

Monthly water situation report: East Anglia

1 Summary - July 2026

July was the driest month on record since 1871 for the majority of catchments in East Anglia. The average cumulative rainfall was 3mm with two catchments, North and South Essex receiving 1mm or less of cumulative rainfall for the month. The lack of rainfall has seen soil moisture deficit (SMD) increase by 5mm throughout July. River flows have also been impacted by the exceptionally low rainfall. Most sites are below normal, notably low or exceptionally low for the time of year. Groundwater levels have continued to decline in the majority of reporting sites for July 2026. Most sites are either below normal, notably low or exceptionally low for the time of year. Seven sites are recording as normal for the time of year, with Hindolveston being the only site recording exceptionally low. All reservoirs ended the month with levels below their respective target curves for the time of year with levels between 65% and 76% of the full storage capacity.

1.1 Rainfall

East Anglia received exceptionally low rainfall in July 2026 and was the driest July on record since 1871 for the majority of our catchments. July 2026 rainfall totals ranged from 1% to 9% of the long term average (LTA) for the month. The average rainfall across East Anglia for July 2026 was 3mm, which is 6% of the historic LTA. The lowest rainfall totals were recorded in North and South Essex with 1mm or less cumulative rainfall in July 2026. The highest rainfall totals were recorded in Broadland Rivers and Little Ouse and Lark, with roughly 5mm cumulative rainfall in July 2026. Over the past 3 months there has been exceptionally low rainfall in most of the catchments with 3 catchments, Upper Bedford Ouse, Lower Bedford Ouse and Little Ouse and Lark receiving notably low rainfall. Over the past 6 months, rainfall totals ranged from 55% to 75% of the LTA with the Upper Bedford Ouse being the only catchment to receive below normal rainfall. All other catchments have received notably low or exceptionally low rainfall for the past 6 months.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

The soil moisture deficit (SMD) for East Anglia has increased during July 2026 from 118mm at the end of June to 123mm at the end of July. This is a 5mm deficit within the month of July. Roughly half of East Anglia catchments ended the month with soil moisture deficits that ranged between 6mm to 25mm below the LTA deficits for the month. The other half of the catchments ended the month with 26mm to 50mm below the LTA deficits for the month.

1.3 River flows

Following exceptionally low rainfall across all of East Anglia, the July 2026, month mean flow at all of the sites are below normal, notably low or exceptionally low for the time of year. Most of the exceptionally low river flow sites were situated within the chalk aquifer apart from the Bure, Colne and Tove. There have been 2 sites which have reached a record low mean flow, Northwold on the River Wissey and Ingworth on the River Bure. Northwold on the river Wissey mean flow for July was 0.27 cumecs which is 19% of the LTA and Ingworth on the River Bure mean flow for July was 0.45 cumecs which is 56% of the LTA.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels have continued to decline in the majority of reporting sites for which there is data available for July 2026. Most sites are either below normal, notably low or exceptionally low for the time of year. Seven sites recorded groundwater levels categorised as normal for the time of year, with Hindolveston being the only site recording exceptionally low for this time of year.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

All public water supply reservoirs have seen a decrease in storage for July 2026. At the end of the month, levels ranged from 65% to 76% of the full storage capacity. All reservoirs ended the month with levels below their respective target curves for the time of year.

Author: Hydrology Team, hydrology-ean-and-lna@environment-agency.gov.uk

All data are provisional and may be subject to revision. The views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the Environment Agency. Its officers, servants or agents accept no liability for any loss or damage arising from the interpretation or use of the information, or reliance upon views contained in this report.

