UK Hydrological Outlook

Delivered in partnership by: UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Period: From May 2025

Issued on 14.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

SUMMARY The outlook for May is for below normal river flows across most of the UK, except southern Wales and south-west England, where flows are likely to be normal. Groundwater levels are expected to continue to decline in most areas, although above normal levels are likely to persist in parts of the southern chalk. Over the period May-July, river flows in most areas are likely to continue to be below normal, with the potential for current low to exceptionally low flows to persist in some catchments. Flows in western Scotland and Northern Ireland are likely to be normal.

Rainfall:

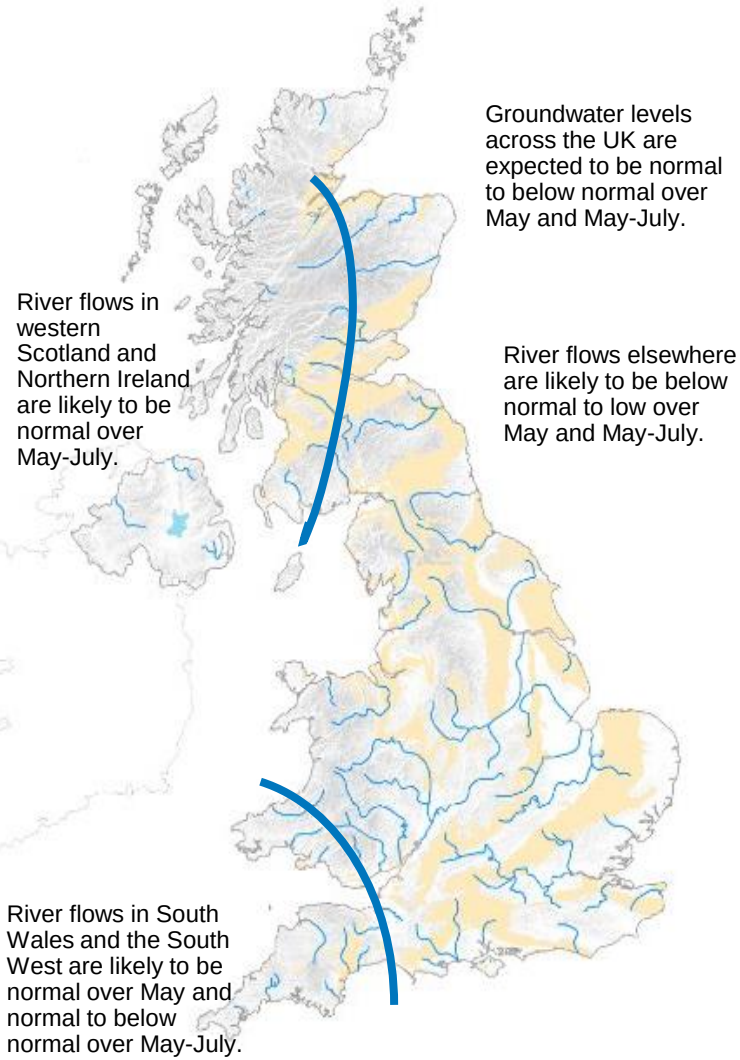
Rainfall across much of Great Britain was very low in April, continuing the dry period that began in February. Many areas received less than half their normal rainfall, with parts of northern England and western Scotland recording below 30% of their April average. The exceptions to this pattern have been in Northern Ireland, where rainfall has been more normal, and in southern Wales, Cornwall and Devon, which experienced above-average April rainfall. The forecast (issued by the Met Office on 28.04.25) shows a signal for a hotter than average May-July, albeit with fairly balanced likelihoods of wet and dry conditions. The dry start to May is likely to be followed by a period of more unsettled weather, especially in western parts.

River flows:

River flows in April were very low in most areas, with exceptionally low flows in northern England and southern and eastern Scotland. The exceptions were in groundwater-dominated catchments, where flows were sustained by the above-normal stores resulting from wet conditions in winter, and the south-west, where flows were normal to above normal due to the recent rainfall. The outlook for May is for below normal to low flows in almost all areas, except the South West in which river flows are likely to be normal. For May-July, river flows are likely to continue to be below normal to low, although western Scotland is more likely to experience normal flows. The dry start to May increases the likelihood that low to exceptionally low flows in some areas persist into the summer.

Groundwater:

Groundwater levels in April have declined over the last month but remain normal across much of southern England. Below-normal levels have been recorded in the Cotswolds, Dorset and eastern Yorkshire, while above normal levels persist in the southern Chalk in Essex and Hertfordshire. The outlook for May indicates these patterns are likely to persist, with normal to above-normal levels in the South, especially the Chalk, and below normal levels in northern England. Very similar patterns are expected over the period May-July. Although the overall tendency is to return towards normal levels, low groundwater levels in some areas are likely to continue for several months.



Shaded areas show principal aquifers

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UK HYDROLOGICAL OUTLOOK

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology · British Geological Survey · Department for Infrastructure An Roinn Bonneagair www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk · Environment Agency · Met Office · Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales · sepa

UK Hydrological Outlook

Delivered in partnership by:

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

About the UK 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 & 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 UK 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 and GR6J hydrological models. Hydrogeological modelling uses the AquiMod model run by BGS. Supporting documentation is available from the Outlooks website: https://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

Disclaimer and liability:

The UK Hydrological Outlook partnership aims to ensure that all Content provided is accurate and consistent with its current scientific understanding. However, the science which underlies hydrological and hydrogeological forecasts and climate projections is constantly evolving. Therefore any element of the Content which involves a forecast or a prediction should not be relied upon as though it were a statement of fact. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the UK Hydrological Outlook Partnership excludes all warranties or representations (express or implied) in respect of the Content.

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The UK Hydrological Outlook is supported by the Natural Environment Research Council funded NC-UK (NE/Y006208/1) and Hydro-JULES (NE/S017380/1) Programmes.

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Further information:

For more detailed information about the UK Hydrological Outlook, and the derivation of the maps, plots and interpretation provided in this outlook, please visit the UK Hydrological Outlook 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. Dynamic access to many of the outputs of the UK Hydrological Portal are available on the UK Hydrological Outlooks Portal.

Contact:

UK Hydrological Outlooks, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BB
t: 01491 838800 e: https://hydoutuk.net/contact

Reference for the UK Hydrological Outlook:

UK Hydrological Outlook, 14 May 2025, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Oxfordshire UK, Online, https://www.hydoutuk.net/latest-outlook/

Other Sources of Information:

The UK 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:

i. Environment Agency: https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/map
ii. Natural Resources Wales: https://flood-warning.naturalresources.wales/
iii. 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://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/monthly-hydrological-summary-uk

UK Met Office forecasts for the UK: https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/

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/

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

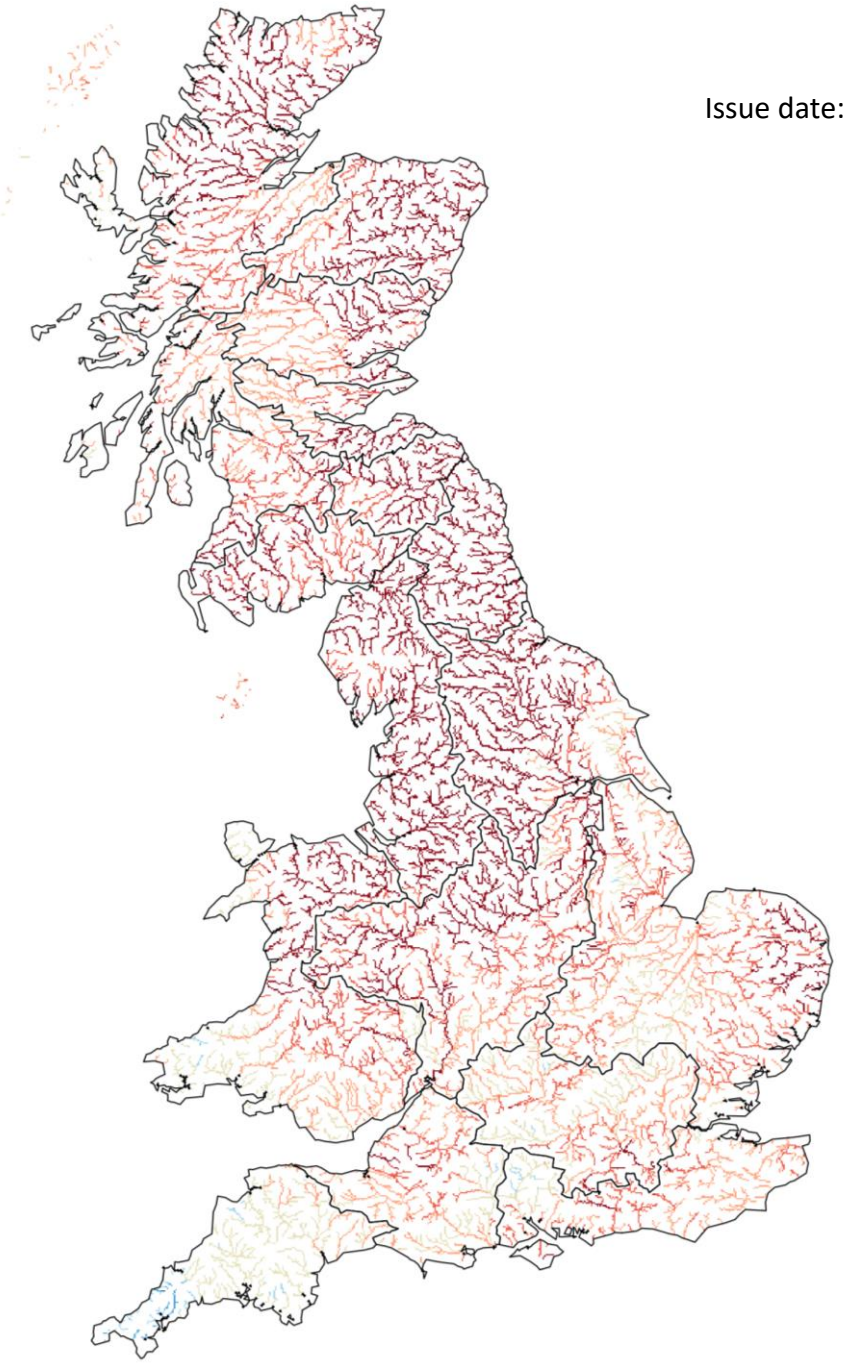
April's mean river flows simulated by the Grid-to-Grid hydrological model

Issue date: 06.05.2025

This map shows the simulated monthly mean flow across Great Britain for last month, ranked in terms of 54 years of historical flow estimates (1963 – 2016).

These flows are produced by the 1km resolution Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model, which is run up to the end of each calendar month using observed rainfall and MORECS potential evaporation as input.

Note that the G2G model provides estimates of natural flows.



Flow estimate for each river pixel ranked in terms of historic % flow estimates (1963-2016)

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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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Current Daily Simulated Subsurface Water Storage Conditions

Based on subsurface water storage estimated for 30 April 2025

Issue date: 06.05.2025

These maps are based on Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model simulated subsurface water storage (water in the soil and groundwater), expressed as an anomaly from the historical monthly mean. To highlight areas that are particularly wet or dry, the storage anomaly is presented relative to historical extremes. Rainfall in WET areas with high positive relative wetness could result in flooding in the coming days/weeks. Areas of negative relative wetness indicate locations which are particularly DRY, and little or no rain in these areas could potentially lead to (or prolong) a drought. Maps of soil moisture only are available on the next page.

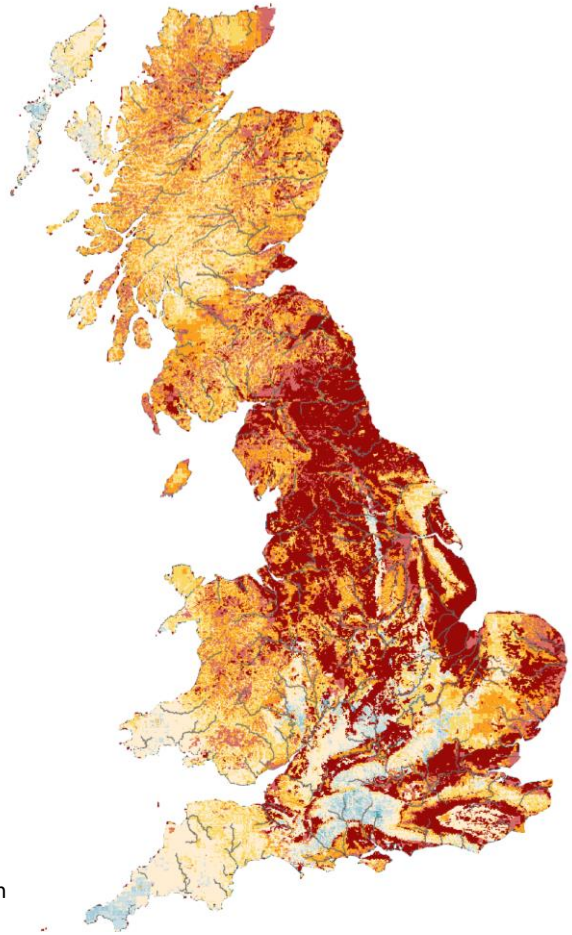
SUMMARY: Subsurface water stores have declined due to the recent low rainfall, and are now much lower (drier) than usual over almost all of Great Britain. Some areas continue to have above normal stores, especially in areas with deep, slowly-varying, aquifers, such as the chalk in southern England.

