Monthly water situation report: Midlands Area

1 Summary - August 2026

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

Despite a very dry start, August was a wetter month than July overall, with all but one of the hydrological areas receiving normal rainfall totals or higher, most of which fell in the final week of the month. Overall the Midlands received 98% of the long-term average (LTA) rainfall. Soil moisture deficits (SMD) remained similar to the previous month, with soils still drier than is expected for the time of year. River flows increased across the month at most flow monitoring sites, as a result of rainfall in the last week of August. Compared to July, August monthly mean flow for most locations increased, with 9 out of the 20 sites recording below normal flows, and 5 recording normal flows for the time of year. Groundwater sites continue to record normal groundwater levels or higher for all but one site. Only Southards Lane is recording below normal groundwater levels. Lastly, the reservoir storage levels decreased across all 10 reservoirs, with storage levels remaining below average for the time of year.

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 65mm of rain fell across the Midlands in August, equating to 98% of the LTA. Rainfall was slightly higher in the north-east of the Midlands, with the Derwent hydrological catchment receiving the largest cumulative total rainfall, at 97.2mm over the month. The Lower Trent and Tame hydrological areas received slightly less rainfall, but have recorded above normal rainfall for the month, compared to the LTA. The Welsh Mountains was the only hydrological area to receive below normal rainfall, receiving 61% to the LTA rainfall. The majority of hydrological areas received normal rainfall totals for the time of year; a stark contrast to the previous month where all areas received exceptionally low rainfall totals.

Over the meteorological summer, from June to August, rainfall was below average to across most of the Midlands, with only the Tame hydrological area recording normal rainfall. The Welsh Mountains and Mid-Severn/Teme areas both received exceptionally low rainfall, and the Shropshire Plains and Lower Wye received notably low rainfall.

Over the last 6 months, all hydrological areas recorded below normal, notably low or exceptionally low rainfall. Once again, the Welsh Mountains and Mid-Severn/Teme hydrological areas recorded exceptionally low rainfall over this period, in addition to the Avon and Lower Wye hydrological areas.

Over the past 12 months, most hydrological areas in the west side of the Midlands recorded above normal rainfall over this time, while the majority in the east recorded notably high rainfall.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Despite recent rainfall, SMD continued to remain high during August throughout the Midlands, as a result of sustained high temperatures and lack of rainfall over most of the summer. At the end of August, most areas recorded between 101mm and 160mm of SMD, with each area recording similar deficits to the previous month.
Soils remain considerably drier than expected for the time of year across all areas of the Midlands, particularly in West Midlands where deficits are greatest.

1.3 River flows

Following rainfall in the last week of August, daily mean river flows increased at nearly all indicator sites in the Midlands from the start to the end of the month. This was most notable in the north-east of the area where the highest rainfall totals were received.

In terms of monthly mean flows, 9 of the flow indicator sites recorded below normal flows for August. This is a slight improvement on the previous month, when the majority of sites recorded notably low monthly mean flow. This month, five sites recorded exceptionally low flows. These were Bewdley, Ebley Mill, Llanyblodwel, Redbrook and Tenbury. One site; Butts Bridge, recorded notably low flows. All of these sites are located in the west and south parts of the Midlands. A total of 5 sites recorded normal monthly mean flows for August, the majority of which were in the north-east of the region.

1.4 Groundwater levels

At the end of August, the majority of 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 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 at sites within the sandstone aquifers were mostly classed as above normal or higher. In contrast, groundwater levels in the Carboniferous limestone and mudstone aquifers were generally classed as normal or below normal.
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1.5 Reservoir stocks

Of the reservoir presented in this water situation report, all 10 continue to have below average storage for this time of year. The storage levels of these reservoirs have also all decreased since the end of June. The biggest drop is Clywedog with a 25% reduction in storage. Draycote reservoir recorded the smallest reduction in storage, at 5%. By end the of August, all reservoirs shown had storage between 31% to 76%.

1.6 Environmental impact

West Midlands area moved to drought incident status on 28-07-2026 whilst East Midlands moved into drought on 10-08-2026. We continue to work with water companies and other abstractors to manage water resources and take precautionary actions where needed.

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 August 30th, there have been 71 days of Severn Regulation so far. No regulation releases were made on the last day of August.

Table 1.1: River Severn operational releases on 30 August 2026

Water supply (Ml/d)	Total releases	Normal releases	Regulation releases	Flood drawdown releases
Llyn Clywedog	200 Ml/d	18 Ml/d	182 Ml/d	0 Ml/d
Lake Vyrnwy	42 Ml/d	42 Ml/d	0 Ml/d	0 Ml/d
Shropshire Groundwater scheme	116 Ml/d	N/A	116 Ml/d	N/A

1.8 River Wye operations

Following on from the previous month, flows remain below the threshold at Redbrook and so regulation releases continued to be required. Therefore regulation releases were made and continued to be required for the entirety of August.

1.9 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 31/08/2026 there are 118 water abstraction licence restrictions in place across the Midlands affecting 486 licences in total.

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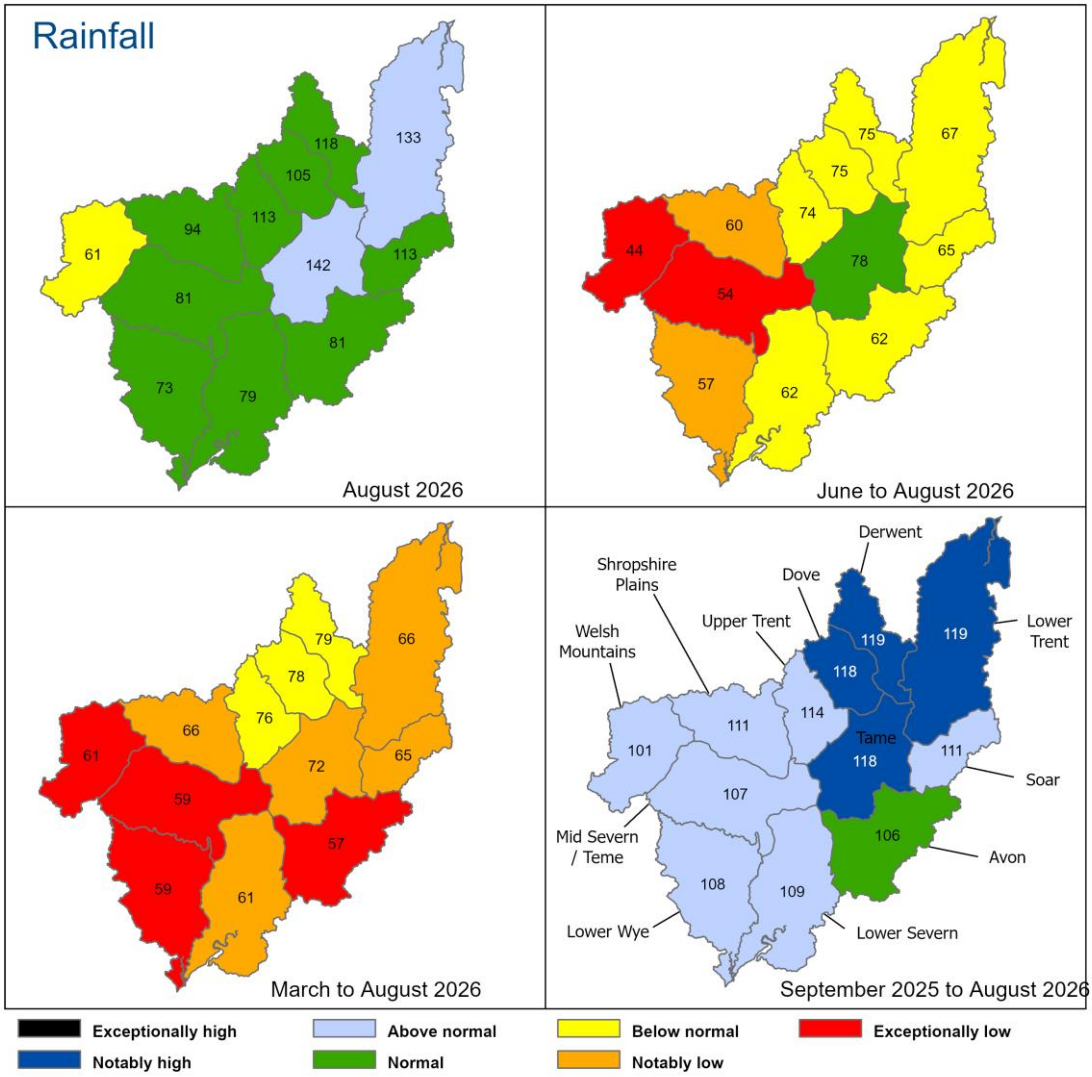
2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

