Monthly water situation report

East Anglia

Summary – May 2022

May was a normal month with an average of 39 mm rainfall, 84% of the Long-Term Average (LTA) falling across the region. Across the catchments, rainfall varied between 70-105% of the LTA, meaning rainfall was classified as normal in all catchments. The longer-term rainfall totals are showing an east-west divide, with western catchments generally receiving more rainfall than eastern catchments. As a result of the normal levels of rainfall, SMD has remained at notably high levels following the dry April. Furthermore, 48% of river flow indicator sites are now at below normal levels, with another 38% of indicator sites at notably low or exceptionally low levels. 57% of the river indicator sites saw their classification drop during May. 72% of groundwater indicator sites are now at normal levels with the remaining 28% of indicator sites at below normal levels, this is a deterioration from the April report where only 5% of indicator sites were at below normal levels. Most reservoirs in the area are currently operating at or above their normal operational curves.

Rainfall

Overall, East Anglia received normal amount of rainfall in May, with an average rainfall recorded 39 mm which was 84% of the LTA. Most catchments experienced normal rainfall with the lowest rainfall total in the North Norfolk catchment with 35 mm (70% LTA) and the NW Norfolk and Wissey catchment with 36 mm (70% LTA) classifying them as normal. Slightly higher rainfall totals occurred in southern catchments such as the South Essex catchment with 47 mm (105% LTA) and the North Essex with 43 mm (97% LTA) classifying them as normal. The rainfall accumulated for the past 3 months is showing an east-west divide, with western catchments generally receiving below normal levels of rainfall whilst the eastern catchments have received notably low levels of rainfall. The 6-month total is showing a similar divide, with North and western catchments receiving normal levels of rainfall whilst the eastern and southern catchments have received below normal levels. The 12-month total is showing normal to below normal levels.

Soil Moisture Deficit/Recharge

SMD remained notably high for the first part of May with the overall value increasing from 58 mm to 92 mm by the end of May reaching normal values in response to the increased warming and reduced rainfall. These SMD levels responded consistently across the region except for a few slightly higher levels around the coast.

River Flows

Following the normal levels of rainfall in May, 48% of indicator sites are at below normal levels, 29% are at notably low levels, 14% are at normal levels and 9% are at exceptionally low levels. 57% of the indicator sites have seen their river flow classification drop from April to May, most notably at Tove and Waveney which have dropped to exceptionally low levels for the time of year. The remaining 43% of indicator sites have remained at the same classification. The observed decreases are a delayed impact of the dry April (particularly the latter half of April) which meant rivers started the month of May at low flows.

Groundwater Levels

In Response to the normal levels of rainfall in May, 78% of indicator sites have unchanged classifications from the April report. The remaining 22% of indicator sites have seen their overall classification slightly worsen. The decreases observed are likely due to the delayed impact of the exceptionally dry April. 72% of indicator sites ended may at normal levels whilst the remaining 28% of sites were at below normal levels.

Reservoir Storage/Water Resource Zone Stocks

As of the end of May, Grafham, Ardleigh and Hanningfield are all operating around their normal operational curves. Abberton is slightly above its normal operational curve whilst Alton is slightly below its normal operational curve. Abberton and Ardleigh are both classified as at above normal levels, Grafham and Hanningfield are both at normal levels whilst Alton is at Below Normal levels.

Environmental Impact

Groundwater support scheme operations has increased slightly throughout May. The Rhee groundwater support scheme ended May with 1 of the 8 pumps operating (was zero pumps operating at the end of April). The Lodes-Granta groundwater support scheme had 4 of the 6 pumps operating by the end of May (Compared to 2 at the end of April). All other pumping operations including the Thet and Little Ouse and the Hiz are not operating.

Forward Look

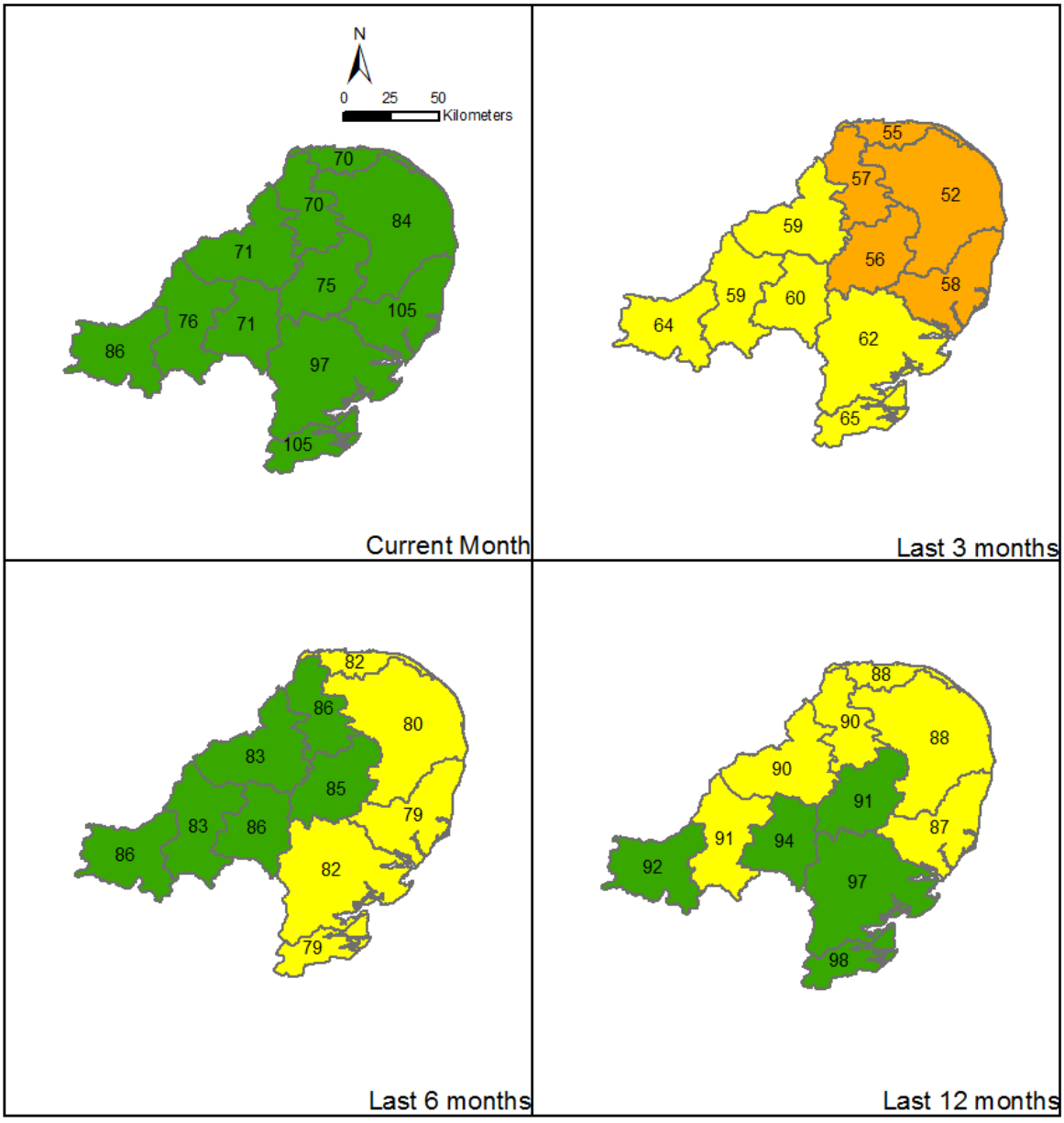
Probabilistic ensemble projections for river flows at key sites
June 2022: Gipping, Stiffkey, Ivel and Kym are all showing an increased probability of normal flows. The three sites on the Ouse are all showing an increased probability of less than normal flows.
September 2022: All sites are showing an increased probability of normal flows. The only exceptions are the Ely Ouse and Stiffkey which are showing an increased probability of below normal flows.

Probabilistic ensemble projections for groundwater levels in key aquifers
September 2022: All sites are showing an increased probability of normal levels. The only exception is Redlands, which is showing an increased chance of below normal levels.
March 2023: Redlands, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Kenninghall and Bircham Newton all have increased probabilities of lower-than-normal levels. Therfield is showing an increased chance of normal levels whilst Washpit and Smeetham are both in line with the expected probability.

Author: Hydrology and Operations Contact details: 03708506506

Rainfall

May 2022

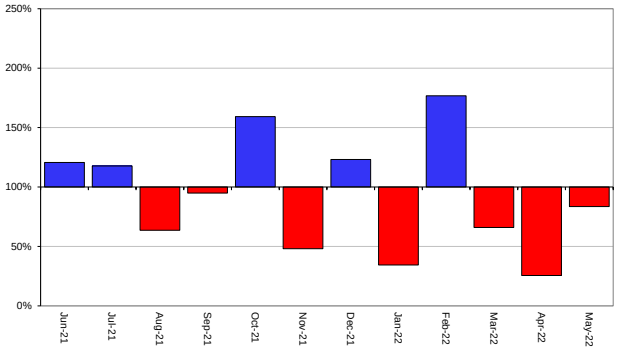


Exceptionally high	Rainfall expressed as percentage of 1961-1990 Long Term Average for the specified duration. Classes derived from data for the period 1891 to 2017 based on the HadUK dataset (Met Office © Crown Copyright)
Notably high	
Above normal	Total rainfall for hydrological areas across England for the current month, the last three months, the last six months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals. Final HadUK data based on the Met Office 1 km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office © Crown Copyright, 2021). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1 km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2021.
Normal	
Below normal	
Notably low	
Exceptionally low	

