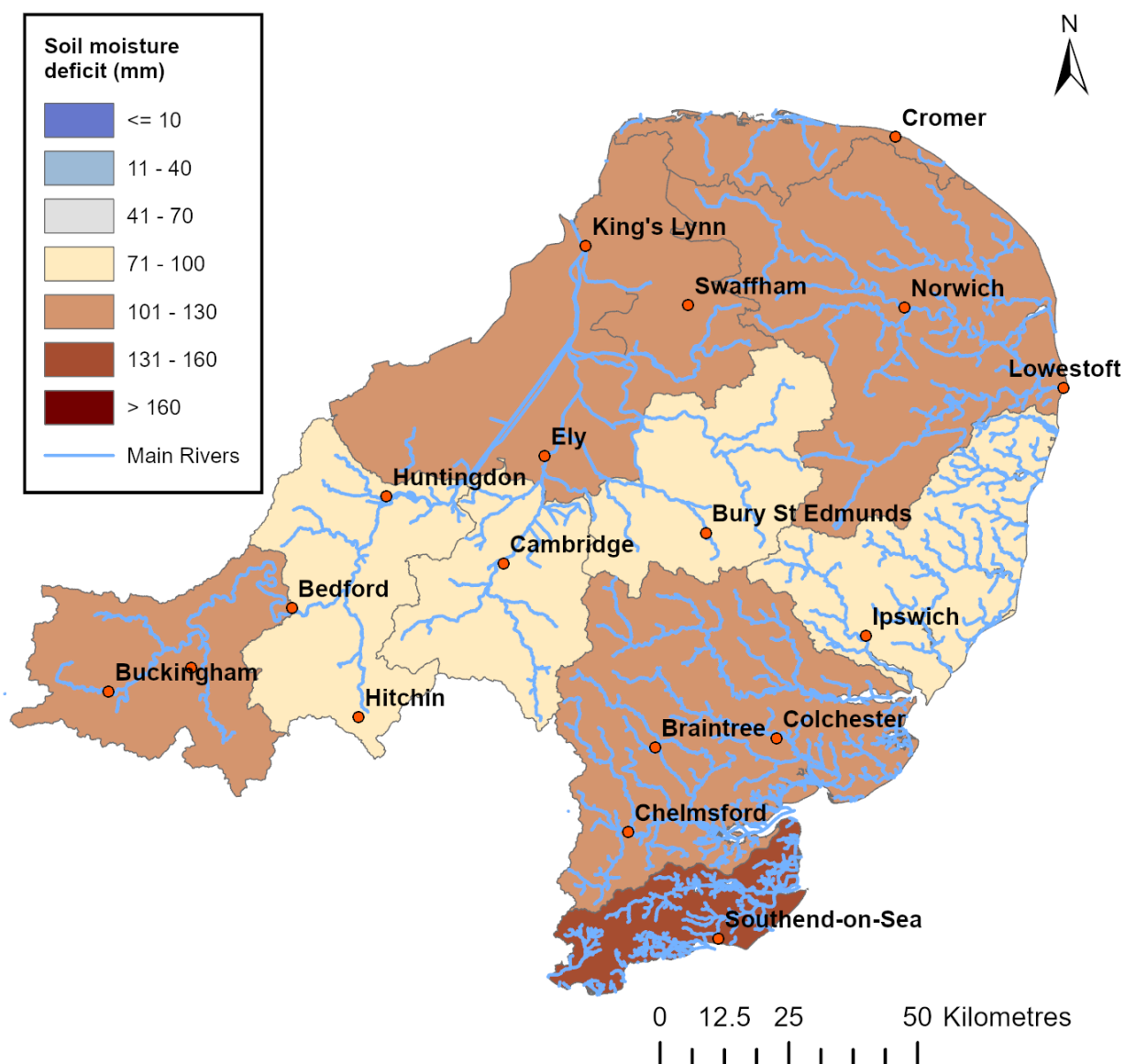


Rainfall data for Jan 2025 onwards, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, 2026). Rainfall data prior to Jan 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset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

3 Soil moisture deficit

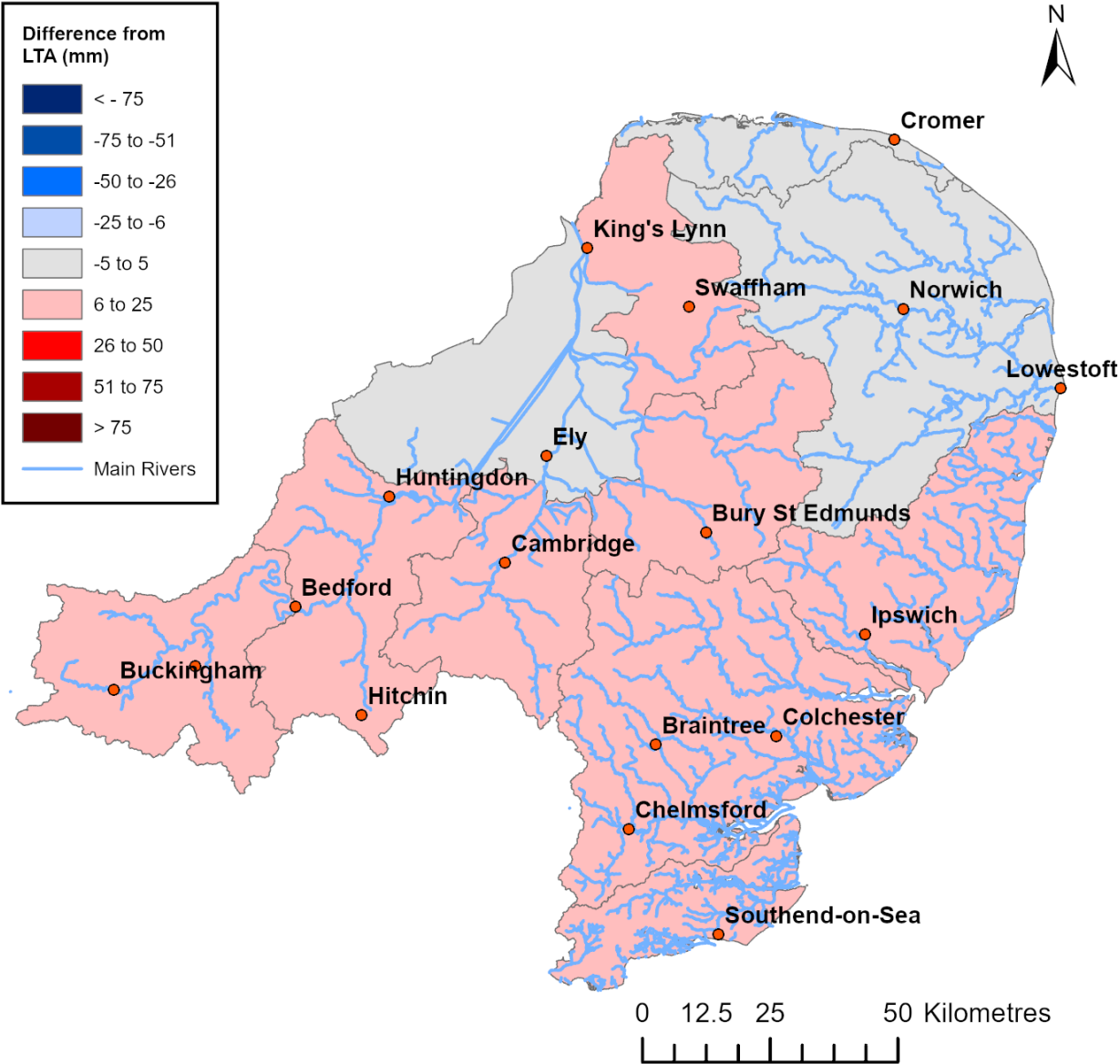
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1a: Soil moisture deficit values for 31 August 2026. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



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Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