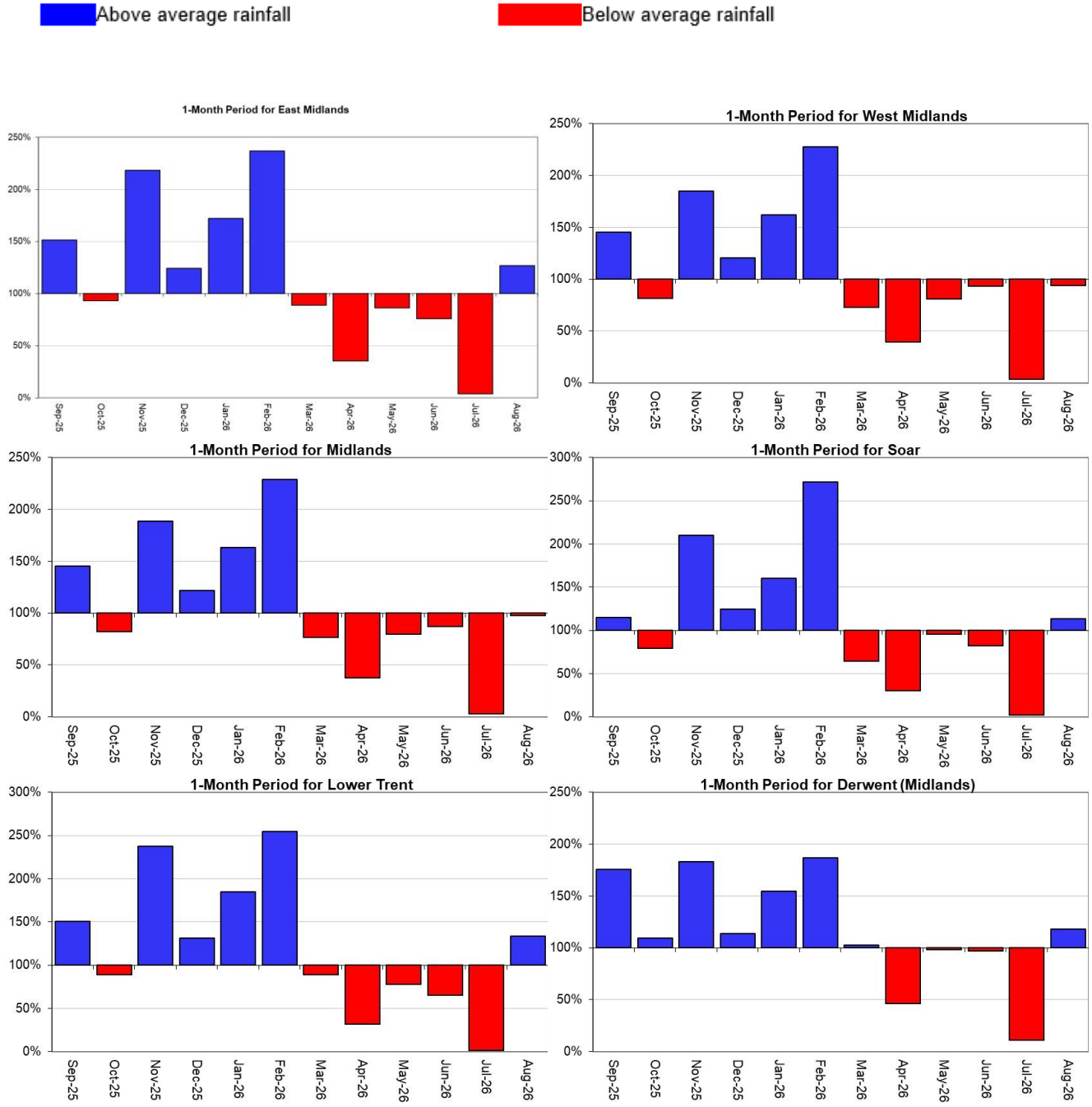
Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 August 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

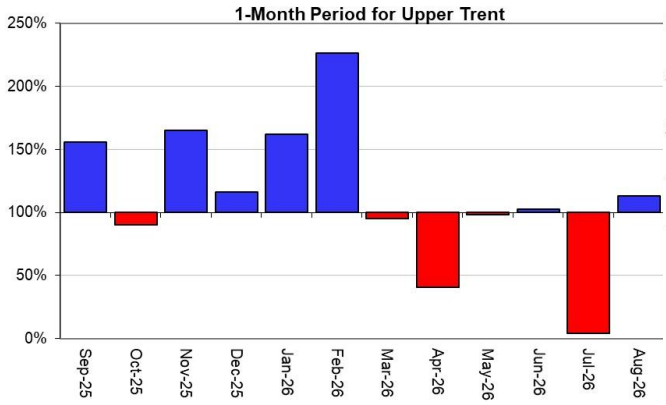


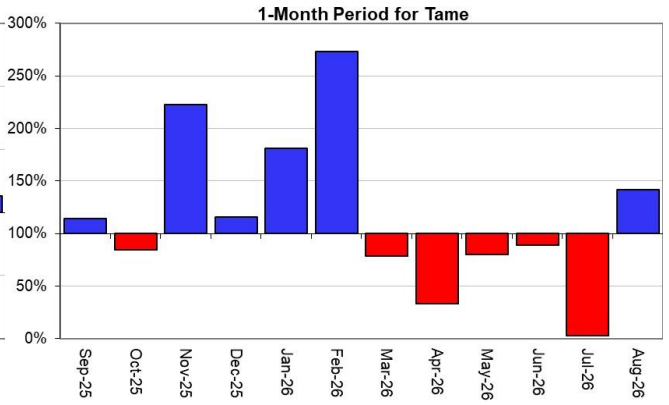
Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

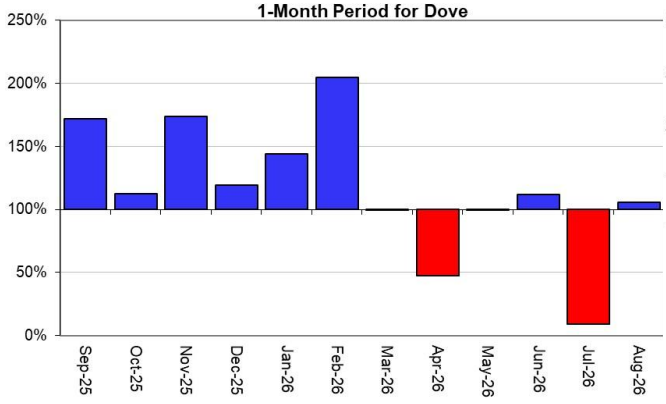
2.2 Rainfall charts

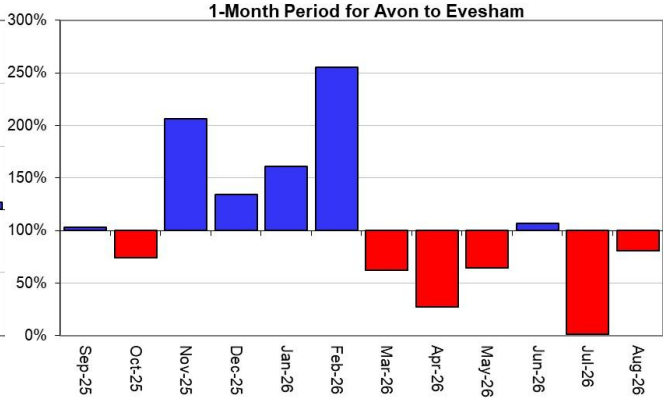
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for hydrological areas across the Midlands region.