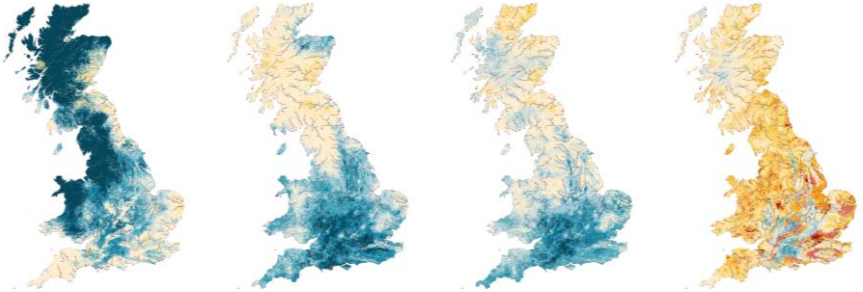
Relative wetness

Water storage anomaly as a % of maximum (positive wetness) or minimum (negative wetness) storage anomaly (zero indicates average value)

High (very wet)	>80
	60-80
Medium wetness	40-60
	20-40
Low wetness	0.01-20
Average conditions	-0.01-0.01
Low dryness	-20--0.01
	-40--20
Medium dryness	-60--40
	-80--60
High (very dry)	<-80
Major rivers	

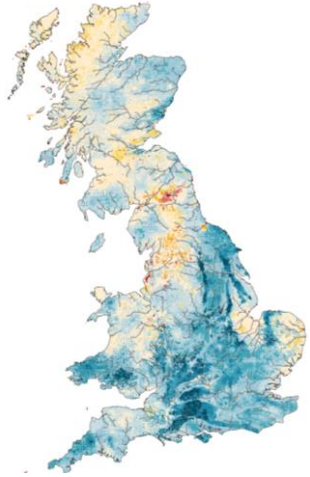
Labels refer to estimated storage on final day of named month



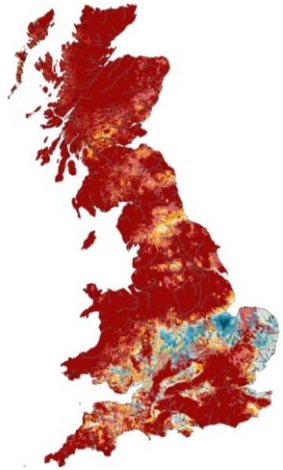


December January February March

April 2024



August 1976*



*Example month displaying extreme negative wetness

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Current Daily Simulated Soil Moisture Conditions

Based on soil moisture estimated for 30 April 2025

Issue date: 06.05.2025

These maps are based on Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model simulated soil moisture, expressed as an anomaly from the historical monthly mean. To highlight areas that are particularly wet or dry, the soil moisture anomaly is presented relative to historical extremes. These maps are not a forecast; rather an indication of current conditions. Soil moisture will often look similar to total storage (shown on the previous slide), since total storage comprises both soil moisture and storage in the saturated zone.

SUMMARY: Soil water stores have declined due to the recent low rainfall, and are now much lower (drier) than usual over almost all of Great Britain. Some areas continue to have above normal stores, especially in areas with deep, slowly-varying, aquifers, such as the chalk in southern England.

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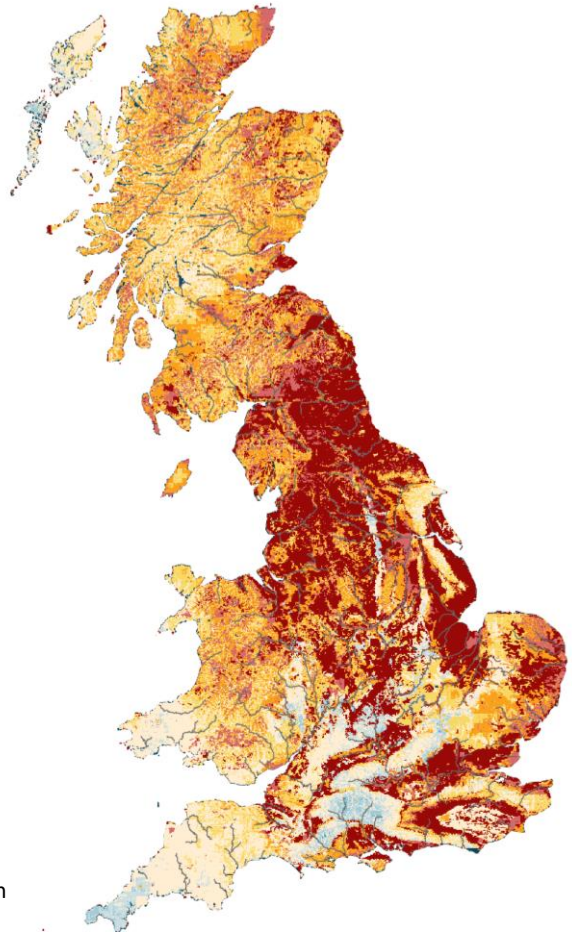
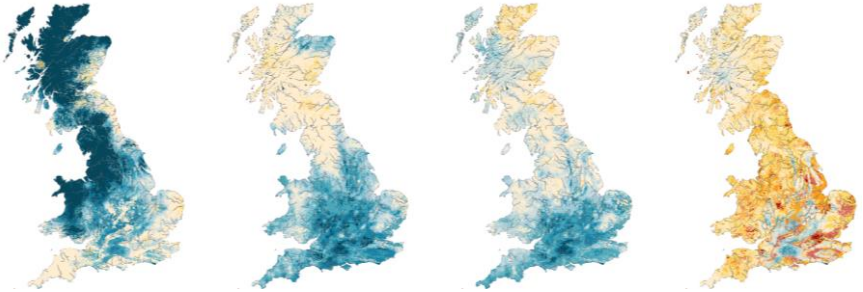
Labels refer to estimated storage on final day of named month





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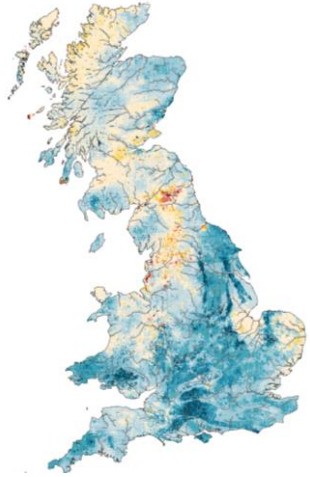

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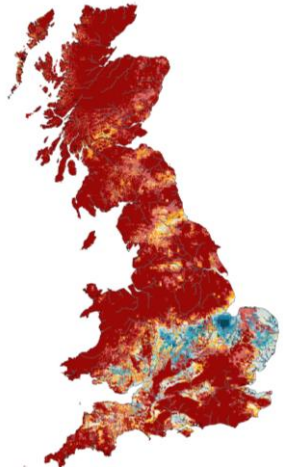

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Estimate of Additional Rainfall Required to Overcome Dry Conditions

Based on subsurface water storage estimated for 30 April 2025

Issue date: 06.05.2025

CURRENT CONDITIONS

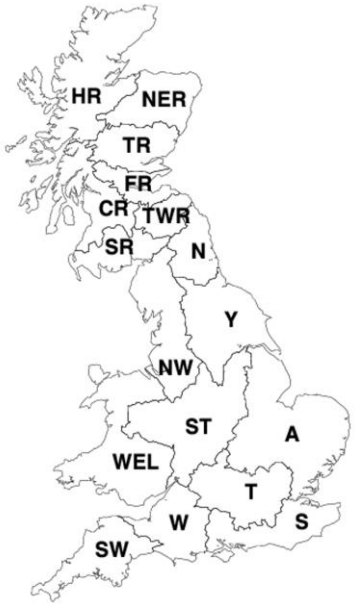
May 2025

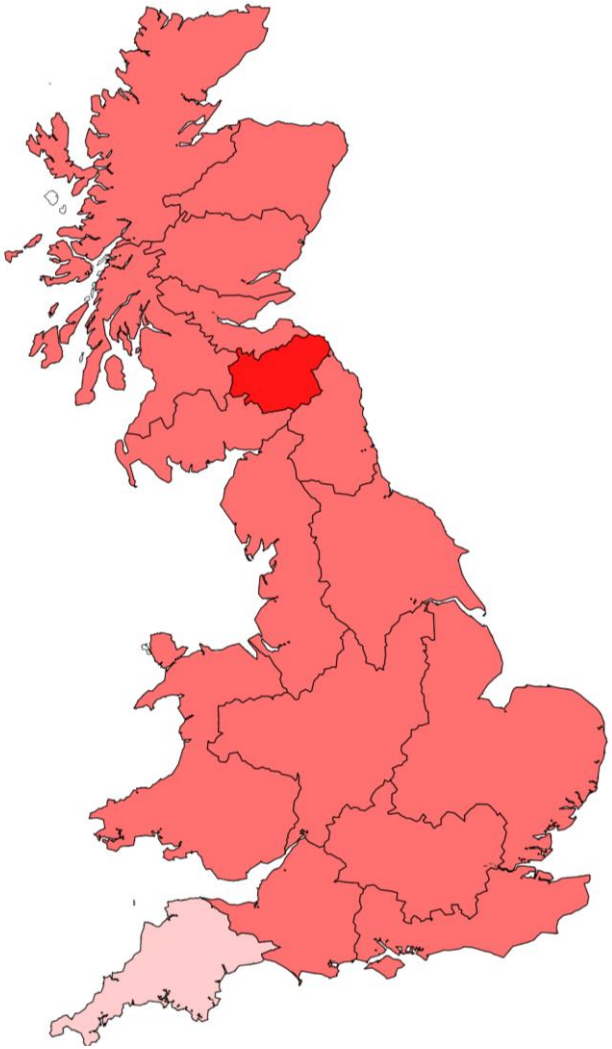
These maps show the Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model simulated subsurface water storage, expressed as an anomaly from the historical monthly mean (1981-2010), presented on a 1km grid and as regional means. Subsurface storage deficits, i.e. where the subsurface water storage anomaly is less than zero, are highlighted in red/pink.

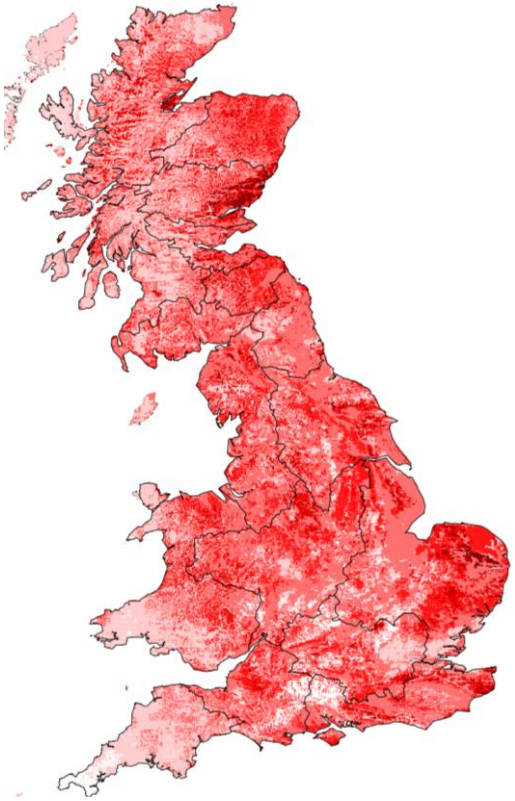
The subsurface storage deficit (mm) can be interpreted as an estimate of additional rainfall that would be required in future months to overcome dry conditions (i.e. rainfall in addition to what is expected on average). Regional mean values of additional rainfall required are provided in the table below.

Regional estimate of additional rainfall required (mm)

	SCOTLAND	
33	HR	Highlands Region
46	NER	North East Region
49	TR	Tay Region
40	FR	Forth Region
28	CR	Clyde Region
50	TWR	Tweed Region
37	SR	Solway Region
	ENGLAND	
37	N	Northumbria
43	NW	North West
42	Y	Yorkshire
40	ST	Severn Trent
44	A	Anglian
29	T	Thames
29	W	Wessex
34	S	Southern
15	SW	South West
	WALES	
31	WEL	Welsh







Water storage deficit (anomaly; mm)

- >125
- 100-125
- 75-100
- 50-75
- 25-50
- 0-25
- <0

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Return Period of Rainfall Required to Overcome Dry Conditions

Period: May 2025 - October 2025

Issue date: 06.05.2025

CURRENT CONDITIONS

These maps show the return period of the rainfall required to overcome dry conditions simulated using the Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model. The maps are coloured according to the return period of accumulated rainfall required to overcome the estimated current subsurface water storage deficit over the next one to six months (areas with no storage deficit will always be white). These maps do not provide a drought forecast; instead they indicate whether particularly heavy rainfall would be required to return to normal conditions for the time of year.

SUMMARY: Subsurface water deficits are now present in all regions, compared to normal levels for the time of year.