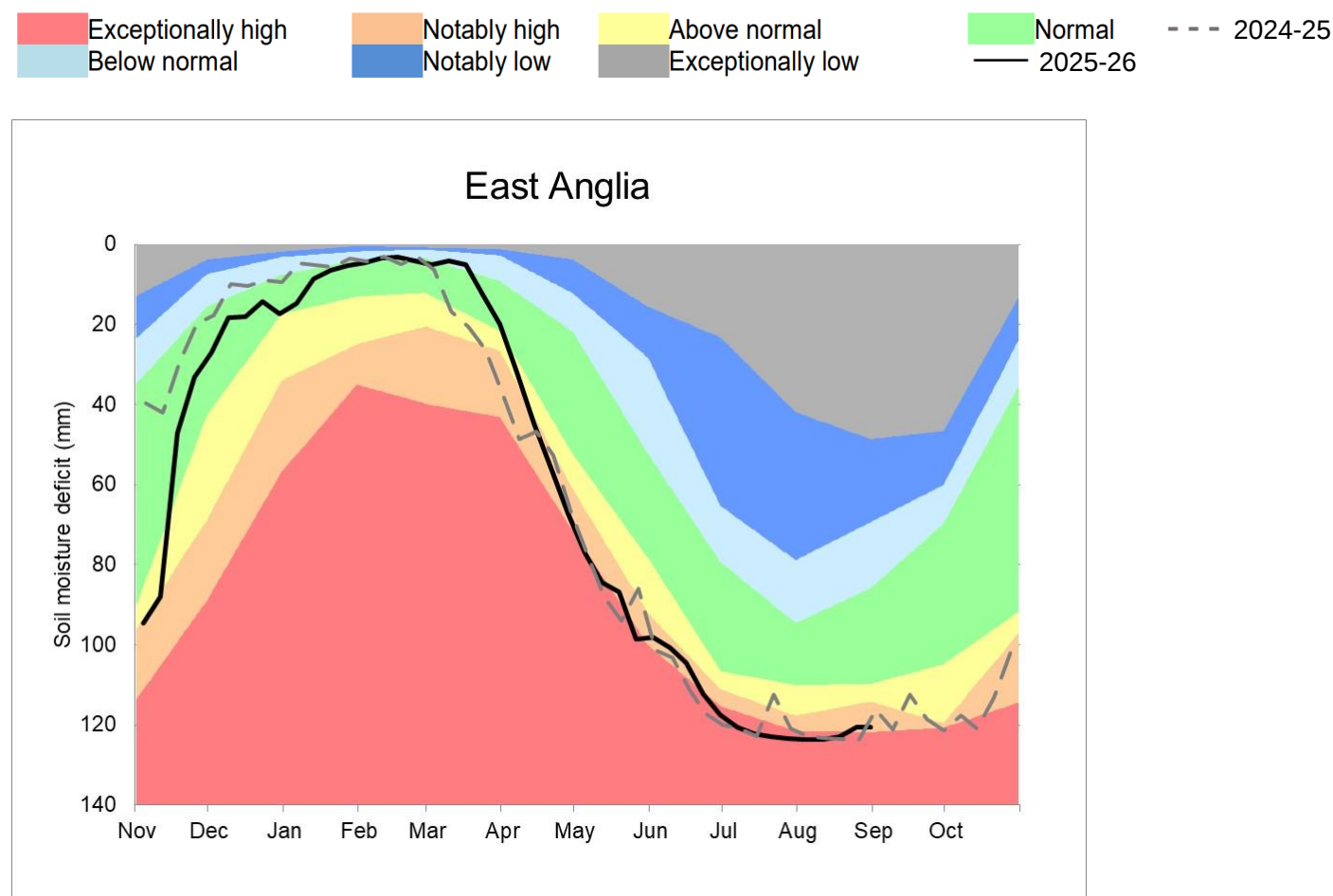
Figure 3.1b: Soil moisture deficit values for 31 August 2026 relative to long term average end of August soil moisture deficit values for hydrometric catchments across East Anglia. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



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3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to an analysis of historic 1991 to 2020 long term data set. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.

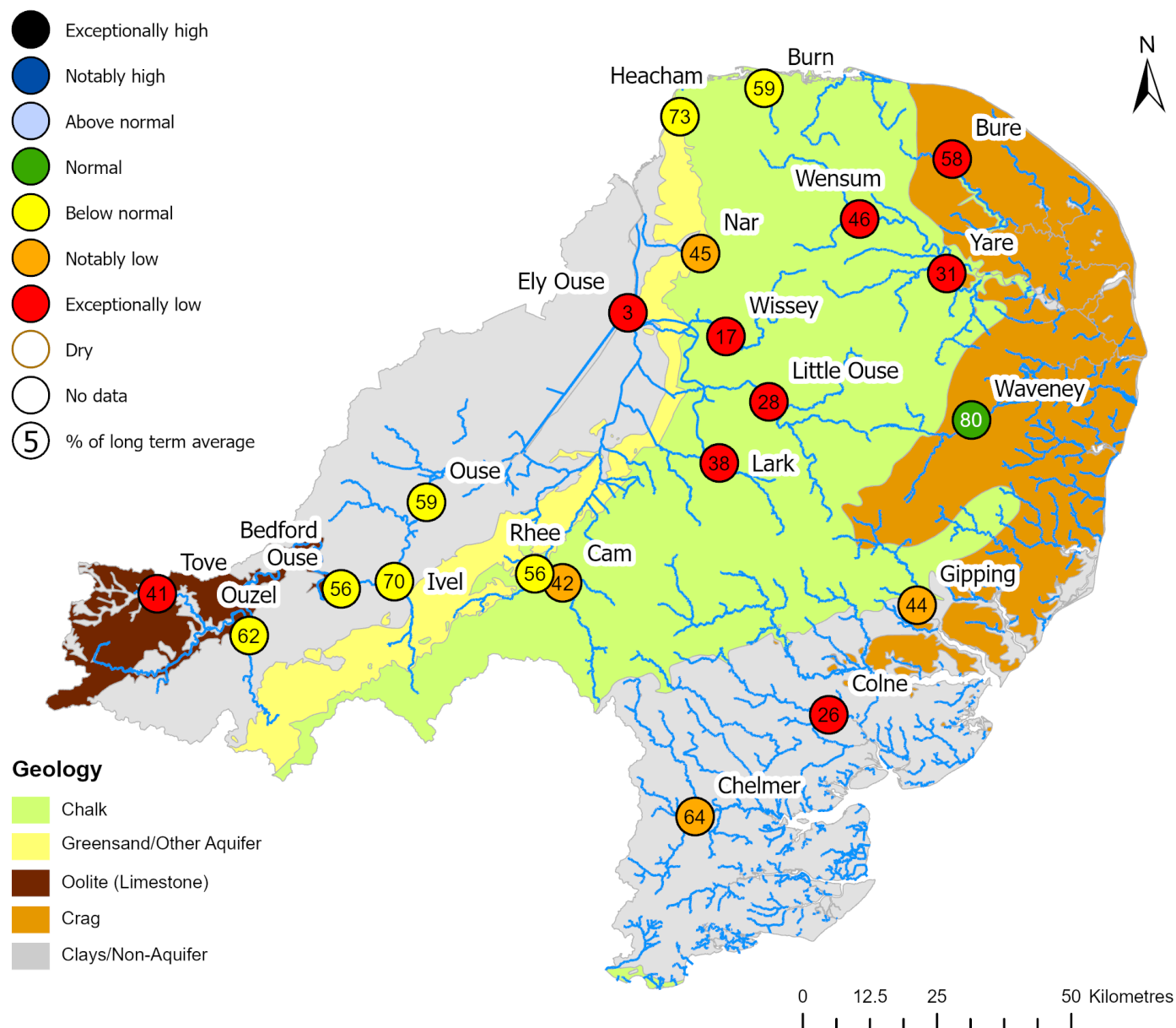


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4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

