

**SUMMARY** The outlook for May is for below normal to notably low river flows across central southern England, normal to below normal for eastern Scotland and normal flows elsewhere. Below normal river flows in central southern England are likely to persist through May-July. For the rest of the UK, May-July river flows are likely to be normal to above normal in northwestern areas and normal elsewhere. Groundwater levels for most boreholes are likely to remain normal to above normal across the UK.

**Rainfall:**

April rainfall was below average for the UK (77%), with particularly dry conditions for England. Large parts of central southern England received less than one third of the average rainfall (fourth driest for the Anglian region since 1890). In contrast, above average rainfall was registered for western Scotland, with particularly high rainfall over the Western Isles.

The one-month forecast for May (issued by the Met Office on 27.04.2026) indicates near average rainfall is the most likely scenario, although a wet May is more likely than a dry one. Over the next three months, the forecast indicates a higher than normal chance of a hot May-July with near-average rainfall most likely, although a wet 3-month period is more probable than dry.

**River flows:**

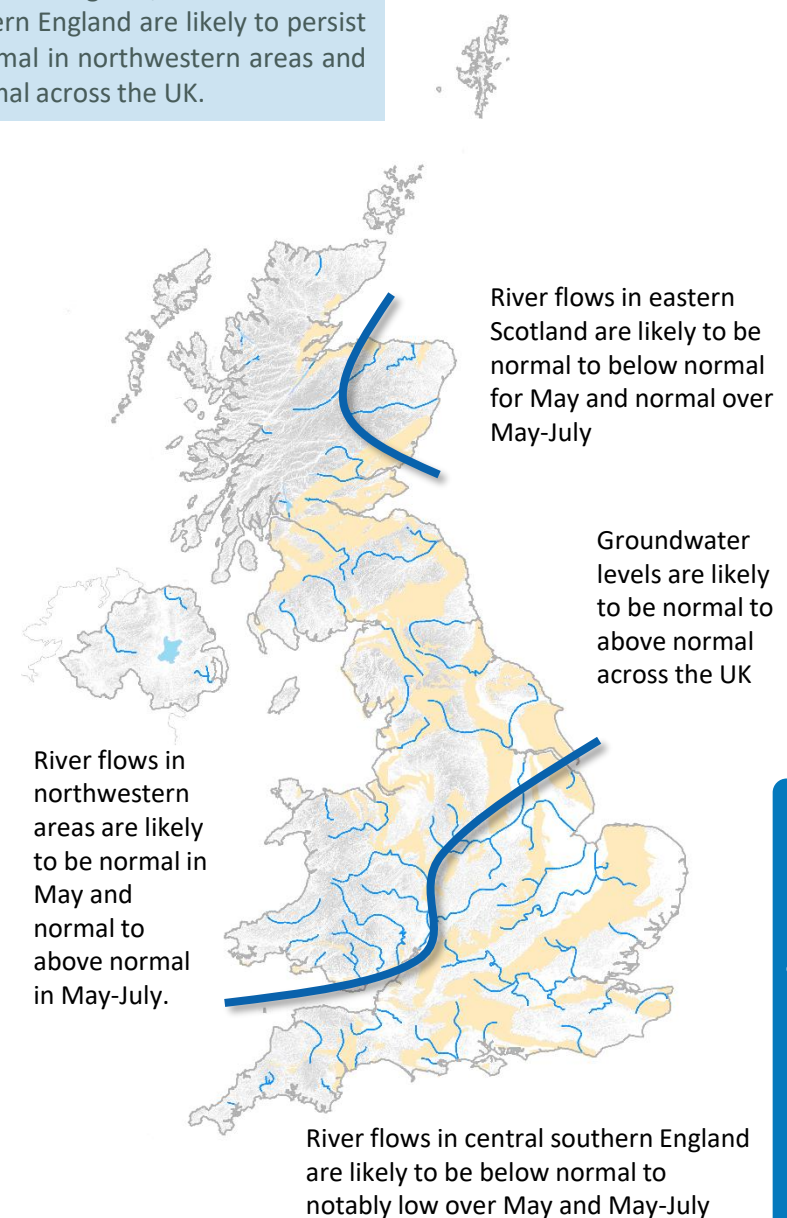
River flows in April were widely below normal across central and southern England and for some catchments in eastern Scotland. Flows in western Scotland and some groundwater-dominated catchments in the far south were in the above normal to notably high range.

Following a dry April, the outlook is for below normal to notably low flows across central southern England and eastern Scotland. Elsewhere, flows are likely to be in the normal range. The outlook for the next three months (May-July) is for below normal to notably low flows to persist in central southern England while flows in northwestern areas are likely to be normal to above normal.

**Groundwater:**

Groundwater levels at the end of April were normal to above normal in most principal aquifers, except for eastern Scotland and south Wales where some boreholes recorded notably or exceptionally low levels, respectively.

The outlook for May is for groundwater levels to remain normal to above normal across the UK. Notably high levels are likely for some boreholes in the Southern, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Chalk while levels at South Wales is expected be below normal to exceptionally low. Over the next three months, groundwater levels are likely to remain normal to above normal, with the exception for South Wales where levels may recover but are likely to remain in the normal to below normal range.



The UK Hydrological Outlook provides an outlook for the water situation for the United Kingdom 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](http://www.hydoutuk.net)

## 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 AquilMod 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, 11 May 2026, 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:

- 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://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/monthly-hydrological-summary-uk>

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

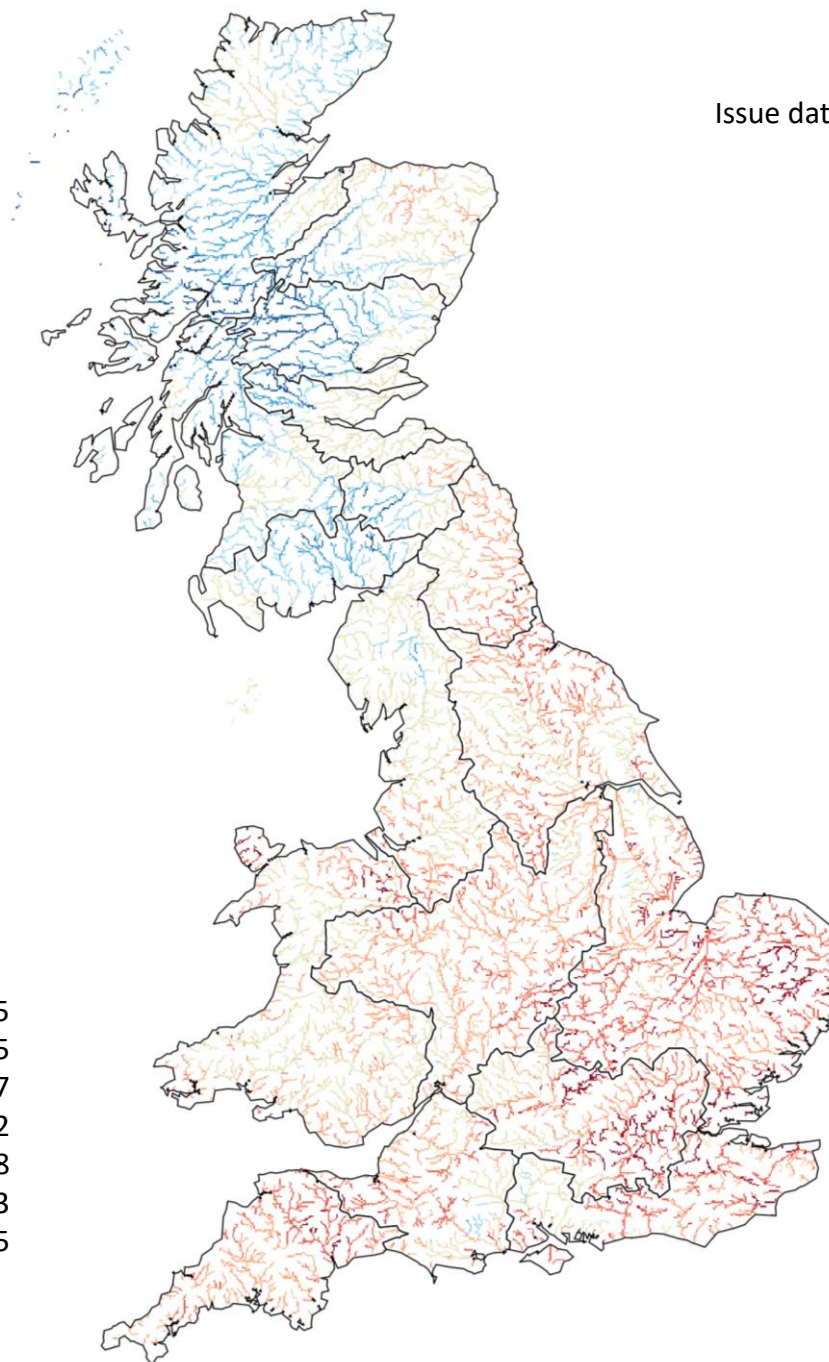
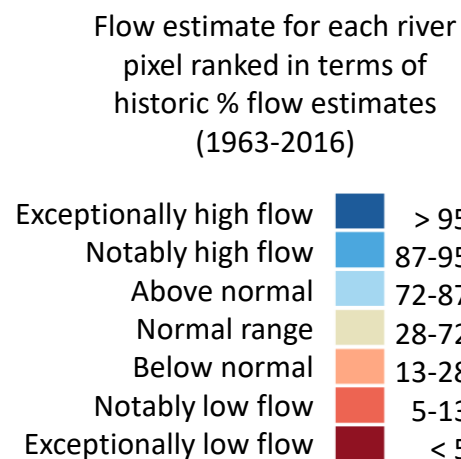
UK Water Resources Portal: monitor the UK hydrological situation in near real-time including rainfall, river flow, groundwater and soil moisture from COSMOS-UK: <https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/hydrology/water-resources/>

Issue date: 11.05.2026

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.

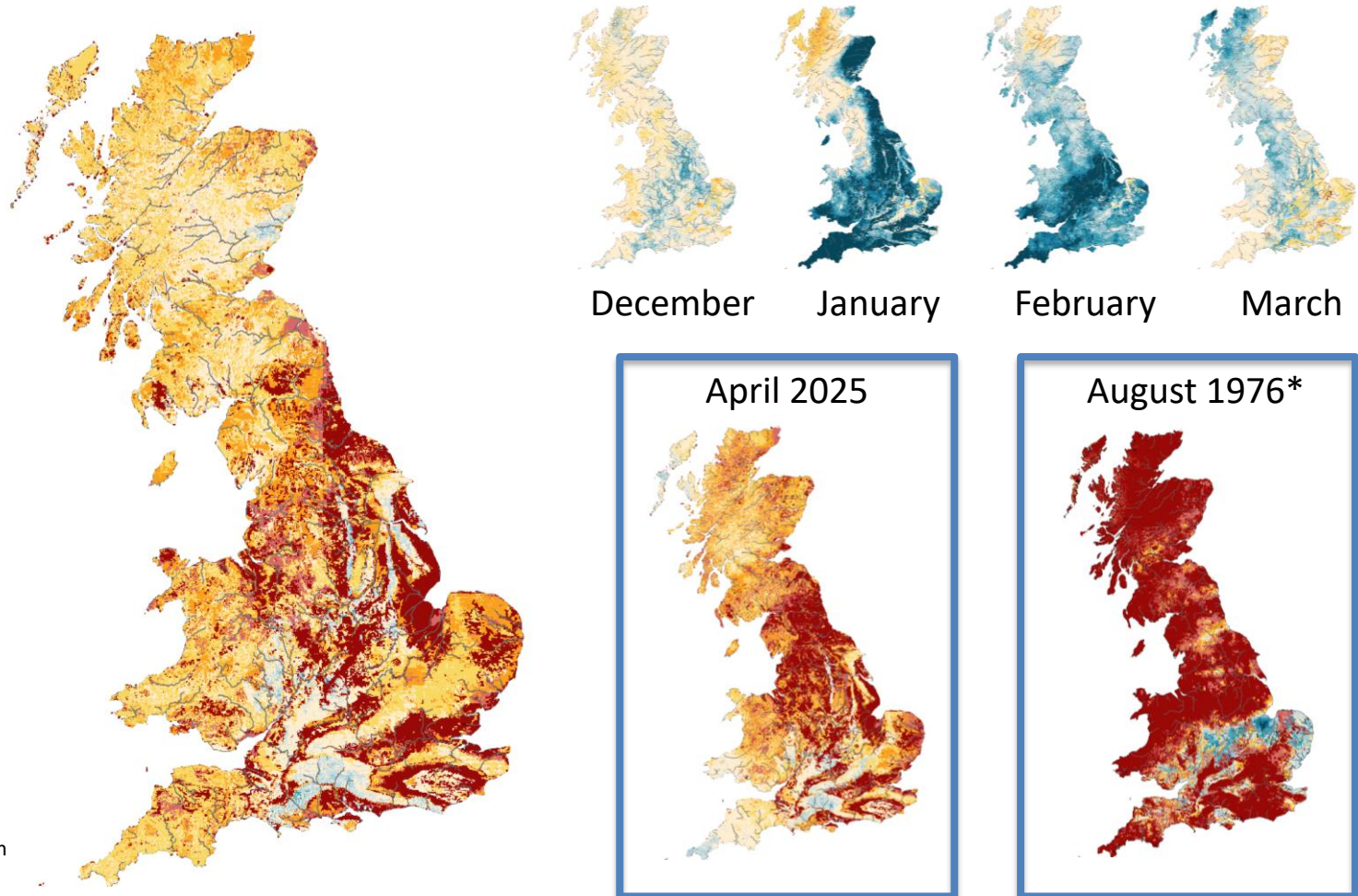
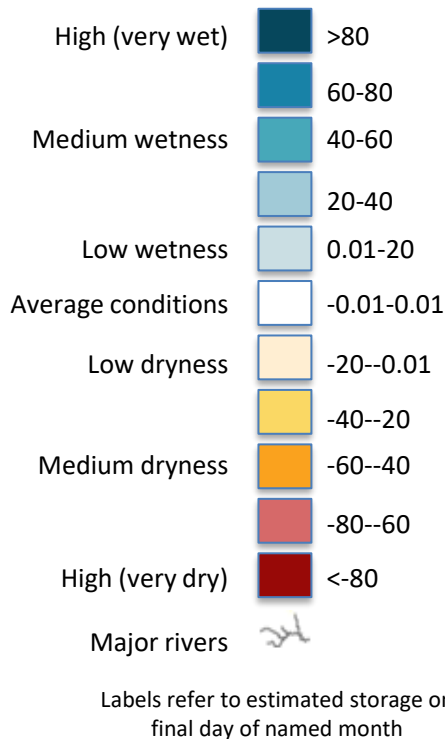