*[SMD]: soil moisture deficits

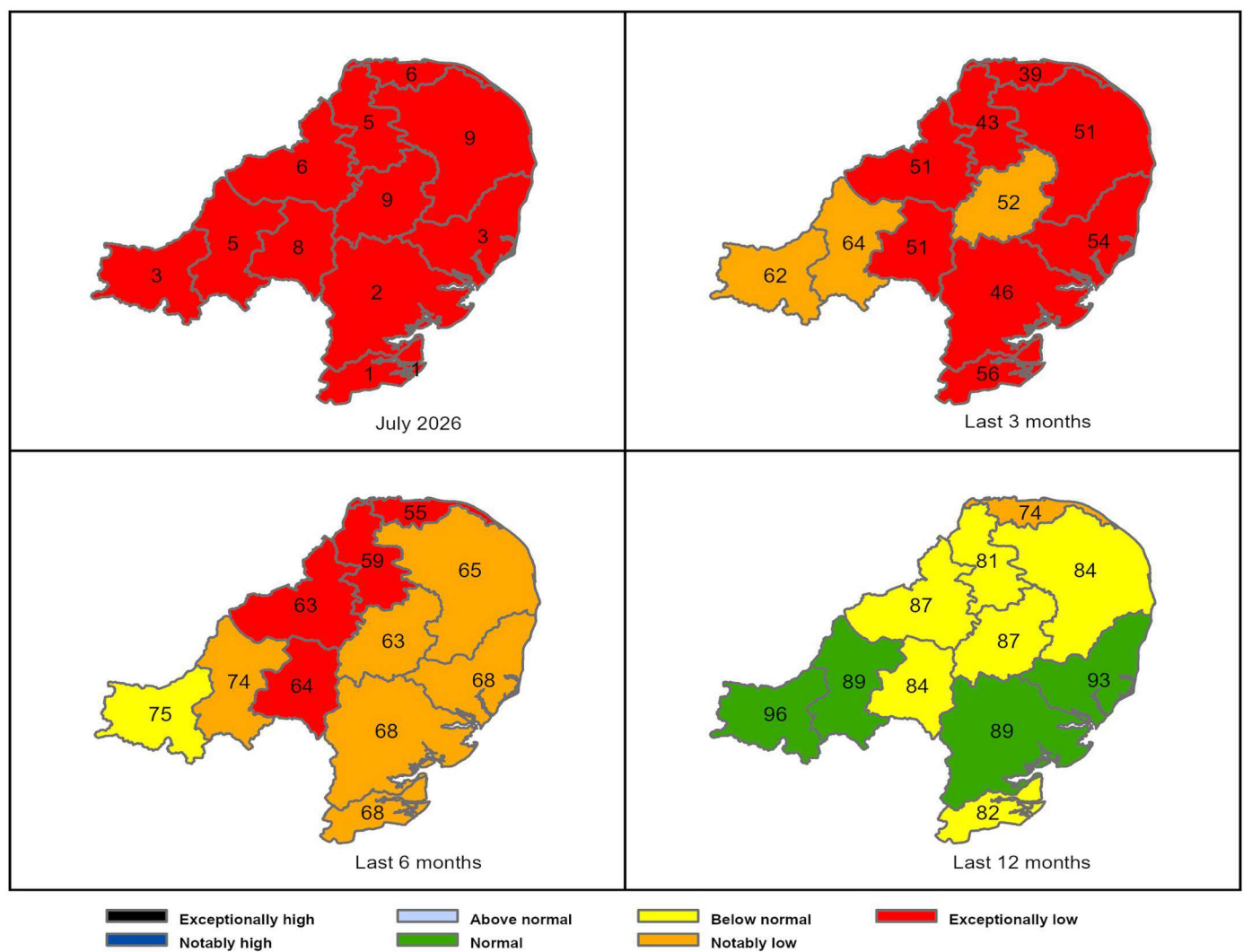
*[LTA]: long term average

Contact Details: 03708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

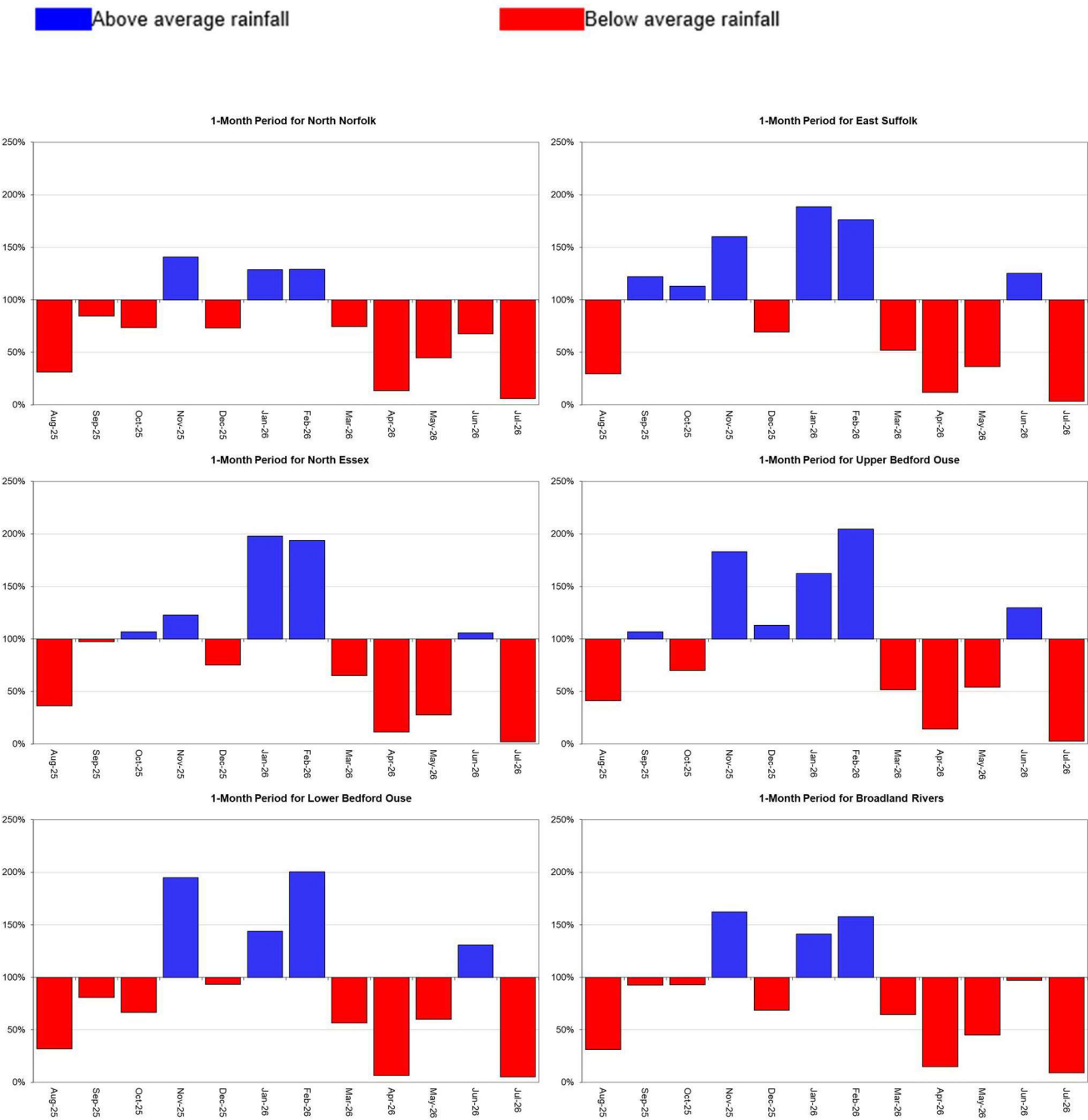
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across East Anglia, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 July 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