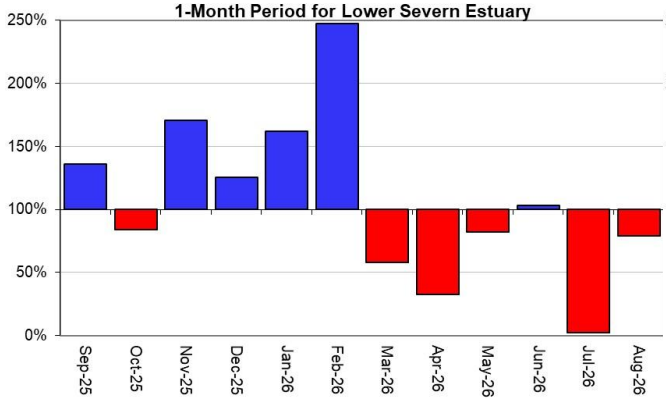


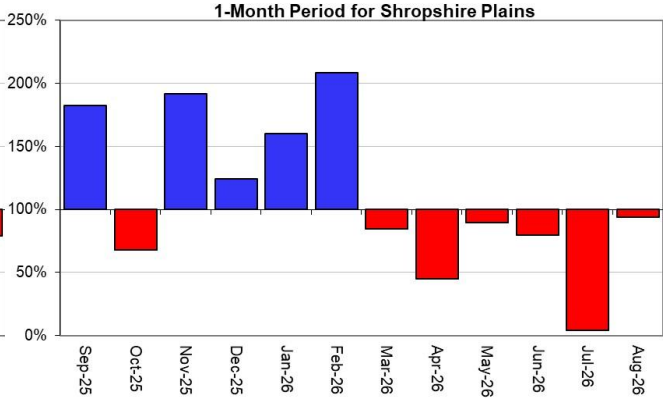

1-Month Period for Upper Trent
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26

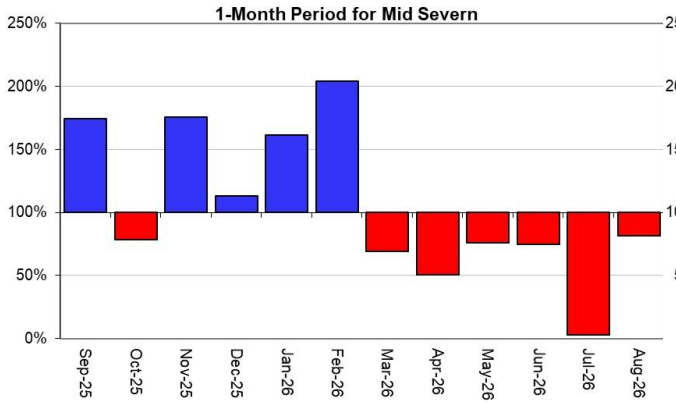

1-Month Period for Tame
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26

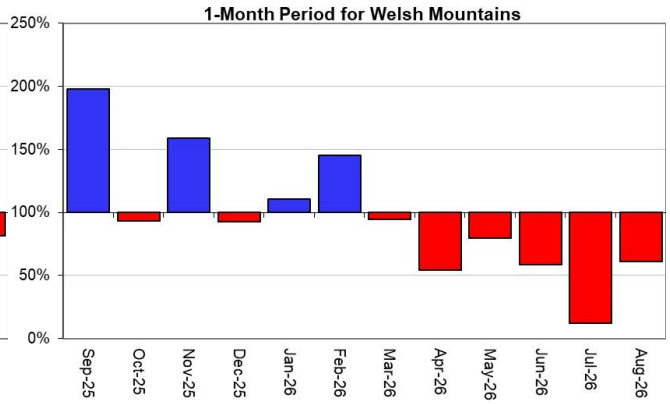

1-Month Period for Dove
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26

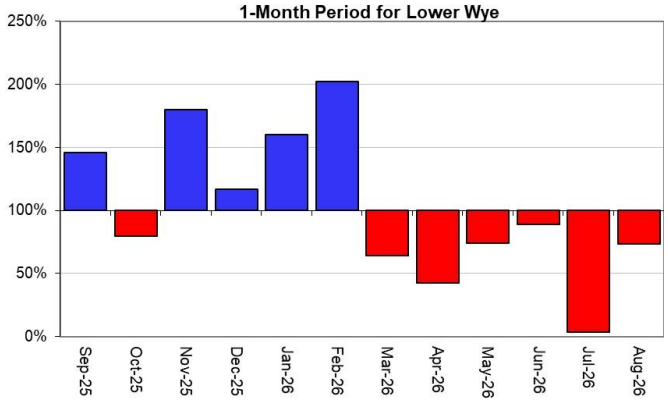

1-Month Period for Avon to Evesham
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26


1-Month Period for Lower Severn Estuary
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26


1-Month Period for Shropshire Plains
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26