These maps are based on Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model simulated subsurface water storage (water in the soil and groundwater), expressed as an anomaly from the historical monthly mean. To highlight areas that are particularly wet or dry, the storage anomaly is presented relative to historical 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 across Great Britain and are now low (dry) in almost all areas.

## Relative wetness

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



\*Example month displaying extreme negative wetness

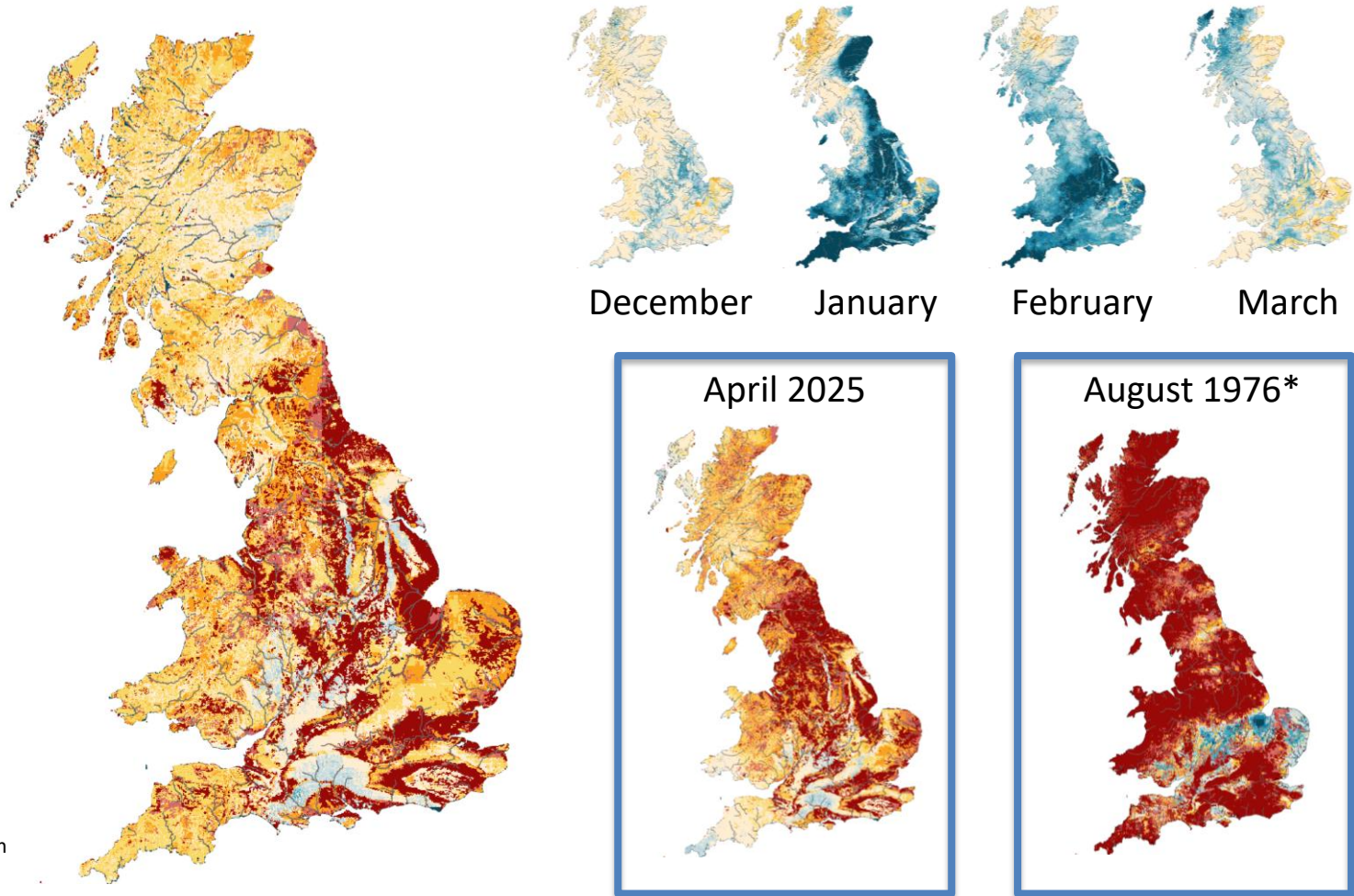
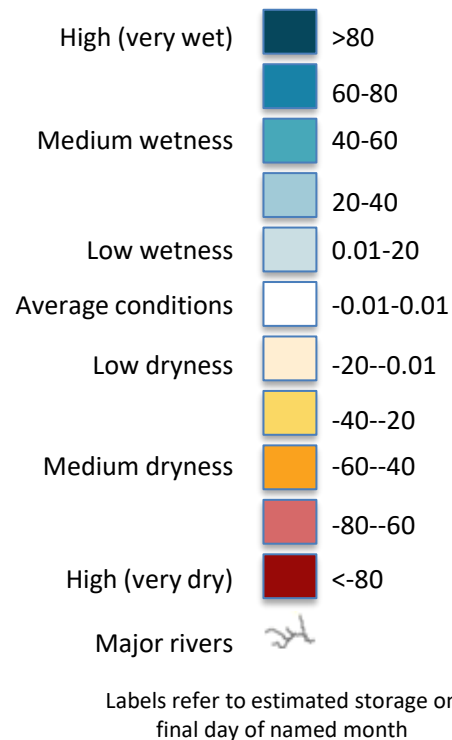
May 2026

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 across Great Britain and are now low (dry) in almost all areas.

## Relative wetness

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



\*Example month displaying extreme negative wetness

May 2026

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

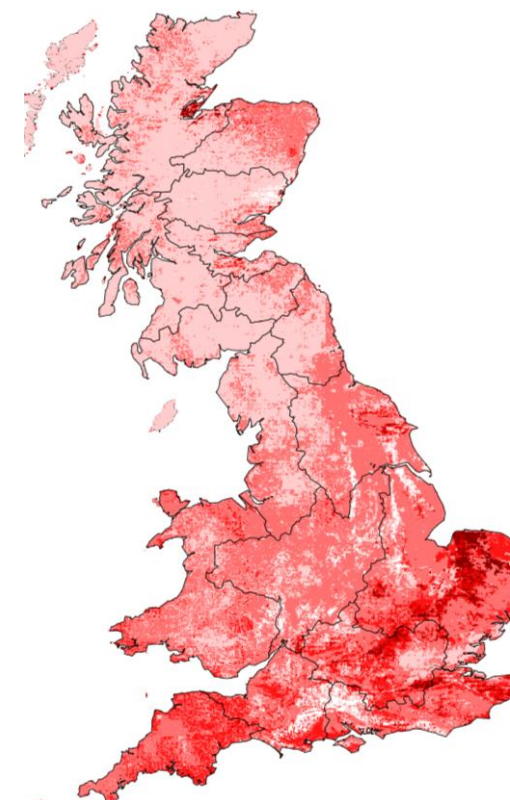
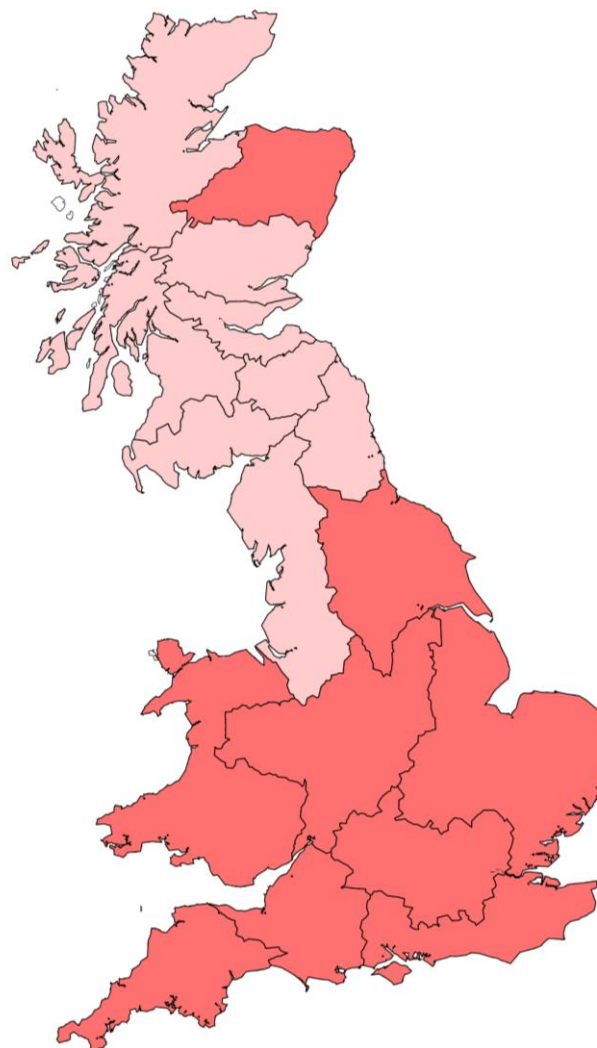
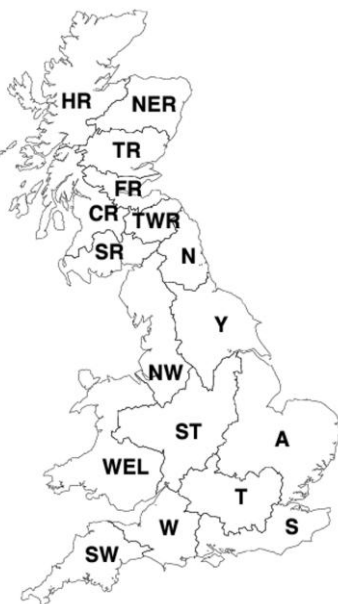
21	HR	Highlands Region
26	NER	North East Region
13	TR	Tay Region
24	FR	Forth Region
21	CR	Clyde Region
21	TWR	Tweed Region
19	SR	Solway Region

### ENGLAND

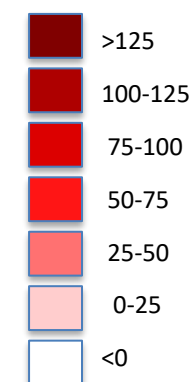
22	N	Northumbria
23	NW	North West
29	Y	Yorkshire
27	ST	Severn Trent
47	A	Anglian
42	T	Thames
28	W	Wessex
35	S	Southern
47	SW	South West