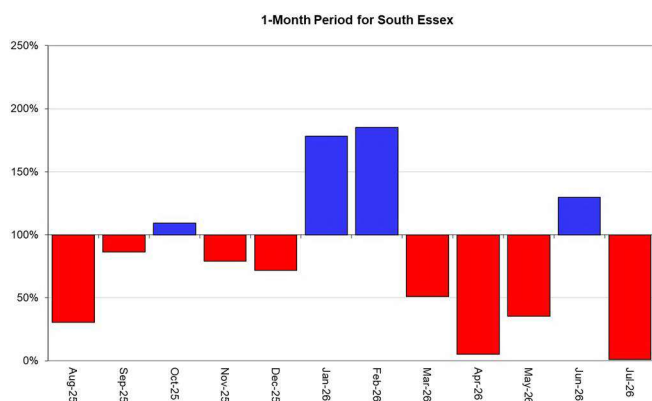
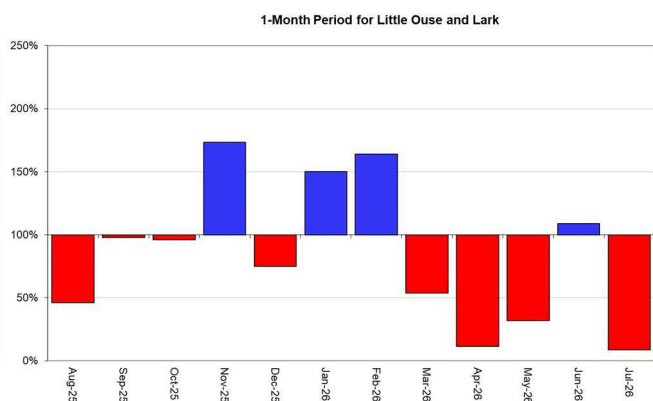
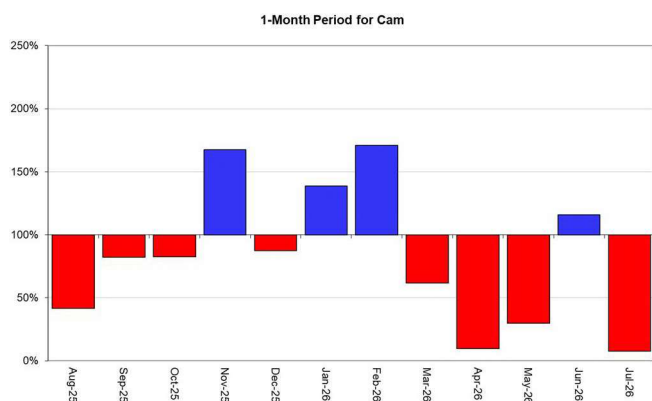
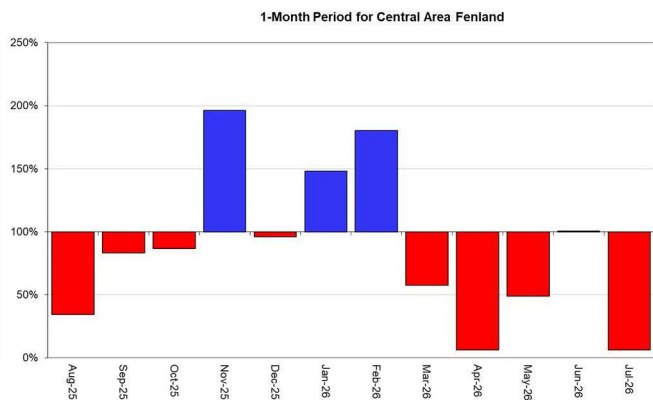
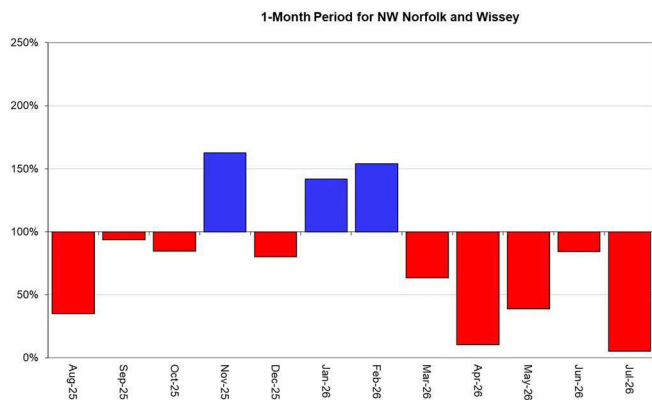


HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

2.2 Rainfall charts

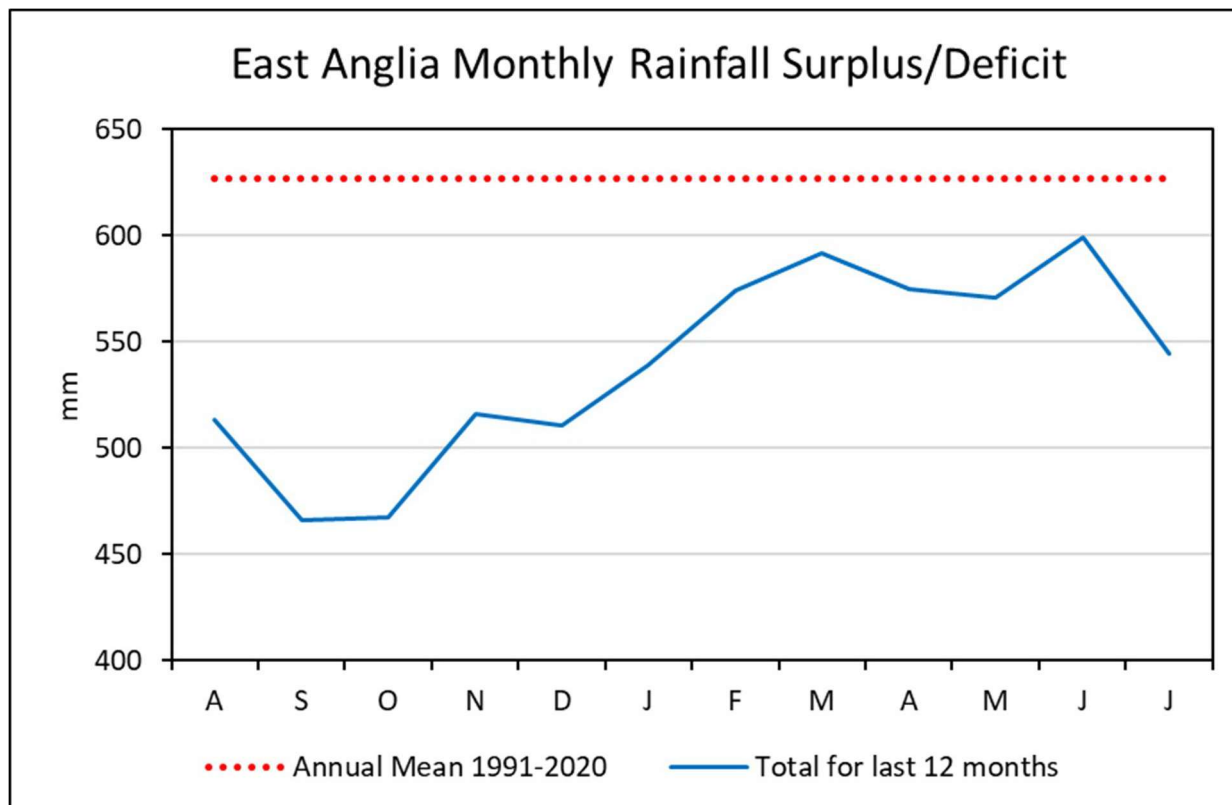
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each region and for England.





HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

2.3 Monthly rainfall surplus deficit chart



HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1a: Soil moisture deficit values for 31 July 2026. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.