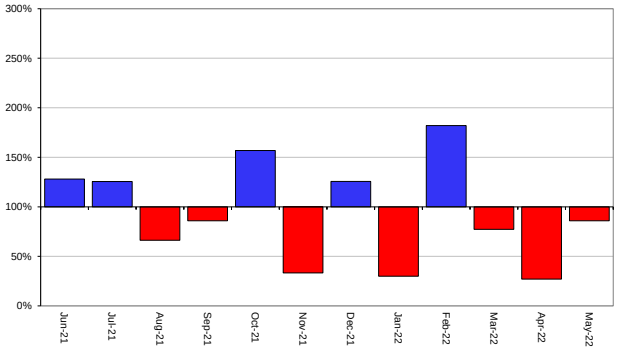
Above average rainfall

Below average rainfall

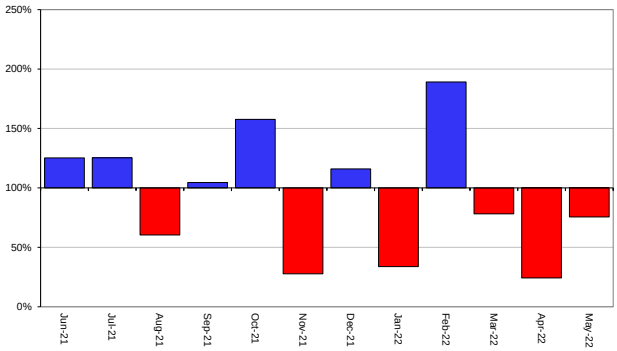
1-Month Period for East Anglia



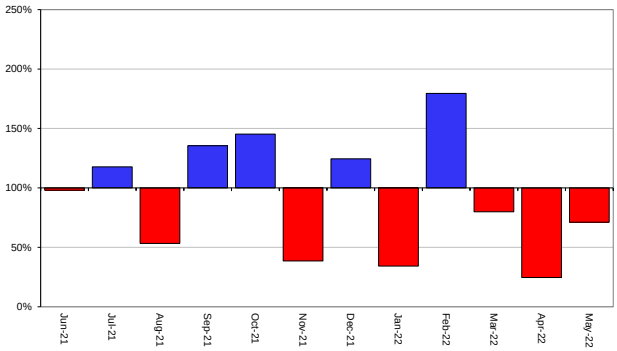
1-Month Period for Upper Bedford Ouse



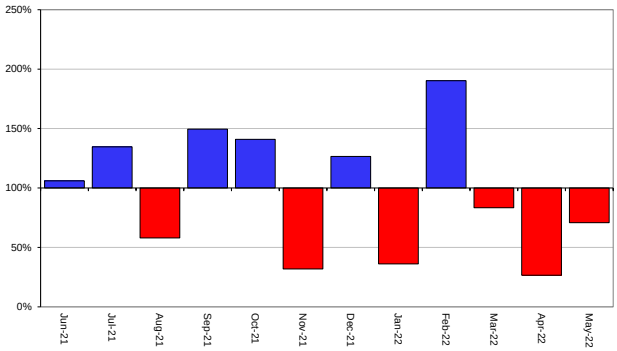
1-Month Period for Lower Bedford Ouse



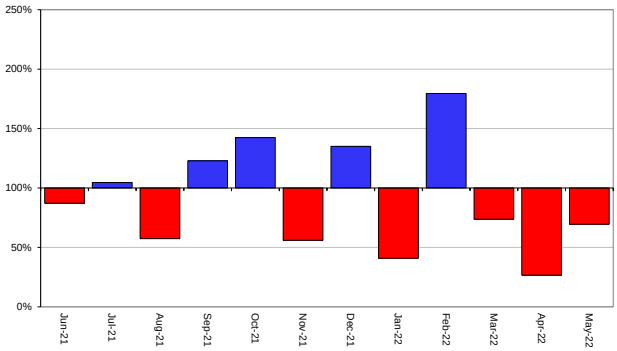
1-Month Period for Central Area Fenland



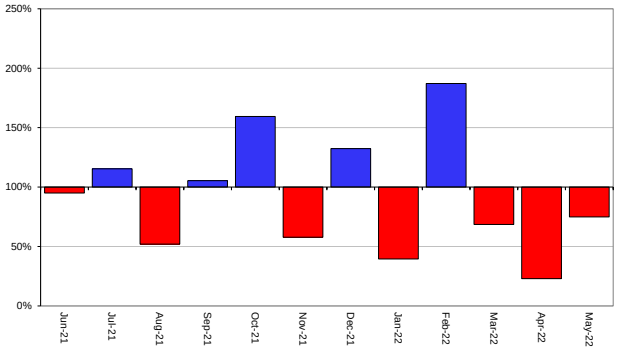
1-Month Period for Cam



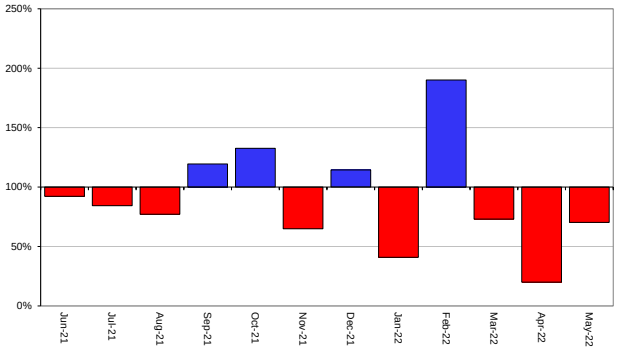
1-Month Period for NW Norfolk and Wissey