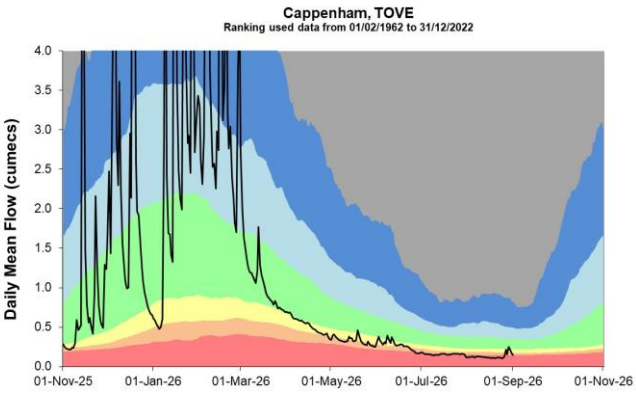
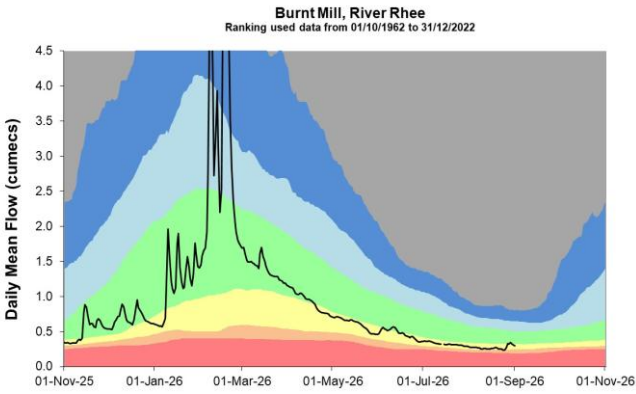
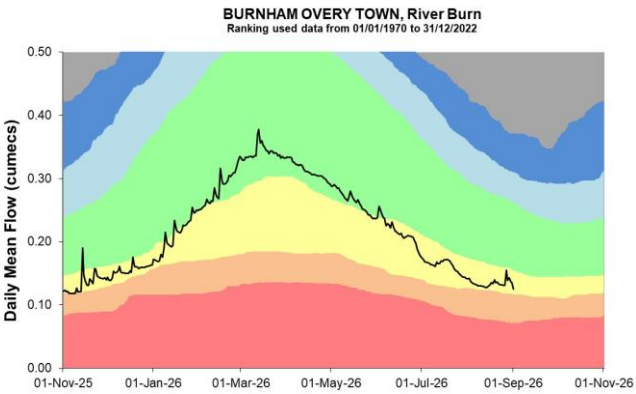
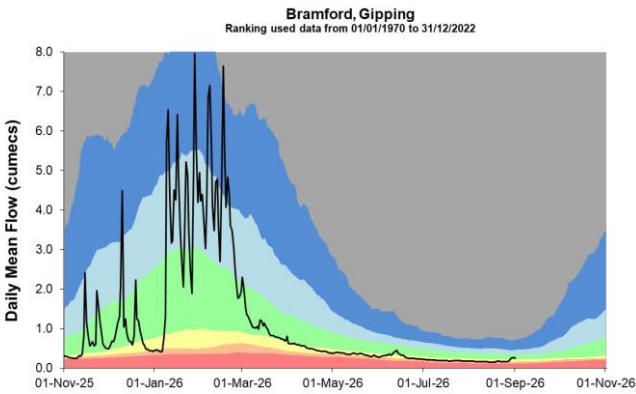
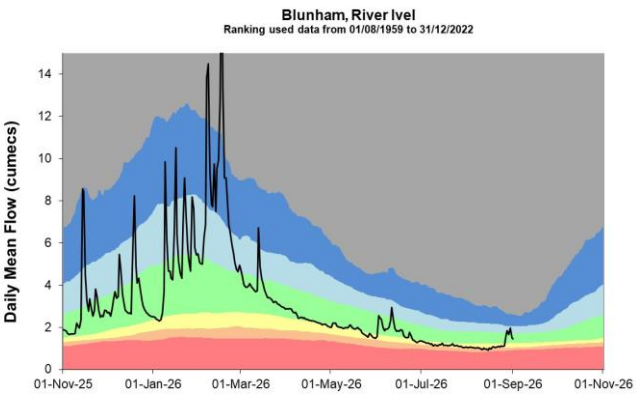
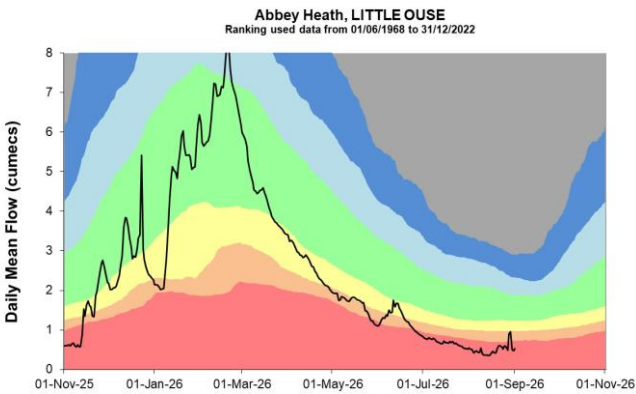
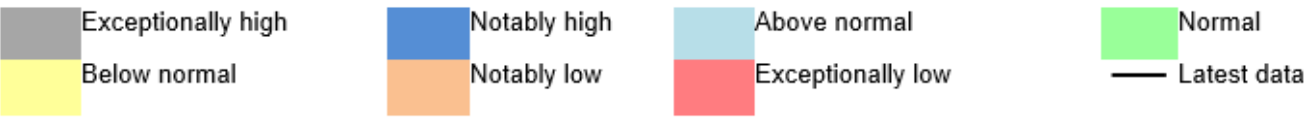
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for August 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic August monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