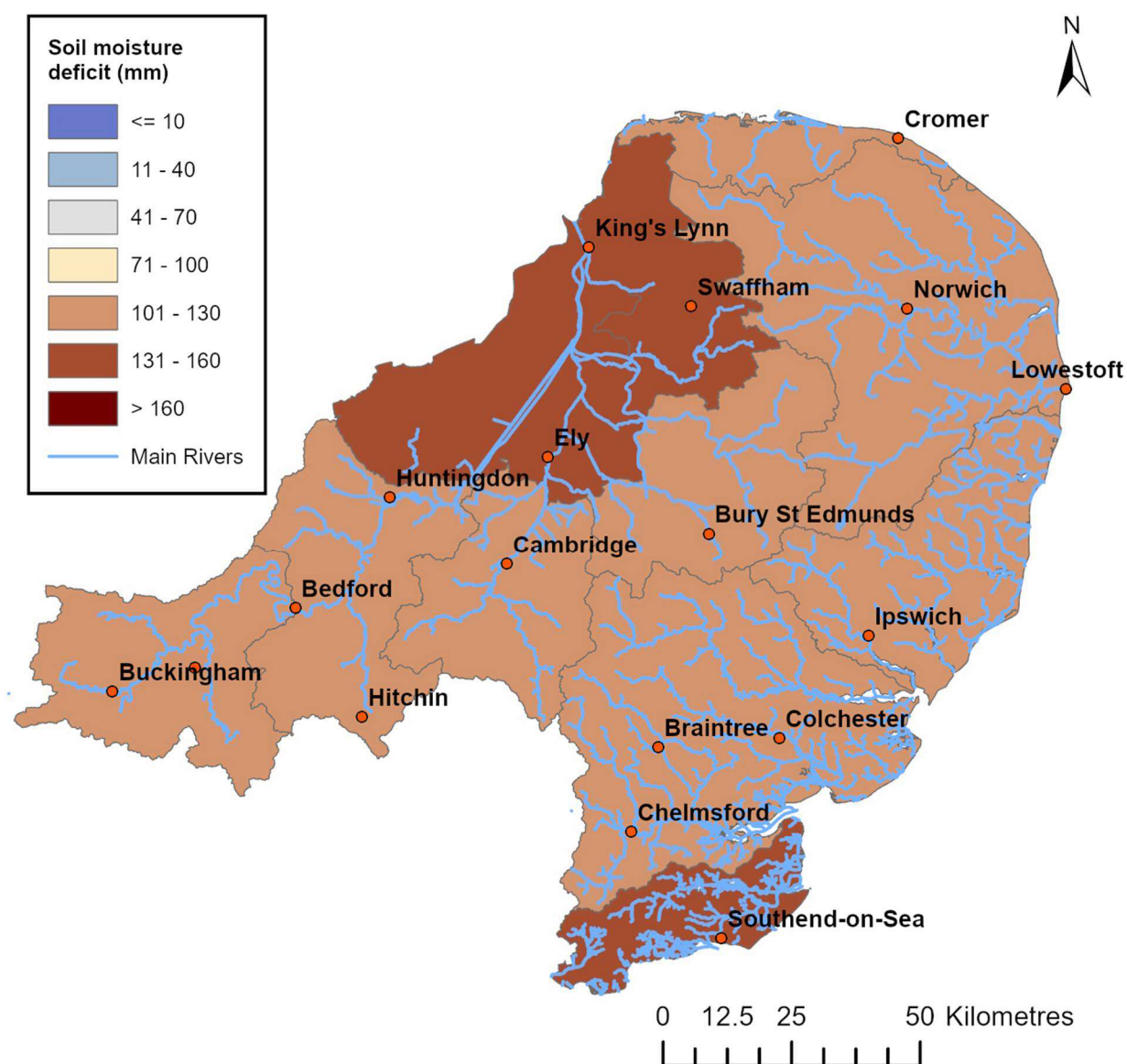