These deficits require unusually high rainfall in the next month to recover to normal levels before the end of the month.

However, to recover these deficits by the end of June would not require unusual rainfall.

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Rainfall amount (Probability)		Return period (years)
Low (Likely)	>20%	<5
	<20%	5-10
	<10%	10-25
	< 4%	25-50
High (Less likely)	< 2%	50-100
	< 1%	100-200
Extreme (Unlikely)	<0.5%	>200

SCOTLAND

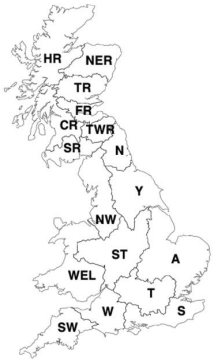
HR Highlands Region
NER North East Region
TR Tay Region
FR Forth Region
CR Clyde Region
TWR Tweed Region
SR Solway Region

ENGLAND

N Northumbria
NW North West
Y Yorkshire
ST Severn Trent
A Anglian
T Thames
S Southern
W Wessex
SW South West

WALES

WEL Welsh



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May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

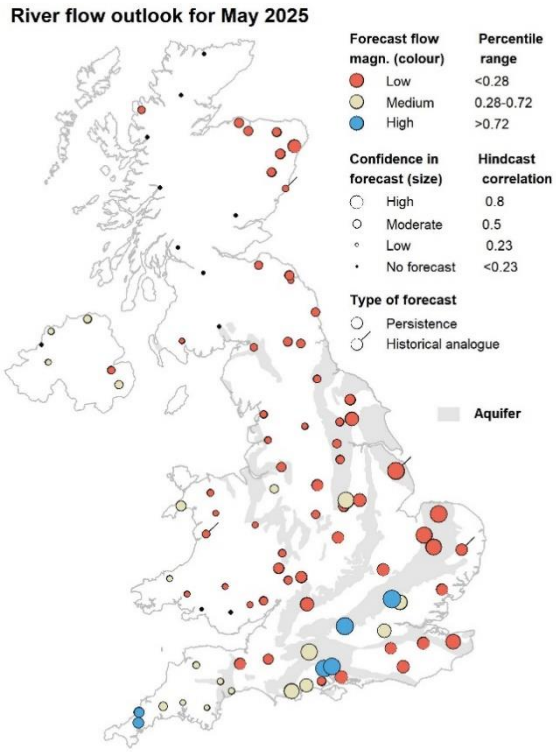
Outlook based on hydrological persistence and analogy

Overview

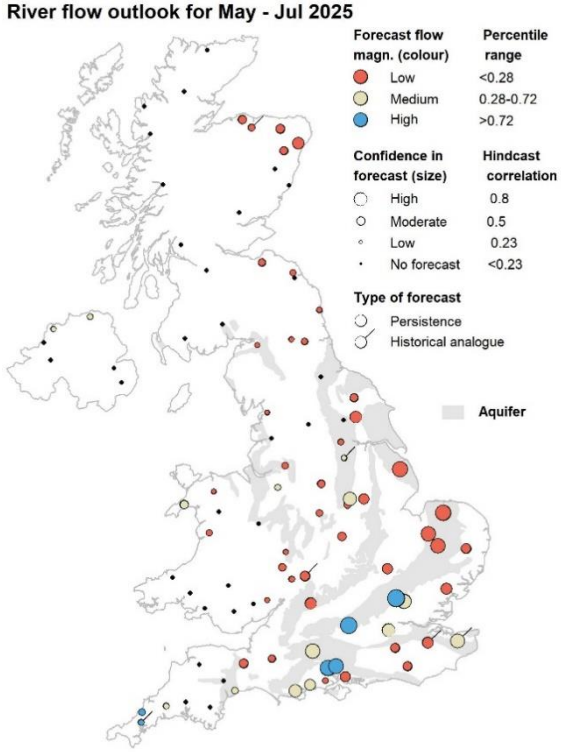
Period: May 2025 – July 2025

Issued on 09.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

SUMMARY:
The May and May-July outlook suggests that river flows across the country will range from normal to below normal. In the south-east of England, flows at groundwater-fed catchments are expected to remain normal to above normal.



1-month flow outlook



3-month flow outlook

Outlooks from hydrological analogues are based on a comparison of river flow during recent months with flows during the same months in previous years at a set of approximately 90 sites from across the UK. These sites are depicted on the two maps. Years with observed flows that most closely resemble current conditions are identified as the best analogues and the outlook is based on extrapolating from current conditions based on these analogues.

It is, however, often the case that a simpler forecast based on the persistence of river flow provides a better forecast than provided by analogy. This is particularly true for slowly responding catchments associated with aquifer outcrops.

Both methods are considered at each site and the forecast from the method with the higher confidence is presented. A simple classification of flows is used (high, medium and low) as indicated by the colours of the dots, with the confidence of the forecast being represented by the size of the dot. A tag on the dot indicates which method has been used in each instance.

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Outlook based on hydrological persistence and analogy

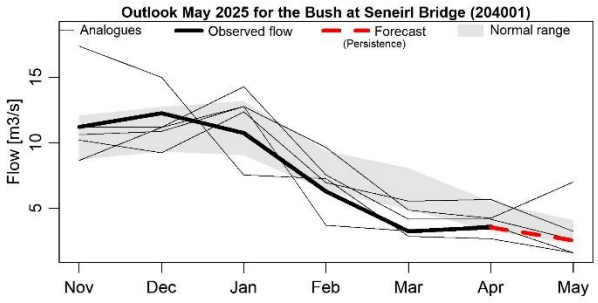
Site-based: 1 month outlook

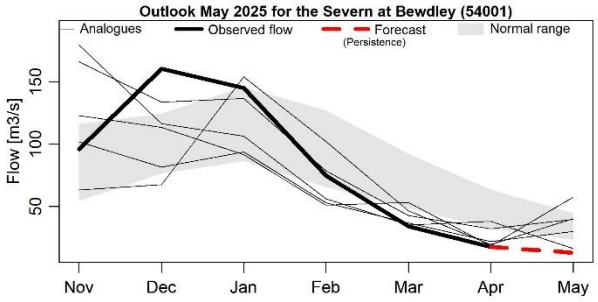
Period: May 2025

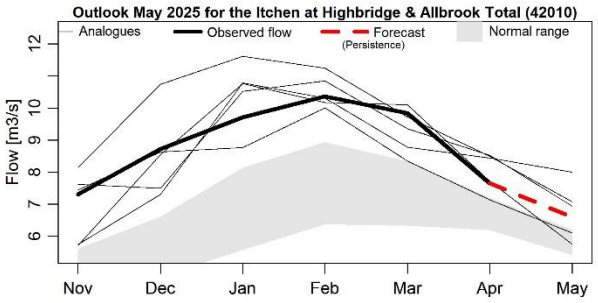
Issued on 09.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

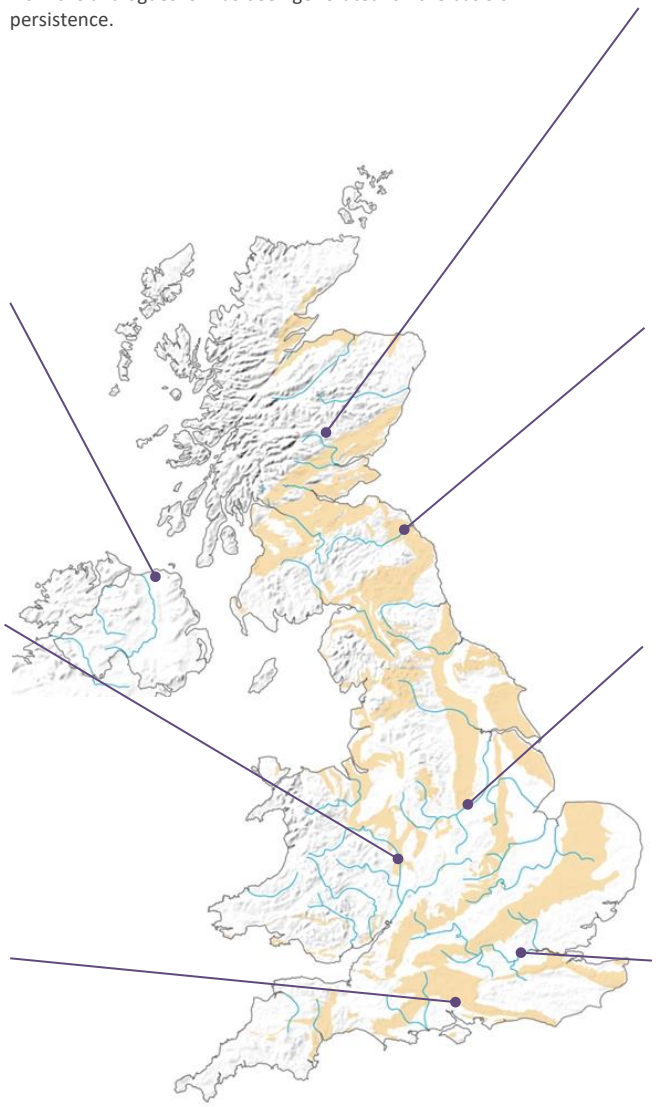
These figures provide insight into the hydrological analogue methodology for a set of sites from across the UK.

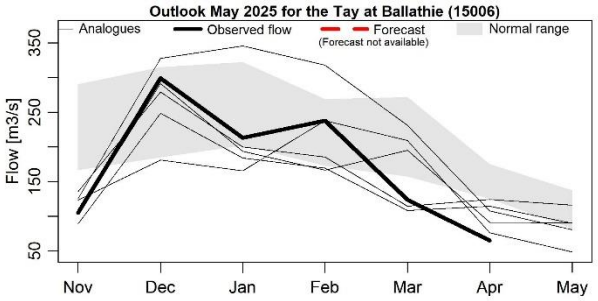
In each of the time series graphs the bold black line represents the observed flow during the past six months. The grey band indicates the normal flow range (the normal band includes 44% of observed flows in each month). The selected analogues are shown as thin lines and the trajectories that flows took in the following month are also shown. The forecast is shown as the dashed red line, and in each plot it states whether this has come from the analogues or has been generated on the basis of persistence.

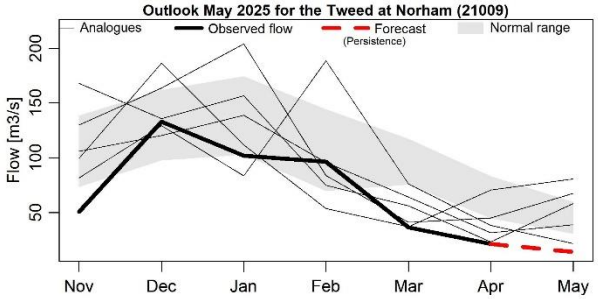


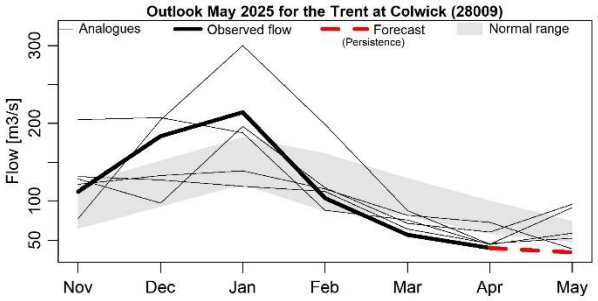


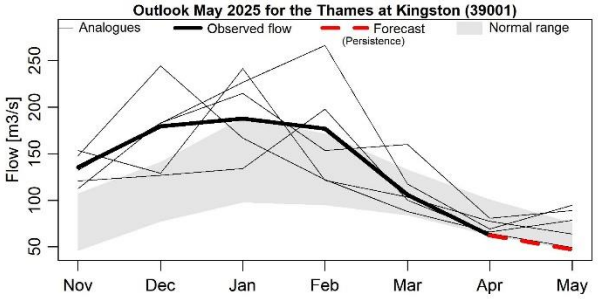












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RIVER FLOW ANALOGY

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Outlook based on hydrological persistence and analogy

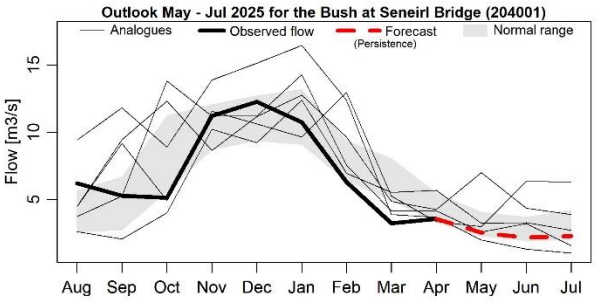
Site-based: 3 month outlook

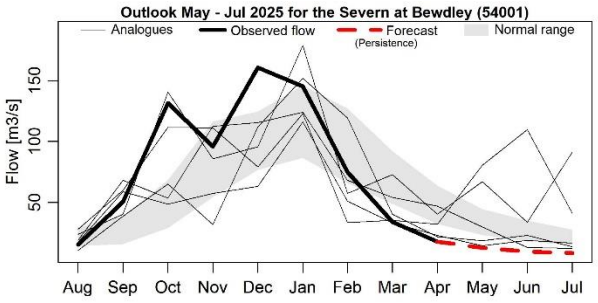
Period: May 2025 – July 2025

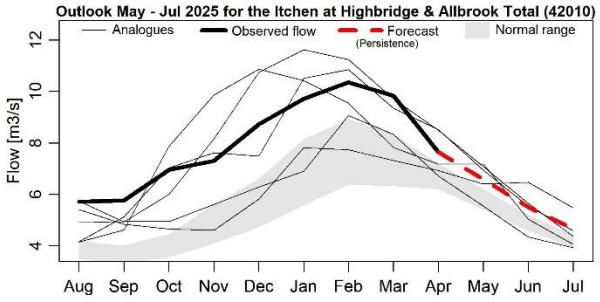
Issued on 09.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