### WALES

32	WEL	Welsh
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Water storage deficit (anomaly; mm)

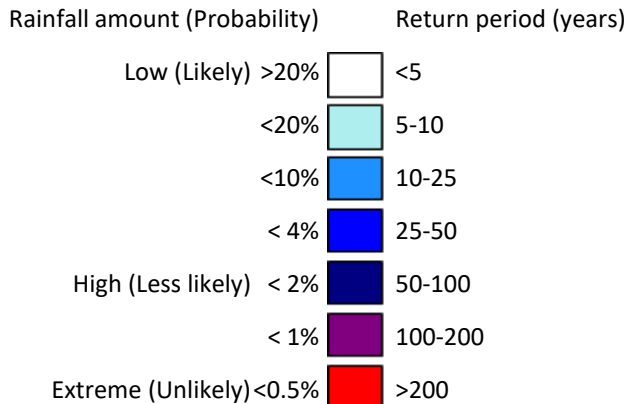
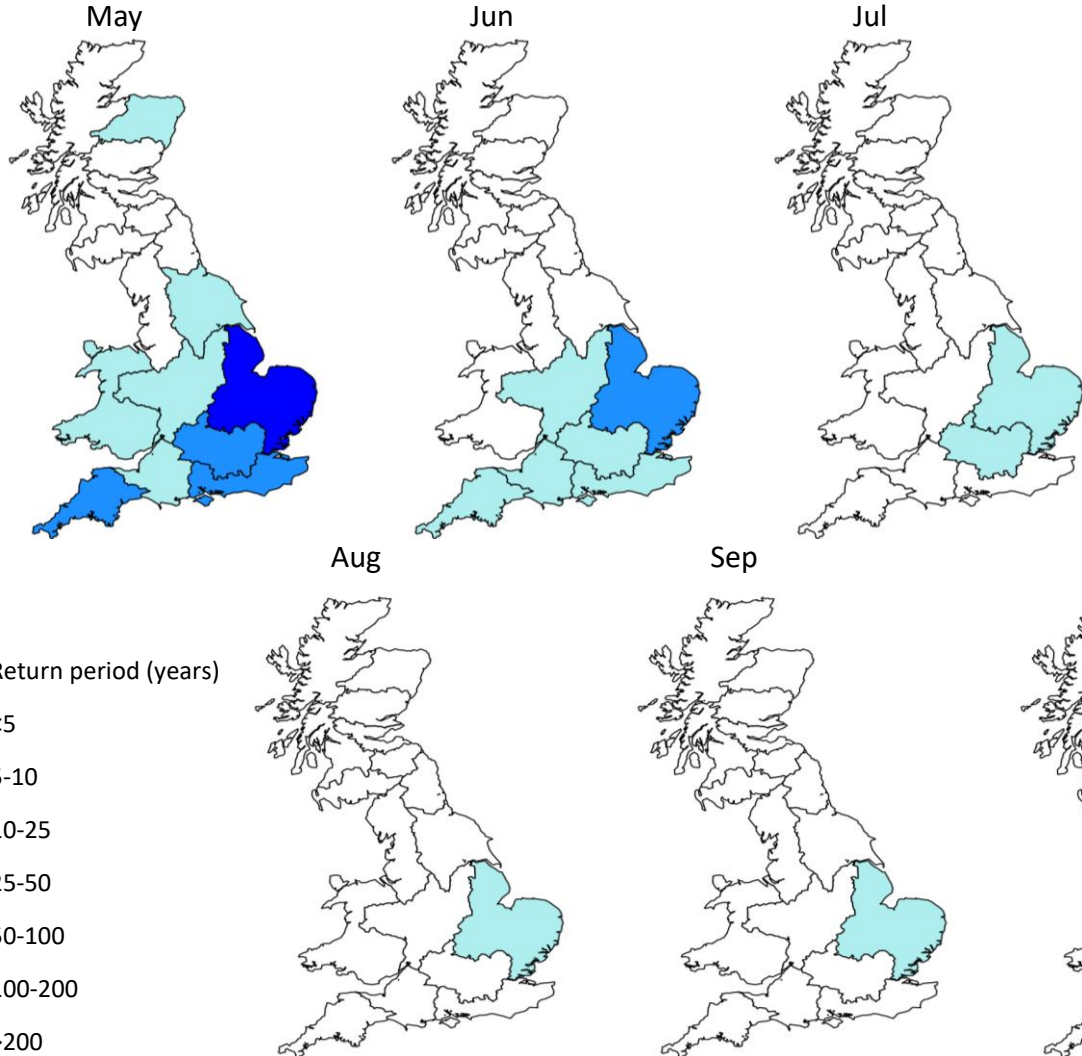
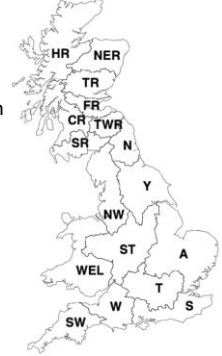


These maps show the return period of the rainfall required to overcome dry conditions simulated using the Grid-to-Grid (G2G) hydrological model. The maps are coloured according to the return period of accumulated rainfall required to overcome the estimated current subsurface water storage deficit over 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:**

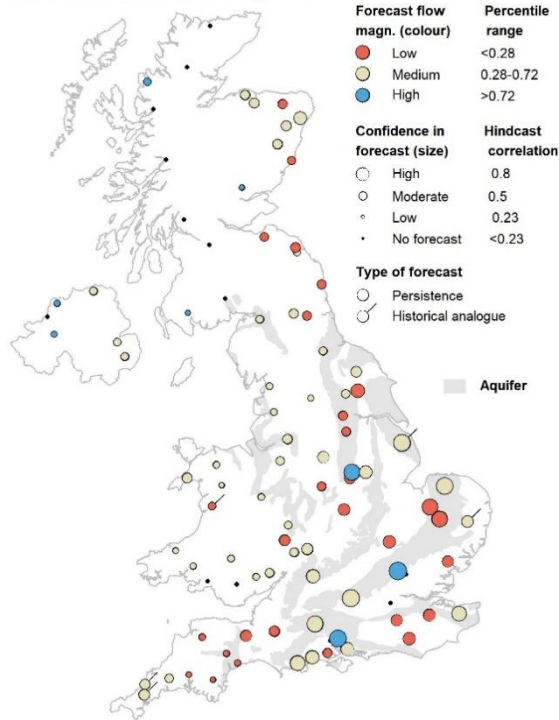
Water storage deficits are now present in all regions. In Wales and central and southern England these require unusually high (>5-year return period) to recover within the next month. Deficits in eastern England are likely to persist across the summer.

- 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



**SUMMARY:** The outlook for May and for the May – July period indicates normal flows are likely across much of southern England, with some above-normal flows in places, particularly in groundwater-influenced catchments. Below-normal flows are likely across central England and East Anglia, while eastern Scotland shows a tendency towards normal to below-normal conditions. Forecast availability is very limited across parts of northern and western Britain.

River flow outlook for May 2026



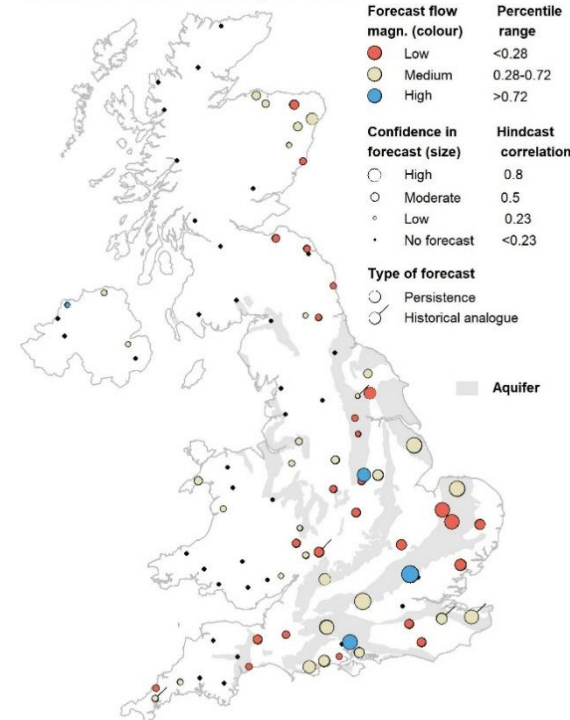
1-month flow outlook

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

River flow outlook for May - Jul 2026



3-month flow outlook

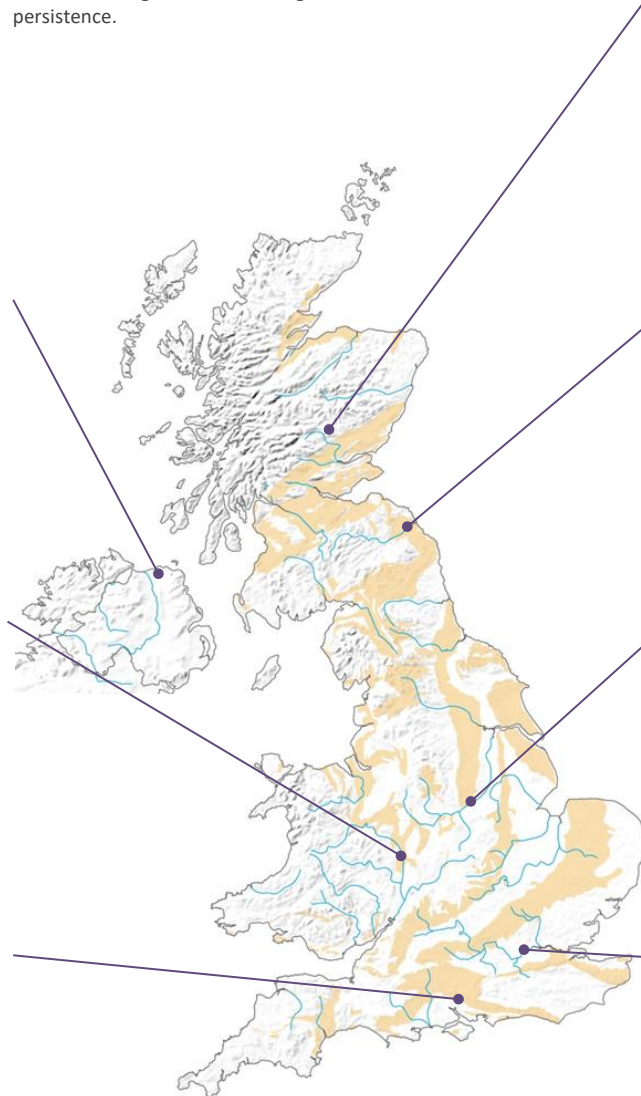
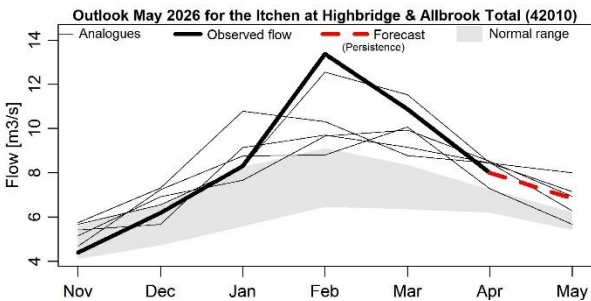
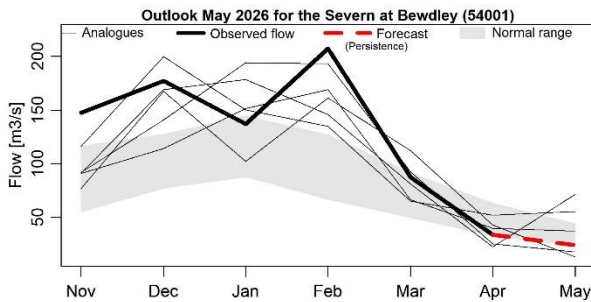
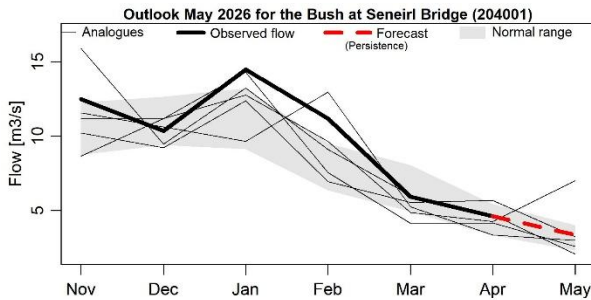
of the forecast being represented by the size of the dot. A tag on the dot indicates which method has been used in each instance.