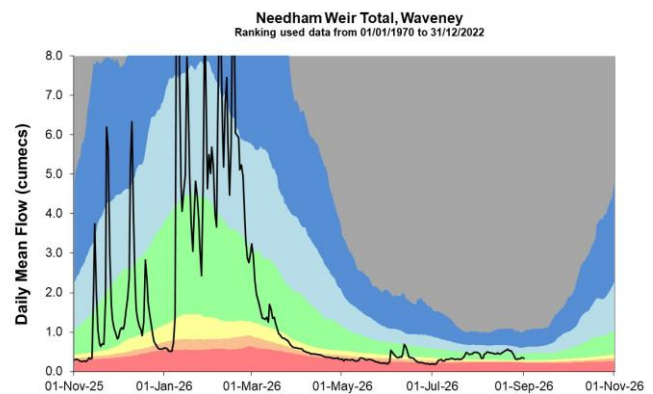
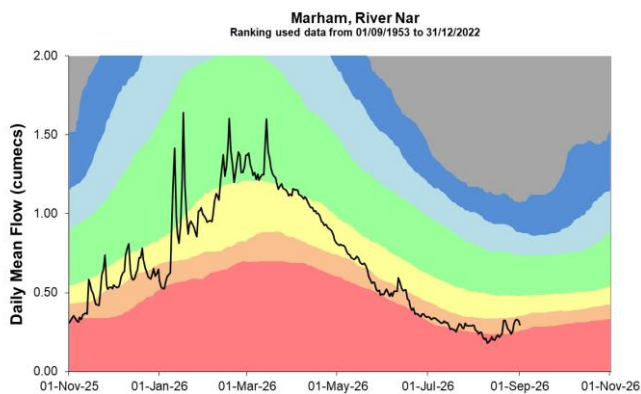
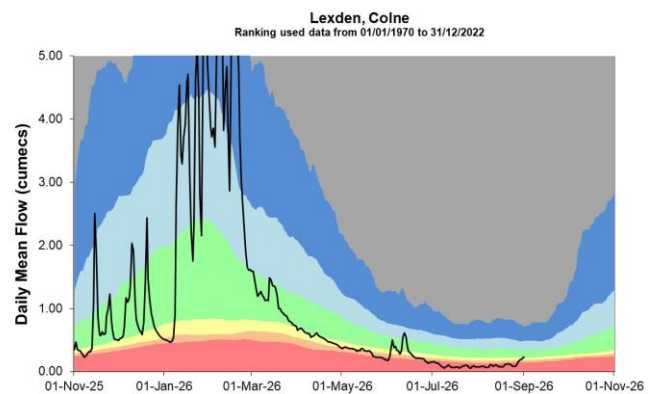
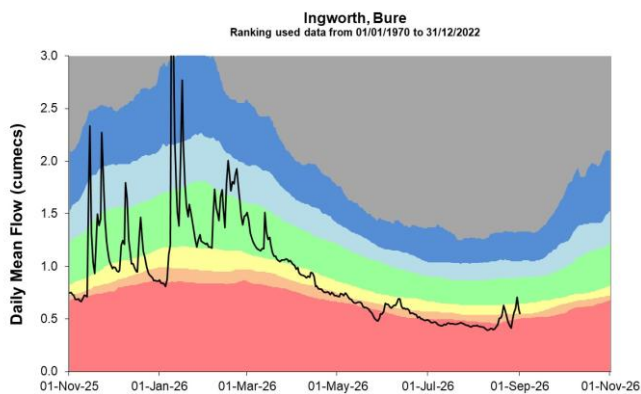
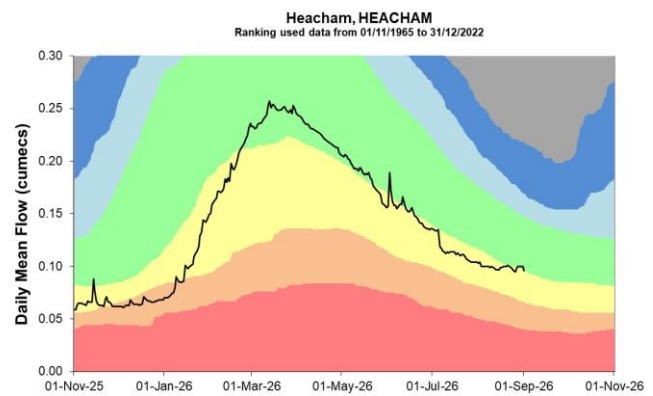
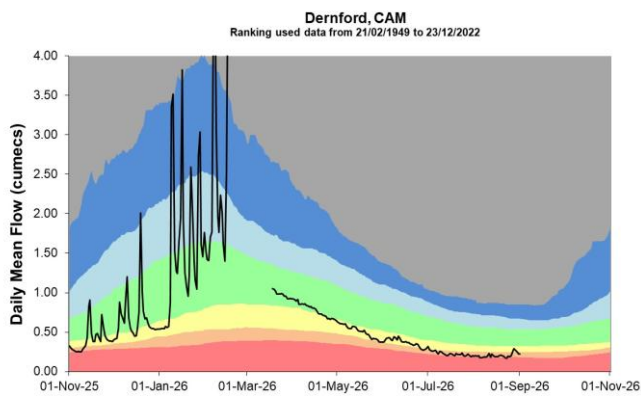
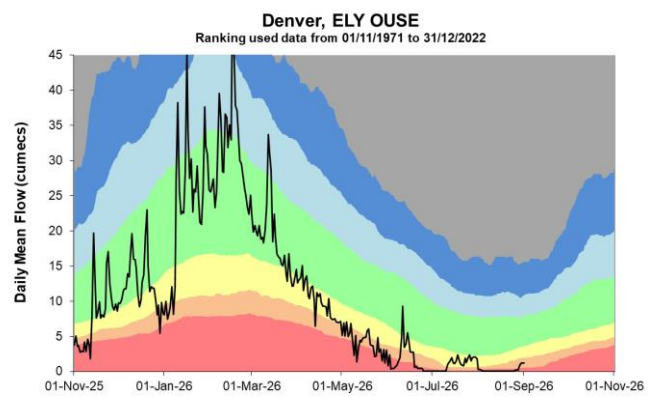
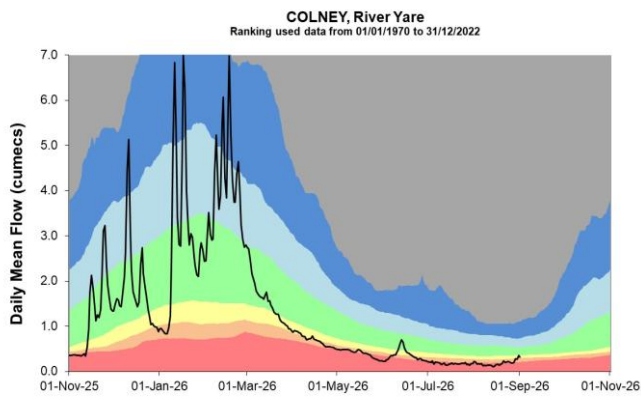


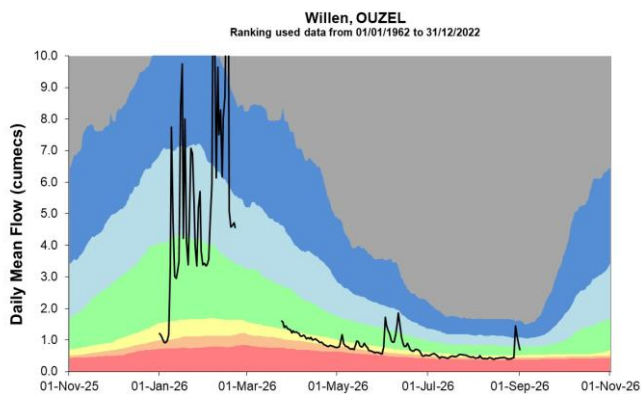
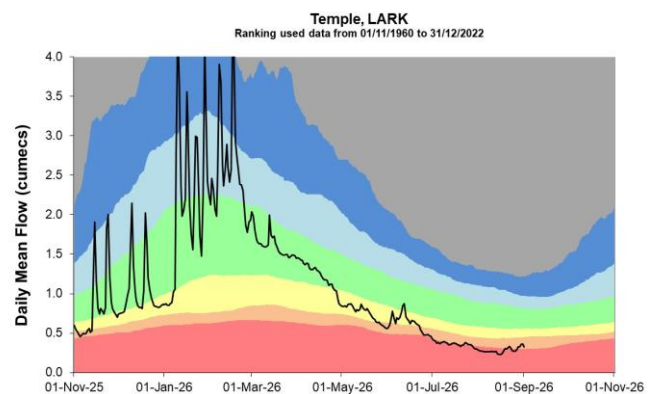
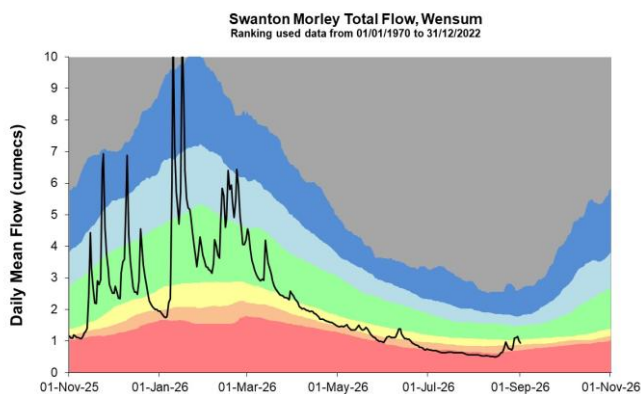
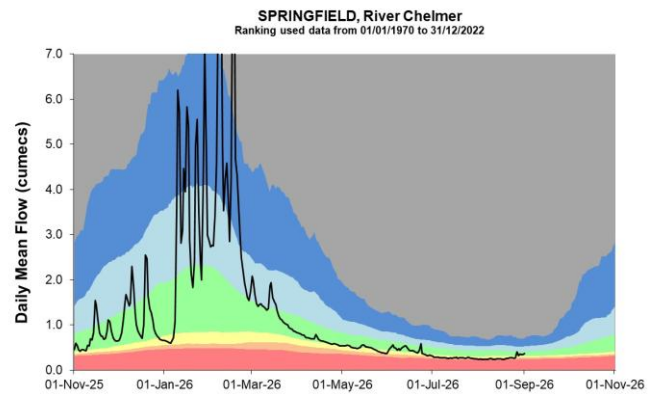
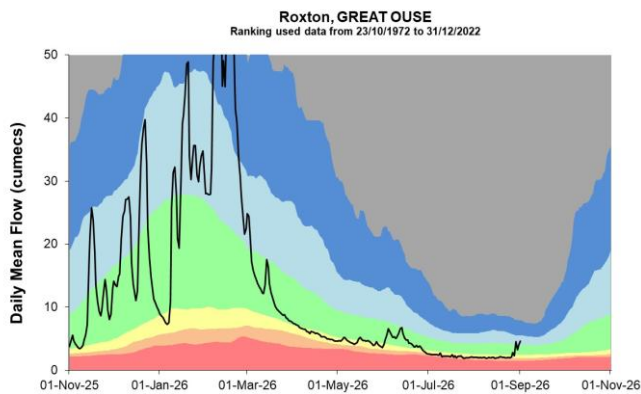
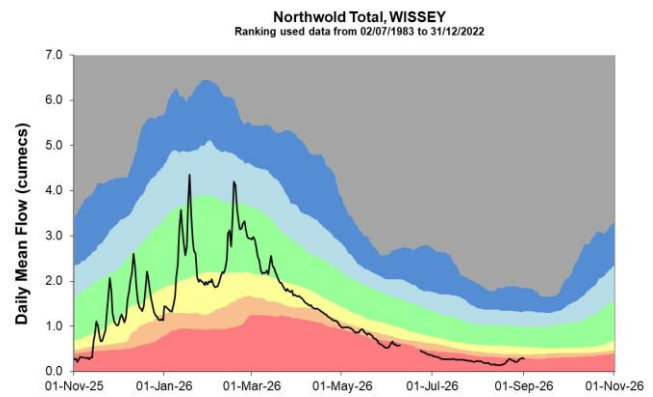
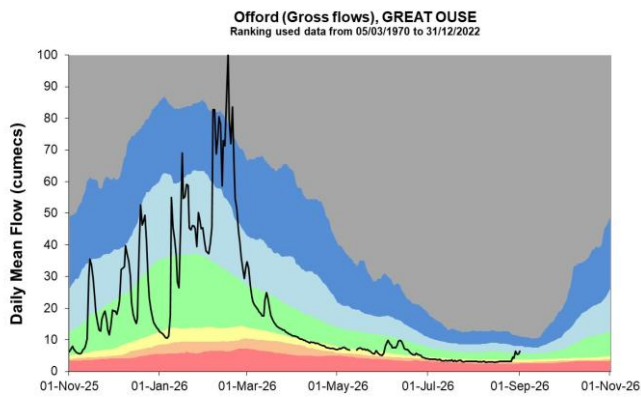
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4.2 River flow charts