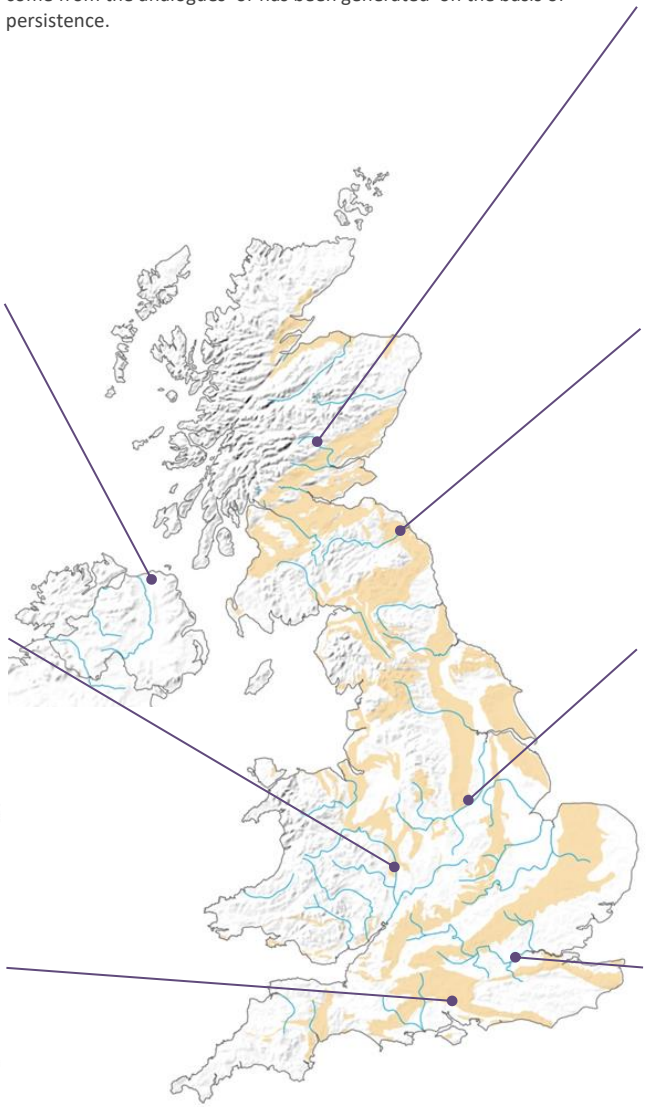
These figures provide insight into the hydrological analogue methodology for a set of sites from across the UK.

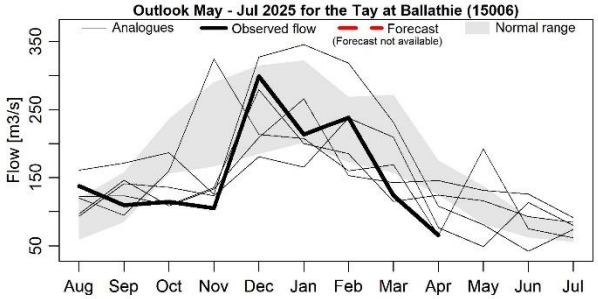
In each of the time series graphs the bold black line represents the observed flow during the past nine months. The grey band indicates the normal flow range (the normal band includes 44% of observed flows in each month). The selected analogues are shown as thin lines and the trajectories that flows took in the following three months are also shown. The forecast is shown as the dashed red line, and in each plot it states whether this has come from the analogues or has been generated on the basis of persistence.

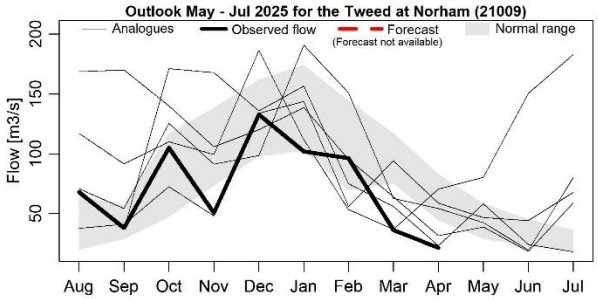


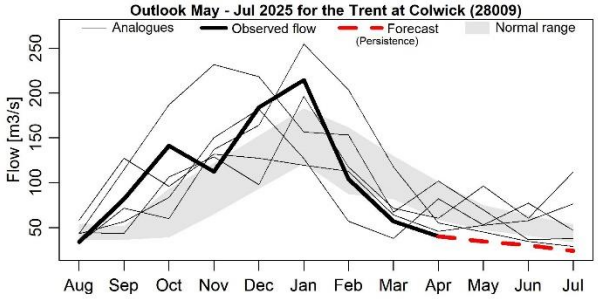


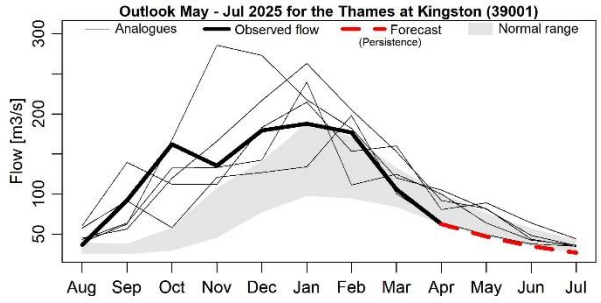












The Hydrological Outlook UK provides an outlook for the water situation for the UK over the next three months and beyond. For guidance on how to interpret the outlook, a wider range of information, and a full description of underpinning methods, please visit the website: www.hydoutuk.net

RIVER FLOW ANALOGY

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

British Geological Survey

Environment Agency

Outlook based on modelled flow from historical climate

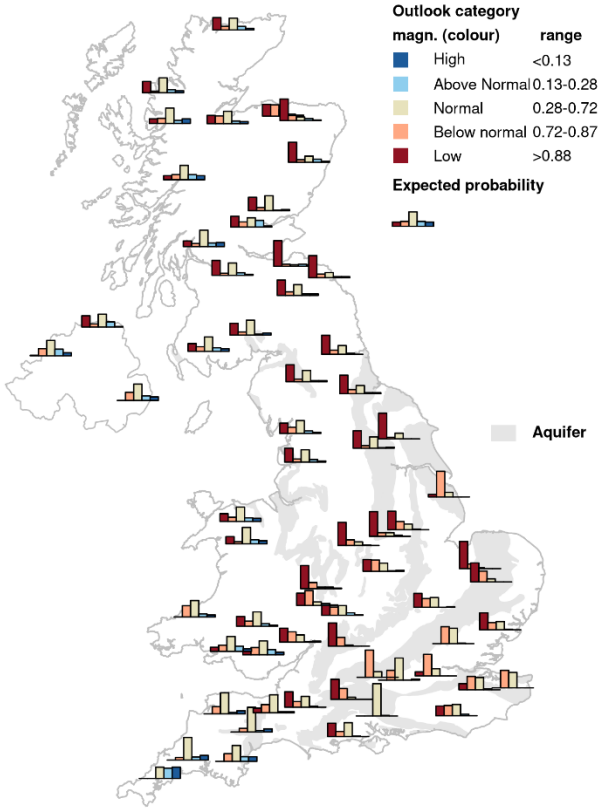
Overview

Period: May 2025 – October 2025

Issued on 06.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

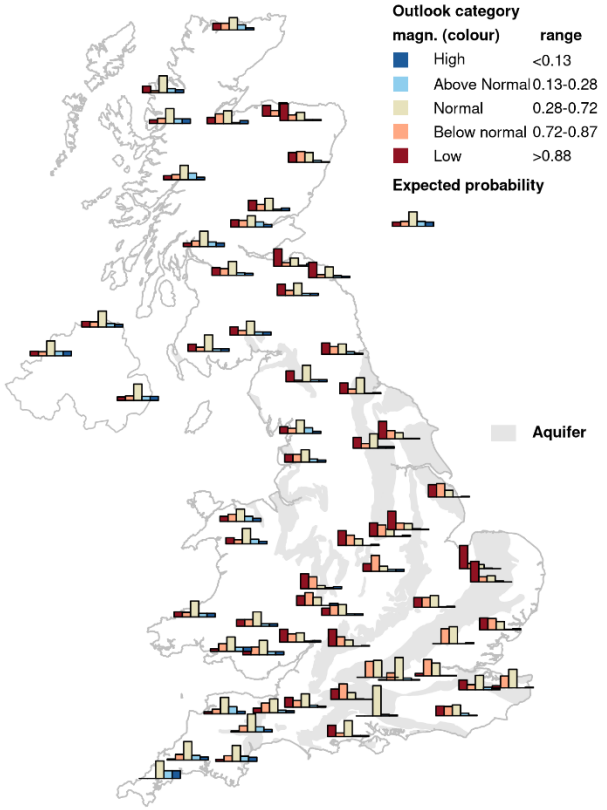
The outlook for May indicates that flows are likely to be below normal to low across the UK. River flows in southwestern England are likely to be in the normal range. The May to July outlook indicates that this pattern is likely to persist over the coming few months with a slight decrease in the likelihood of below normal to low flows across the UK.

1-month river flow outlook starting May 2025



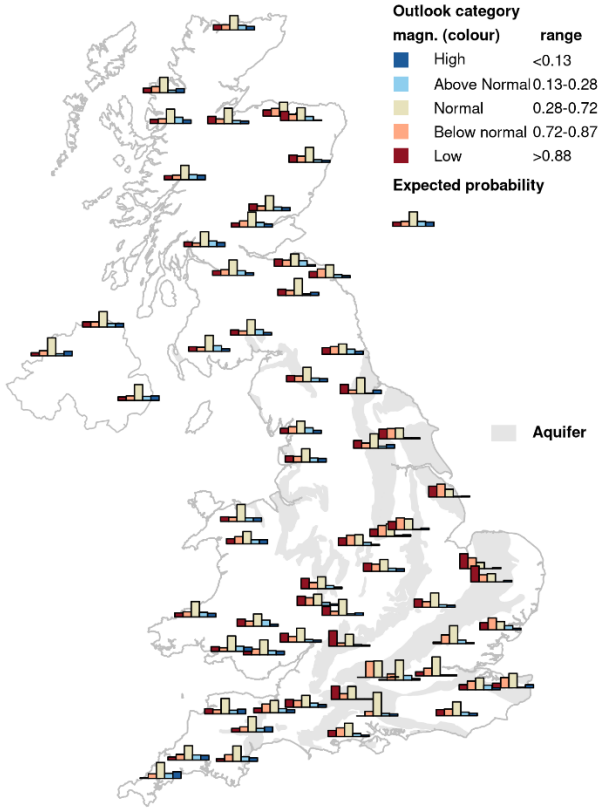
This outlook is based on monthly ensembles of historical sequences of observed climate (rainfall and potential evapotranspiration) that form input to a hydrological model. The outputs are probabilistic simulations of the average river flow over the forecast period (1 to 12 months ahead), at each location. The simulations are generated by the GR6J conceptual rainfall-runoff model from INRAE (France) calibrated on observed or naturalised flows.

3-month river flow outlook starting May 2025



The bar plot maps show the outlook distribution for 1, 3 and 6-month period for 64 catchments across England and Wales. Each bar plot represents the probabilistic distribution of the simulated river flow compared to the historical river flow, for the same n-month period. The probabilities fall within five categories, classified as: low, below normal, normal, above normal and high.

6-month river flow outlook starting May 2025



This outlook is based entirely on historical sequences and therefore does not contain any knowledge of the state of the atmosphere and ocean. It is hence possible that some of the historical sequences used might be inconsistent with current large-scale atmospheric conditions and would therefore be unlikely to occur in the next few months.

Please note that *Outlooks based on modelled flow from historical climate* from October 2023 onwards were generated using GR6J model, whereas until September 2023, they were produced using GR4J model. For more details, please see the section on River flow from historical climate at this link: https://hydoutuk.net/about/methods/river-flows

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

British Geological Survey

Environment Agency

Outlook based on modelled flow from historical climate

Overview

This outlook is based on monthly ensembles of historical sequences of observed climate (rainfall and potential evapotranspiration) that form input to a hydrological model. The outputs are probabilistic simulations of the average river flow over the forecast period (1 to 12 months ahead), at each location. The simulations are generated by the GR6J conceptual rainfall-runoff model from INRAE (France) calibrated on observed or naturalised flows.