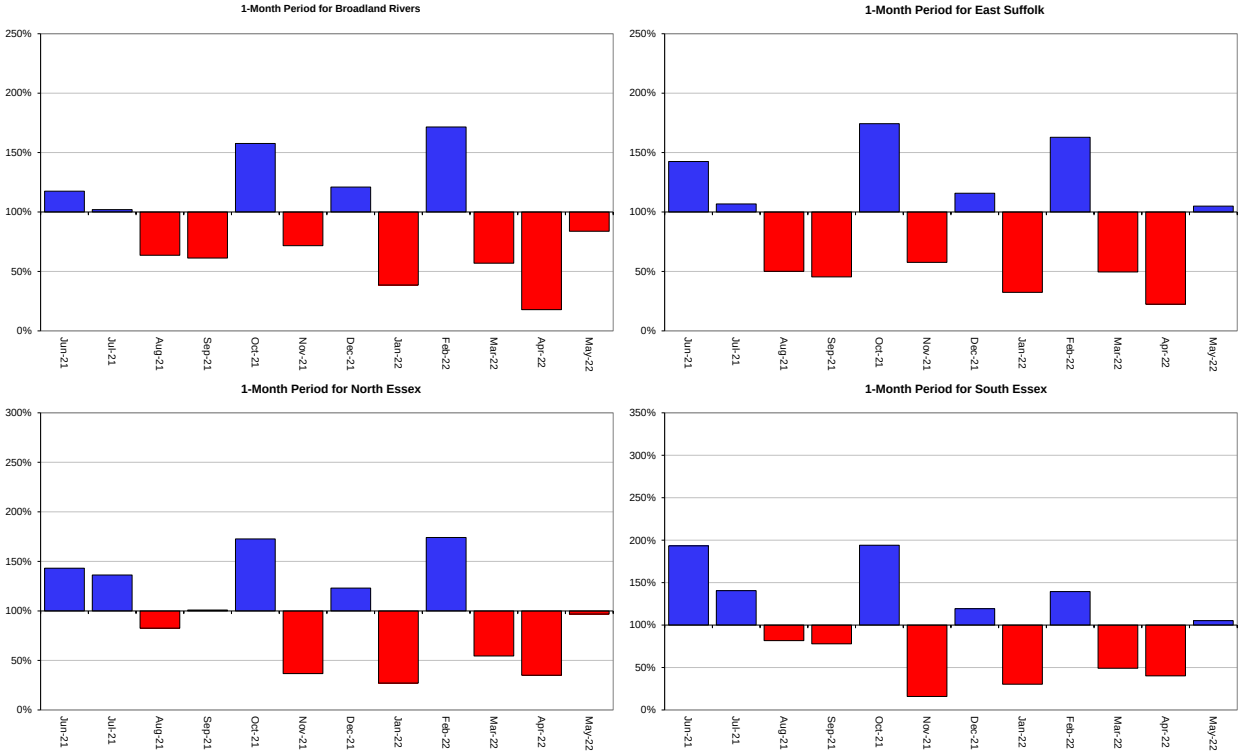
1-Month Period for Little Ouse and Lark

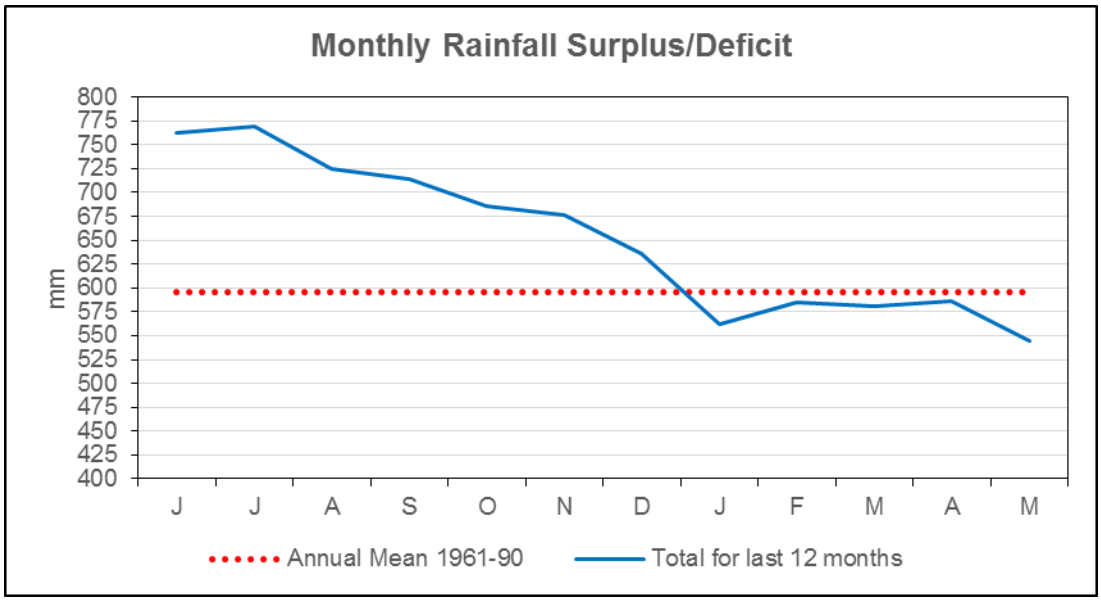


1-Month Period for North Norfolk

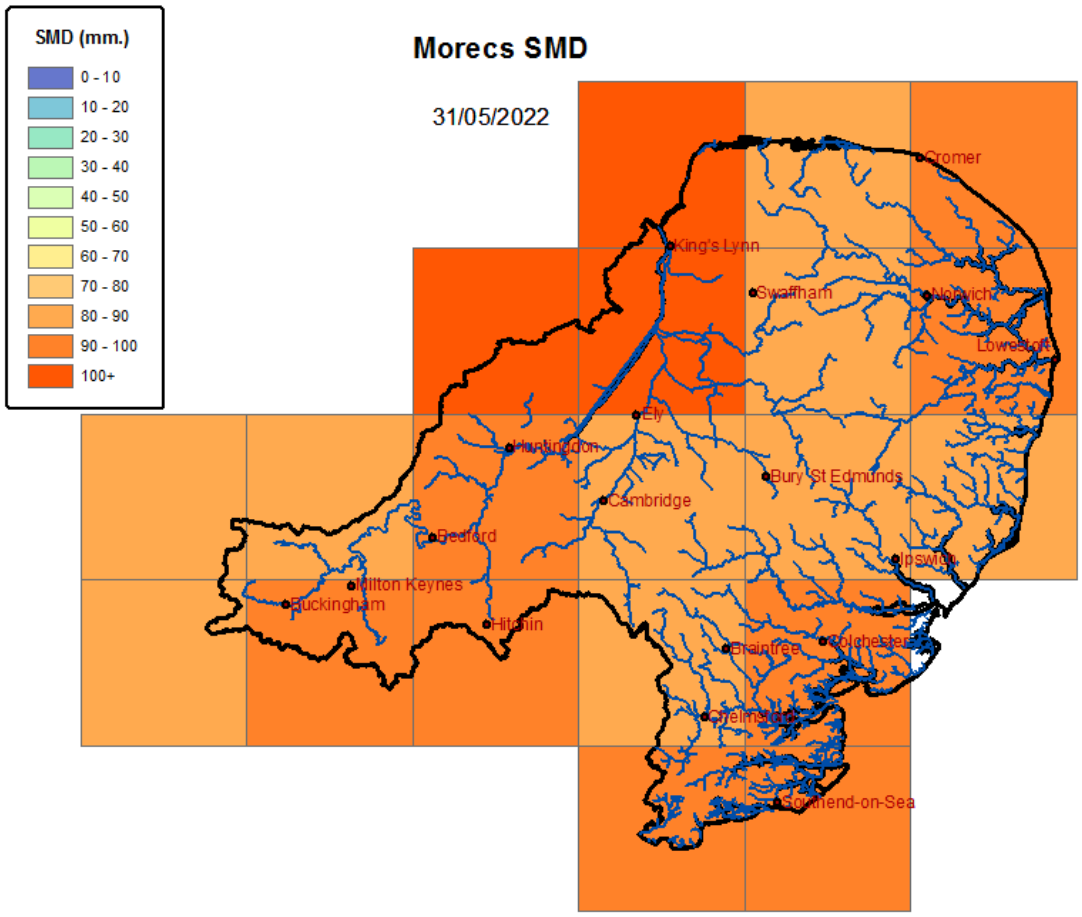


Above average rainfall Below average rainfall





Soil Moisture Deficit

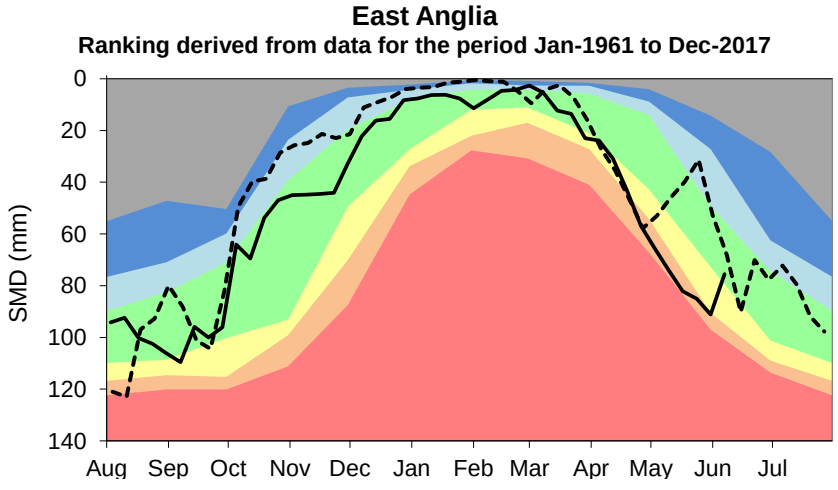


Data based on MORECS (Met Office © Crown Copyright)

Data based on MORECS dataset (Met Office © Crown Copyright)

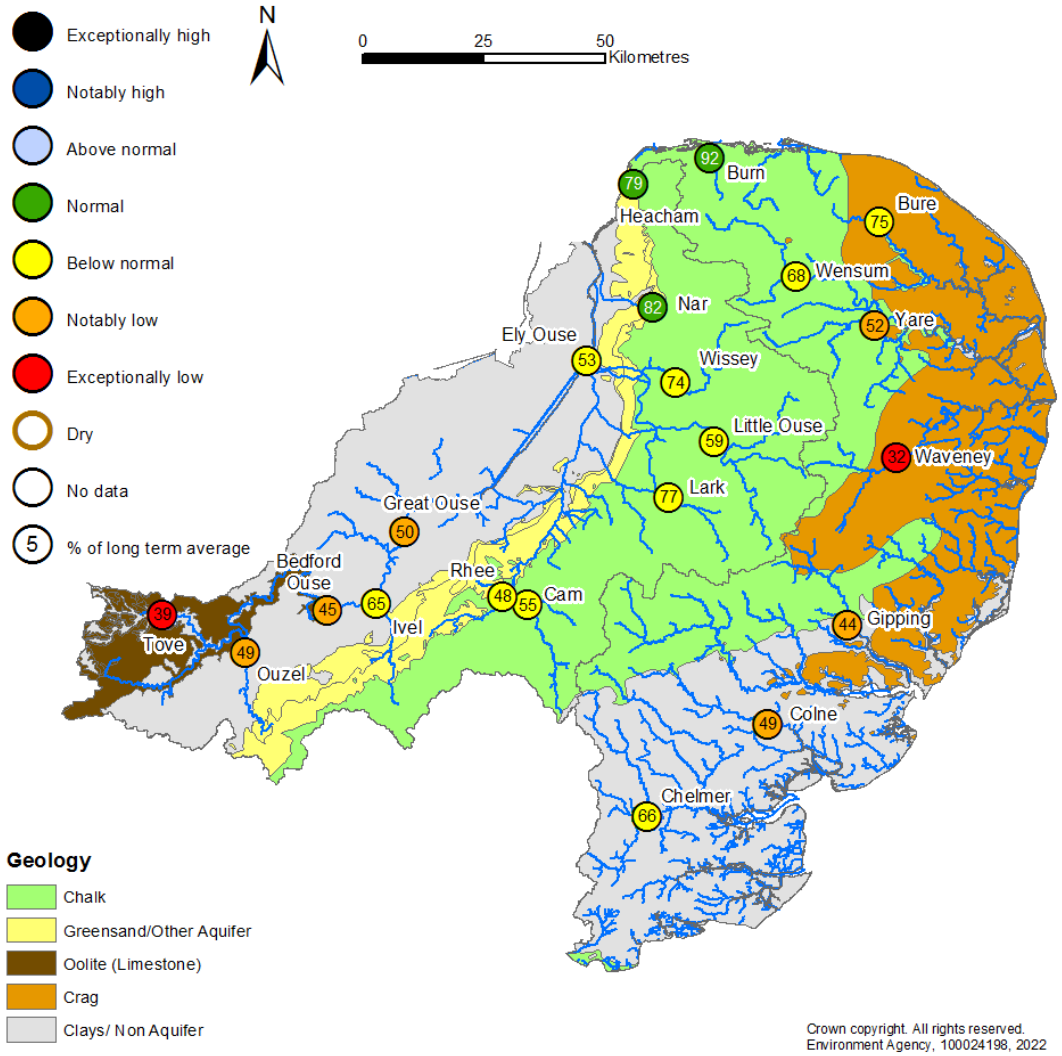
——2021-22 – – –2020-21

Exceptionally high	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Below normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	—— Latest data

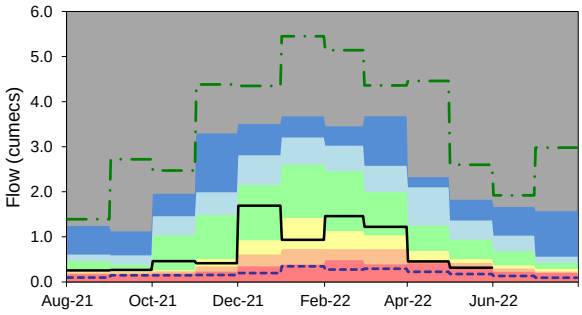


River Flow

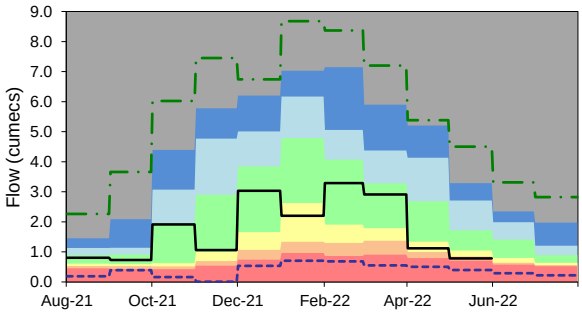
May 2022



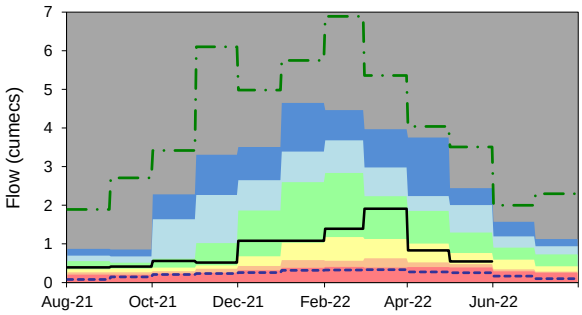
Cappenham, TOVE
Ranking derived from data for the period Feb-1962 to Dec-2017



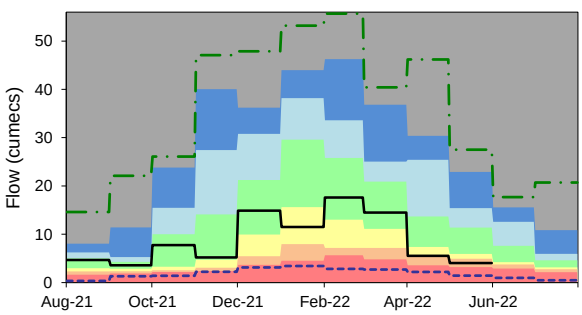
Willen, OUZEL
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1962 to Dec-2017



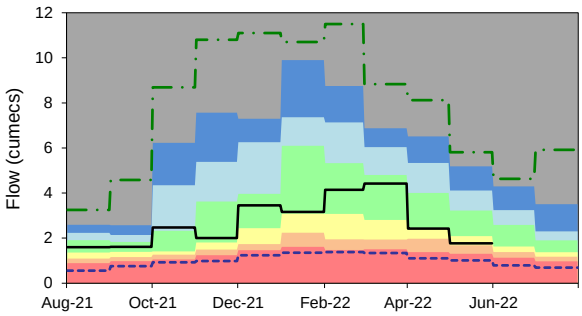
Burnt Mill, RHEE
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1962 to Dec-2017