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





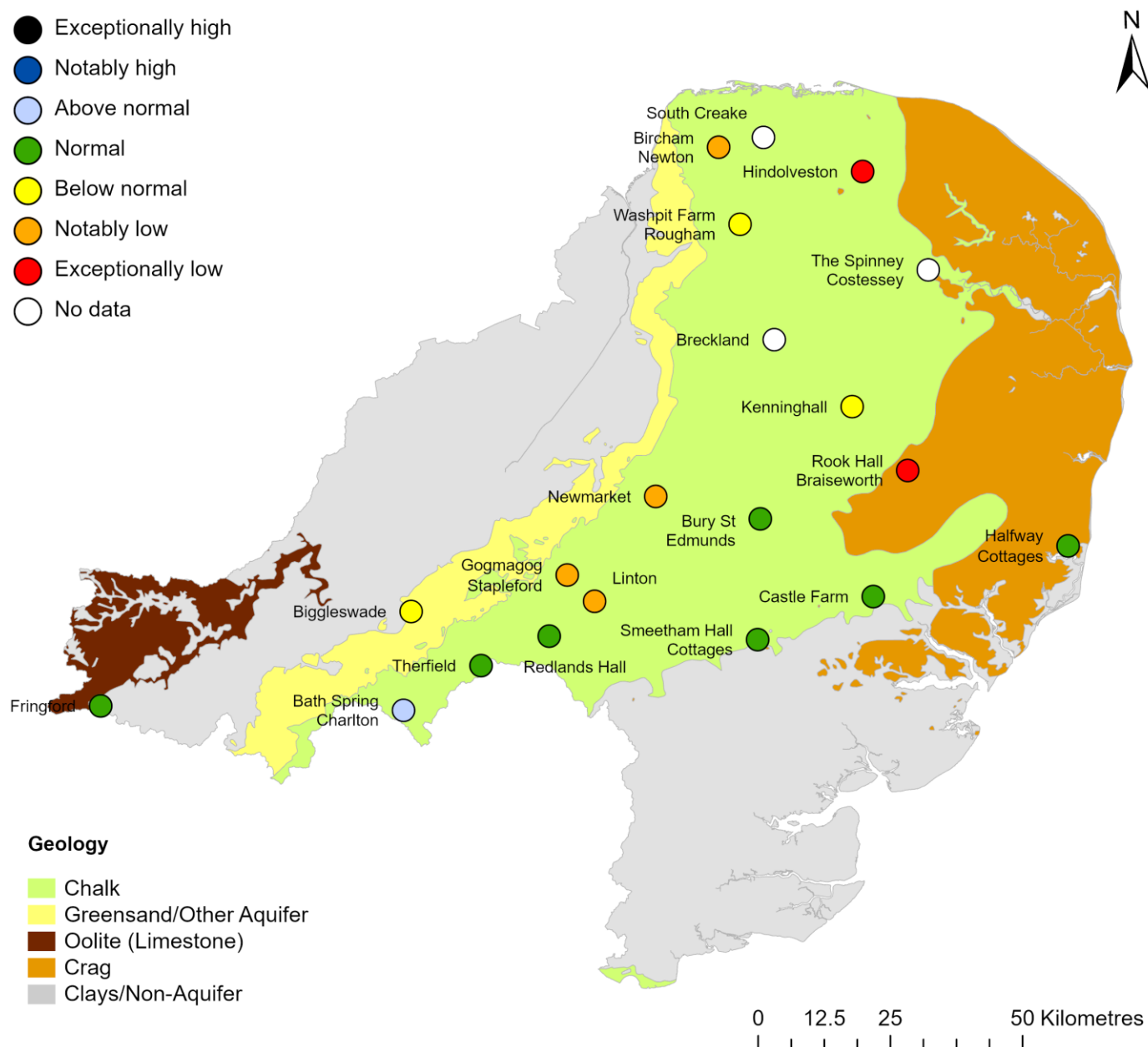


(Source: Environment Agency).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

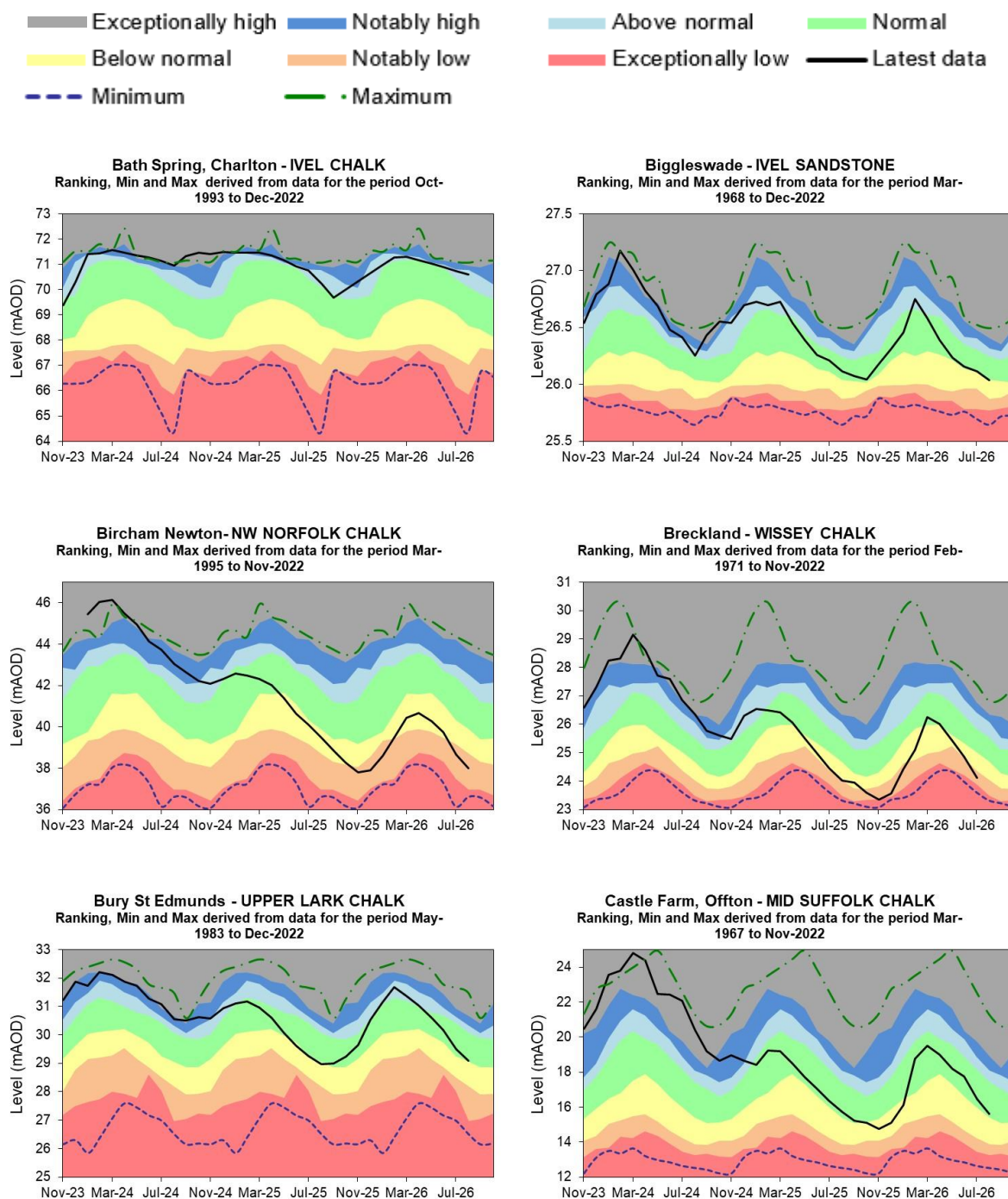
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of August 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic end of August levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