Period: May 2026

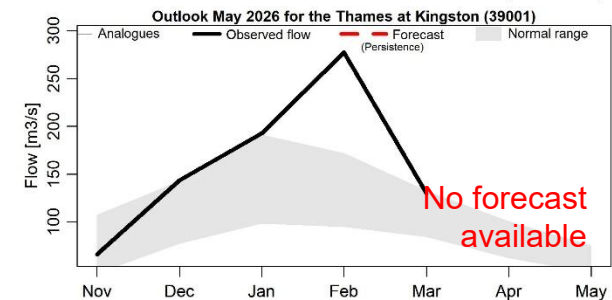
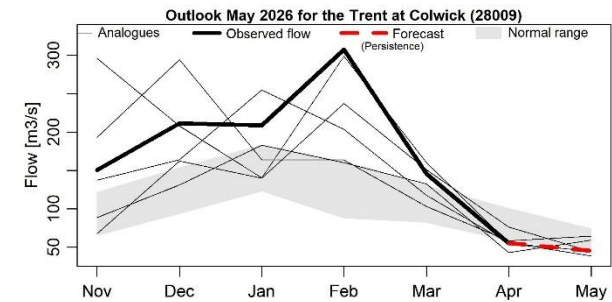
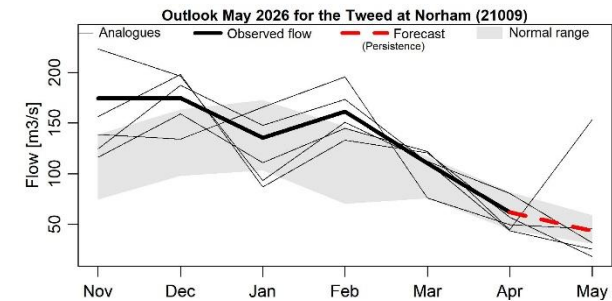
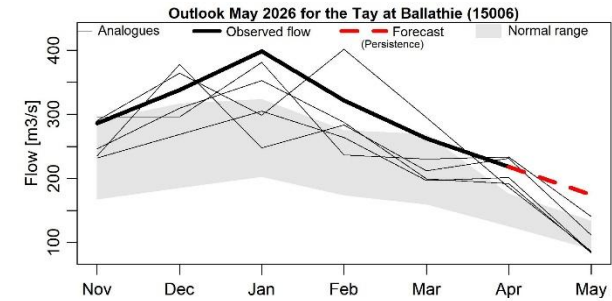
These figures provide insight into the hydrological analogue methodology for a set of sites from across the UK.

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.



Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April 2026

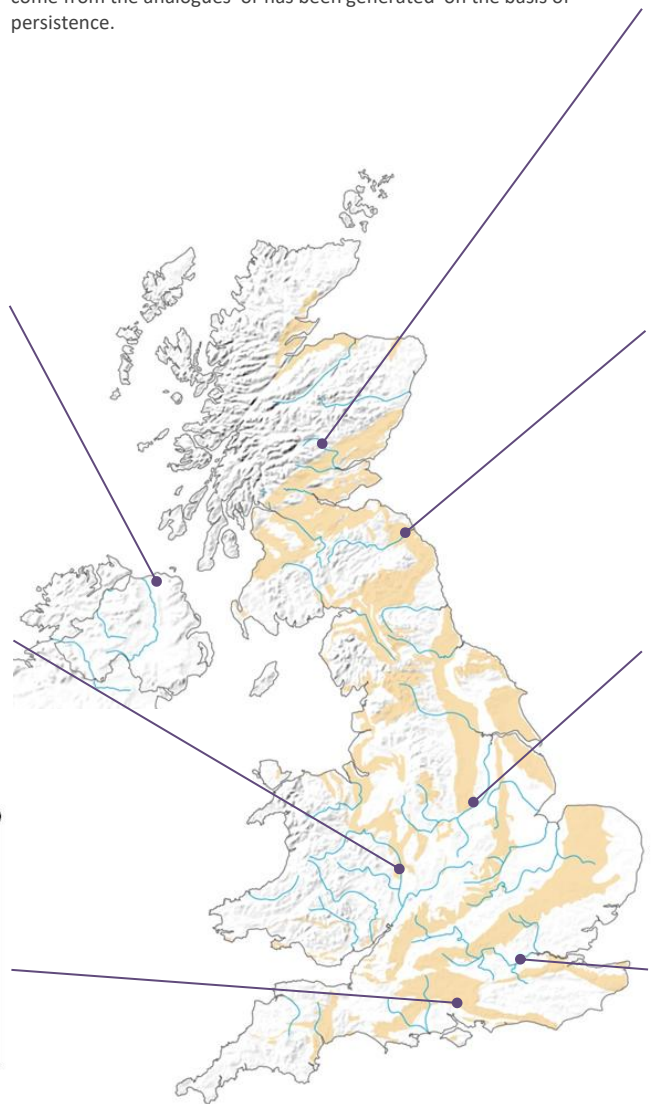
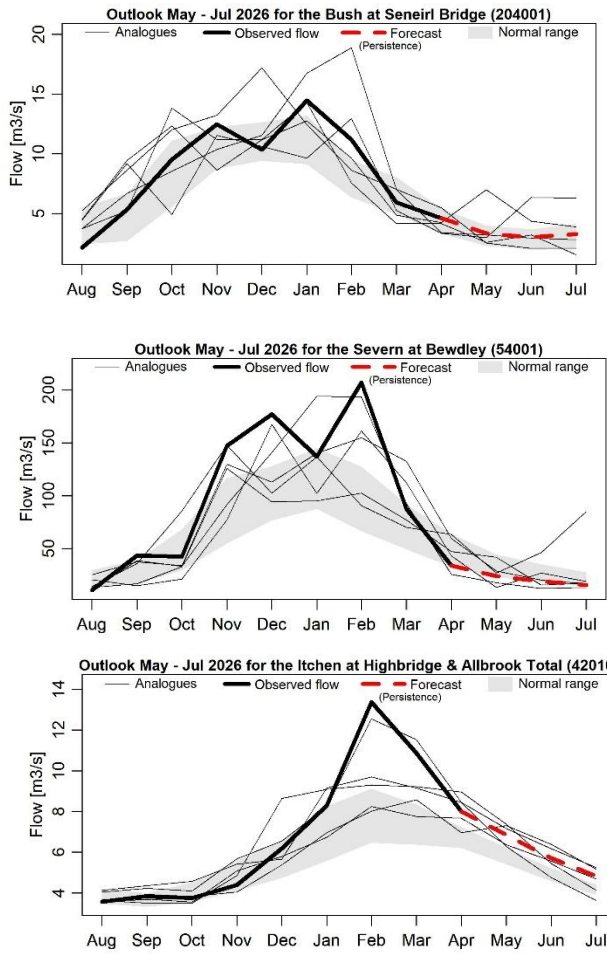


Period: May 2026 – July 2026

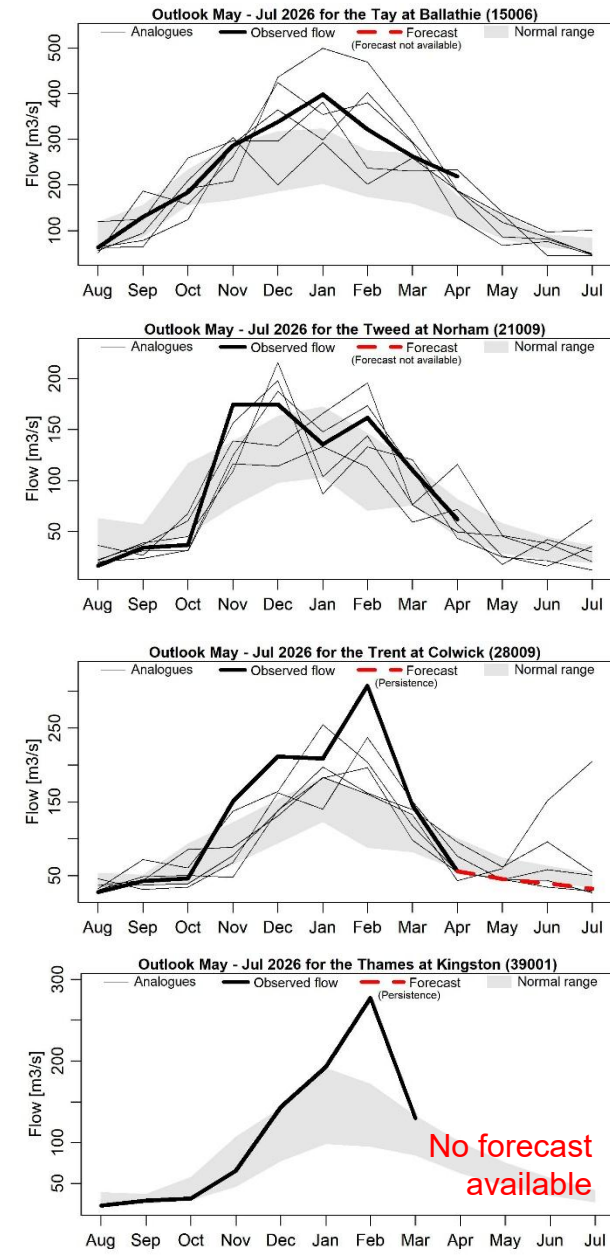
These figures provide insight into the hydrological analogue methodology for a set of sites from across the UK.

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.



Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April 2026

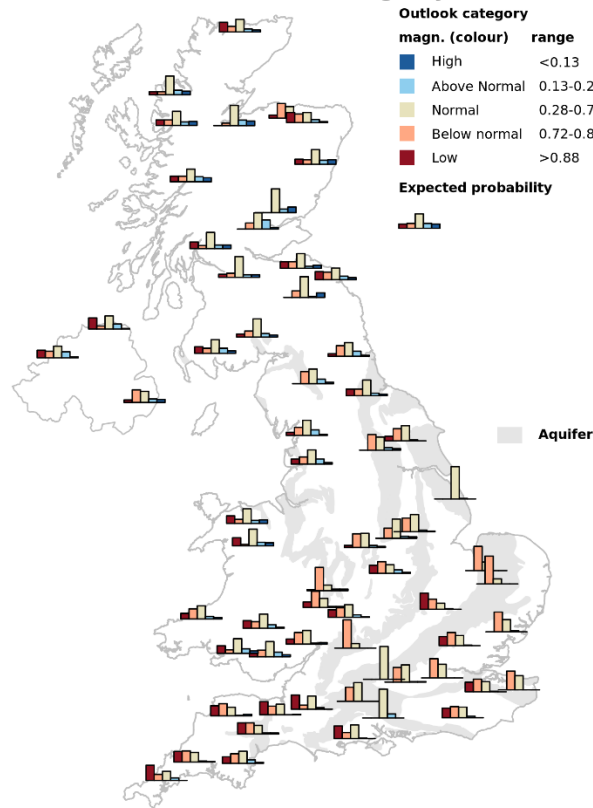


Period: May 2026 – October 2026

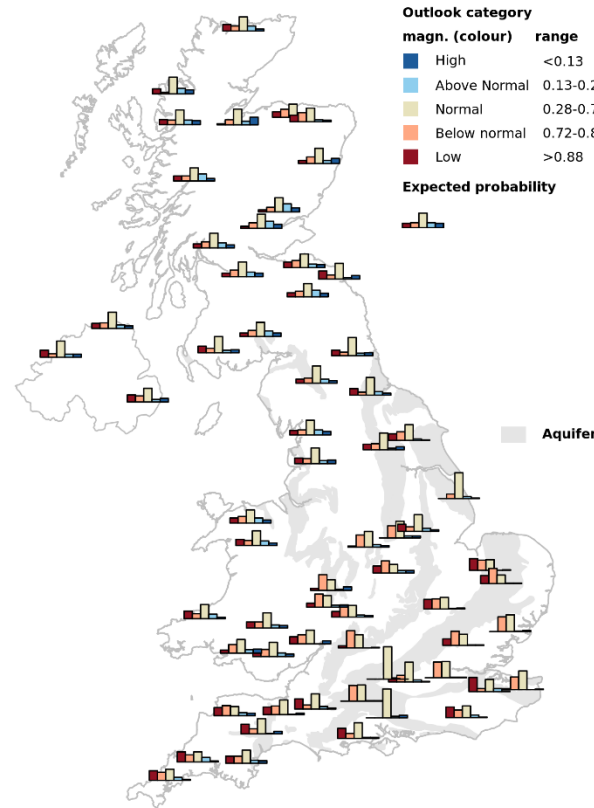
Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April 2026

The outlook for May indicates that flows are likely to be below normal to low across southern England and normal to below normal in some catchments in eastern Scotland. Elsewhere, flows are likely to be normal to below normal in Northern Ireland and northern England and in the normal range for Scotland. The May to July outlook indicates below normal flows are likely to persist across southern England with a shift towards the normal range elsewhere.