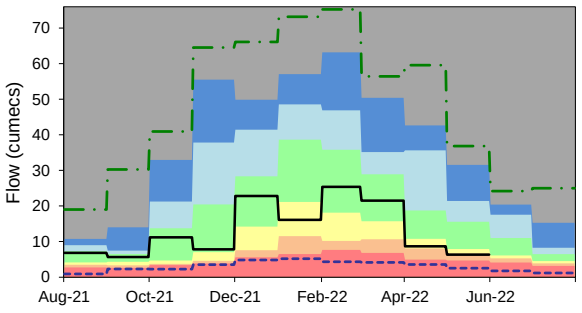
Roxton, GREAT OUSE
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1972 to Dec-2017



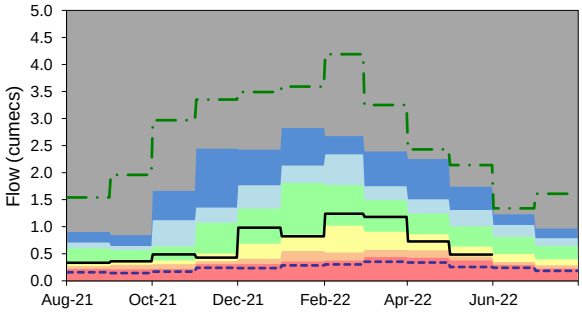
Blunham, IVEL
Ranking derived from data for the period Aug-1959 to Dec-2017



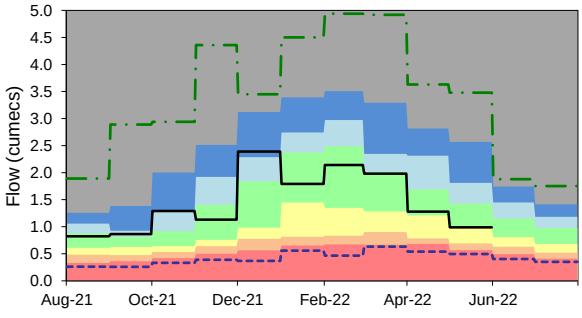
Offord (Gross Flows), GREAT OUSE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1972 to Dec-2017



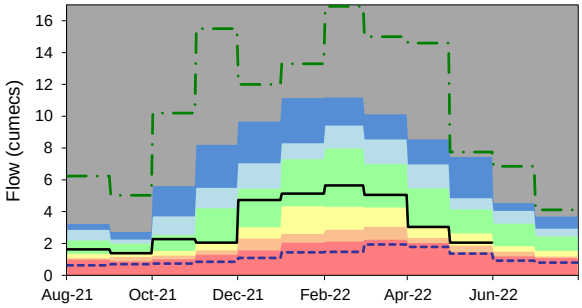
Dernford, CAM
Ranking derived from data for the period Feb-1949 to Dec-2017



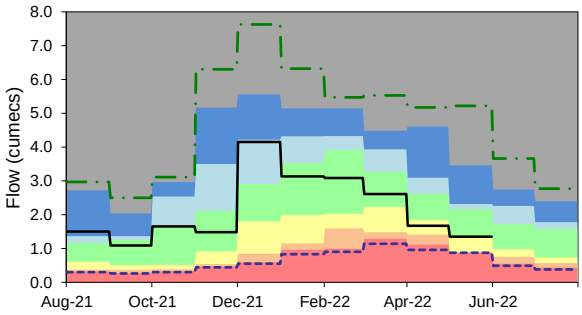
Temple, LARK
Ranking derived from data for the period Nov-1960 to Dec-2017



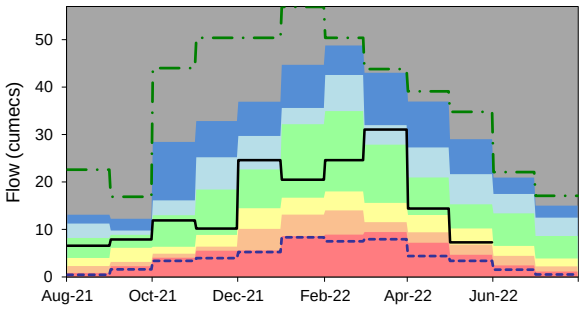
Abbey Heath, LITTLE OUSE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jun-1968 to Dec-2017



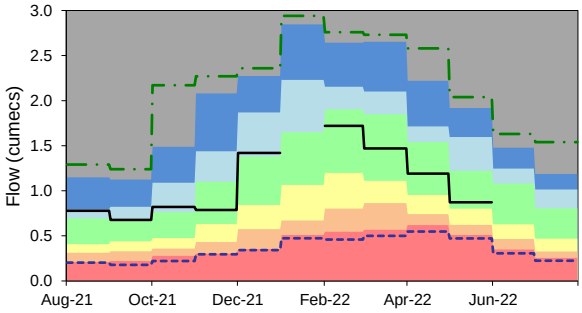
Northwold Total, WISSEY
Ranking derived from data for the period Jul-1983 to Dec-2012



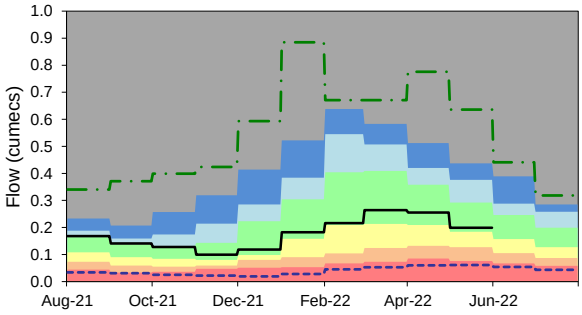
Denver, ELY OUSE
Ranking derived from data for the period Nov-1971 to Dec-2017



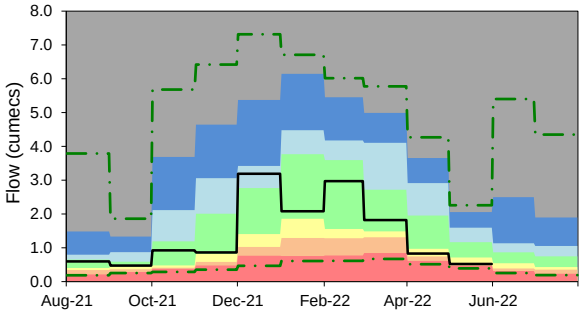
Marham, NAR
Ranking derived from data for the period Apr-1982 to Dec-2017



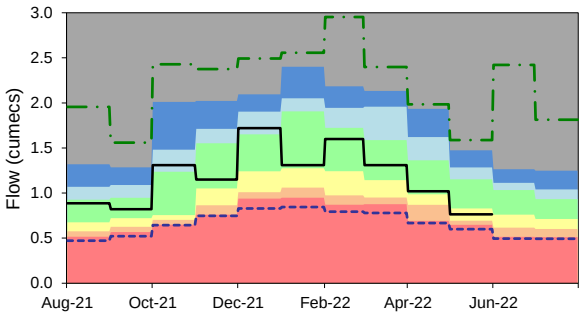
Heacham, HEACHAM
Ranking derived from data for the period Nov-1965 to Dec-2017



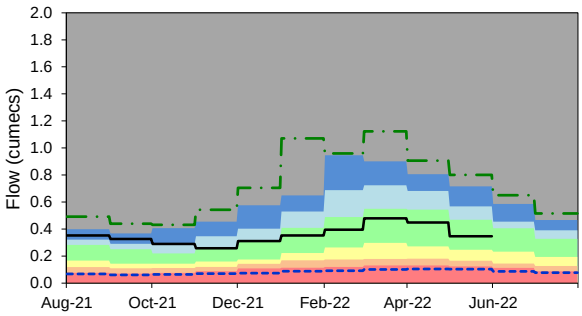
Colney, YARE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



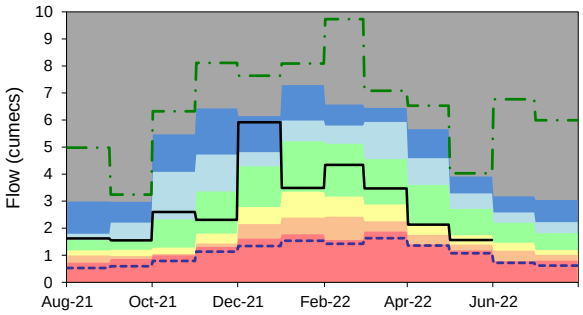
Ingworth, BURE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



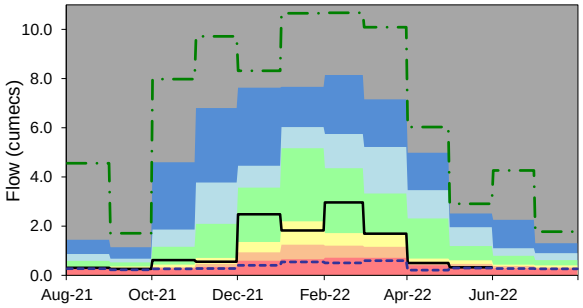
Burnham Overy, BURN
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



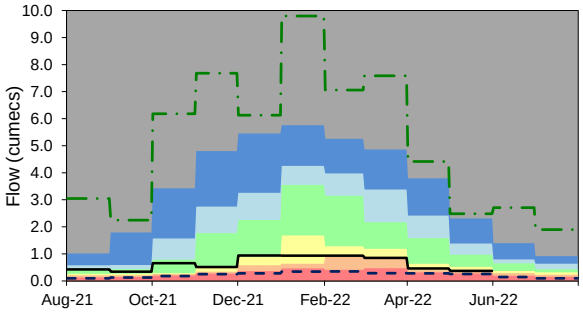
Swanton Morley Total, WENSUM
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



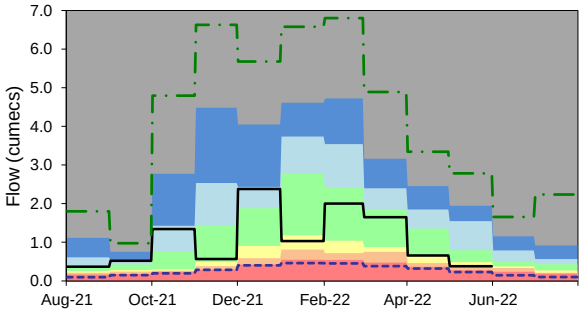
Needham Weir Total, WAVENEY (LOWER)
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



