

SUMMARY

The outlook May and for May–July is for river flows to be below normal for southern and central England and in the normal to below normal range elsewhere. Groundwater levels in May, and for the next three months, are likely to be in the normal to below normal range across the UK.

Rainfall:

Rainfall in April was substantially below average for most of the UK with the exception of north-west Scotland. Large areas of southern and eastern England recorded less than a third of the average expected for the month.

The rainfall outlook (issued by the Met Office on 01.05.2022) for May and for the May–July period suggests near average rainfall is more likely to prevail than wetter or drier than average conditions.

River flows

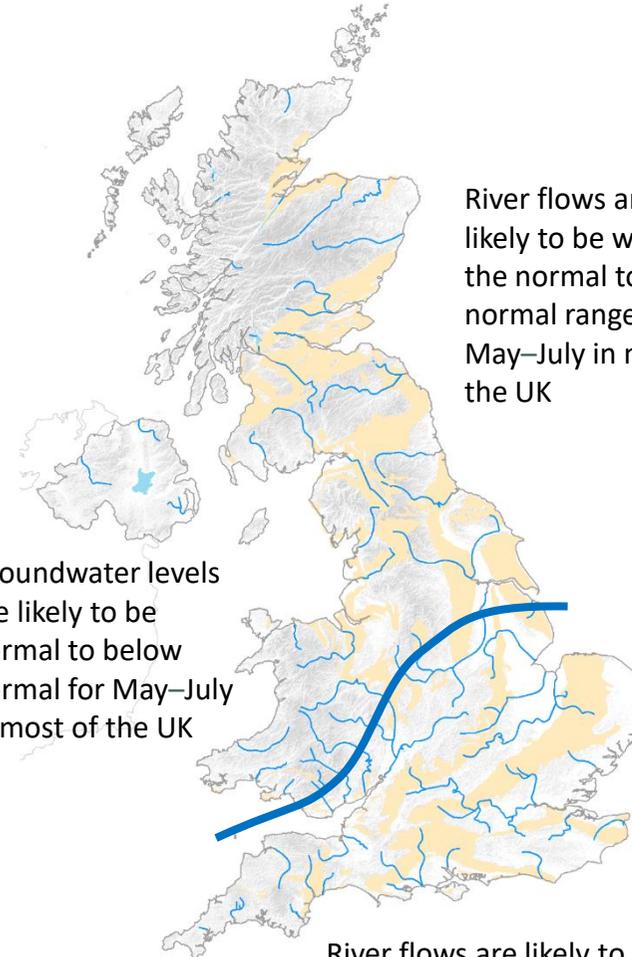
River flows in April were mainly below normal across the UK, notably or exceptionally so in south-west England, Wales, and western Scotland. There was an exception in the far north-west of Scotland where flows were above normal following above average rainfall in that area.

River flows in May are likely to show similar patterns to April. Below normal flows are expected across much of central, southern and eastern England, with normal to below normal flows being most likely across the rest of the country. A similar picture is seen for the May–July timeframe, albeit with a higher likelihood of normal flows in the north and west of the UK.

Groundwater:

Groundwater levels in April were normal to below normal across England and Wales. Levels in south Wales and in some boreholes in southern England were below normal, exceptionally so in one case in south Wales.

Levels in May are likely to continue in the normal to below normal range at most boreholes in England and Wales. Below normal levels are likely in southern England. Levels for one borehole in the Scottish Borders are likely to be exceptionally high. The three-month outlook is very similar to the one-month outlook.



River flows are likely to be below normal for May and over May–July for southern and central England

Shaded areas show principal aquifers

The Hydrological Outlook UK provides an outlook for the water situation for the UK over the next three months and beyond. For guidance on how to interpret the outlook, a wider range of information, and a full description of underpinning methods, please visit the website: www.hyoutuk.net

About the Hydrological Outlook:

This document presents an outlook for the UK water situation for the next 1 – 3 months and beyond, using observational datasets, meteorological forecasts and a suite of hydrological modelling tools. The outlook is produced in a collaboration between the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), British Geological Survey (BGS), the Met Office, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and for Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure – Rivers (DfIR).

Data and Models:

The Hydrological Outlook depends on the active cooperation of many data suppliers. This cooperation is gratefully acknowledged. Historic river flow and groundwater data are sourced from the UK National River Flow Archive and the National Groundwater Level Archive. Contemporary data are provided by the EA, SEPA, NRW and DfIR. These data are used to initialise hydrological models, and to provide outlook information based on statistical analysis of historical analogues.

Climate forecasts are produced by the Met Office. Hydrological modelling is undertaken by UKCEH using the Grid-to-Grid, PDM and CLASSIC hydrological models and by the EA using CATCHMOD. Hydrogeological modelling uses the R-groundwater model run by BGS and CATCHMOD run by the EA. Supporting documentation is available from the Outlooks website: <https://www.hydoutuk.net/about/methods>

Presentation:

The language used in the summary presented overleaf generally places flows and groundwater levels into just three classes, i.e. below normal, normal, and above normal. However, the underpinning methods use as many as seven classes as defined in the graphic to the right, i.e. the summary uses a simpler classification than some of the methods. On those occasions when it is appropriate to provide greater discrimination at the extremes the terminology and definitions of the seven class scheme will be adopted.

	Percentile range of historic values for relevant month
Exceptionally high flow	> 95
Notably high flow	87-95
Above normal	72-87
Normal range	28-72
Below normal	13-28
Notably low flow	5-13
Exceptionally low flow	< 5

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Further information:

For more detailed information about the Hydrological Outlook, and the derivation of the maps, plots and interpretation provided in this outlook, please visit the Hydrological Outlook UK website.

The website features a host of other background information, including a wider range of sources of information which are used in the preparation of this Outlook.

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Reference for the Hydrological Outlook:

Hydrological Outlook UK, 2022, May, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxfordshire UK, Online, <https://www.hydoutuk.net/latest-outlook/>

Other Sources of Information:

The Hydrological Outlook should be used alongside other sources of up-to-date information on the current water resources status and flood risk.

Environment Agency Water Situation Reports: provides summary of water resources status on a monthly and weekly basis for England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england>

Flood warnings are continually updated, and should be consulted for an up-to-date and localised assessment of flood risk:

Environment Agency: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/map>

Natural Resources Wales: <https://flood-warning.naturalresources.wales/>

Scottish Environment Protection Agency: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding.aspx>

Hydrological Summary for the UK: provides summary of current water resources status for the UK: <https://nfa.ceh.ac.uk/monthly-hydrological-summary-uk>

UK Met Office forecasts for the UK: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/#?tab=regionalForecast>

UK Water Resources Portal: monitor the UK hydrological situation in near real-time including rainfall, river flow, groundwater and soil moisture from COSMOS-UK: <https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/hydrology/water-resources/>