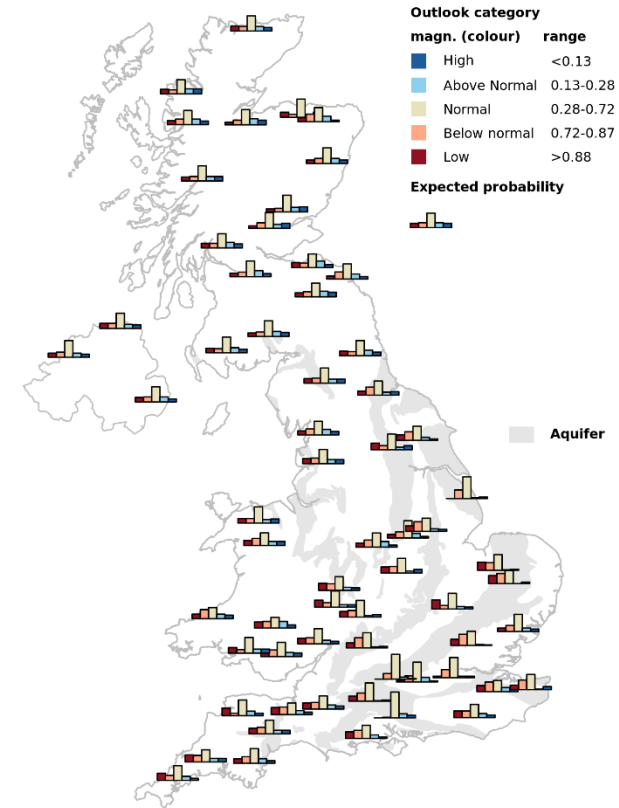
1-month river flow outlook starting May 2026



3-month river flow outlook starting May 2026



6-month river flow outlook starting May 2026

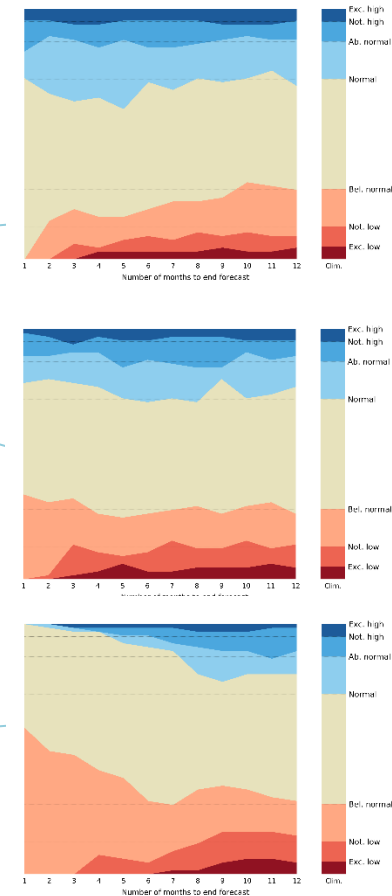
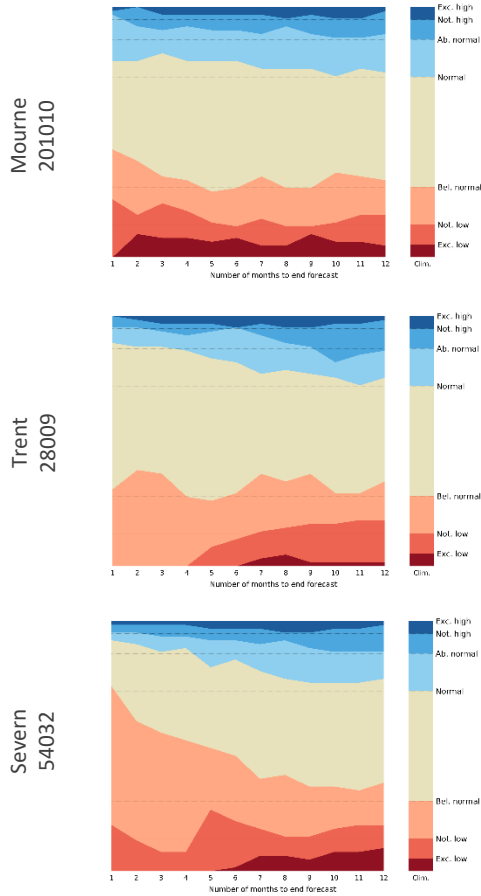


This outlook is based on monthly ensembles of historical sequences of observed climate (rainfall and potential evapotranspiration) that form input to a hydrological model. The outputs are probabilistic simulations of the average river flow over the forecast period (1 to 12 months ahead), at each location.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

The 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.

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>



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.

Period: May 2026 – July 2026

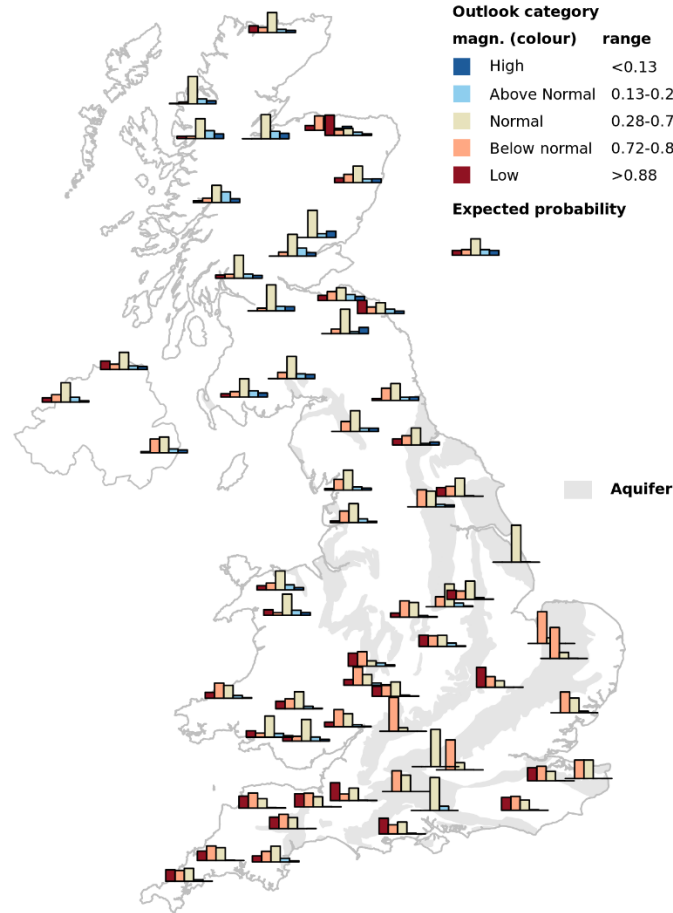
Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April 2026

The outlook for May indicates that flows are likely to be below normal to low across southern England and some catchments in eastern Scotland. Elsewhere, flows are likely to be normal. The May to July outlook suggests that below normal to low flows are likely to persist across southeast England with a shift towards normal to above normal flows across northwestern areas.

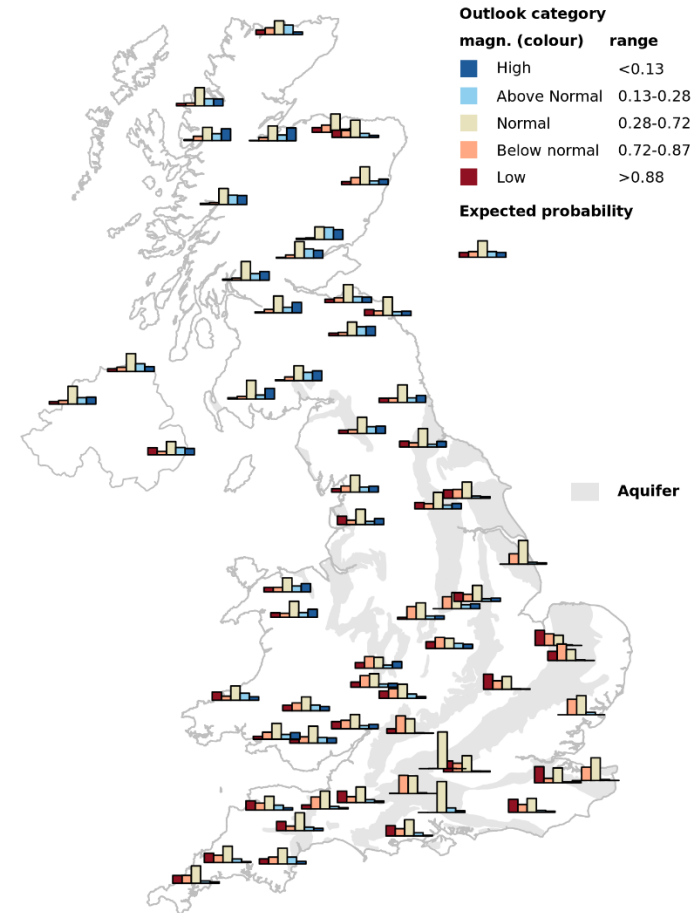
The historical weather analogues method uses Met Office predictions of average weather 1 and 3 months ahead to provide inputs to a hydrological model. Like the ESP method, observed rainfall and temperature data from past years are used to drive the predictions, however, the analogue method constrains 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 2026



## 3-month river flow outlook starting May 2026



### Met Office 1-month likelihood of precipitation impact



### Met Office 3-month likelihood of precipitation impact

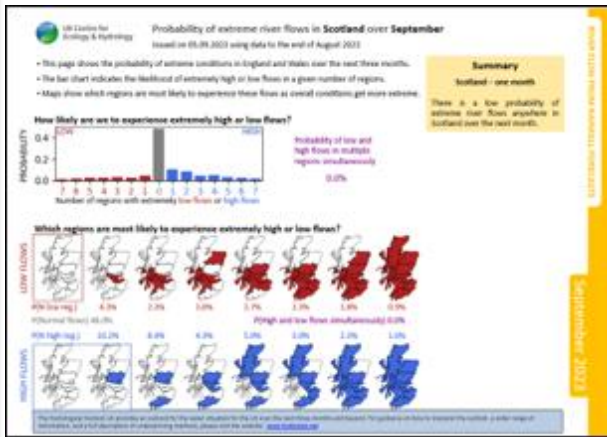


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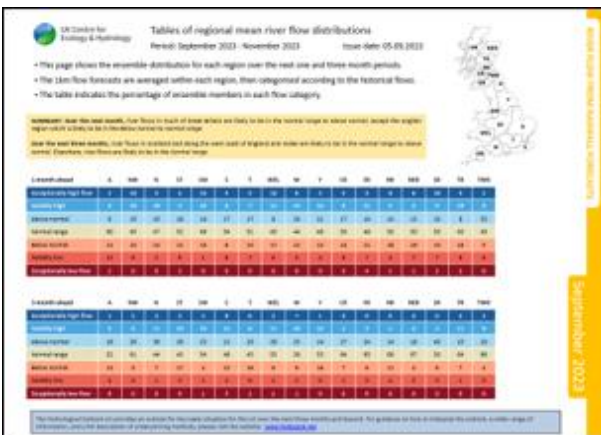
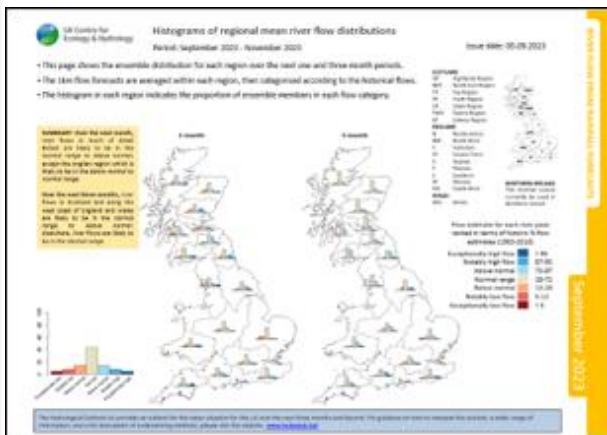
- These (yellow edged) pages summarise river flow forecasts produced by the UKCEH Water Balance Model.
- This model uses an ensemble of rainfall forecasts provided by the Met Office and a hydrological model to forecast river flows for the next one- and three-months ahead.
- A detailed description of 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.