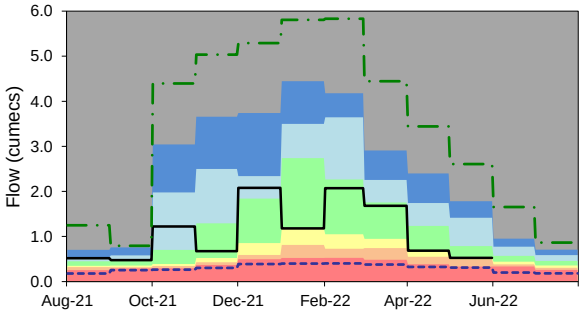
Bramford, GIPPING
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



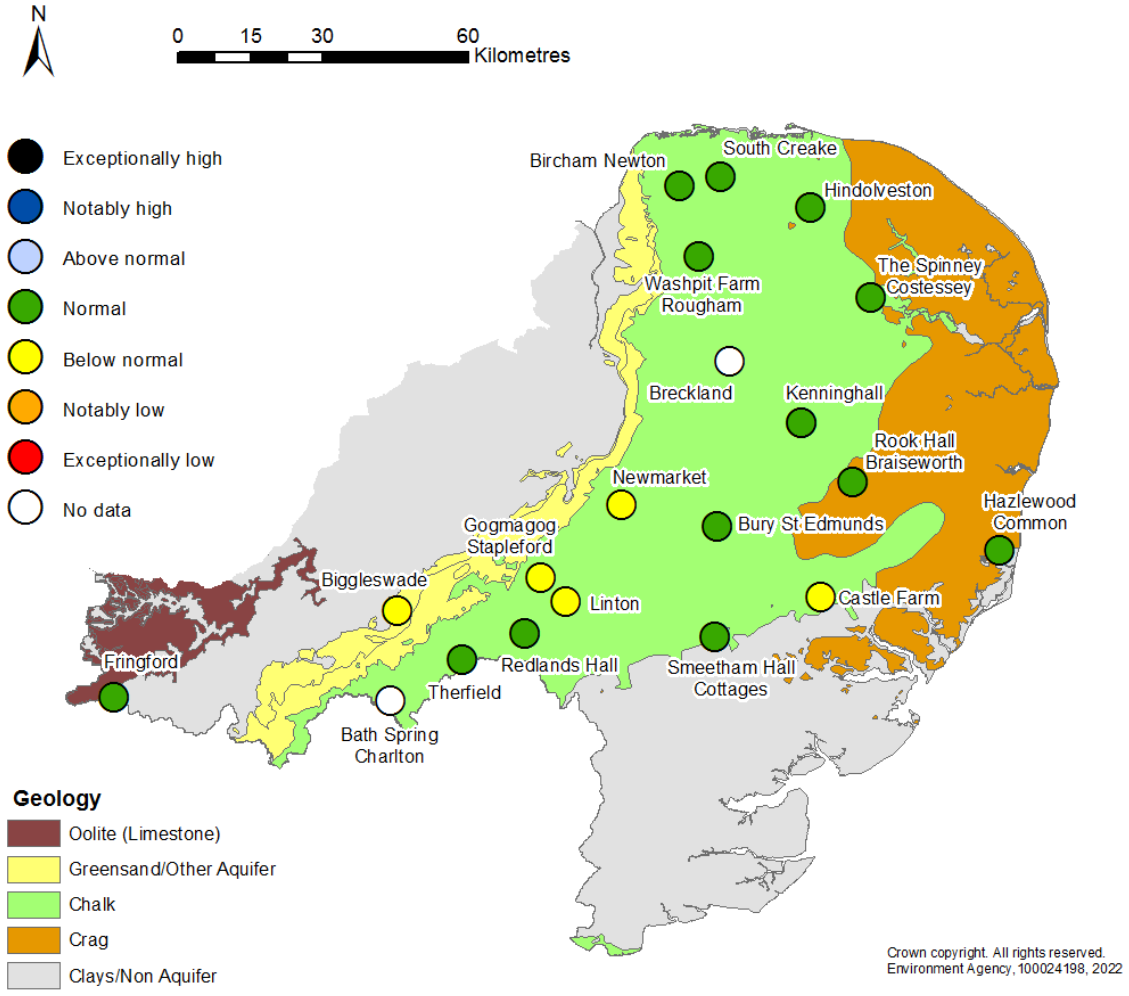
Lexden, COLNE
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



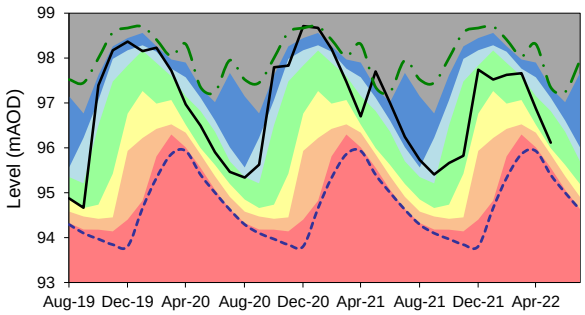
Springfield, CHELMER
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1970 to Dec-2017



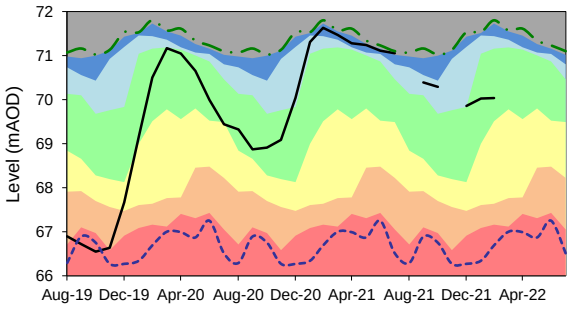
Groundwater Levels May 2022



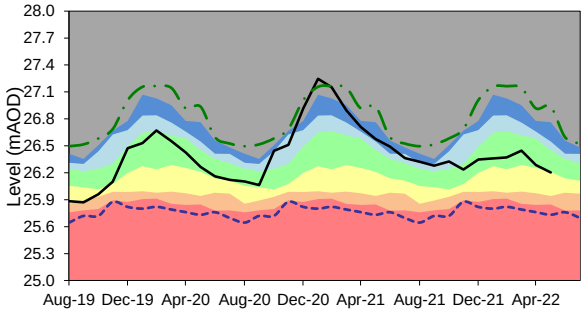
Fringford - GREAT OOLITE
Ranking derived from data for the period Sep-1980 to Dec-2017



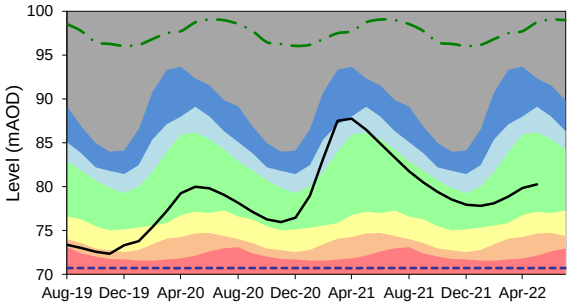
Bath Spring, Charlton - IVEL CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Mar-1993 to Dec-2017



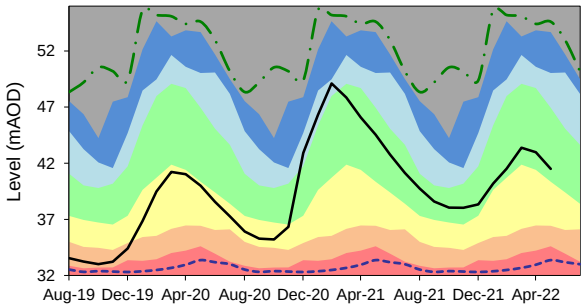
Biggleswade - IVEL SANDSTONE
Ranking derived from data for the period Mar-1968 to Dec-2017



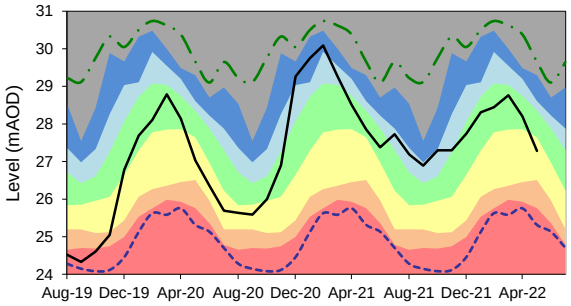
Therfield Rectory - N HERTS CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1883 to Dec-2017



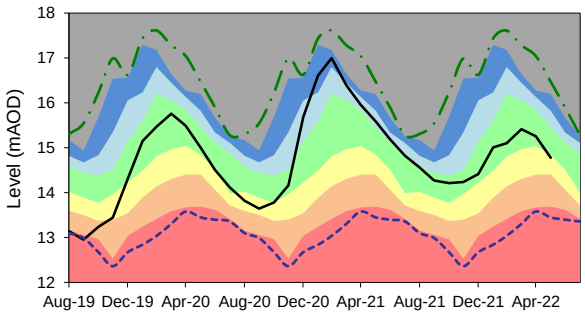
Redlands Hall, Ickleton - CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Aug-1963 to Dec-2017



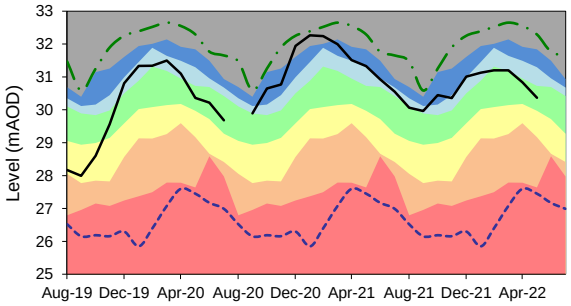
Linton - CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2017



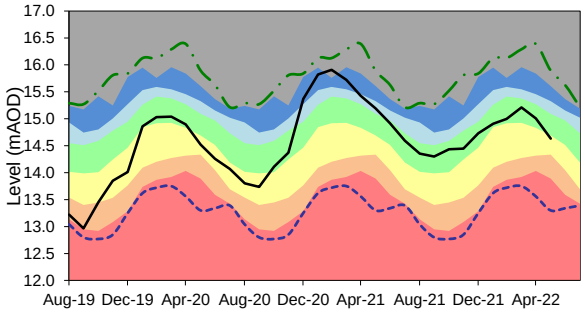
Gog Magog, Stapleford - CAM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1980 to Dec-2017