The stack diagrams show the variation over time of the outlook distribution for a number of individual catchments. Each graph represents variation over time of the number of simulated river flows, in each month ensemble, that fall within each of seven categories: exceptionally low, notably low, below normal, normal, above normal, notably high and exceptionally high. The categories represent cumulative flow conditions, e.g. For 3-month, the simulated total 3-month flow compared to the historical 3-month flow distribution. The monthly variations can be compared to the long-term average distribution of river flows (shown as columns on the right of each timeline graph).

This outlook is based entirely on historical sequences and therefore does not contain any knowledge of the state of the atmosphere and ocean. It is hence possible that some of the historical sequences used might be inconsistent with current large-scale atmospheric conditions and would therefore be unlikely to occur in the next few months.

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RIVER FLOW FROM HISTORICAL CLIMATE

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Met Office

Outlook based on modelled flow using historical weather analogues

Period: May 2025 – July 2025

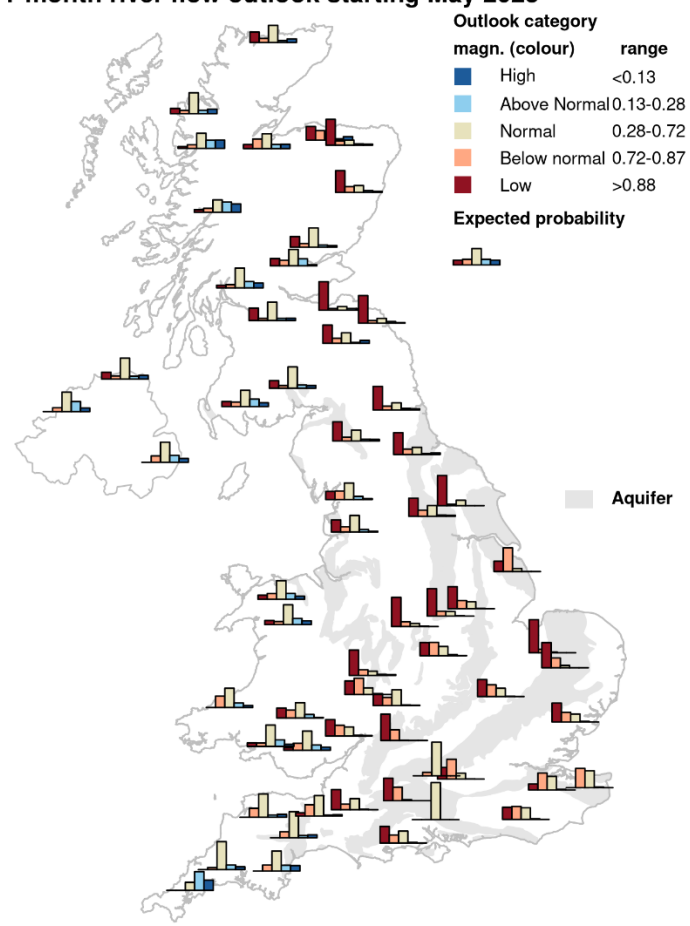
Issued on 06.05.2025 using data to the end of April 2025

The outlook for May indicates that river flows are likely to be below normal to low across much of the UK. Flows in Northern Ireland, western Scotland, southwestern England, and Wales are likely to be in the normal range. The May to July outlook suggests a continuation of this pattern, with a shift towards normal to above normal flows in western Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The historical weather analogues method uses Met Office predictions of average weather 1 and 3 months ahead to provide inputs to a hydrological model. Like the ESP method, observed rainfall and temperature data from past years are used to drive the predictions, however, the analogue method constrains the selection of past rainfall using the weather conditions in the meteorological forecasts (which are summarised for this forecast in the Met Office likelihood of impacts blocks underneath the maps). For each member of the Met Office forecast ensemble, the 10 analogues that best match the predicted average weather pattern (surface pressure map) over the forecast period are selected. Precipitation and temperature sequences constructed from the selected analogue scenarios are corrected to account for historic trends and used as inputs to hydrological models. Here, the GR6J model is run using these inputs, creating an ensemble of hydrological forecasts.

The outputs shown in the maps are the likelihoods of different outcomes for the average river flow over the one-month and three-month forecast periods at each location. The outlooks maps show the distribution for 64 catchments across the United Kingdom. Each bar plot represents the likelihood of the simulated river flow compared to the historical river flow, for the same n-month period. The probabilities fall within five categories, classified as: low, below normal, normal, above normal and high. The expected climatological probability of ensemble members in each of these categories is shown under the legend.

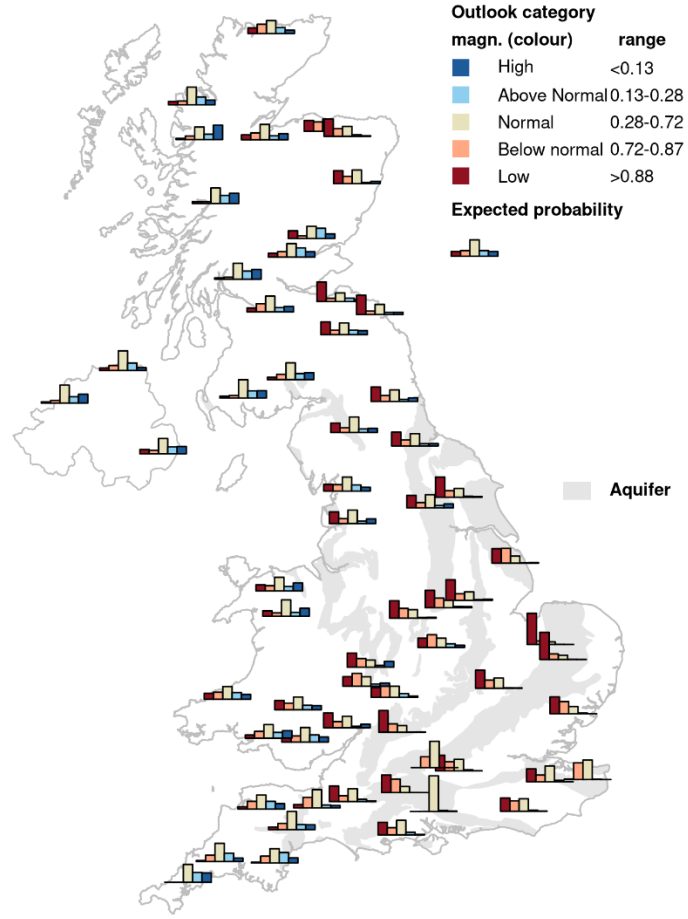
1-month river flow outlook starting May 2025



Met Office 1-month likelihood of precipitation impact

15%	60%	25%
chance the month will be DRY	chance the month will be NEAR AVERAGE	chance the month will be WET
0.8× the normal chance	1.0× the normal chance	1.3× the normal chance

3-month river flow outlook starting May 2025



Met Office 3-month likelihood of precipitation impact

20%	50%	30%
chance the season will be DRY	chance the season will be NEAR AVERAGE	chance the season will be WET
1.0× the normal chance	0.8× the normal chance	1.5× the normal chance

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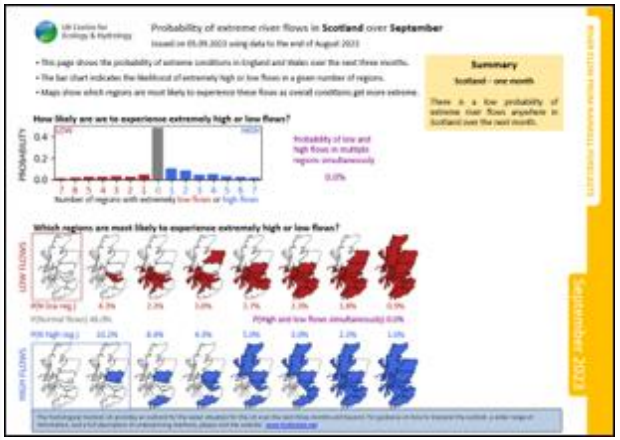
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Forecasts of river flows using Met Office rainfall forecasts

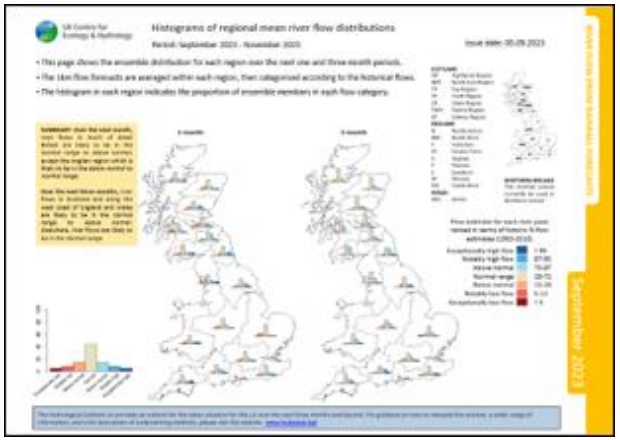
- These (yellow edged) pages summarise river flow forecasts produced by the UKCEH Water Balance Model.
- This model uses an ensemble of rainfall forecasts provided by the Met Office and a hydrological model to forecast river flows for the next one- and three-months ahead.
- A detailed description of these forecast products can be found on the final page, and a full technical description is given in the documentation available via the Hydrological Outlook website.
- Additional forecast products are available on the Hydrological Outlook Portal, via the website.

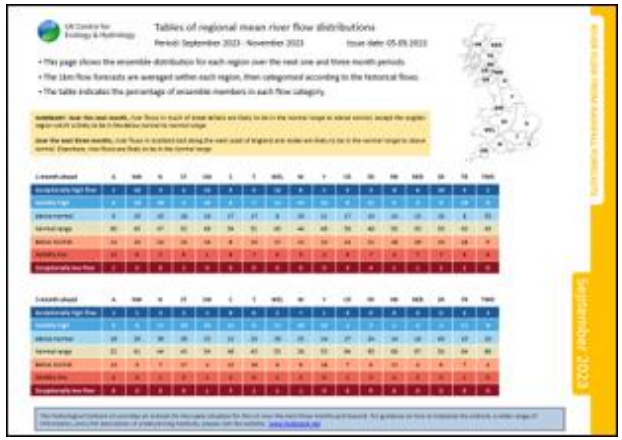
Probability of extreme river flows



- **Use these pages if you are interested in extreme conditions across multiple regions.**
- These pages summarise the risk of extremely high or low flows being observed across GB.
- The four pages show the risk for **Scotland** and for **England & Wales** over the next one and three months.
- The slides indicate the **probability of widespread extreme conditions** and which regions are most likely to experience extremely high or low flows.

Regional mean river flow distributions





- **Use these pages if you are interested in the ensemble distribution in a single region.**
- The first page shows the ensemble distribution as a histogram for each region.
- The second page shows the percentage of ensemble members in each band for each region.

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RIVER FLOW FROM RAINFALL FORECASTS

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Probability of extreme river flows in **Scotland** over **May**

Issued on 06.05.25 using data to the end of April 2025

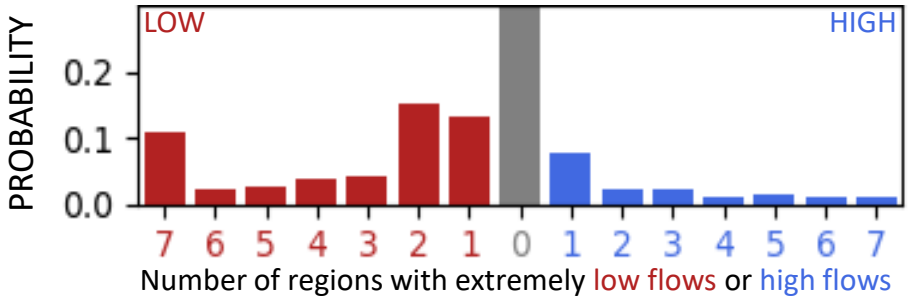
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in Scotland** over the next month. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

Summary

Scotland – one month

Extremely low flows are likely in Scottish rivers over the next month, especially in eastern regions.