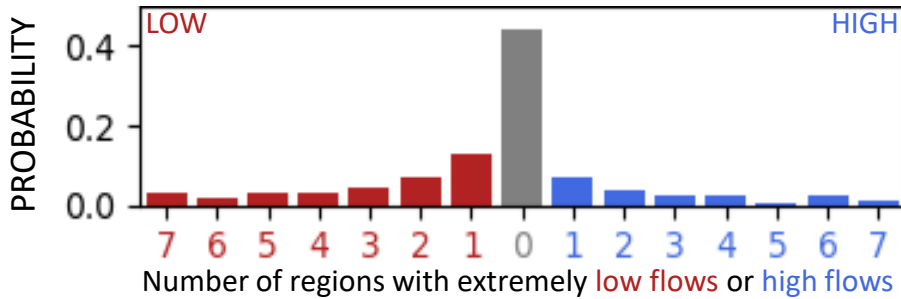
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in Scotland** over the next month. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

## Summary

### Scotland – one month

Extremely high or low flows are not likely to be observed in Scotland over May.

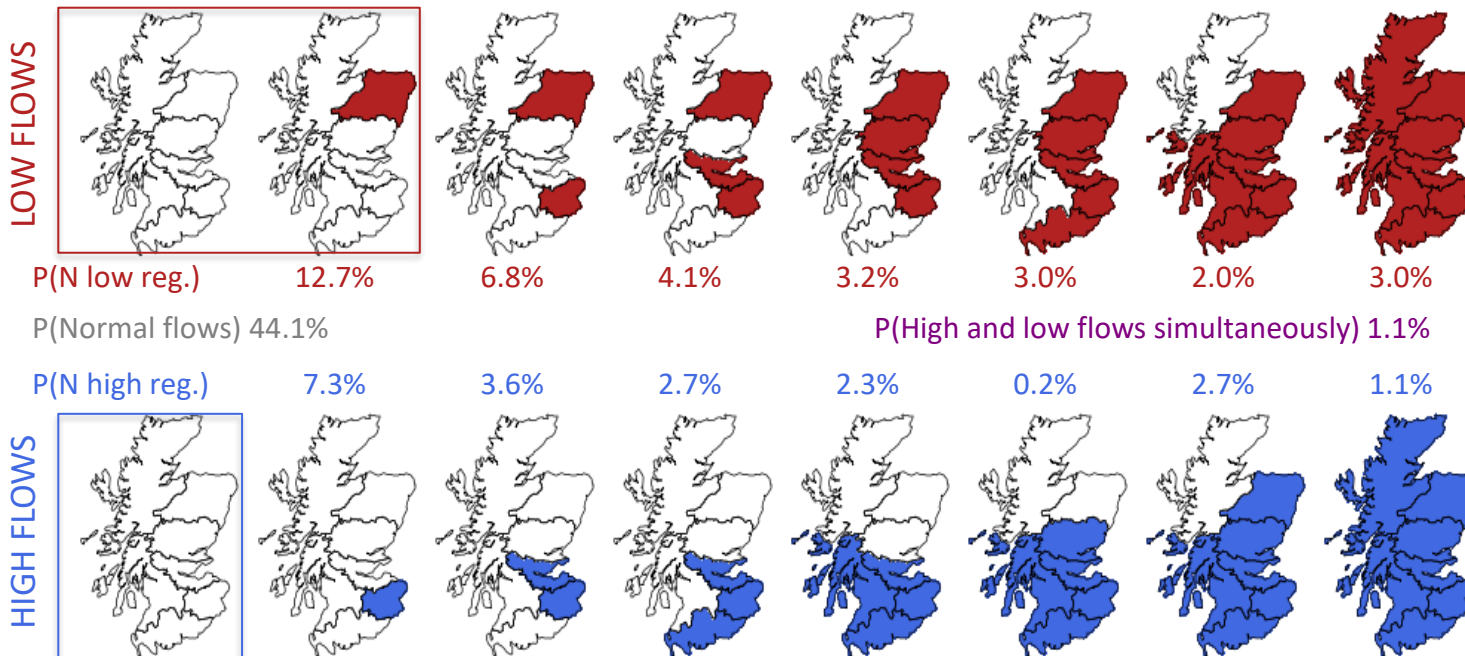
### How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

1.1%

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



P(High and low flows simultaneously) 1.1%

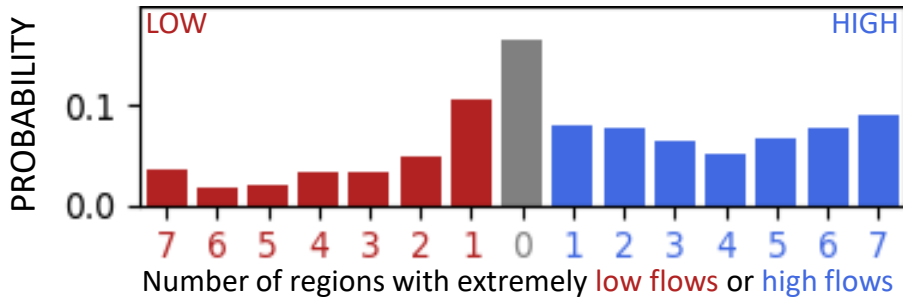
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in Scotland** over the next three months. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more extreme.

## Summary

### Scotland – three months

Extremely high flows may be observed in southern Scotland over the next three months.

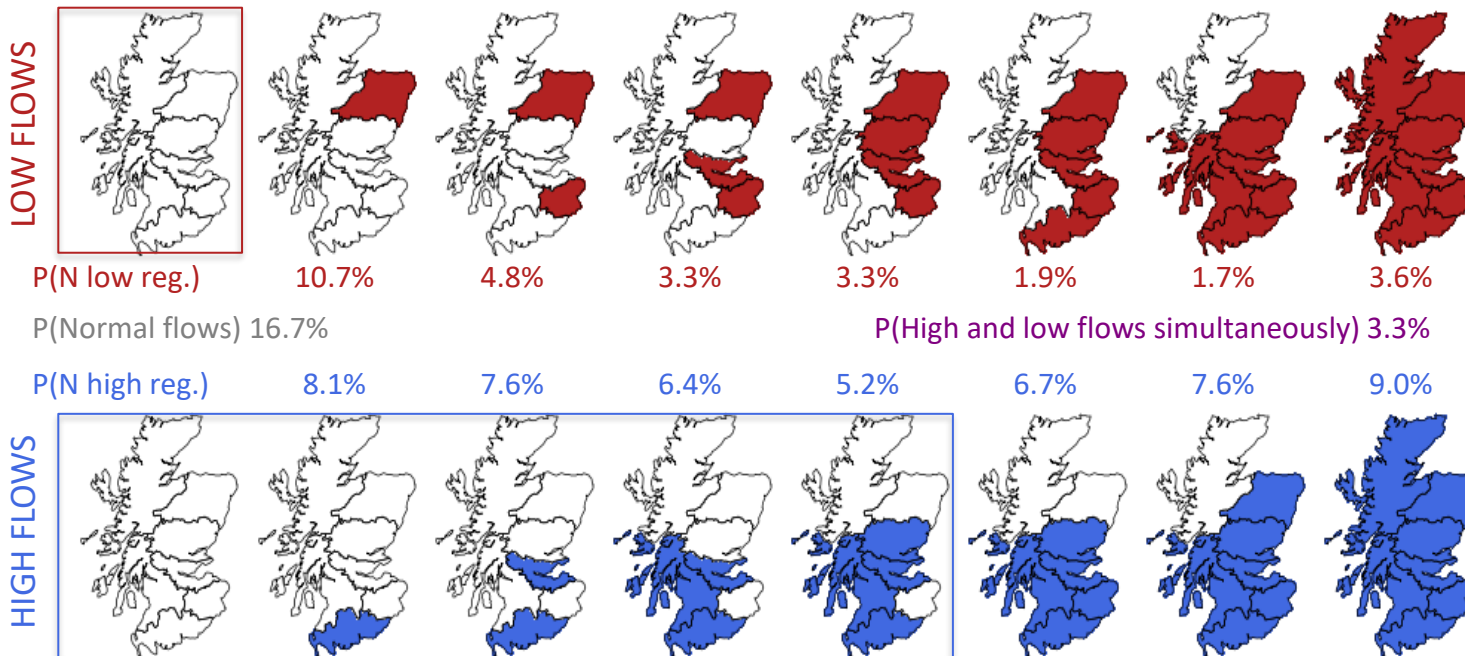
### How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

3.3%

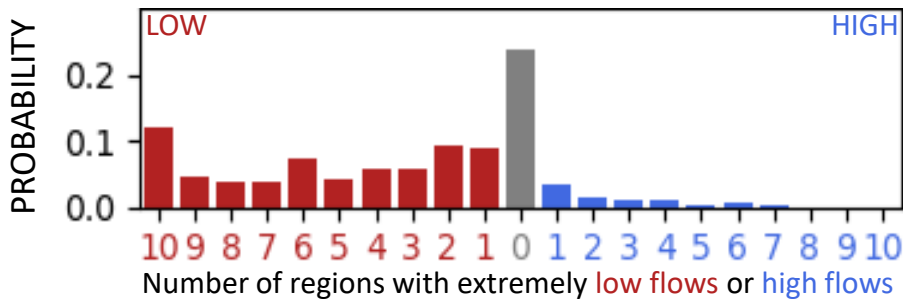
### Which regions are most likely to experience extremely low or high flows?



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**  
 Extremely low flows are likely to be observed across parts of southern, central, and eastern England over the next month.

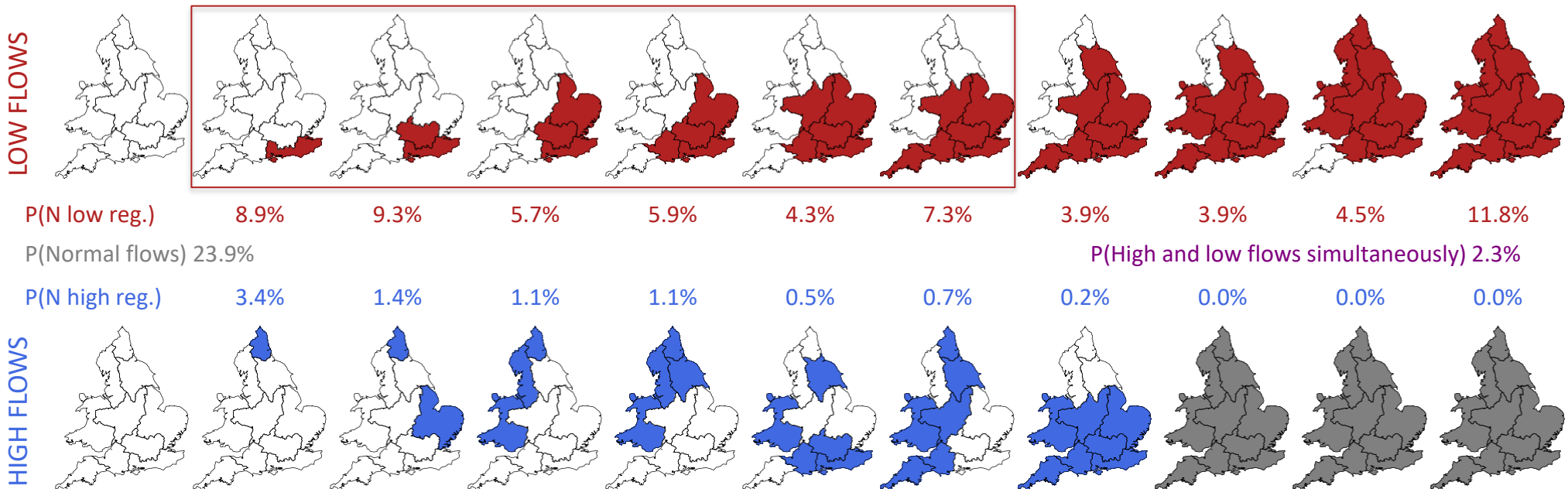
## How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

2.3%

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



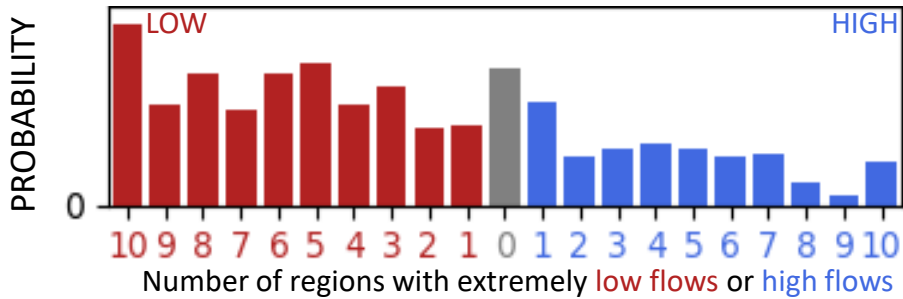
This page shows the **probability of extreme conditions in England and Wales** over the next three months. The bar chart indicates the likelihood of extremely high or low flows in a given number of regions. Maps show which regions are most likely to experience these flows as overall conditions get more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

## Summary

### England and Wales – three months

Extremely low flows are likely to be observed across parts of southern, central, and eastern England over the next three months.