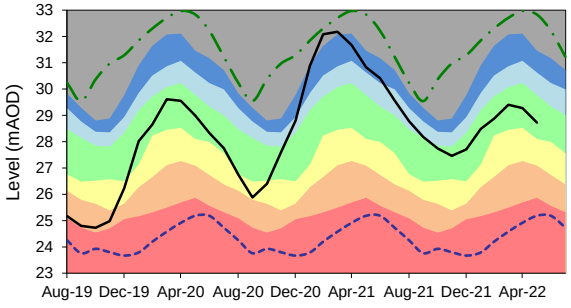
Bury St Edmunds - UPPER LARK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period May-1983 to Dec-2017



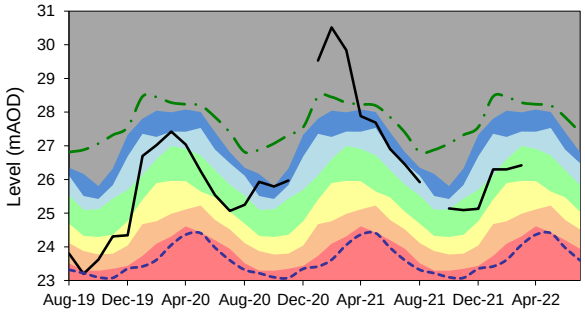
Newmarket - SNAIL CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Feb-1983 to Dec-2017



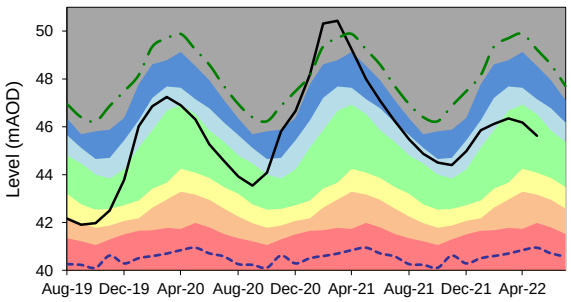
Kenninghall - LITTLE OUSE CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Aug-1973 to Dec-2017



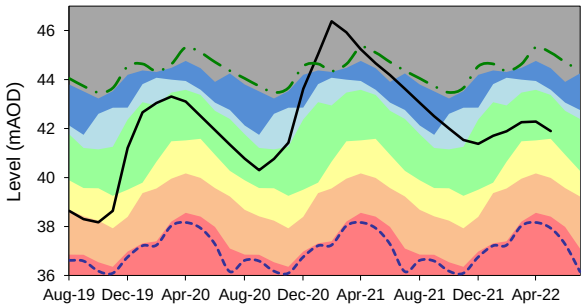
Breckland - WISSEY CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1971 to Nov-2017



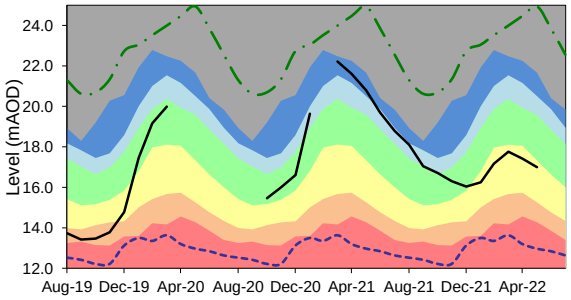
Washpit Farm, Rougham - NW NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period May-1950 to Dec-2017



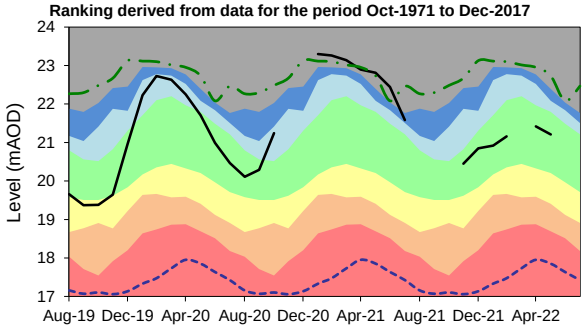
Bircham Newton - NW NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Mar-1995 to Sep-2017



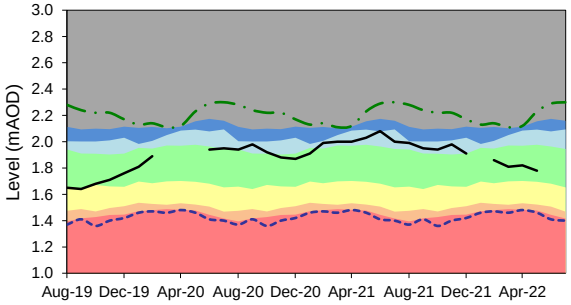
Castle Farm, Offton - MID SUFFOLK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Mar-1967 to Dec-2017



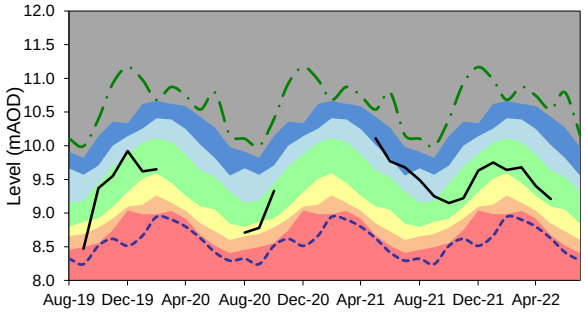
Old Primary School, South Creake
NW NORFOLK CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1971 to Dec-2017



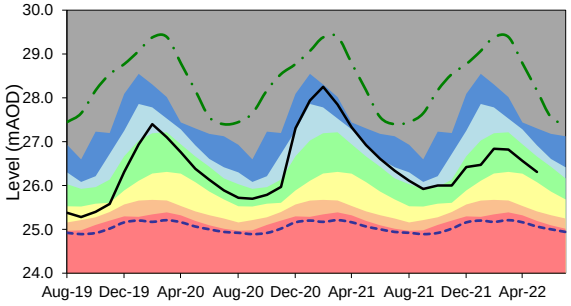
Hazlewood Common, SUFFOLK CRAG
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1988 Feb-2020

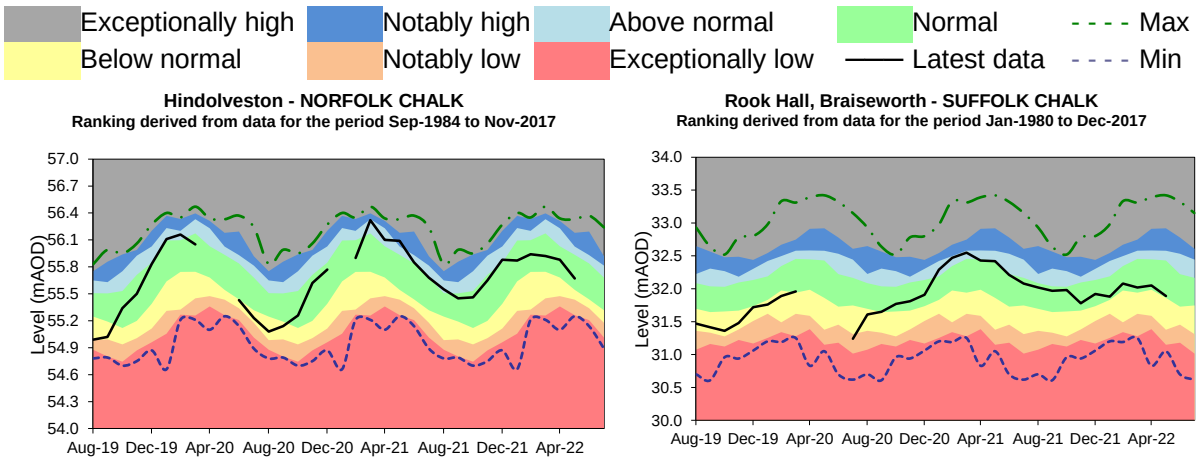


The Spinney, Costessey - WENSUM CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Oct-1971 to Dec-2017

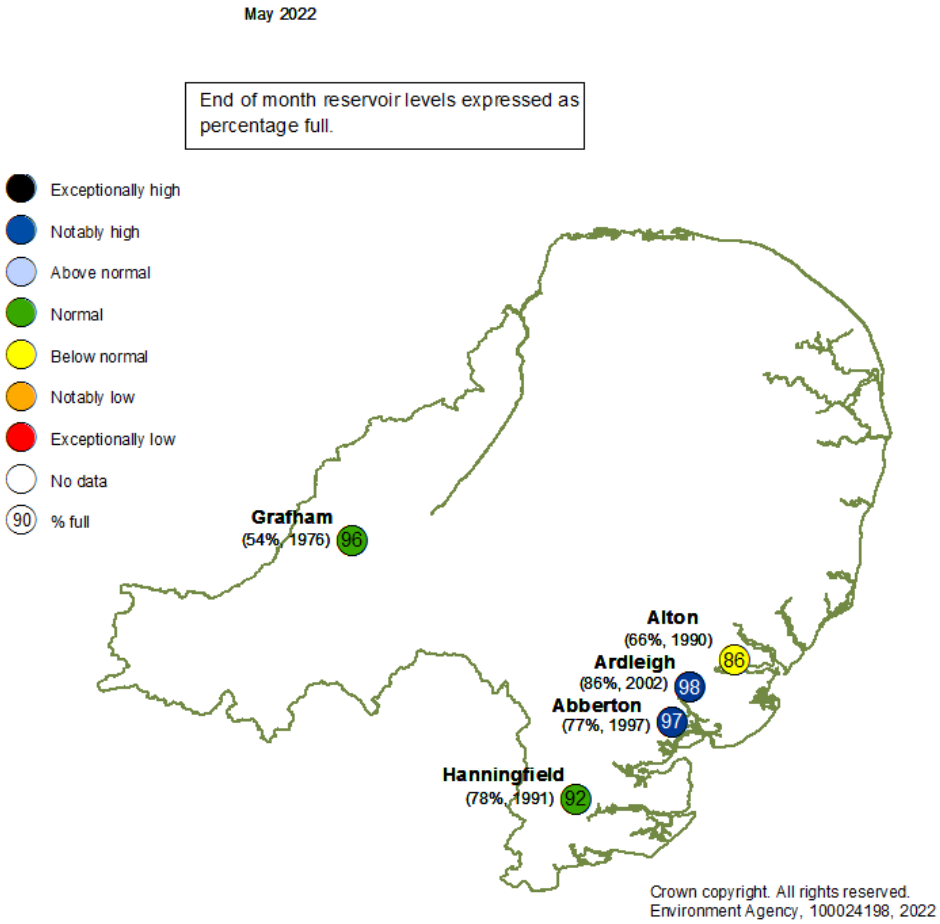


Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer - ESSEX CHALK
Ranking derived from data for the period Jan-1964 to Dec-2017