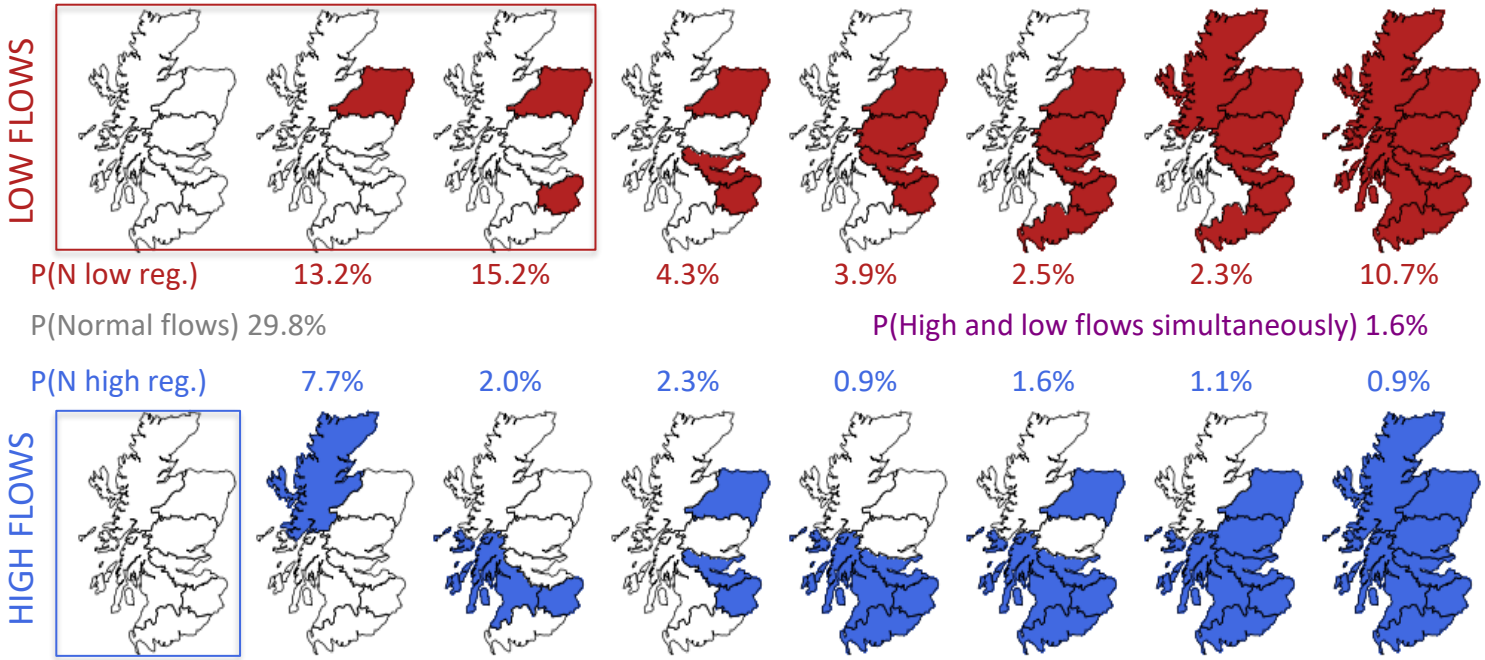
How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

1.6%

Which regions are most likely to experience extremely low or high flows?



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RIVER FLOW FROM RAINFALL FORECASTS

May 2025

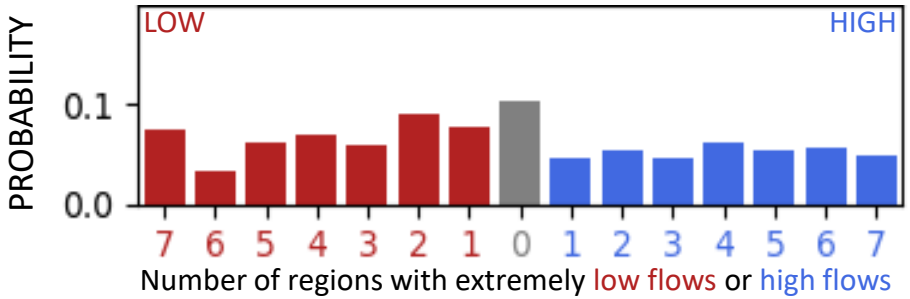
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Probability of extreme river flows in **Scotland** over **May to July**

Issued on 06.05.25 using data to the end of April 2025

This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in Scotland** over the next three months. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

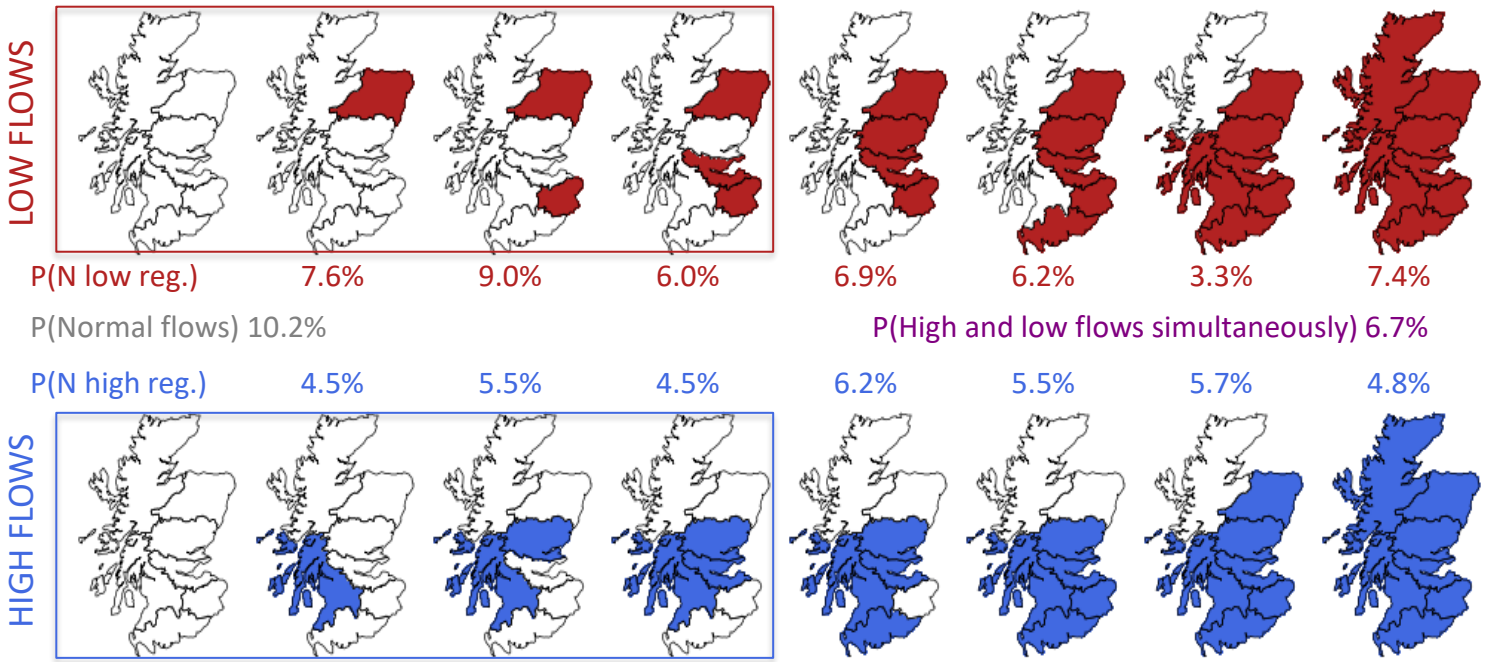
How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

6.7%

Which regions are most likely to experience extremely low or high flows?



Summary

Scotland – three months

Over the next three months, there is not a strong signal for either widespread high or low flows. This follows from the spatial complexity of the forecast for Scotland, shown on a later page.

Western regions are more likely to experience high flows, whereas the Tweed and North East regions are more likely to experience low flows. Other eastern regions are highly sensitive to evolving conditions over the next few weeks.

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UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Probability of extreme river flows in **England and Wales** over **May**

Issued on 06.05.25 using data to the end of April 2025

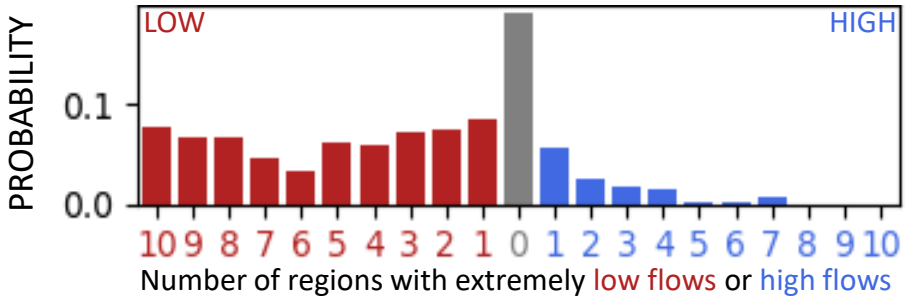
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in England and Wales** over the next month. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

Summary

England and Wales – one month

Over the next month, river flows in England are likely to continue to be extremely low, especially in regions where subsurface storage deficits are likely to persist.

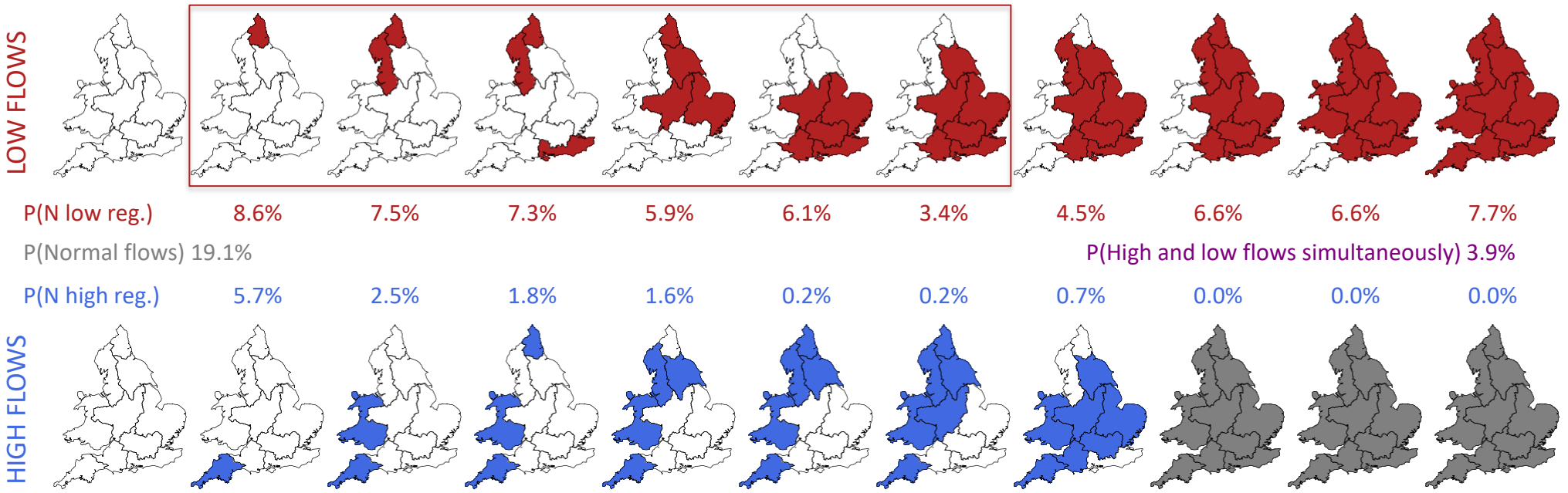
How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

3.9%

Which regions are most likely to experience extremely low or high flows?



P(N low reg.)	8.6%	7.5%	7.3%	5.9%	6.1%	3.4%	4.5%	6.6%	6.6%	7.7%
P(N high reg.)	5.7%	2.5%	1.8%	1.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

P(Normal flows) 19.1%

P(High and low flows simultaneously) 3.9%

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RIVER FLOW FROM RAINFALL FORECASTS

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Probability of extreme river flows in **England and Wales** over **May to July**

Issued on 06.05.25 using data to the end of April 2025

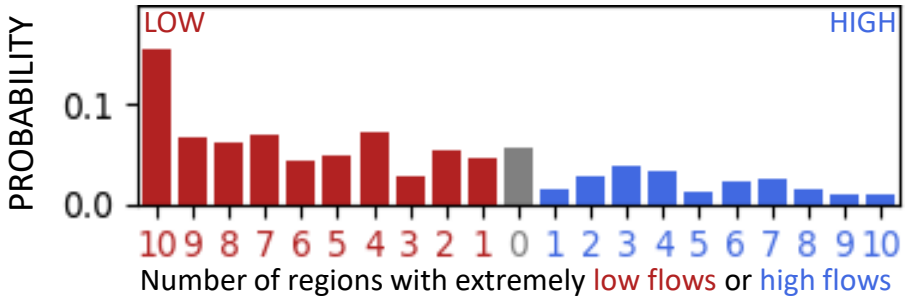
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in England and Wales** over the next three months. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

Summary

England and Wales – three months

Over the next three months, most areas of England are likely to experience extremely low river flows. These are particularly likely in eastern regions, and less likely in Wales and Cornwall where subsurface water stores are less depleted.