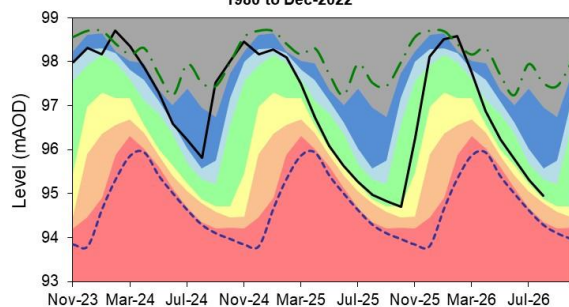
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

5.2 Groundwater level charts

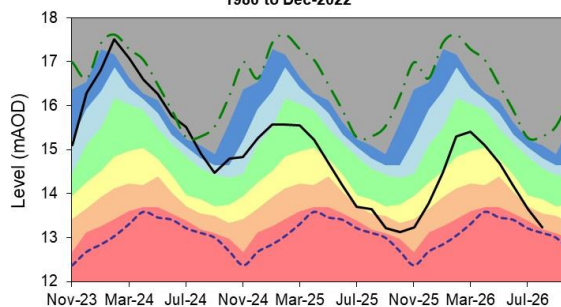
Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 34 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



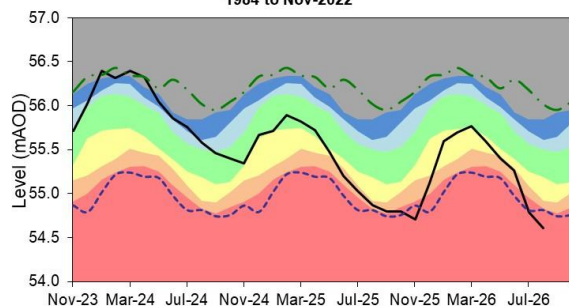
Fringford - GREAT OOLITE
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Sep-1980 to Dec-2022



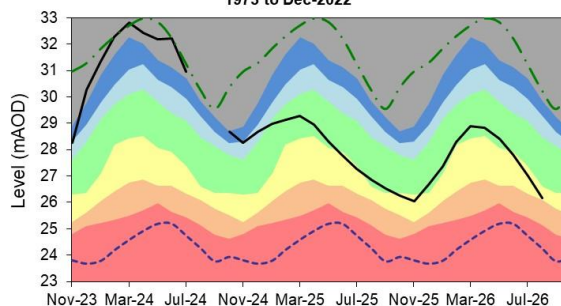
Gog Magog, Stapleford - CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022



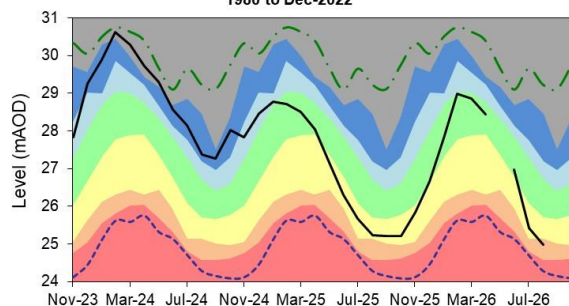
Hindolveston - NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Sep-1984 to Nov-2022



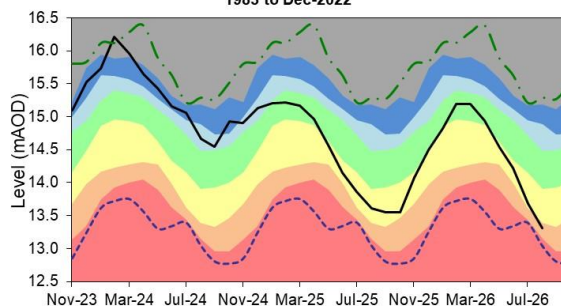
Kenninghall - LITTLE OUSE CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Aug-1973 to Dec-2022



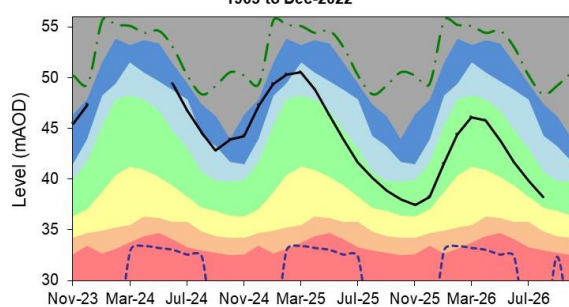
Linton - CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2022



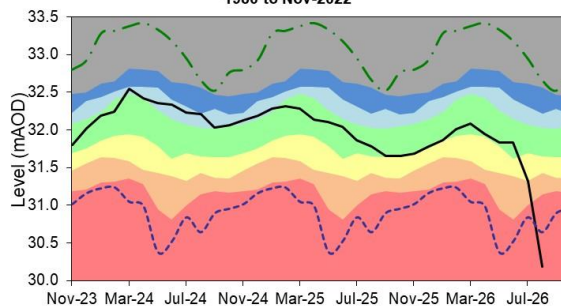
Newmarket - SNAIL CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Feb-1983 to Dec-2022