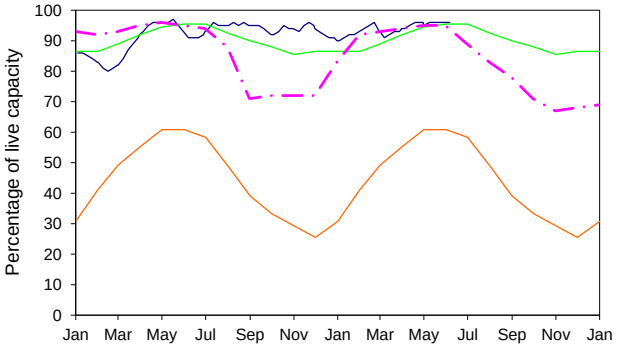
Reservoir Stocks May 2022



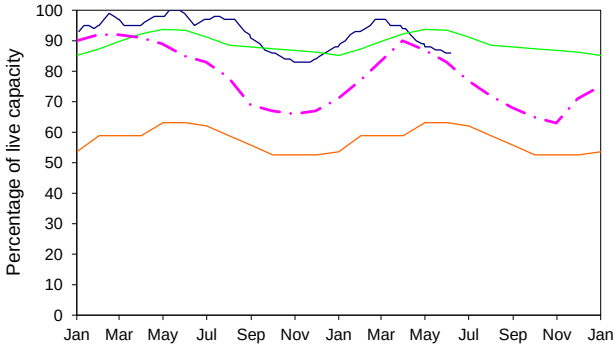
2021-2020 Normal Operating Curve Drought Alert Curve 1995-1996

2021-2020 Normal Operating Curve Drought Alert Curve 1995-1996

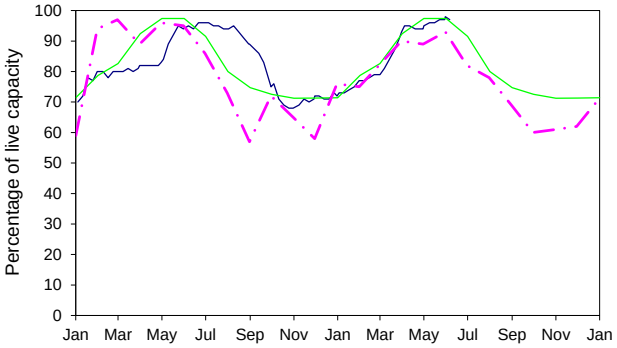
Grafham



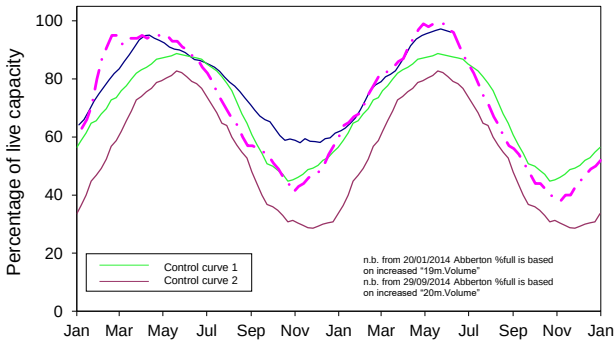
Alton



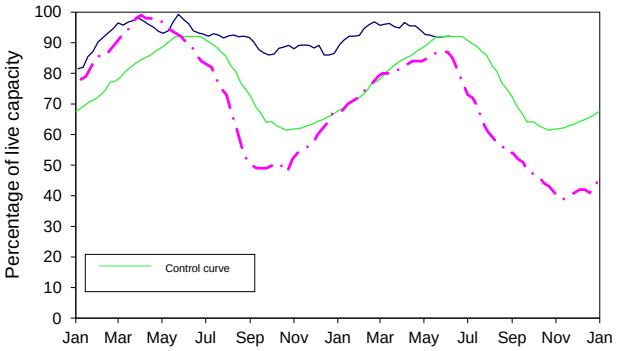
Ardleigh



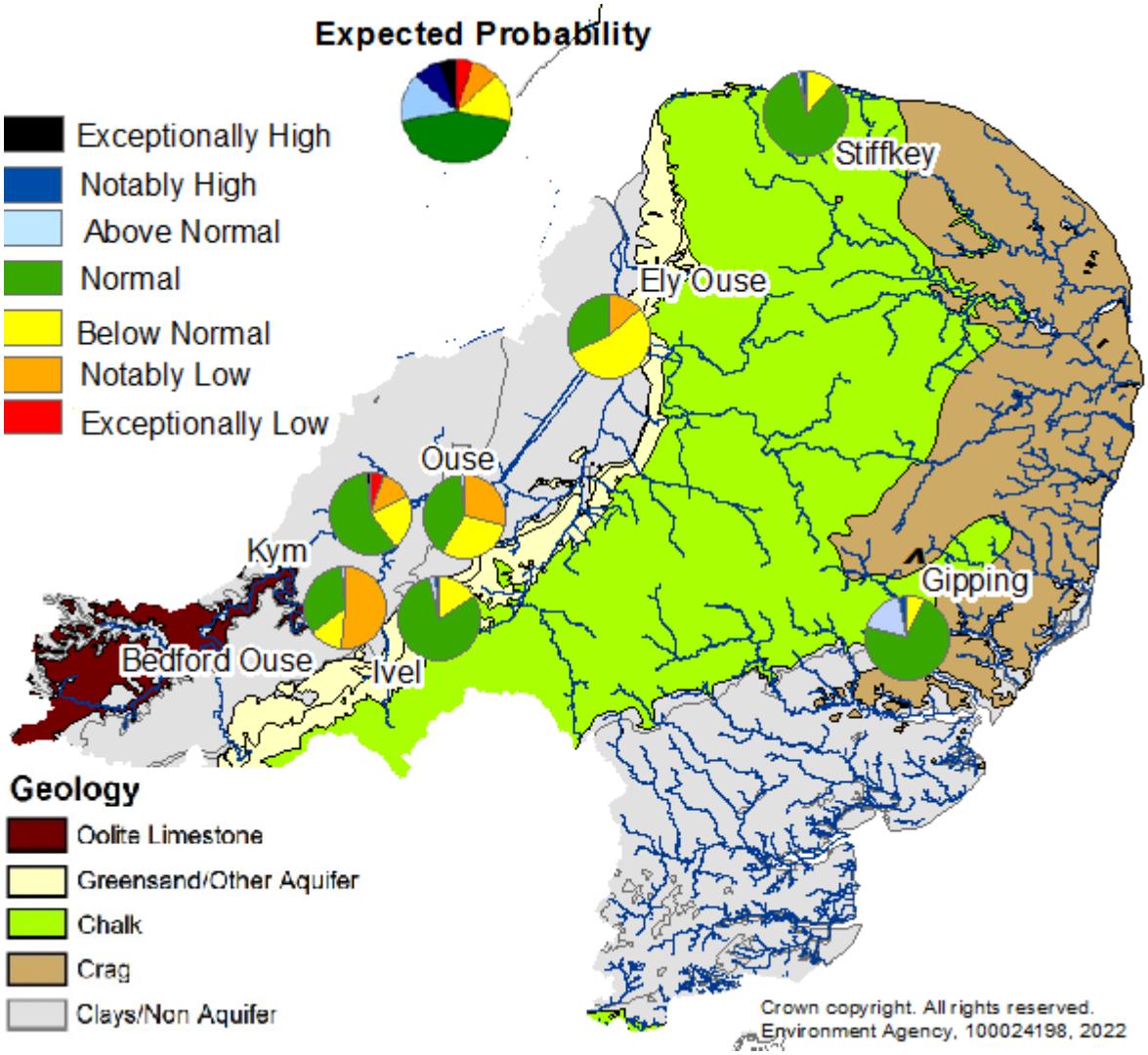
Abberton



Hanningfield



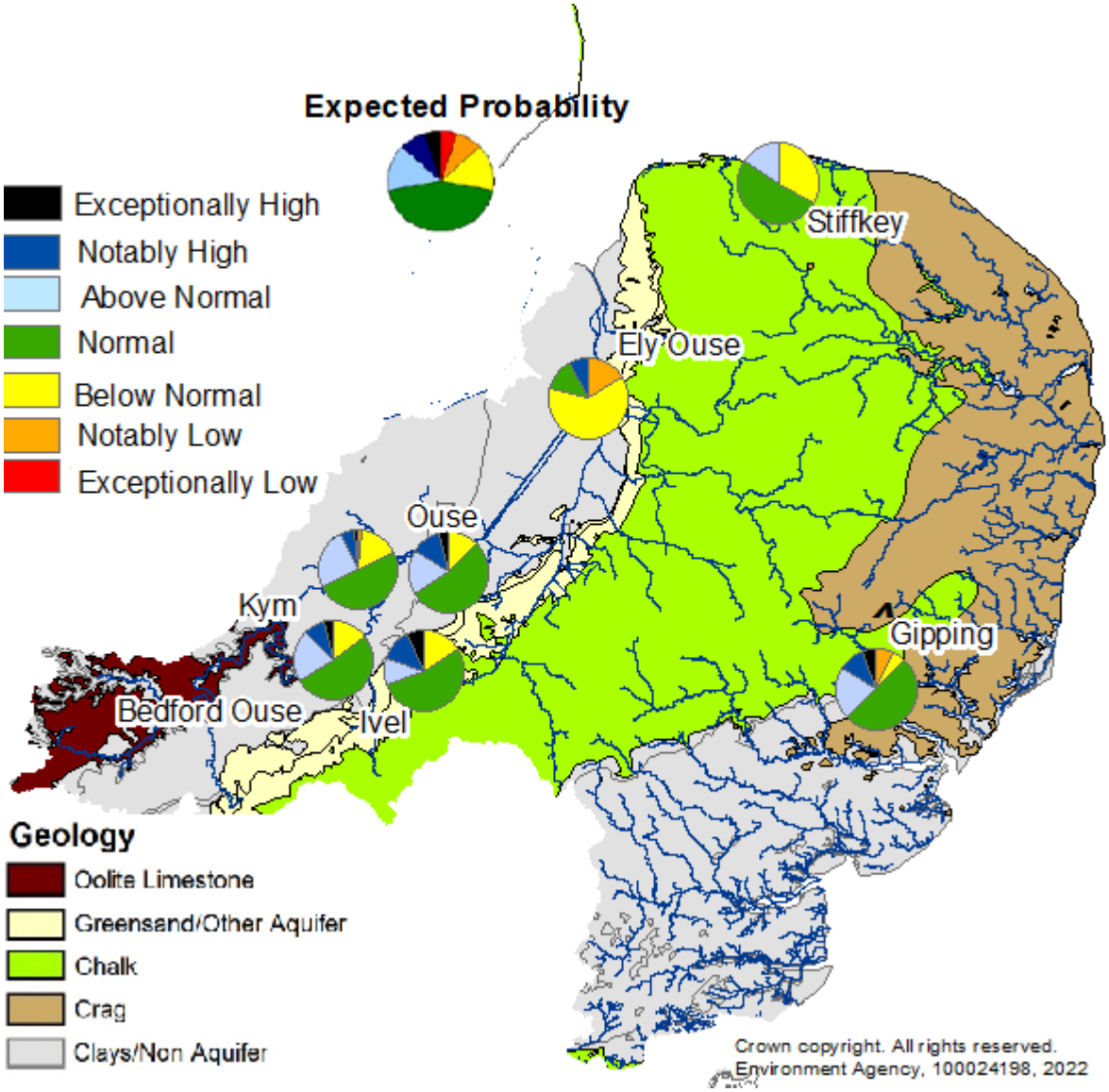
Forward Look – River Flows



Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.