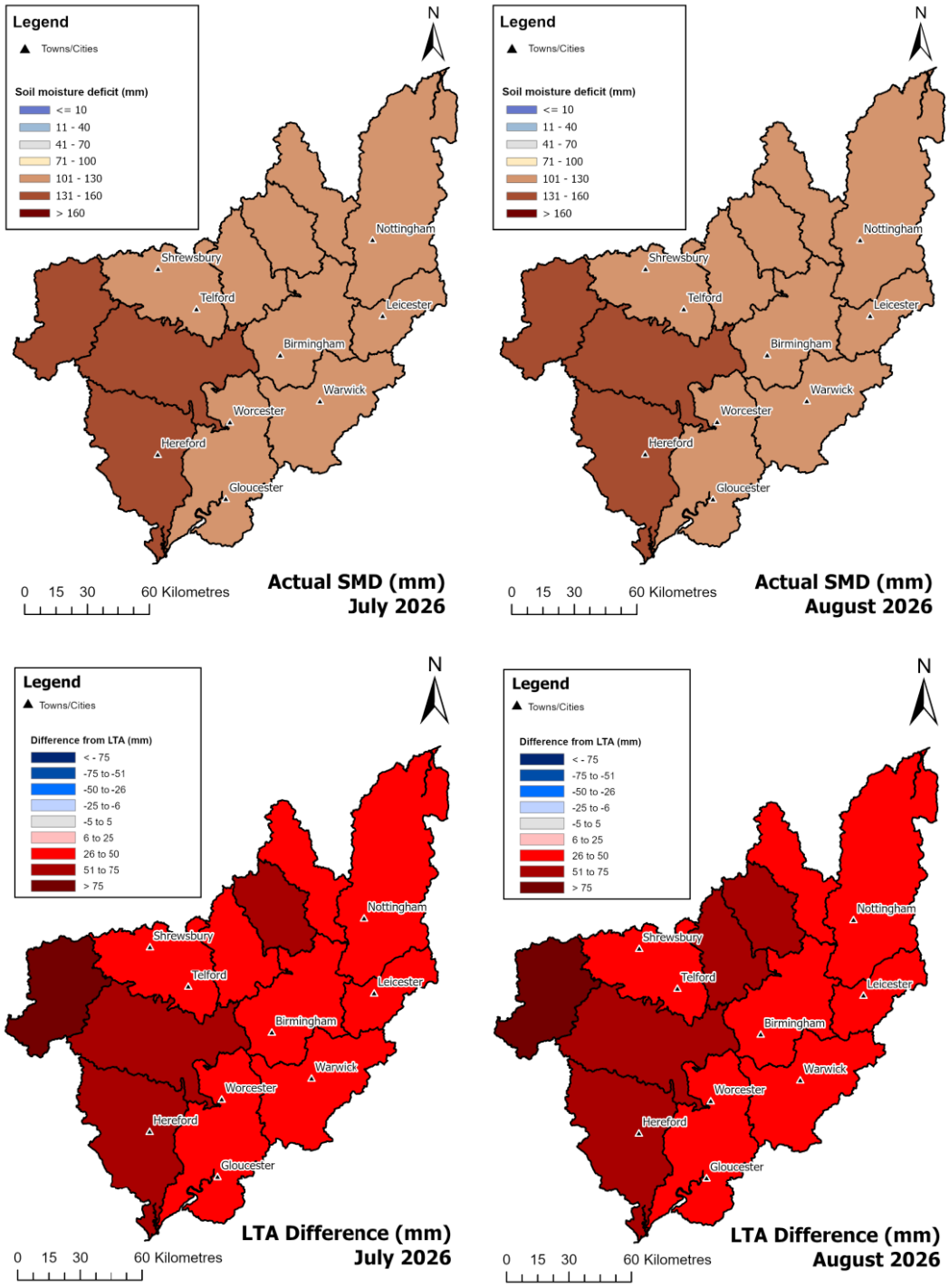


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

3 Soil moisture deficit

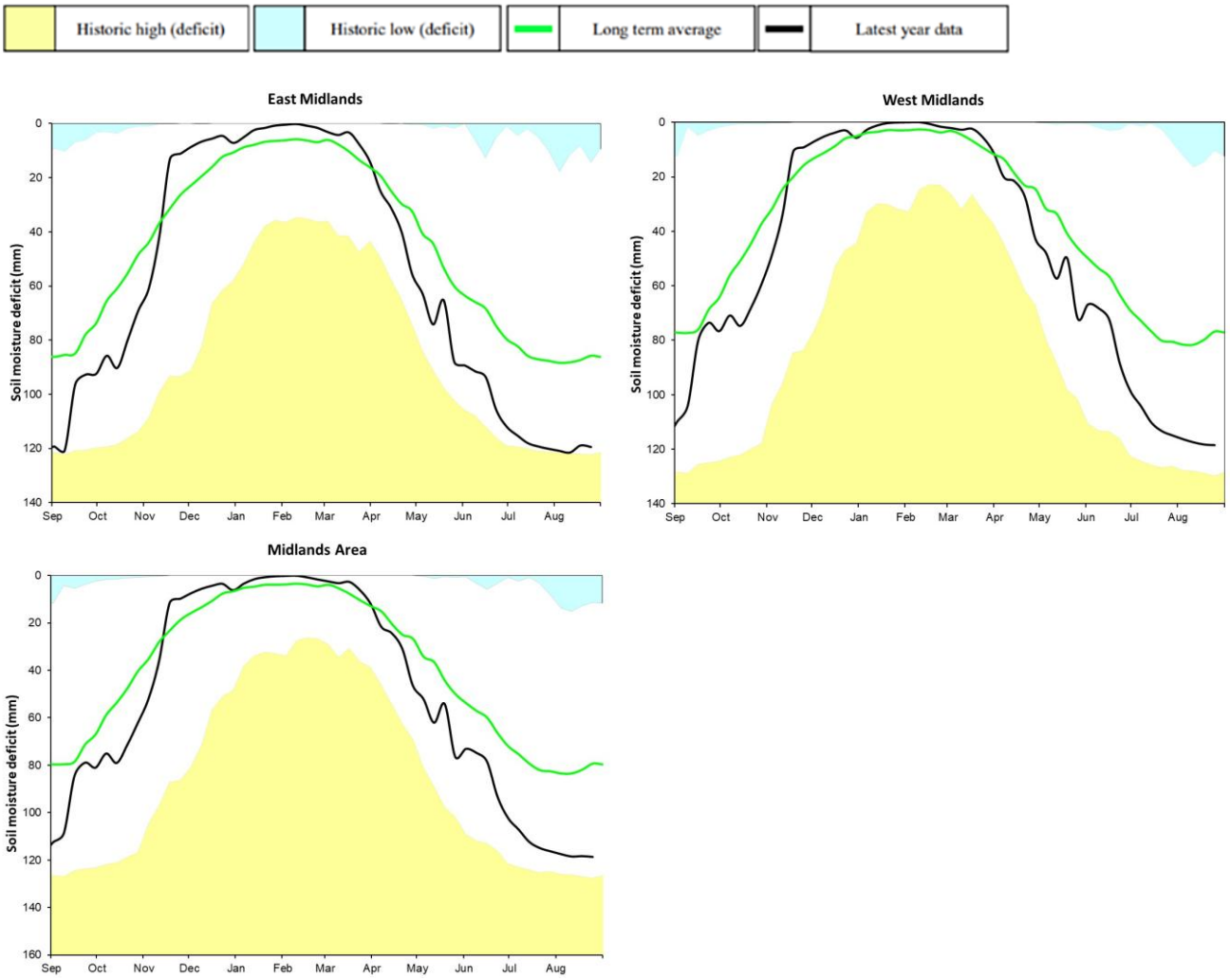
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 August 2026 (right pane) and the previous month (left pane). 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.



3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

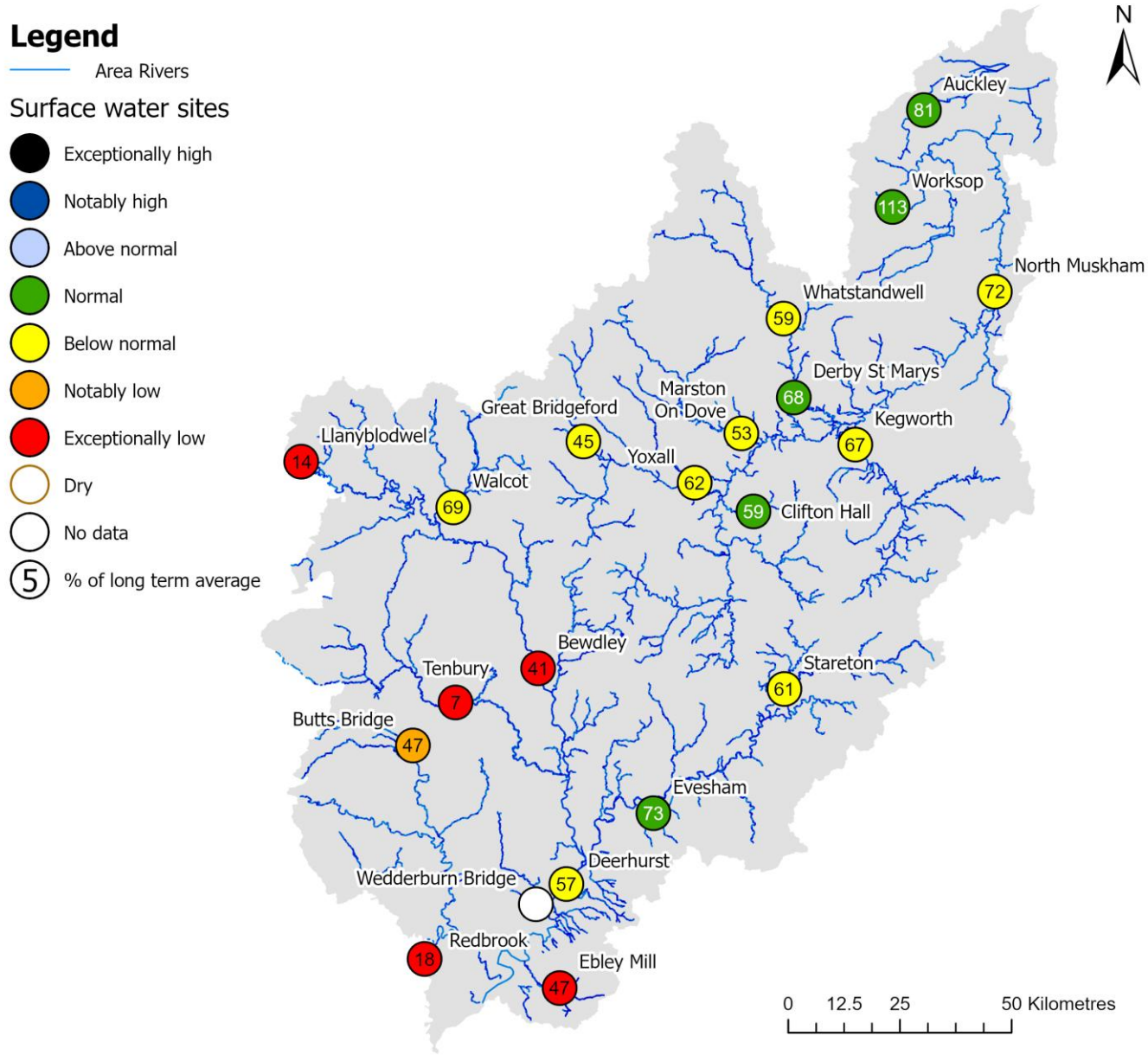
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit charts for selected areas across the Midlands compared to 1991 to 2020 long term average, and historic maximums and minimums (1961 to 2025). Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