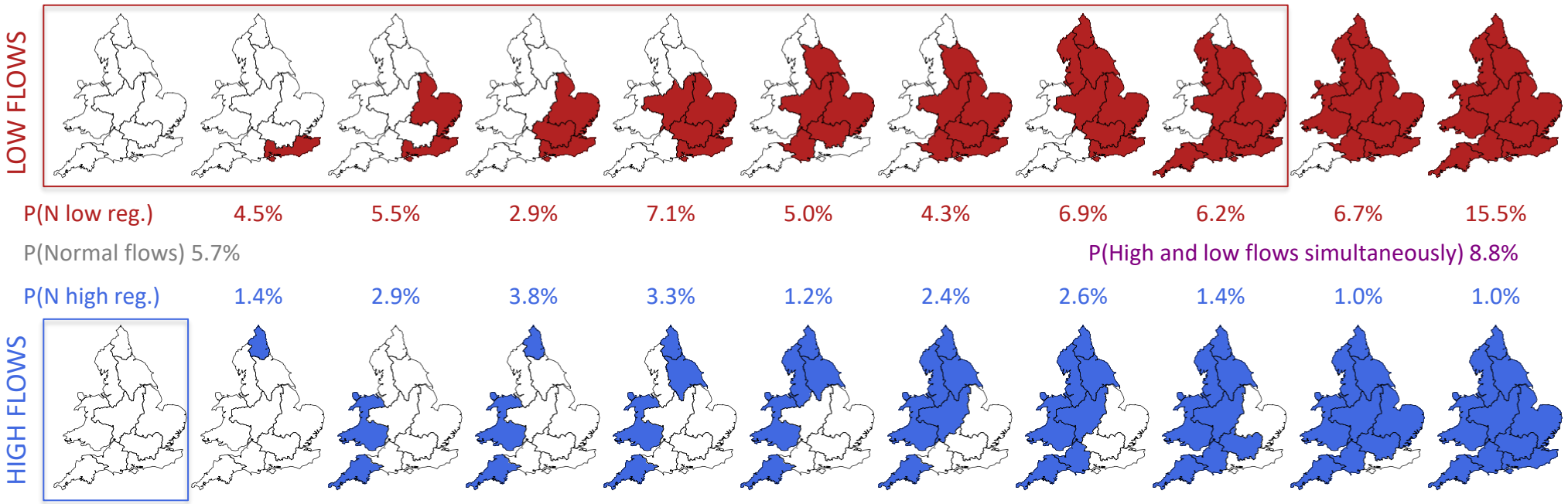
How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

8.8%

Which regions are most likely to experience extremely low or high flows?



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RIVER FLOW FROM RAINFALL FORECASTS

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Histograms of GB regional mean river flow distributions

Period: May 2025 - July 2025

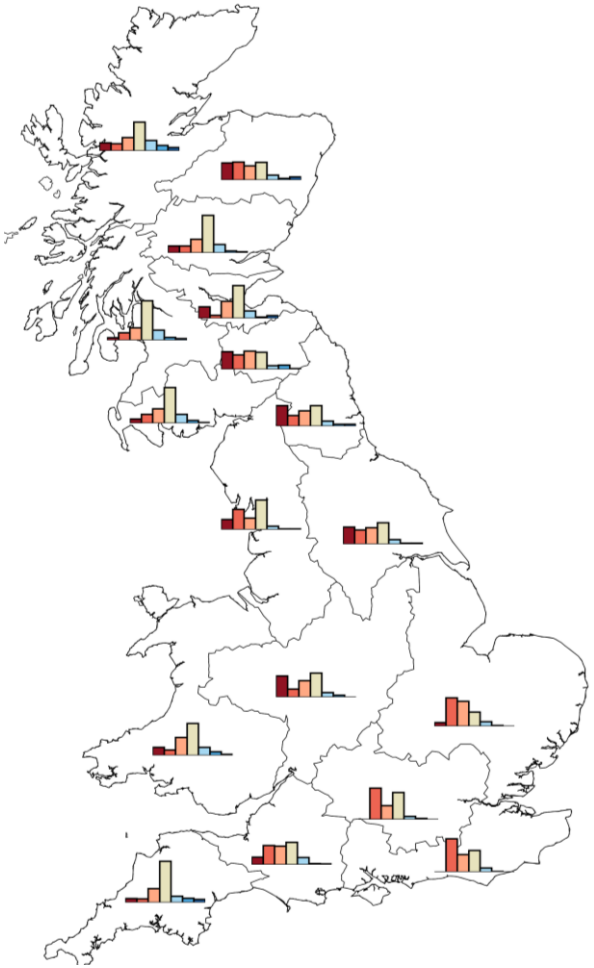
Issue date: 06.05.2025

- This page shows **the ensemble flow distribution for each region** over the next 1- and 3-month periods.
- The 1km flow forecasts are averaged within each region, then categorised according to the historical flows.
- The histogram in each region indicates the proportion of ensemble members in each flow category.

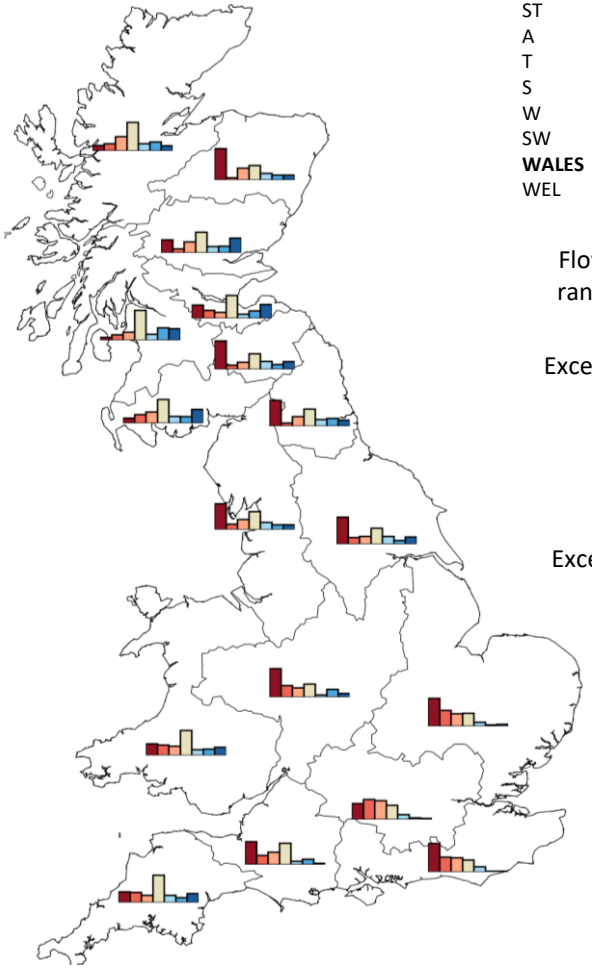
SUMMARY: Over the next month, river flows in almost all areas are likely to be in the *notably low* to *normal range*. *Exceptionally low flows* are likely in eastern regions.

Over the next three months, river flows in England, and the North East and Tweed regions of Scotland likely to be in the *exceptionally low* to *below normal range*. Elsewhere in eastern Scotland, river flows are sensitive to evolving conditions. In western Scotland, flows are likely to be in the *normal range*.

1-month



3-month



SCOTLAND

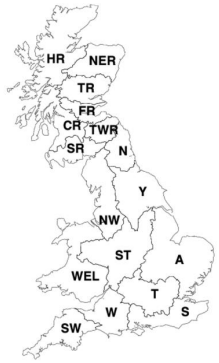
HR	Highlands Region
NER	North East Region
TR	Tay Region
FR	Forth Region
CR	Clyde Region
TWR	Tweed Region
SR	Solway Region

ENGLAND

N	Northumbria
NW	North West
Y	Yorkshire
ST	Severn Trent
A	Anglian
T	Thames
S	Southern
W	Wessex
SW	South West

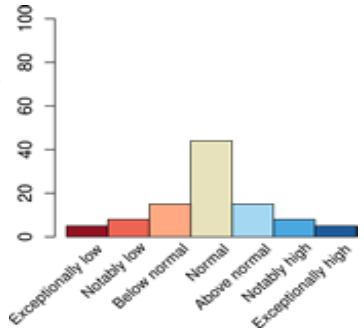
WALES

WEL	Welsh



Flow estimate for each river pixel ranked in terms of historic % flow estimates (1963-2016)

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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RIVER FLOW FROM RAINFALL FORECASTS

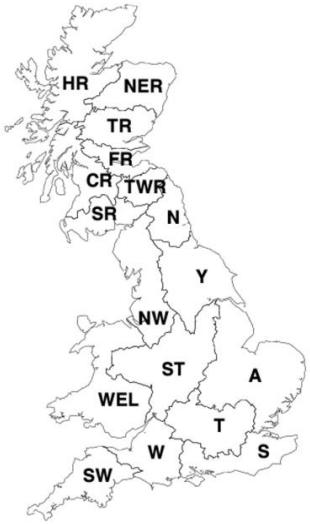
May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Tables of GB regional mean river flow distributions

Period: May 2025 - July 2025

Issue date: 06.05.2025



- This page shows **the ensemble flow distribution for each region** over the next 1- and 3-month periods.
- The 1km flow forecasts are averaged within each region, then categorised according to the historical flows.
- The table indicates the percentage of ensemble members in each flow category.

SUMMARY: Over the next month, river flows in almost all areas are likely to be in the *notably low* to *normal range. Exceptionally low flows* are likely in eastern regions.

Over the next three months, river flows in England, and the North East and Tweed regions of Scotland likely to be in the *exceptionally low* to *below normal range*. Elsewhere in eastern Scotland, river flows are sensitive to evolving conditions. In western Scotland, flows are likely to be in the *normal range.*

1-month ahead	A	NW	N	ST	SW	S	T	WEL	W	Y	CR	FR	HR	NER	SR	TR	TWR
Exceptionally high flow	0	1	2	0	4	0	0	1	1	2	2	4	4	4	1	2	1
Notably high	1	1	3	2	6	1	2	5	1	2	4	2	7	2	4	2	6
Above normal	6	4	7	6	8	5	4	11	9	6	13	10	14	6	12	11	5
Normal range	18	39	27	31	54	28	35	42	29	28	52	43	38	23	47	49	22
Below normal	33	15	20	22	18	23	18	23	24	22	16	22	17	19	19	18	24
Notably low	37	27	14	10	5	43	41	7	25	18	10	4	9	23	12	9	19
Exceptionally low flow	5	13	27	28	5	0	0	11	10	22	3	15	10	22	6	9	23

3-month ahead	A	NW	N	ST	SW	S	T	WEL	W	Y	CR	FR	HR	NER	SR	TR	TWR
Exceptionally high flow	2	6	8	5	12	1	1	10	2	10	15	18	7	6	18	20	10
Notably high	2	6	10	10	6	1	2	8	7	5	16	10	12	6	9	9	6
Above normal	5	10	9	3	9	7	6	8	4	10	8	6	10	9	9	8	11
Normal range	17	24	22	17	36	16	19	33	28	21	39	30	37	19	31	27	20
Below normal	16	13	13	12	9	19	24	12	16	10	11	8	19	16	15	14	10
Notably low	21	7	4	15	13	20	26	14	12	9	7	10	9	3	11	5	6
Exceptionally low flow	36	34	34	37	14	37	21	15	30	36	4	18	7	41	7	17	37

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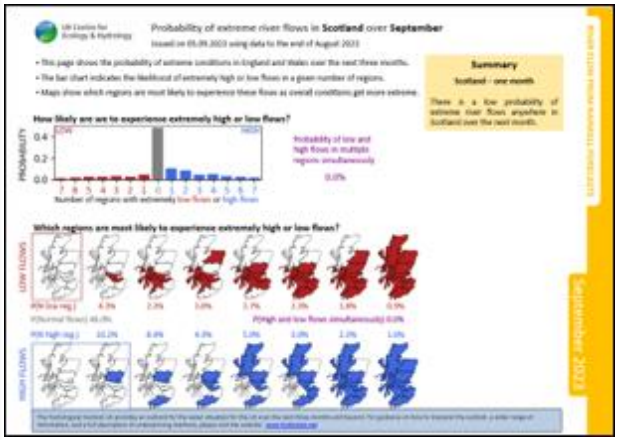
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Forecasts of river flows using Met Office rainfall forecasts

- The data on these (yellow-bordered) pages are based on approximately 400 rainfall scenarios provided by the Met Office, which are used as inputs to a water balance hydrological model.
- River flow forecasts for every 1km grid cell are ranked according to the historical flow estimates and aggregated within each region.
- A full description of this method and these summary products is given in the technical documentation available via the Hydrological Outlook website.

Probability of extreme river flows



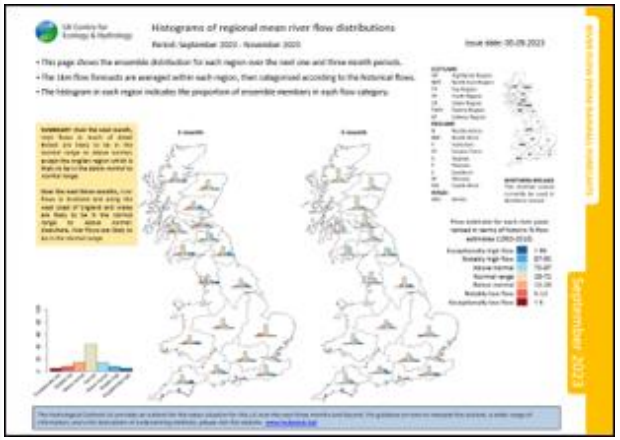
Extreme river flows are defined as those which rank in the lowest or highest 13% of historical flow estimates (1963 - 2016). This definition encompasses the 'Notably' and 'Exceptionally' high/low flow bands used elsewhere in the Outlook.