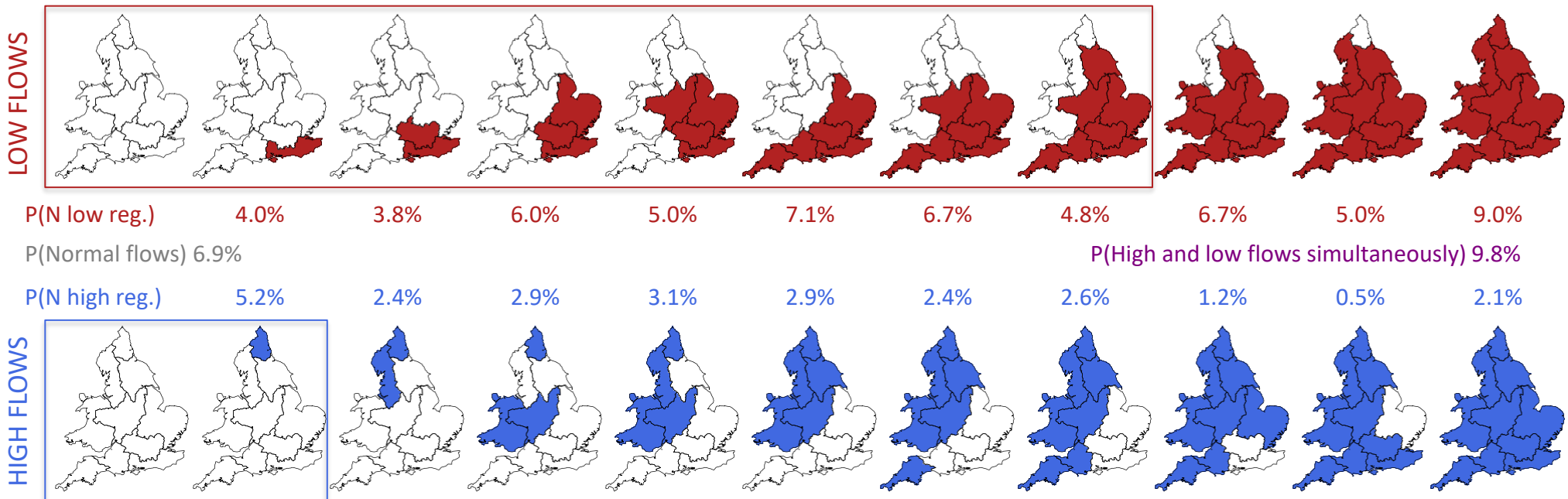
## How likely are we to experience extremely low or high flows?



Probability of low and high flows in multiple regions simultaneously

9.8%

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

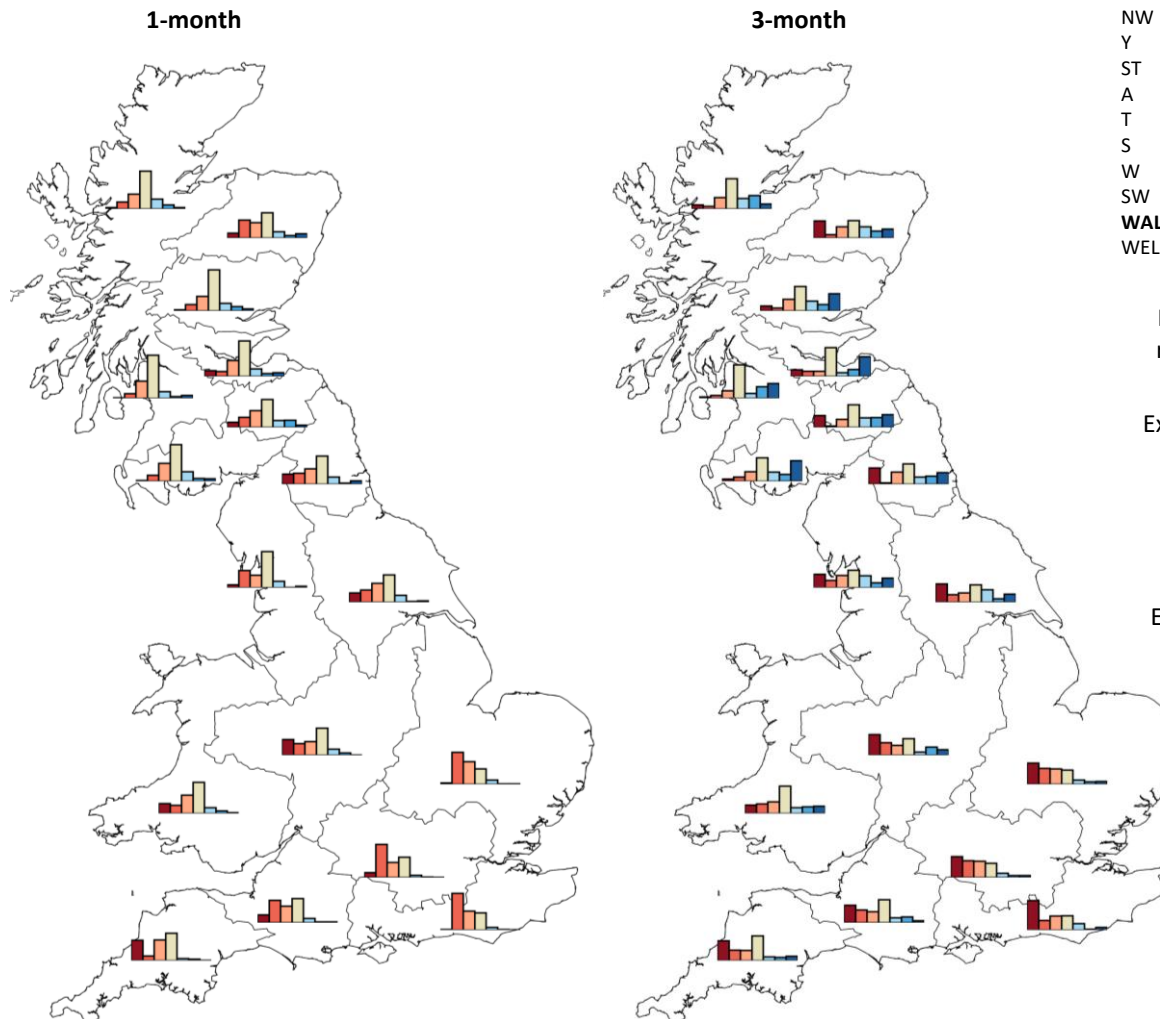


P(High and low flows simultaneously) 9.8%

- 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 across Great Britain are likely to be in the *normal range* to *notably low* in almost all areas.

**Over the next three months,** river flows in southern and central England are likely to be in the *normal range* to *exceptionally low*. Flows in southern and eastern Scotland are likely to be in the *normal range* to *above normal*.



### SCOTLAND

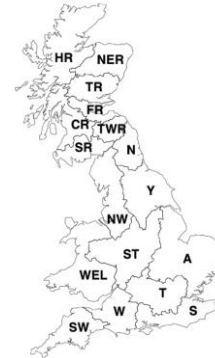
- HR Highlands Region
- NER North East Region
- TR Tay Region
- FR Forth Region
- CR Clyde Region
- TWR Tweed Region
- SR Solway Region

### ENGLAND

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

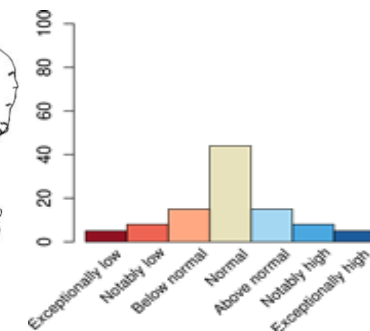
### WALES

- WEL Welsh

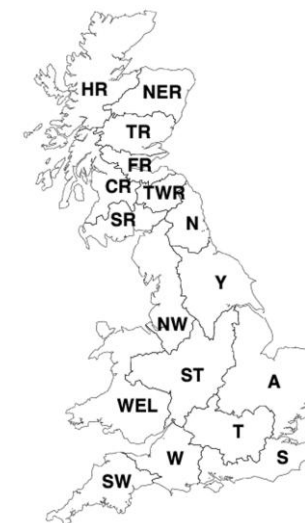


Flow estimate for each river pixel ranked in terms of historic % flow estimates (1963-2016)

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



- 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 across Great Britain are likely to be in the *normal range to notably low* in almost all areas.

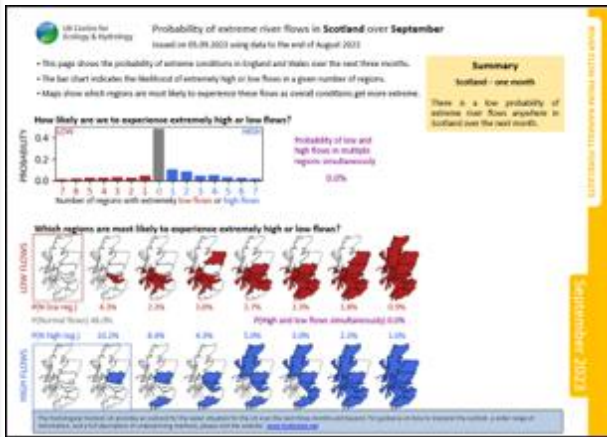
**Over the next three months**, river flows in southern and central England are likely to be in the *normal range to exceptionally low*. Flows in southern and eastern Scotland are likely to be in the *normal range to above normal*.

1-month ahead	A	NW	N	ST	SW	S	T	WEL	W	Y	CR	FR	HR	NER	SR	TR	TWR
Exceptionally high flow	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	5	2	6	3	2	3
Notably high	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	3	1	1	2	4	5	3	4	6	10
Above normal	6	8	10	8	2	3	3	8	6	9	9	10	13	8	12	10	9
Normal range	20	47	37	35	36	22	27	41	31	36	56	46	50	33	48	54	36
Below normal	30	16	20	18	27	25	20	24	22	24	22	21	20	20	24	19	22
Notably low	42	22	14	15	6	48	43	11	29	16	6	6	9	23	8	8	13
Exceptionally low flow	2	4	13	20	27	1	6	13	10	12	1	8	2	6	1	1	7

3-month ahead	A	NW	N	ST	SW	S	T	WEL	W	Y	CR	FR	HR	NER	SR	TR	TWR
Exceptionally high flow	4	12	15	7	6	3	2	10	3	11	19	26	6	12	27	22	17
Notably high	3	6	10	11	4	1	3	9	7	4	15	9	17	9	9	8	13
Above normal	6	16	9	4	5	8	6	8	6	16	6	5	14	15	12	13	13
Normal range	19	23	26	22	32	19	19	36	30	23	44	38	40	23	31	32	30
Below normal	20	16	16	13	13	18	21	15	14	12	10	7	15	15	13	15	11
Notably low	21	9	2	16	14	12	22	13	17	10	4	7	3	4	6	4	2
Exceptionally low flow	28	18	21	27	26	38	27	11	23	24	2	9	5	22	3	6	16

- 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



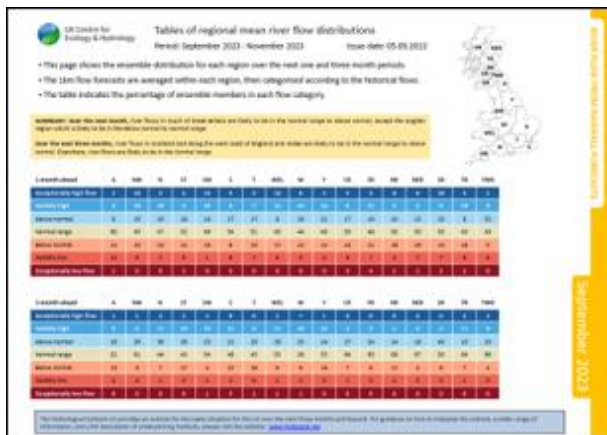
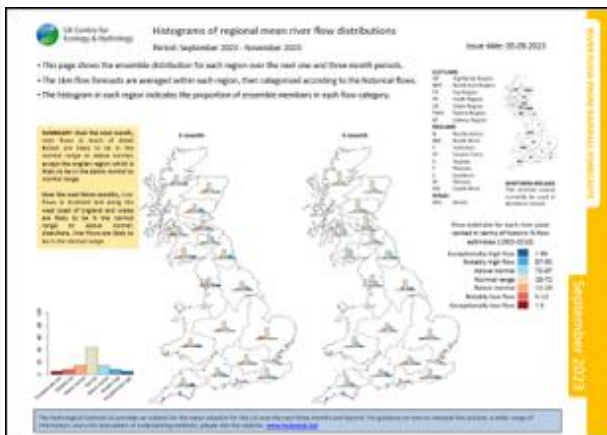
Extreme river flows are defined as those which rank in the lowest or highest 13% of historical flow estimates (1963 - 2016). This definition encompasses the 'Notably' and 'Exceptionally' high/low flow bands used elsewhere in the Outlook.