4 River flows

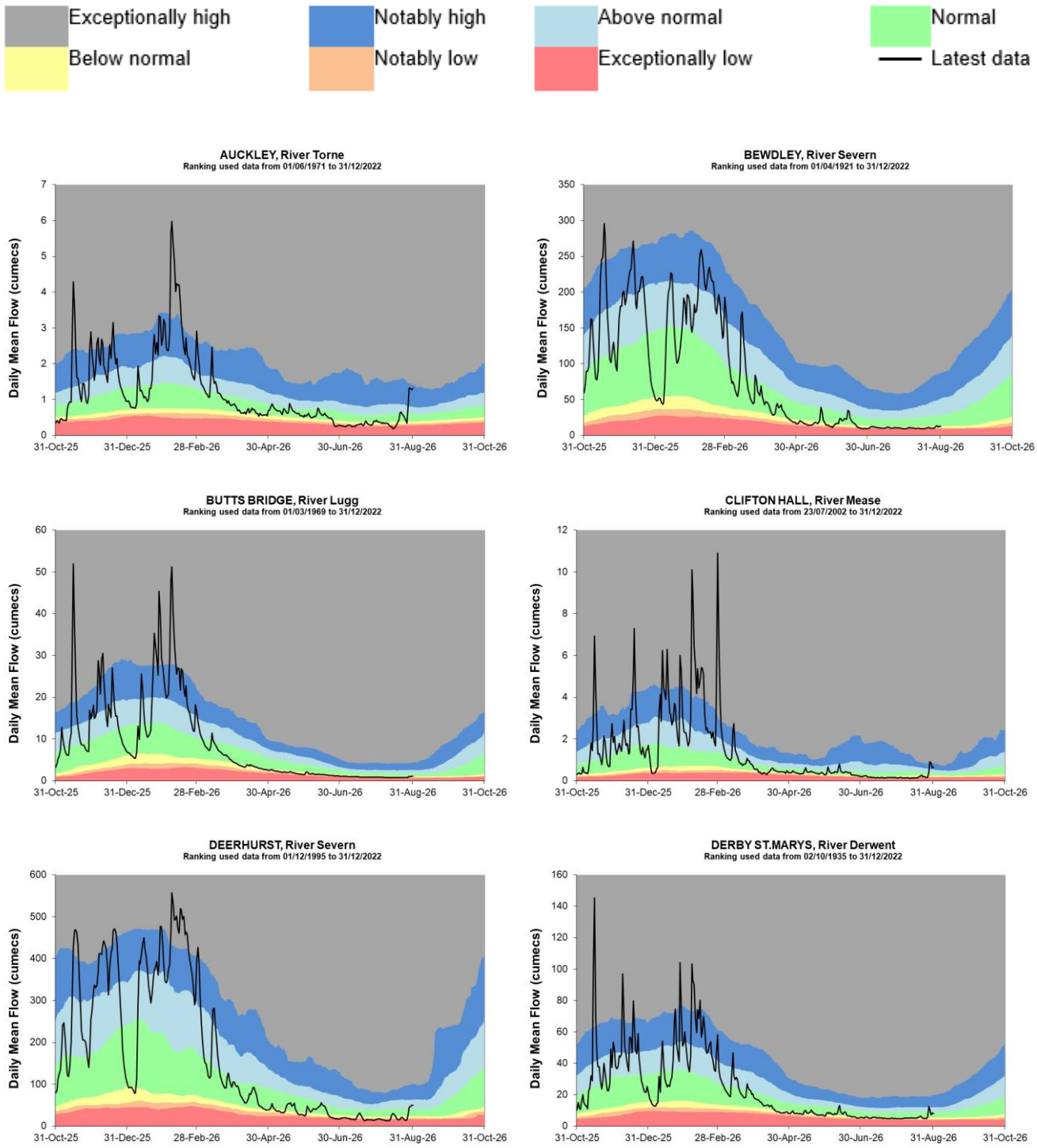
4.1 River flows map

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.

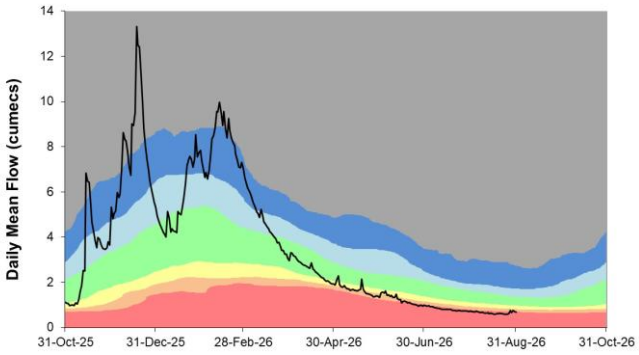


4.2 River flow charts

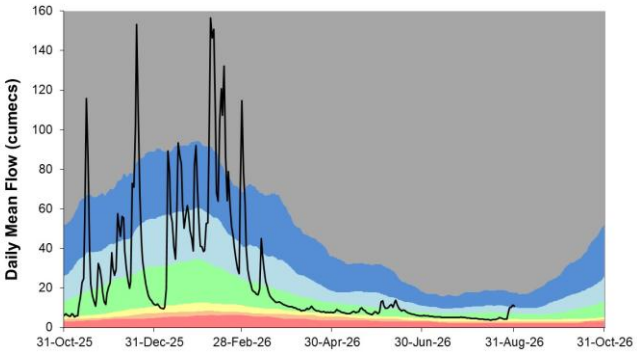
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



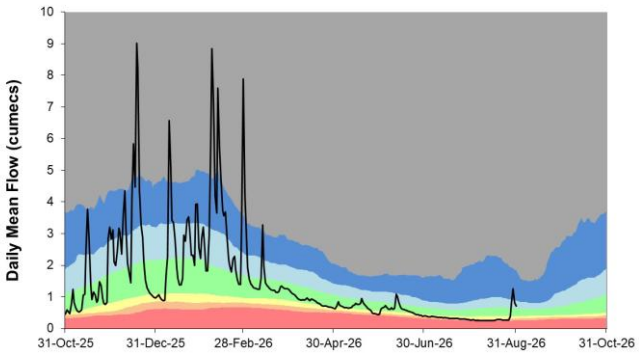
EBLEY MILL, River Frome
Ranking used data from 01/04/1969 to 31/12/2022



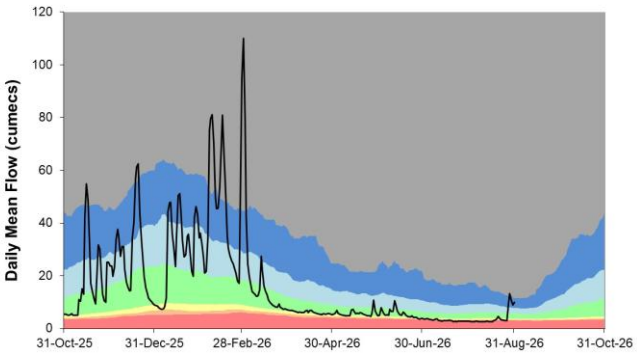
EVESHAM, River Avon
Ranking used data from 01/12/1936 to 31/12/2022



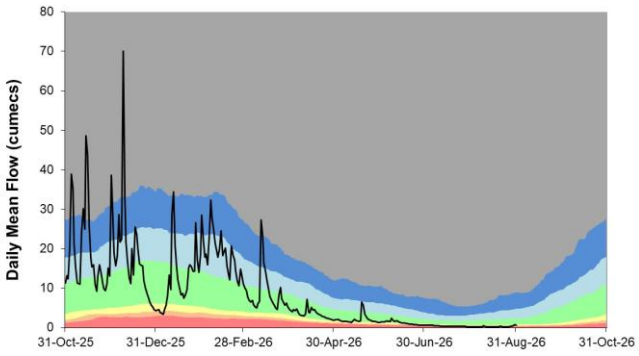
GREAT BRIDGFORD, River Sow
Ranking used data from 18/01/1971 to 31/12/2022



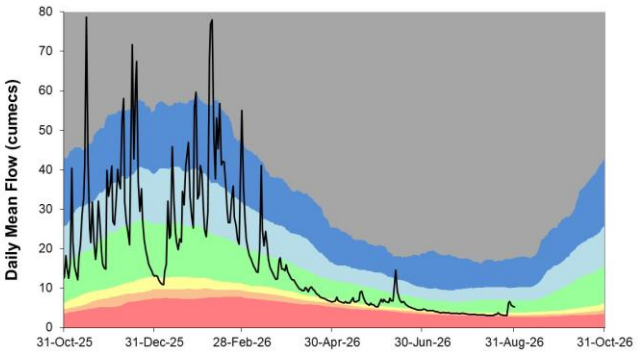
KEGWORTH, River Soar
Ranking used data from 01/12/1978 to 31/12/2022



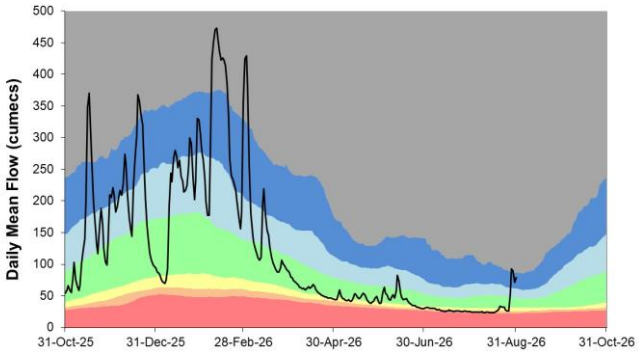
LLANYBLODWEL, Afon Tanat
Ranking used data from 01/06/1973 to 31/12/2022



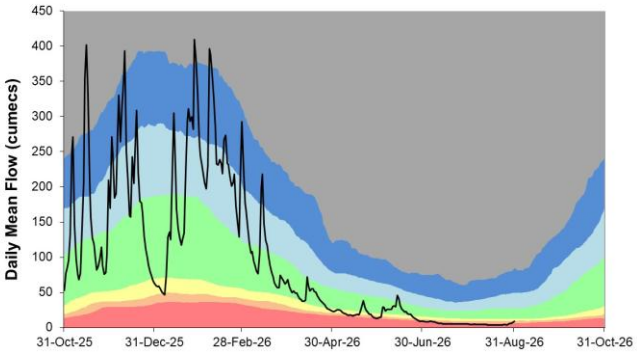
MARSTON ON DOVE, River Dove
Ranking used data from 01/07/1965 to 31/12/2022