Probabilistic ensemble projections of river flows at key indicator sites in June 2022. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2021.

^ *"Naturalised" flows are projected for these sites'*



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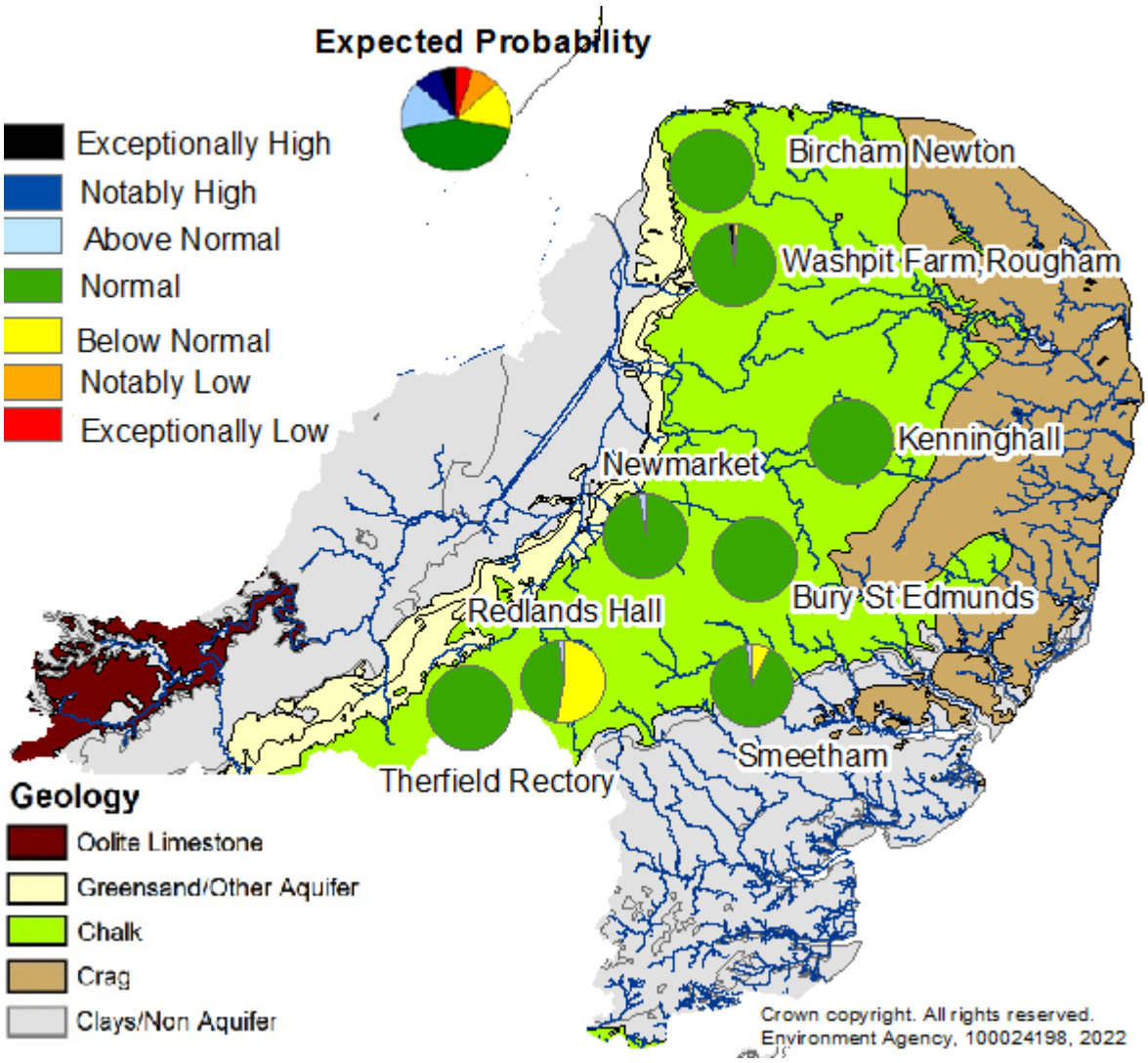
Probabilistic ensemble projections of river flows at key indicator sites in September 2022. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2021

Forward Look – Groundwater



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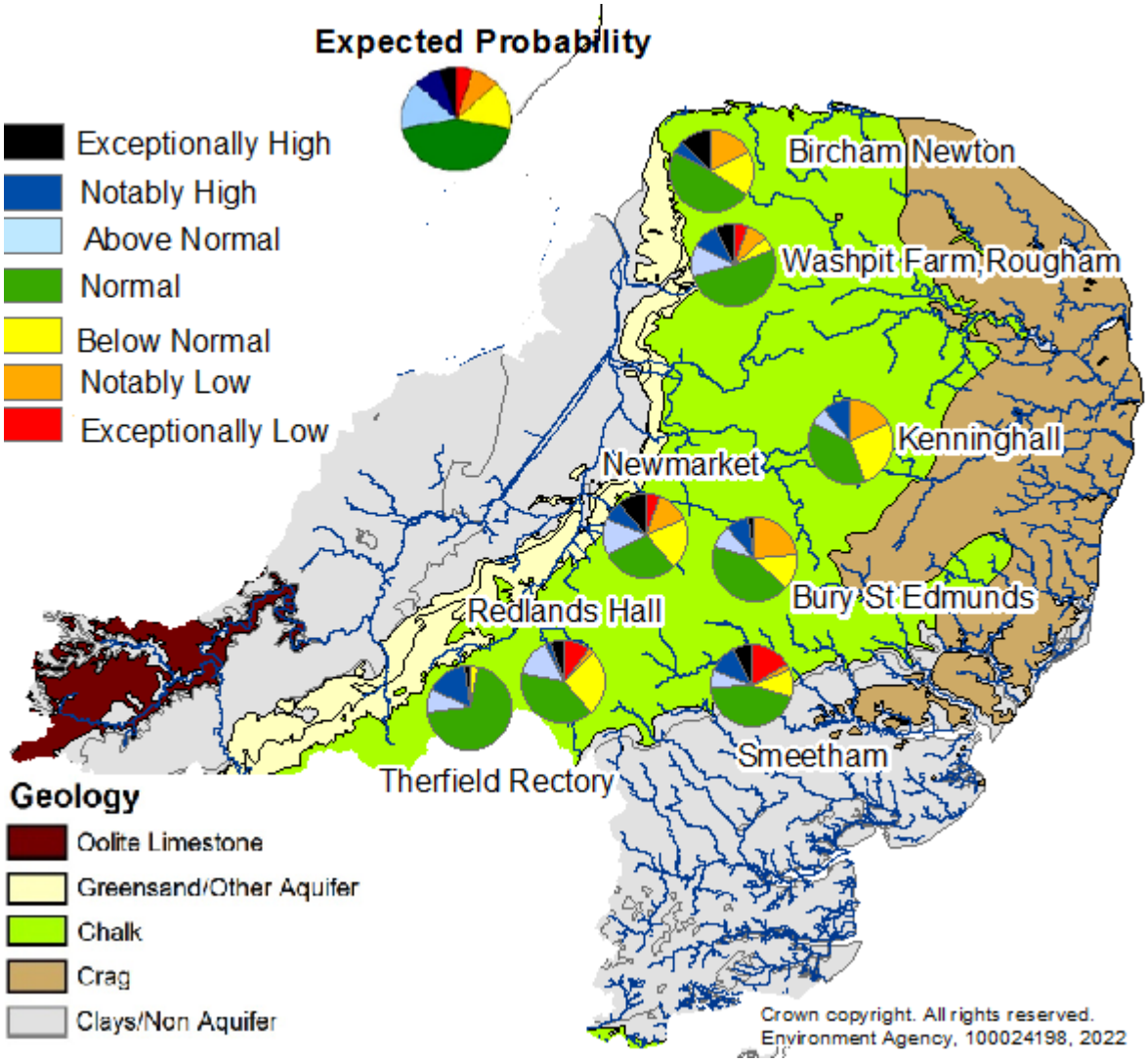
Probabilistic ensemble projections of groundwater levels at key indicator sites for end of September 2022. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2022.



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Probabilistic ensemble projections of groundwater levels at key indicator sites for end of March 2023. Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being e.g. exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2022.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Aquifer	A geological formation able to store and transmit water.
Areal average rainfall	The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).
Artesian	The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.
Artesian borehole	Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.
Cumecs	Cubic metres per second (m^3s^{-1})
Effective rainfall	The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).
Flood Alert/Flood Warning	Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood Alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood Warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe Flood Warnings indicate severe flooding.
Groundwater	The water found in an aquifer.
Groundwater level	The water level measured in the aquifer at a borehole, which may include the impacts of artificial influences.
Long term average (LTA)	The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1961-1990. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).
mAOD	Metres Above Ordnance Datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).
MORECS	Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 x 40 km grid.
Naturalised flow	River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.
NCIC	National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.
Recharge	The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).
Reservoir gross capacity	The total capacity of a reservoir.
Reservoir live capacity	The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (e.g. storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as 'net' or 'deployable' capacity.
River Flow	The flow in the river measured at a gauging station which includes the upstream impact of artificial influences.
Soil moisture deficit (SMD)	The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Categories

Exceptionally high	Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time within the historic record.
Notably high	Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time within the historic record.
Above normal	Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time within the historic record.
Normal	Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time within the historic record.
Below normal	Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time within the historic record.
Notably low	Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time within the historic record.
Exceptionally low	Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time within the historic record.