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 box summary.

## 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).

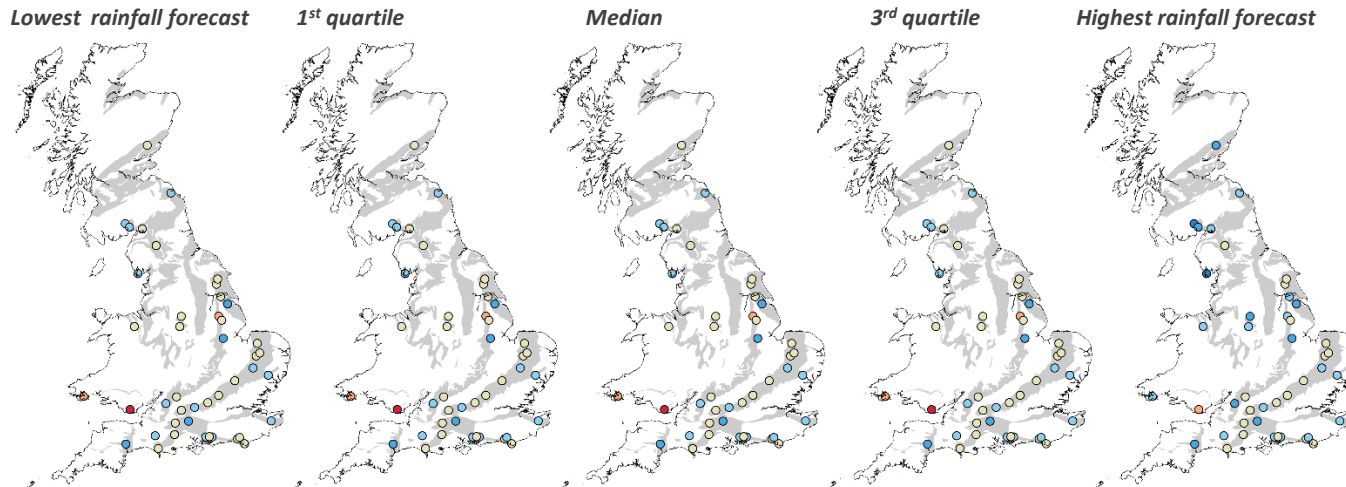
Period: May 2026 – July 2026

Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April

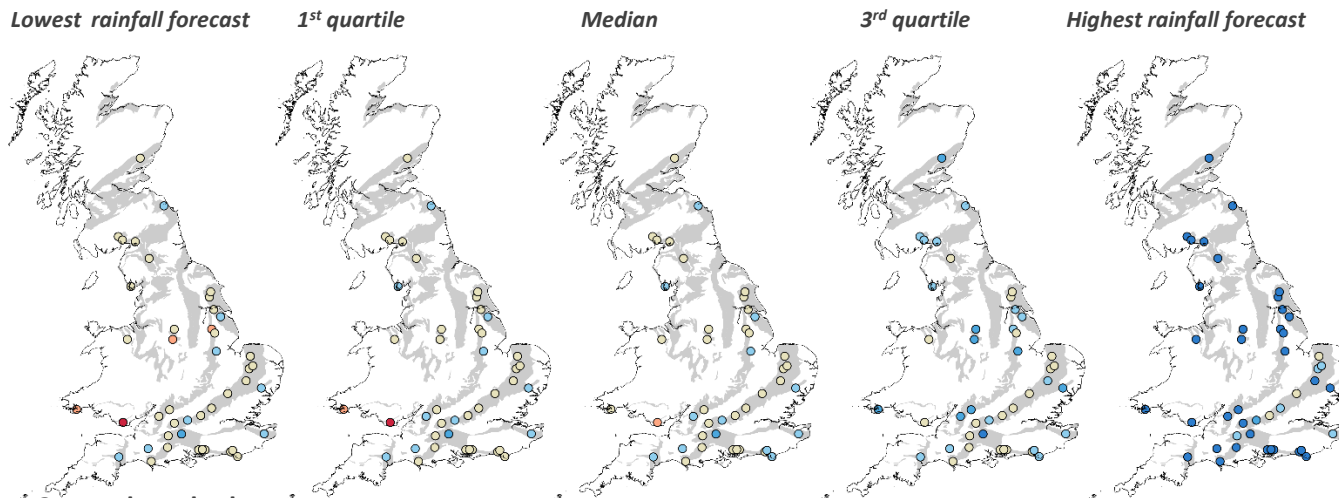
Under median rainfall conditions, groundwater levels in the Chalk across the South, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and East Anglia are expected to be within the normal to notably high range over the next month. Levels in the Jurassic limestones are expected to range between below normal to notably high. In northern England and Scotland levels are expected to be normal to above normal. In north Wales, levels are expected to be normal, whereas in South Wales it is anticipated levels will fall to below normal to exceptionally low conditions. Under median rainfall conditions the three-month groundwater forecast broadly matches the one-month outlook, with levels generally declining slightly but remaining within the normal to above normal range. Contrastingly, in South Wales levels are expected to increase to be within the normal to below normal range.

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.

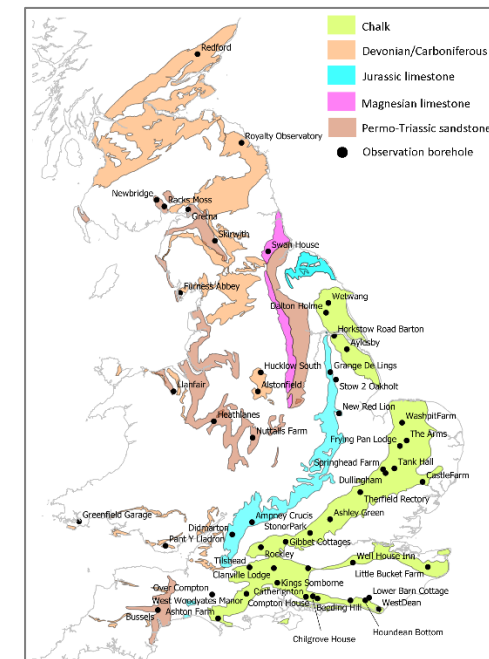


1-month outlook



3-month outlook

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

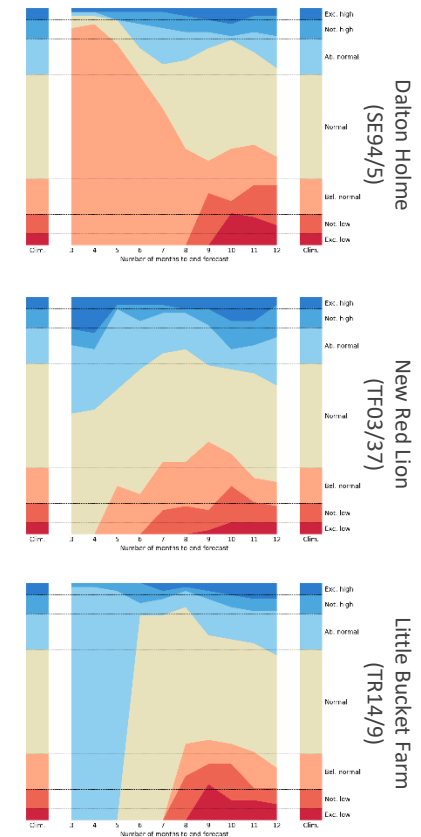
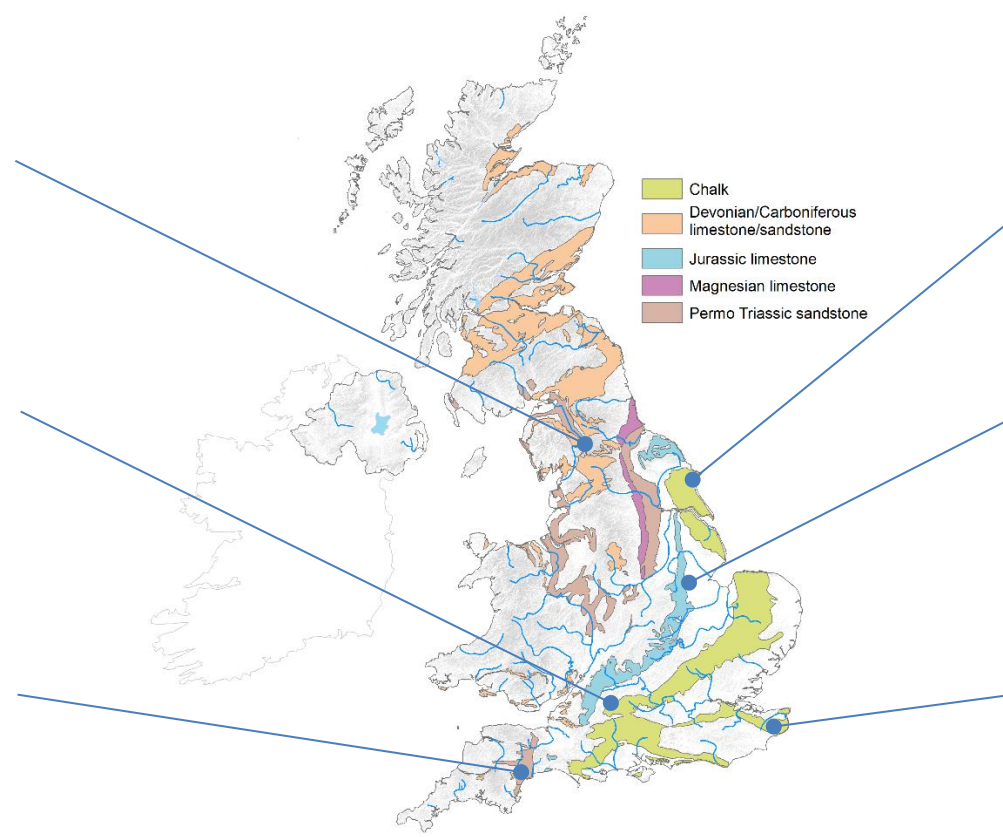
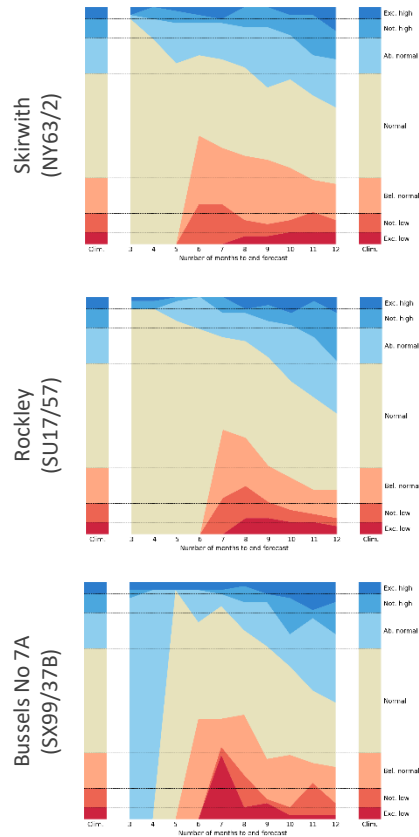


# Outlook based on modelled groundwater from historical climate

Period: May 2026 – April 2027

Issued on 11.05.2026 using data to the end of April

Levels in the South at Bussels No 7A and Little Bucket Farm are expected to transition from above normal conditions towards more normal conditions after around four to five months. At Skirwith, Rockley and New Red Lion, normal conditions are expected to persist for the next four to six months, after which levels are expected to decline towards more below normal conditions. At Dalton Holme it is anticipated below normal conditions will continue for the next 8 months, before conditions start to trend towards more normal levels.



This outlook is based on monthly ensembles of historical sequences of observed climate (rainfall and potential evapotranspiration) 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.