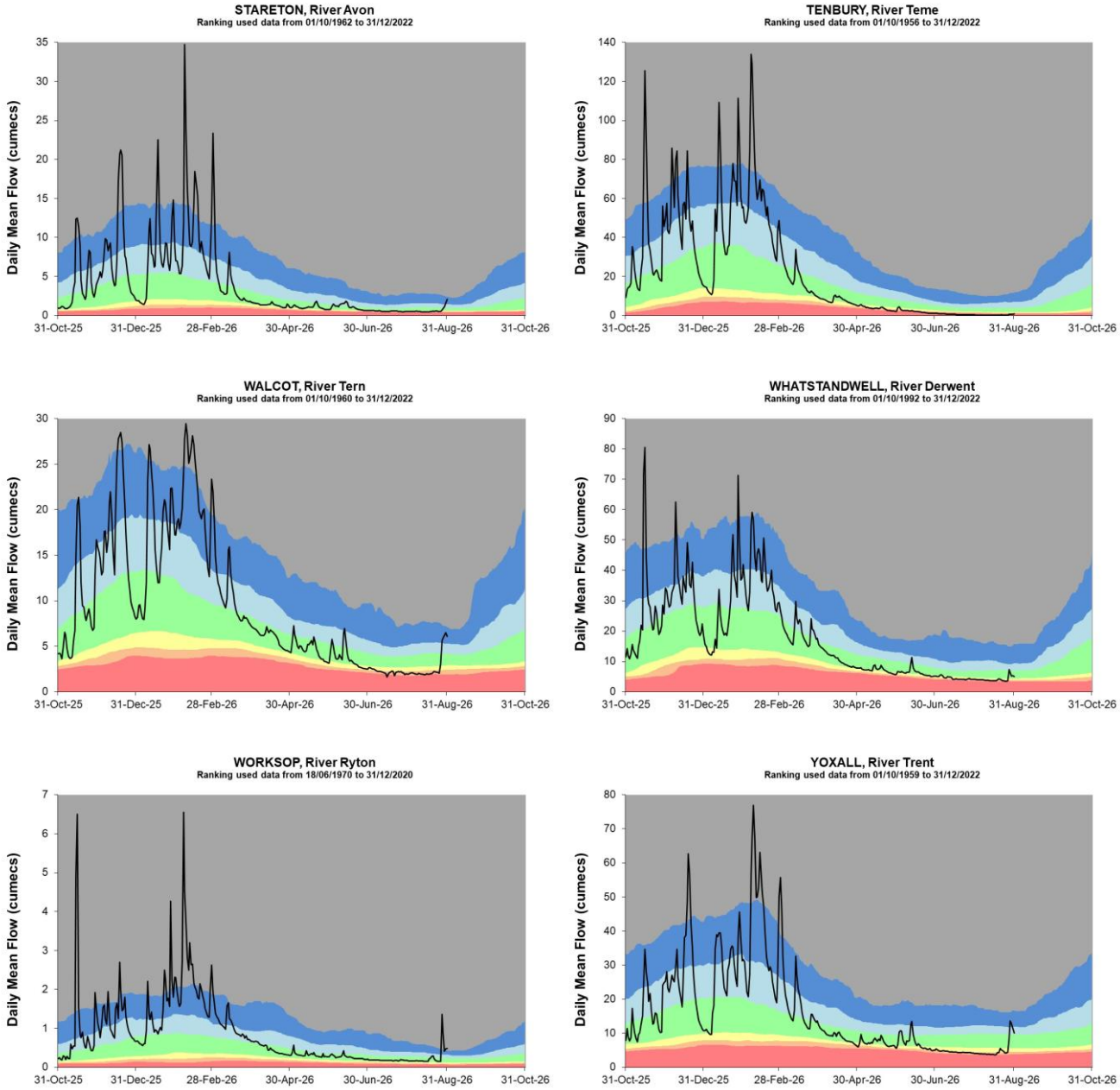


NORTH MUSKHAM, River Trent
Ranking used data from 03/10/1969 to 31/12/2022



REDBROOK, River Wye
Ranking used data from 01/10/1969 to 31/12/2022



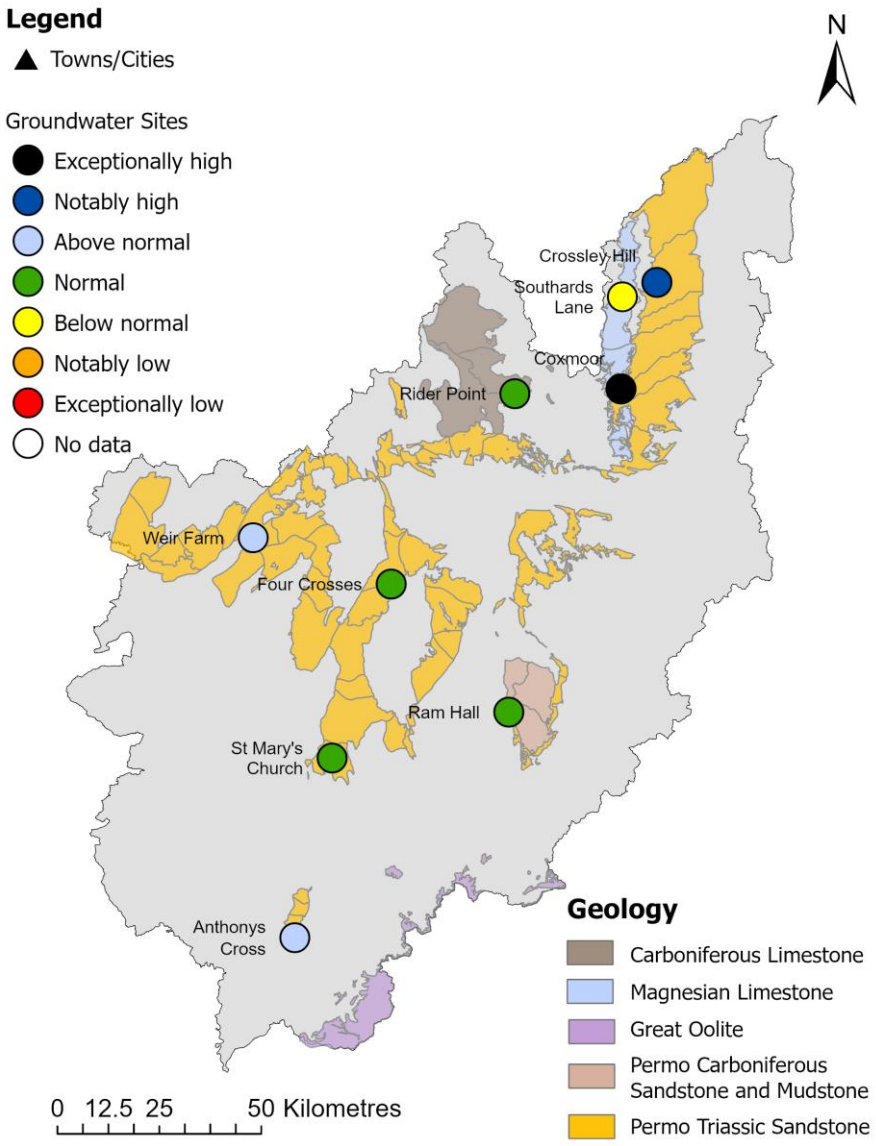


Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

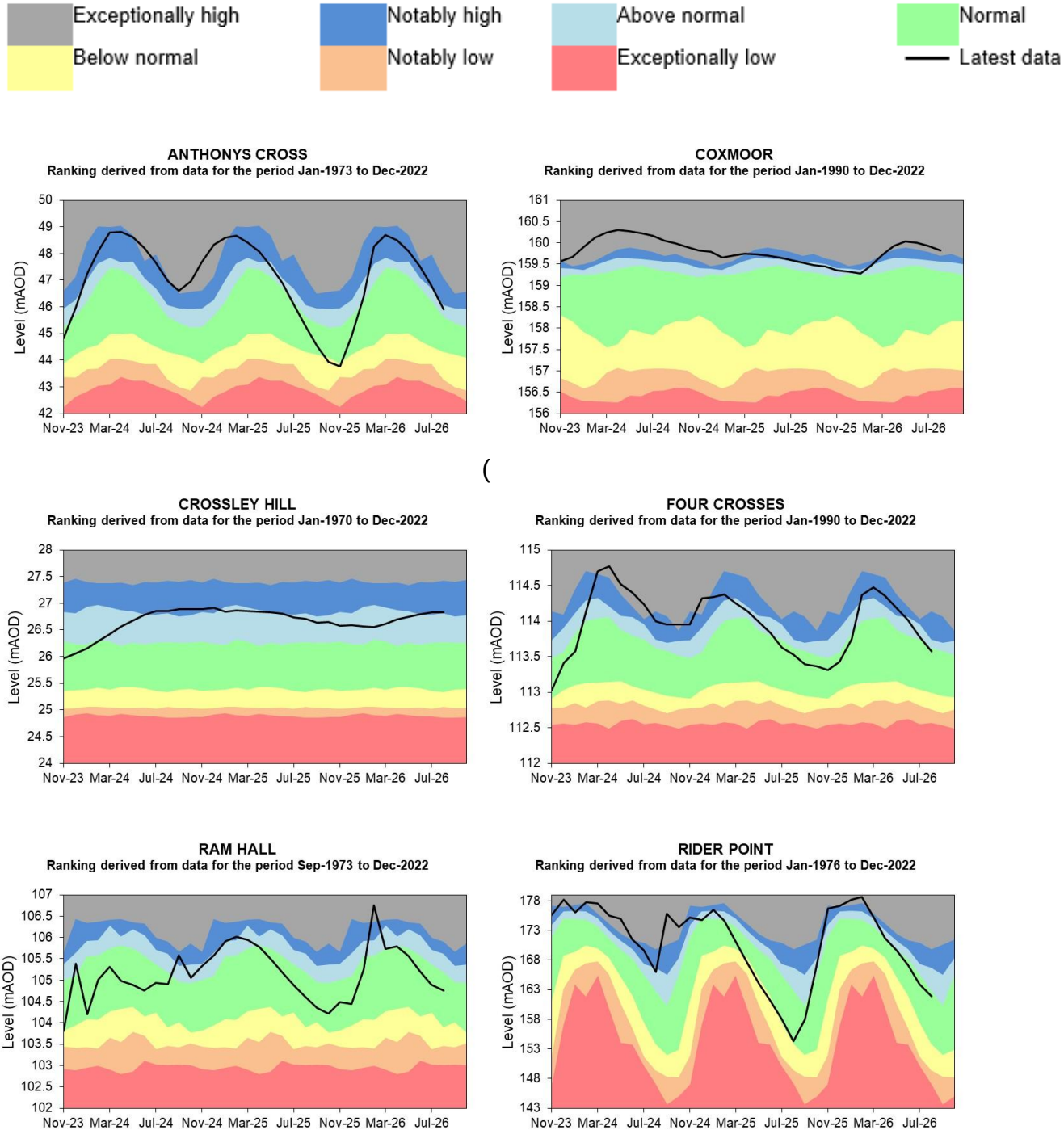
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of August 