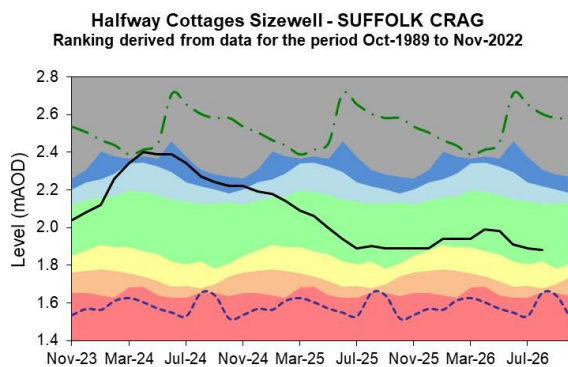
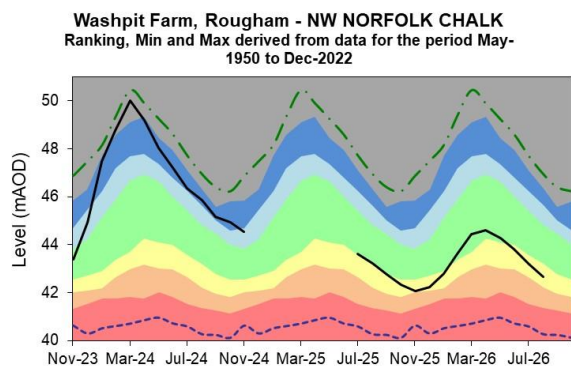
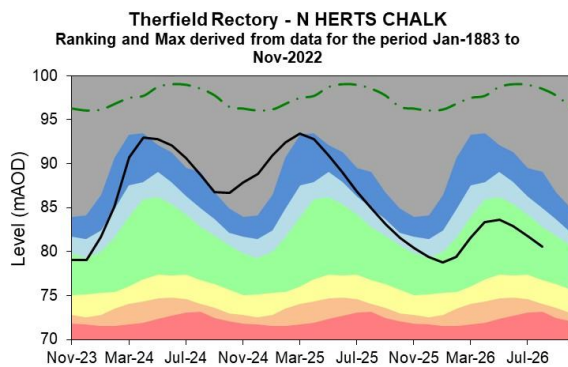
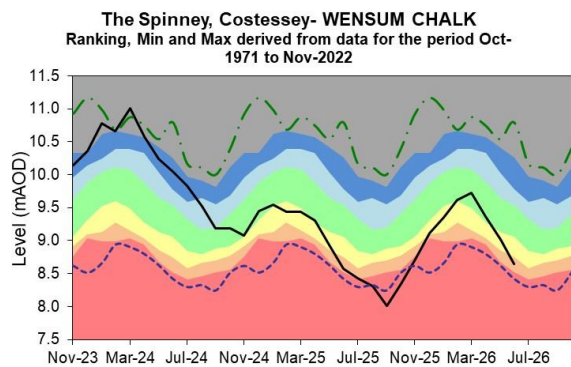
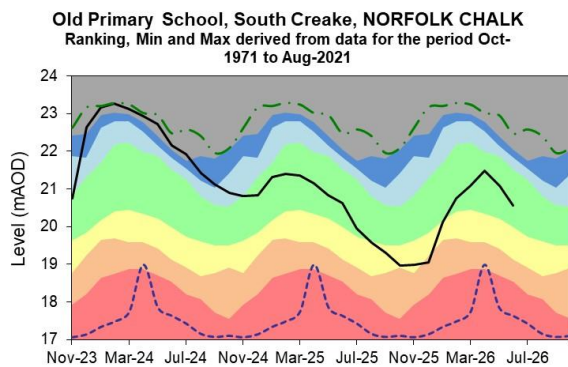
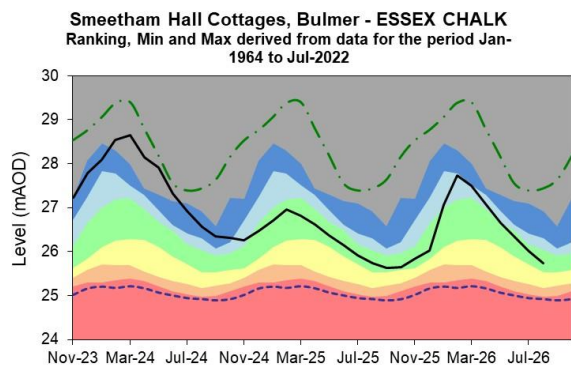


Redlands Hall, Ickleton - CAM CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Aug-1963 to Dec-2022



Rook Hall, Braiseworth - SUFFOLK CHALK
Ranking, Min and Max derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Nov-2022





(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

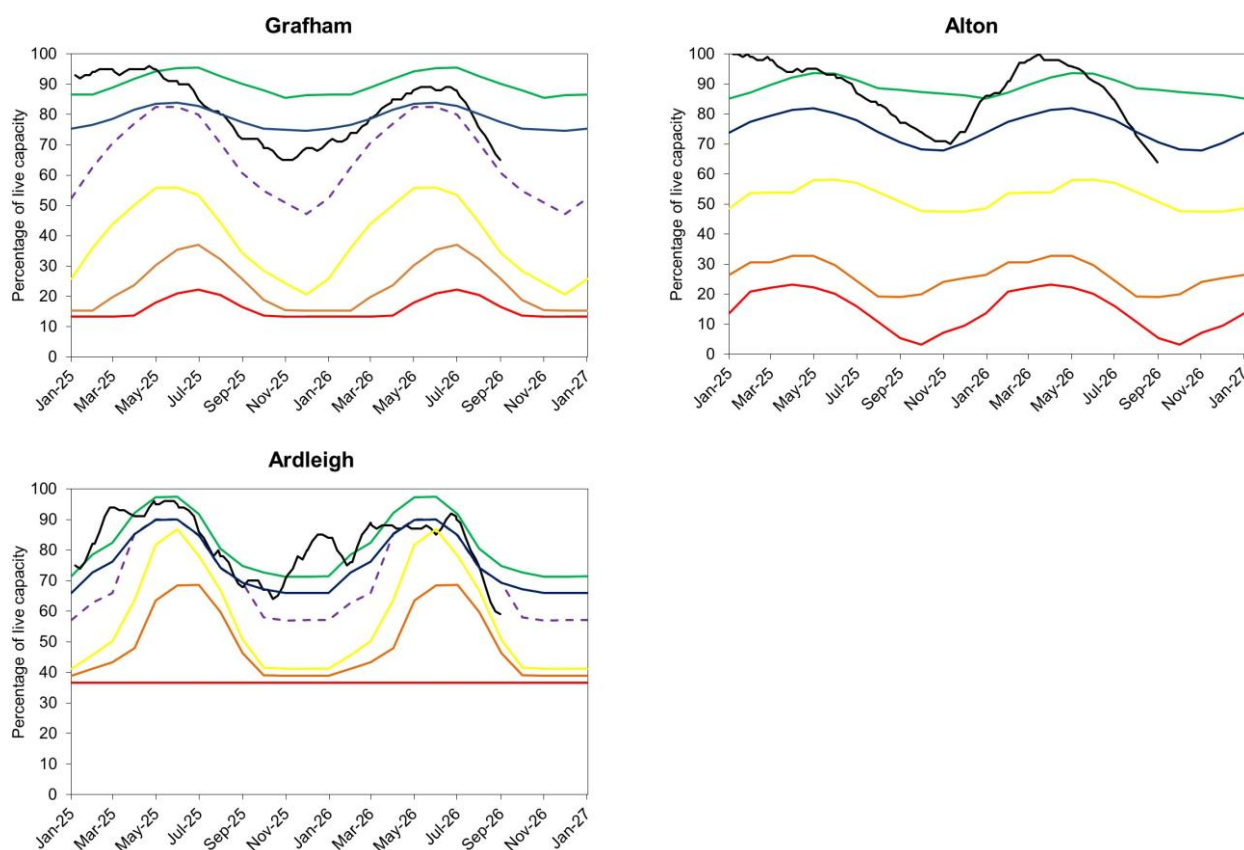
6 Reservoir stocks

6.1 Anglian Water

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the target curve and drought permit application trigger.

— 2025-2026 — Target Curve - - - Drought Permit Application Trigger

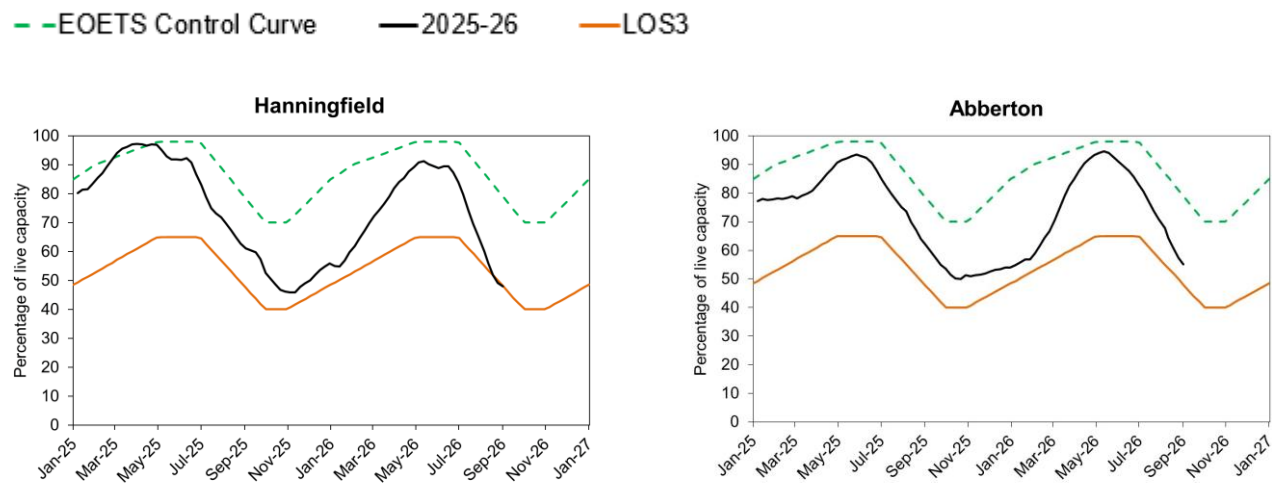
— Level 1 — Level 2 — Level 3 — Level 4



(Source: Anglian Water. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir levels, please view their [Drought Plan](#)).