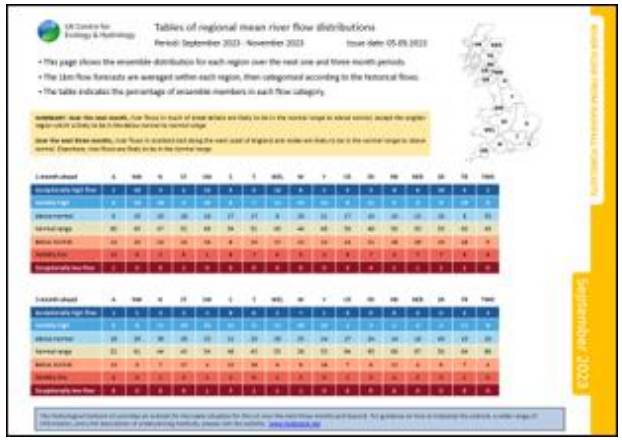
The bar chart shows the probability of a given number of regions experiencing extremely high/low flows, where scenarios showing both extremely high and extremely low flows in different regions simultaneously excluded. These probabilities are also shown beneath the maps.

Shaded regions on each map are those most likely to experience extreme flows from the set of scenarios with at least a given number of regions experiencing such flows. If shown, grey maps indicate scenarios not observed in the ensemble.

The box drawn around some maps spans the central 50% probability interval, excluding scenarios where extremely high/low flows are observed simultaneously. If these excluded cases constitute a significant probability, details are given in the yellow summary box.

Regional mean river flow distributions





The maps illustrate the ensemble distribution of regional mean river flows. The historical distribution is shown at bottom-left, and allows deviations from the normal distribution to be determined by comparing the forecast distribution to the historical distribution. A summary is given in the yellow box.

The table gives access to the data shown in the histograms. The numbers in the tables are the percentage of ensemble forecasts falling in each of the flow categories. As before results are averaged by region then ranked in terms of 54 years of historical regional flow estimates (1963 – 2016).

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British Geological Survey

Outlook based on modelled groundwater level & climate forecast

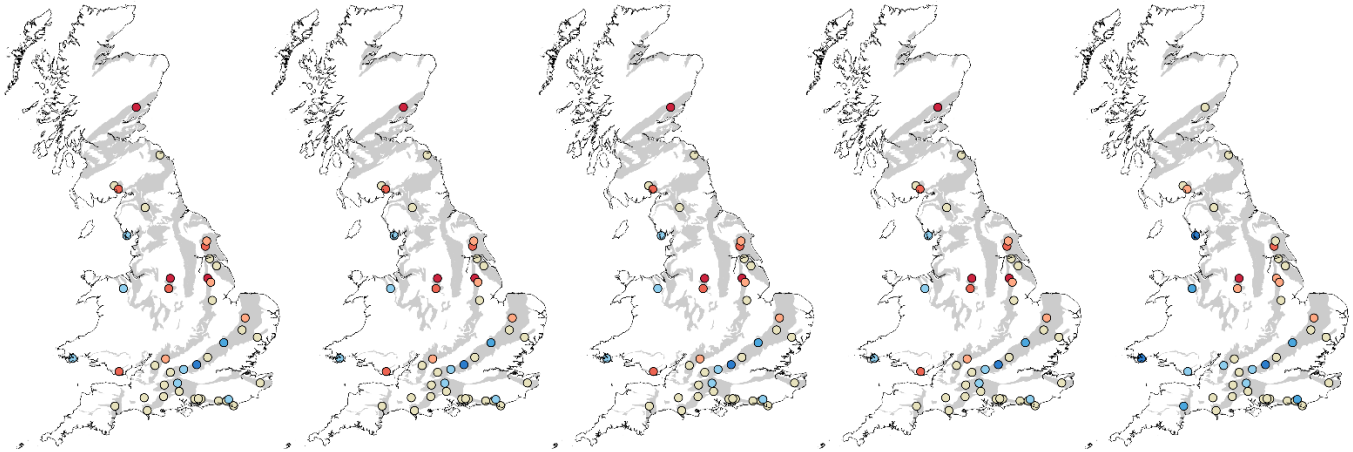
Overview

Period: May 2025 – July 2025

Issued on 08.05.2025 using data to the end of April

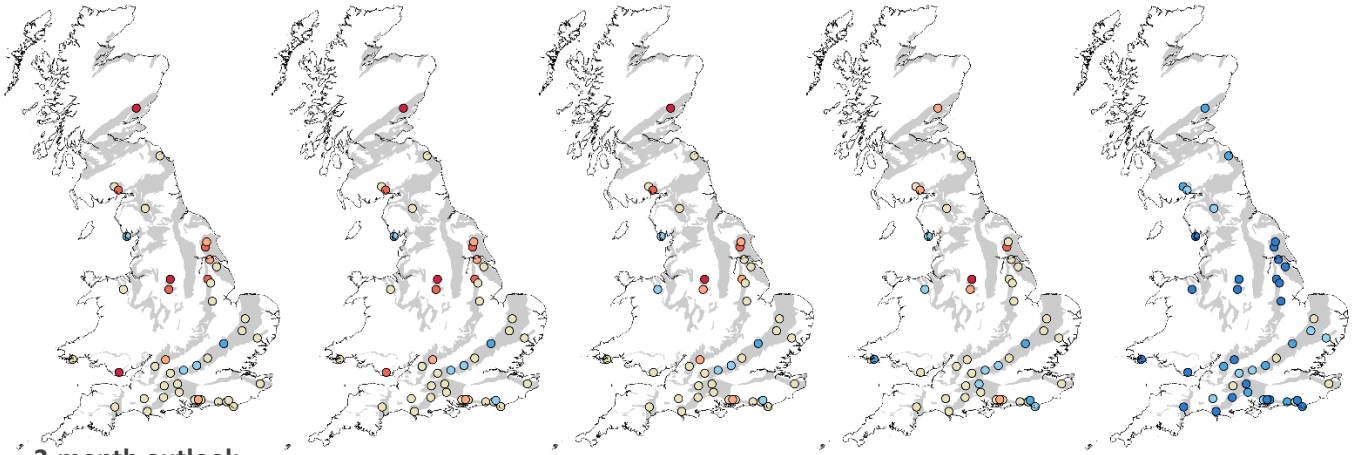
At median rainfall conditions, levels in the southern Chalk aquifer are generally expected to remain between normal and above normal over the next month. Across other aquifers, the majority of sites are expected to exhibit normal to exceptionally low levels. In contrast, in the Permo-Triassic sandstone in North Wales, Devonian/Carboniferous in South Wales and at Furness Abbey, levels are expected to be above normal. The 3-month forecast anticipates that similar conditions will persist, although levels will trend more towards normal.

Lowest rainfall forecast | *1st quartile* | *Median* | *3rd quartile* | *Highest rainfall forecast*



1-month outlook

Lowest rainfall forecast | *1st quartile* | *Median* | *3rd quartile* | *Highest rainfall forecast*

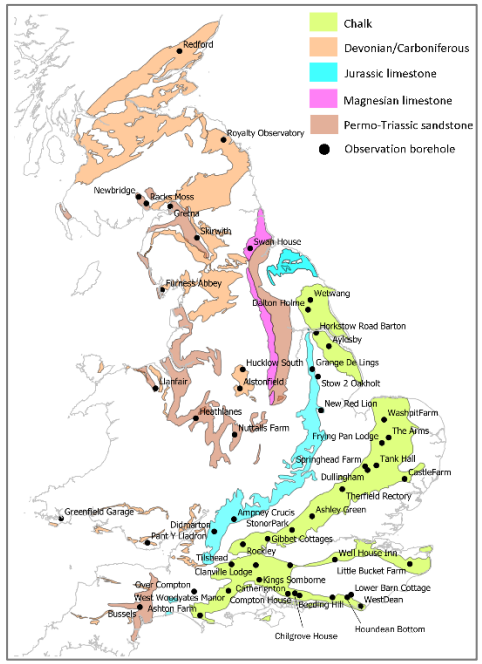


3-month outlook

These forecasts are produced by running five members of the Met Office ensemble climate forecast through groundwater models of observation borehole hydrographs at 42 sites across the country. The sites are distributed across the principal aquifers.

Based on the distribution of observed historical groundwater levels in a given month, seven categories have been derived for each site: very low, low, below normal, normal, above normal, high, and very high. The forecast groundwater level is assigned to one of these seven categories depending on where it falls within the distribution of the historically observed values.

Key	Percentile range of historic observed values for relevant month
Exceptionally high levels	> 95
Notably high levels	87-95
Above normal	72-87
Normal	28-72
Below normal	12-28
Notably low levels	5-13
Exceptionally low levels	< 5



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GROUNDWATER FROM CLIMATE FORECASTS

May 2025

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

British Geological Survey

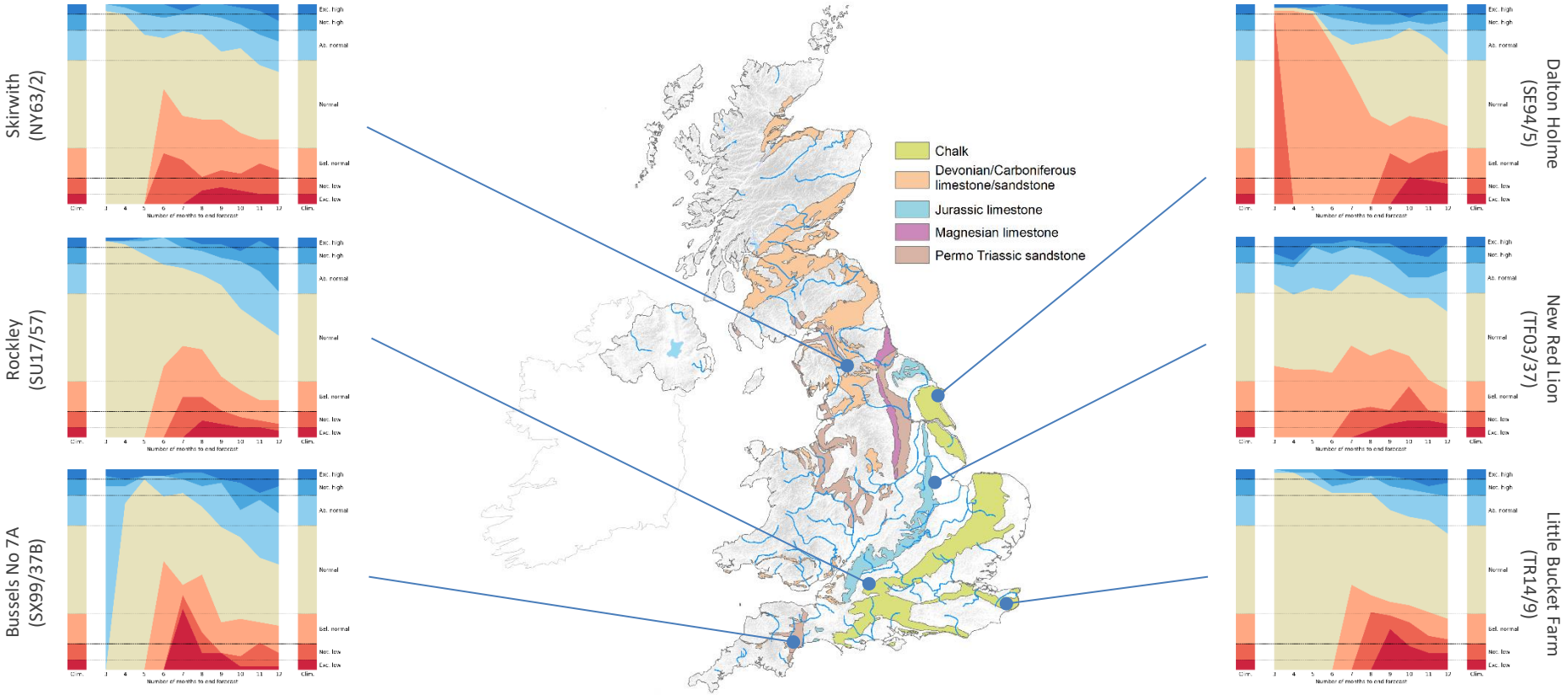
Environment Agency

Outlook based on modelled groundwater from historical climate

Period: May 2025 – April 2026

Issued on 08.05.2025 using data to the end of April

For the next five to six months, at Little Bucket Farm and Rockley in the Chalk as well as Bussels No 7A and Skirwith in the Permo-Triassic Sandstone, groundwater levels are likely to be normal for this time of year. There is limited potential for levels to be above normal to exceptionally high. In the later months, there is an increased chance for below normal to exceptionally low levels. At New Red Lion in the Jurassic Limestone, levels are expected to be normal to below normal for the next twelve months. At Dalton Holme in the Chalk, levels are expected to transition from notably low to below normal conditions over the next six months, before levels become more difficult to predict from eight months onwards.



This outlook is based on monthly ensembles of historical sequences of observed climate (rainfall and potential evpotranspiration) that form input to hydrological models. The outputs are probabilistic simulations of the average groundwater level over the forecast horizon (3 to 12 months ahead), at each location.

The graphs show variation over time of the number of simulated groundwater levels in each monthly ensemble, that fall within each the seven categories: exceptionally low, notably low, below normal, normal, above normal, notably high and exceptionally high. The monthly variations can be compared to the long-term average distribution of levels, which are shown as columns on the left and right of each graph.

This outlook is based entirely on historical sequences and therefore does not contain any knowledge of the state of the atmosphere and ocean. It is hence possible that some of the historical sequences used might be inconsistent with current large-scale atmospheric conditions and would therefore be unlikely to occur in the next few months.

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