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic August levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information, including aquifer type.

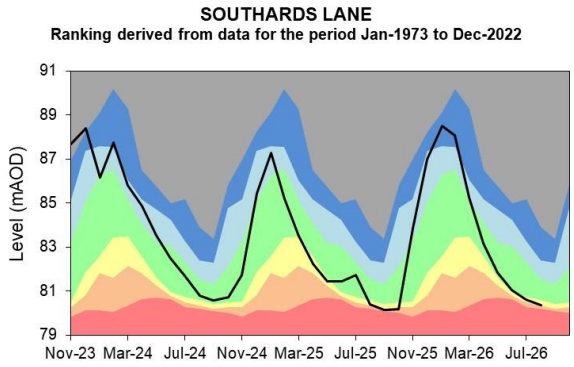


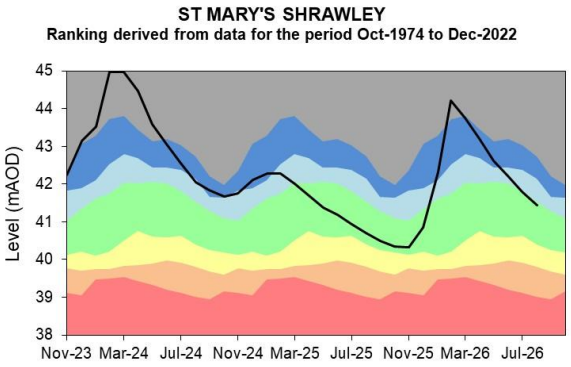
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

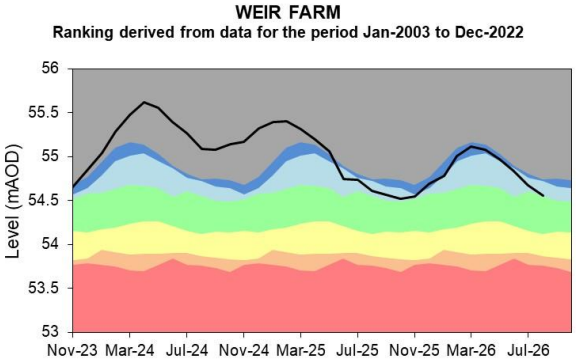
5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.