6.2 Essex and Suffolk Water

Figure 6.2: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the EOETS and level of service 3 control curve.



(Source: Essex and Suffolk Water).

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^3/s).

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 1 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

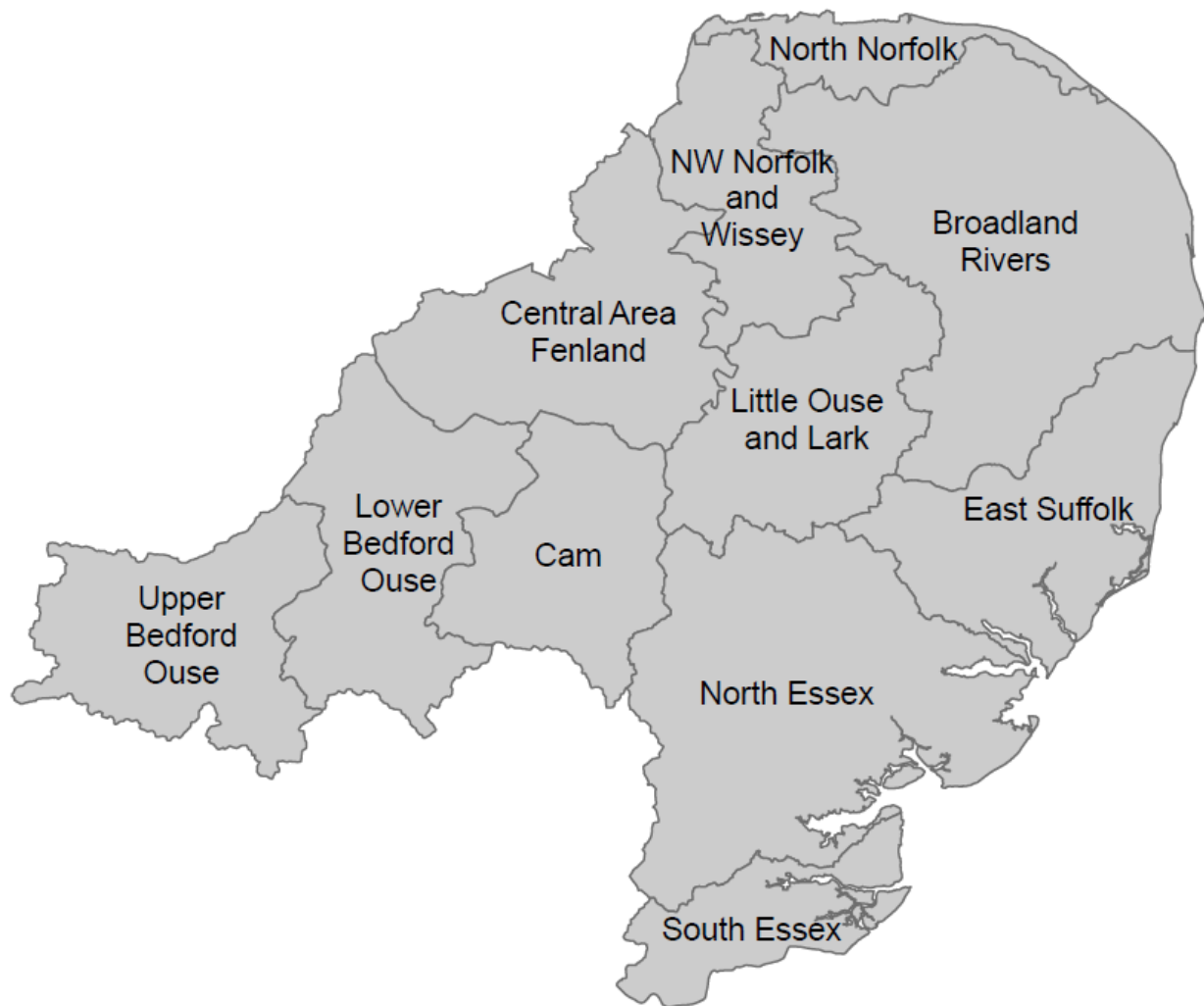
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

7.3 Hydrological areas

Figure 7.3: The map below shows the geographical extent of each hydrological area in East Anglia.



8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Aug 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Aug 2026 band	Jun 2026 to August cumulative band	Mar 2026 to August cumulative band	Sep 2025 to August cumulative band
Broadland Rivers	73	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Cam	72	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Central Area Fenland	106	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
East Suffolk	54	Below Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Little Ouse And Lark	65	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Lower Bedford Ouse	83	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
North Essex	46	Below Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
North Norfolk	88	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Nw Norfolk And Wissey	90	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
South Essex	46	Below Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Upper Bedford Ouse	44	Below Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Aug 2026 band	Jul 2026 band
Abbey Heath	Little Ouse	Little Ouse	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Blunham	Ivel	Ivel	Below normal	Below normal
Bramford	Gipping	Gipping	Notably low	Below normal
Burnham Overy	Burn	Burn	Below normal	Below normal
Burnt Mill	Rhee	Rhee	Below normal	Below normal
Cappenharn	Tove	Tove	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Colney	Yare	Yare	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Denver	Ely Ouse	Cutoff and Renew Channel	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Dernford	Cam	Cam	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Heacham	Heacham	Heacham	Below normal	Below normal
Ingworth	Bure	Bure	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Lexden	Colne	Colne Essex	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Marham	Nar	Nar	Notably low	Notably low
Needham Weir Total	Waveney (lower)	Waveney	Normal	Below normal
Northwold Total	Wissey	Wissey	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Offord (gross Flows)	Great Ouse	Ouse Beds	Below normal	Below normal

Roxton	Great Ouse	Ivel	Below normal	Notably low
Springfield	Chelmer	Chelmer Upper	Notably low	Notably low
Swanton Morley Total	Wensum	Wensum	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Temple	Lark	Lark	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Willen	Ouzel	Ouzel	Below normal	Notably low

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Aug 2026 band	End of Jul 2026 band
Bath Springs, Charlton	Upper Ivel Chalk	Above normal	Above normal
Biggleswade	Ivel Woburn Sands	Below normal	Normal
Bircham Newton	North West Norfolk Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Breckland	Wissey Chalk	No Data	Notably low
Bury St Edmunds	Upper Lark Chalk	Normal	Normal
Castle Farm, Offton	East Suffolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Gog Magog, Stapleford	Cam Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Halfway Cottages	East Suffolk Crag	Normal	Normal
Hindolveston	Norfolk Chalk	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Kenninghall	Little Ouse Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Linton	Cam Chalk	Notably low	Below normal
Newmarket	Snail Chalk	Notably low	Below normal
Old Primary School, South Creak	North Norfolk Chalk	No Data	No Data
Redlands Hall, Ickleton	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal

Rook Hall, Braiseworth	East Suffolk Chalk	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer	North Essex Chalk	Normal	Normal
The Spinney, Costessey	Wensum Chalk	No Data	No Data
Washpit Farm, Rougham	North West Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Therfield Rectory	Upper Lee Chalk	Normal	Normal
Fringford P.s.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Normal	Normal