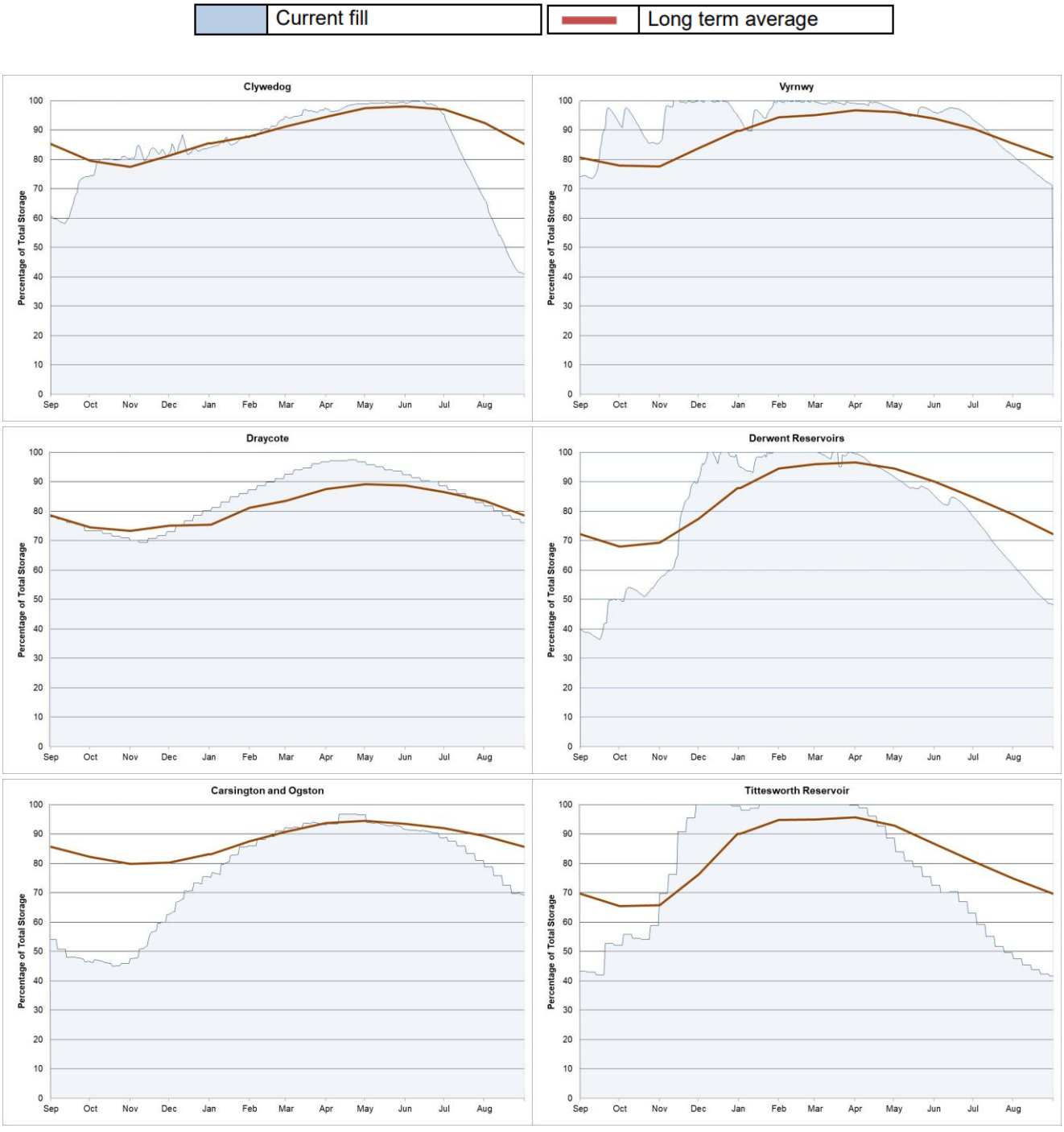




Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

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

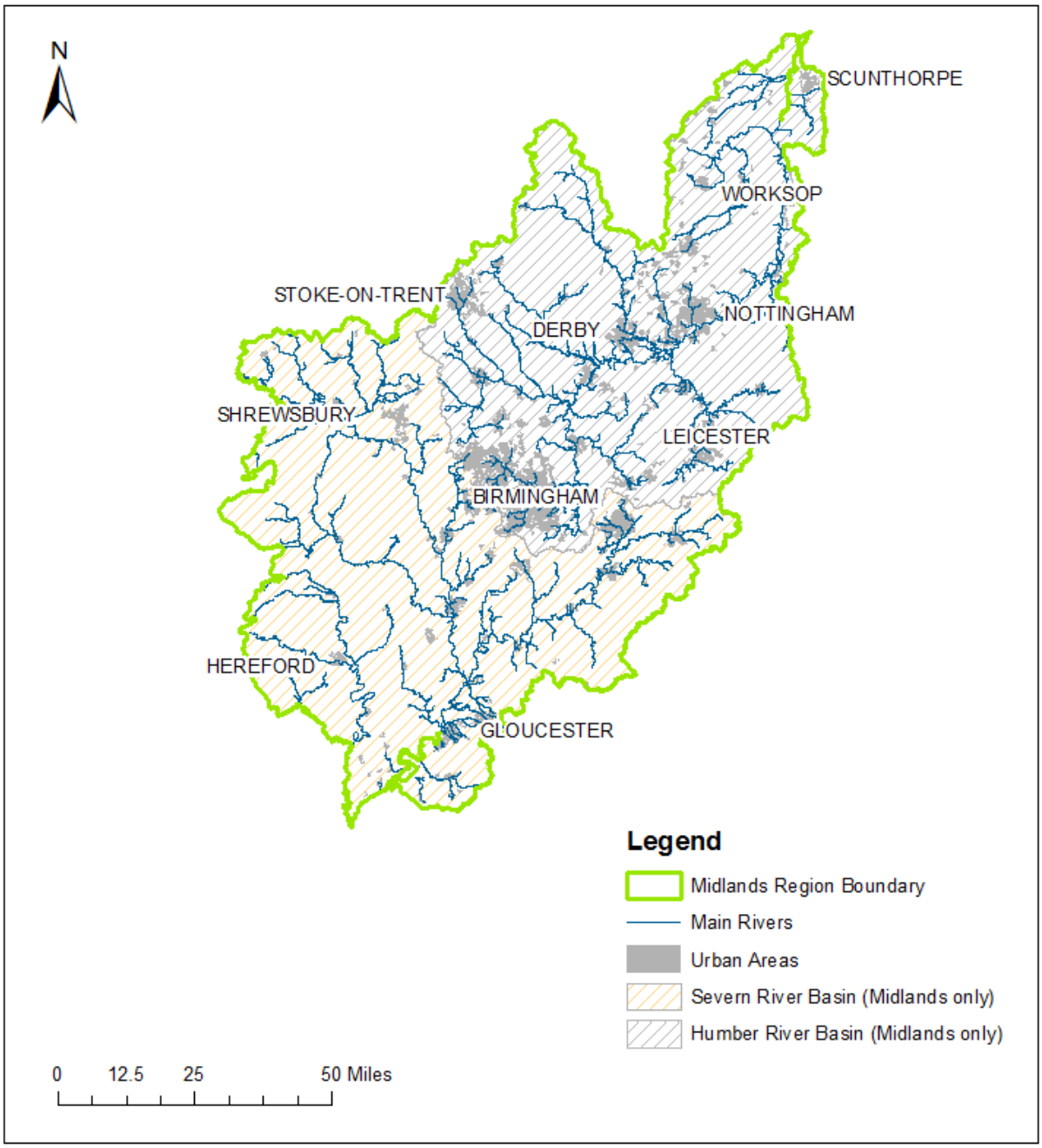
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

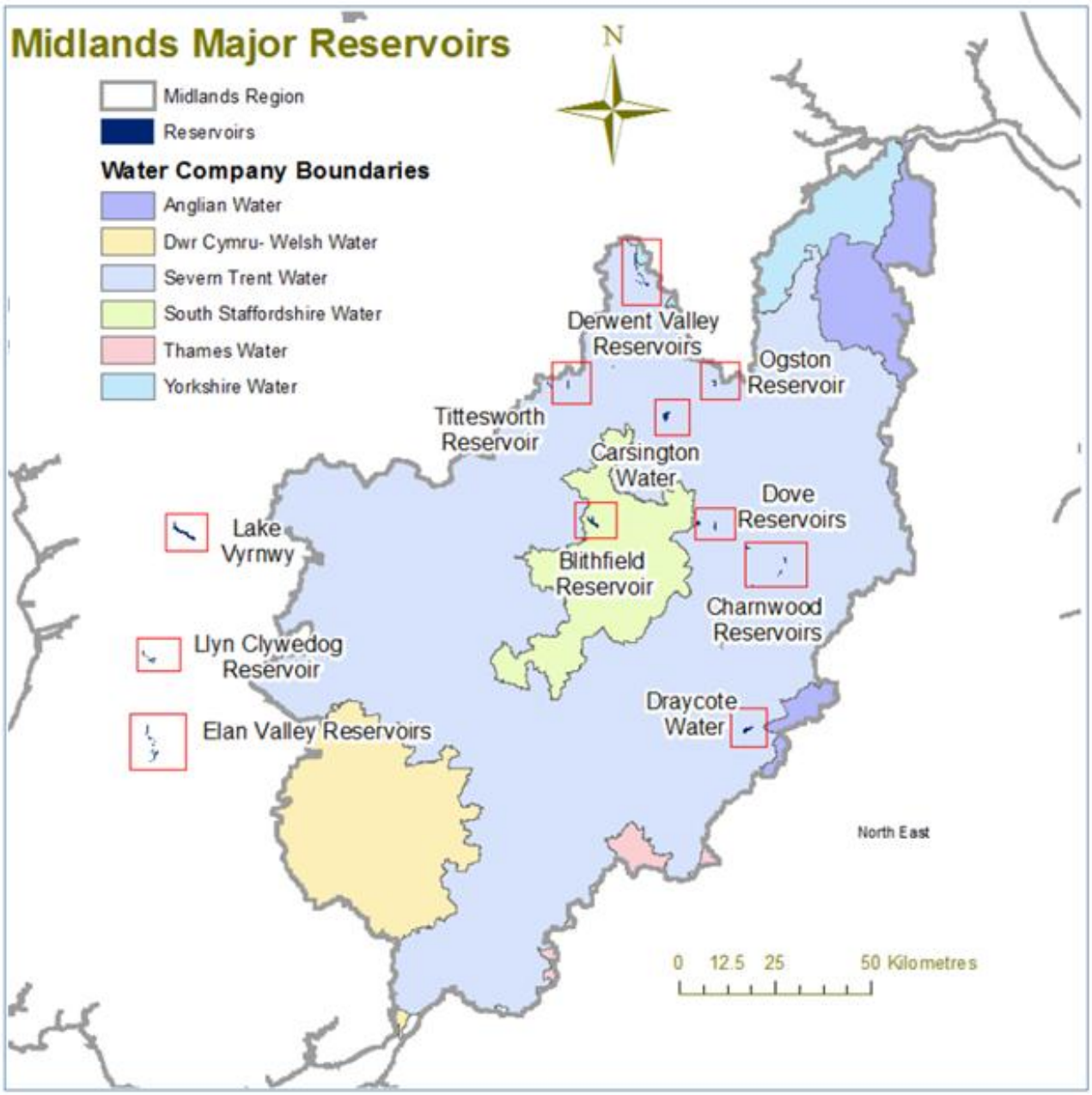
7.3 Midlands regional coverage

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.



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
Avon To Evesham	81	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
Derwent (Midlands)	118	Normal	Below normal	Below normal	Notably high
Dove	106	Normal	Below normal	Below normal	Notably high
Lower Severn Estuary	79	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Above normal
Lower Trent	133	Above Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Notably high
Lower Wye	73	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Above normal
Mid Severn	81	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Above normal
Shropshire Plains	94	Normal	Notably low	Notably low	Above normal
Soar	114	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Above normal

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
Tame	142	Above Normal	Normal	Notably low	Notably high
Upper Trent	113	Normal	Below normal	Below normal	Above normal
Welsh Mountains	61	Below Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Above normal

8.2 River flows table

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

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

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Aug 2026 band	End of Jul 2026 band
Anthonys Cross	Severn Vale Permo Triassic Sandstone	Above normal	Notably high
Coxmoor	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Crossley Hill	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Notably high	Notably high
Four Crosses	Permo Triassic Sandstone	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	Below normal
St Mary's Church, Shrawley	Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Normal
Weir Farm	Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation	Above normal	Above normal