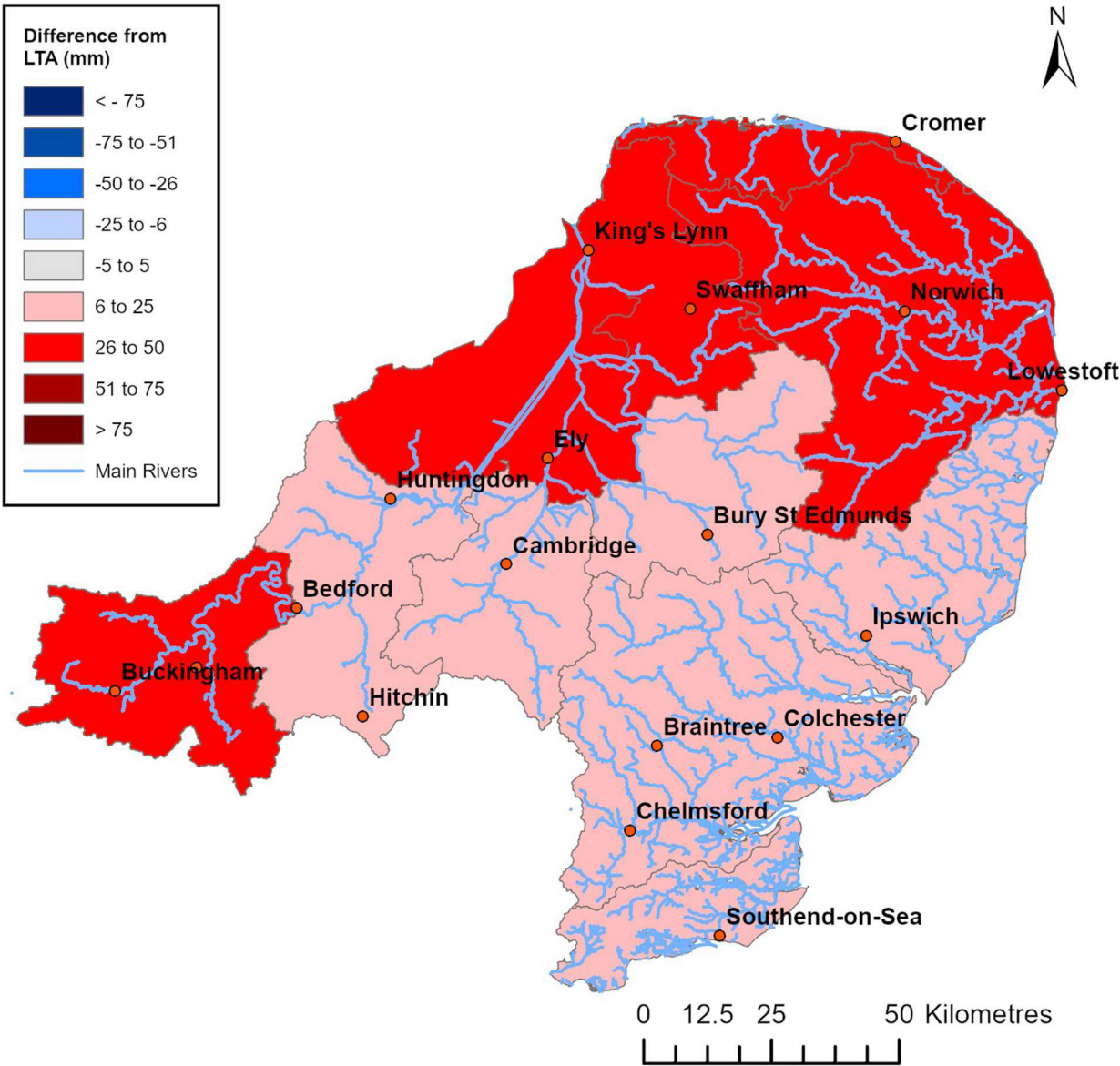


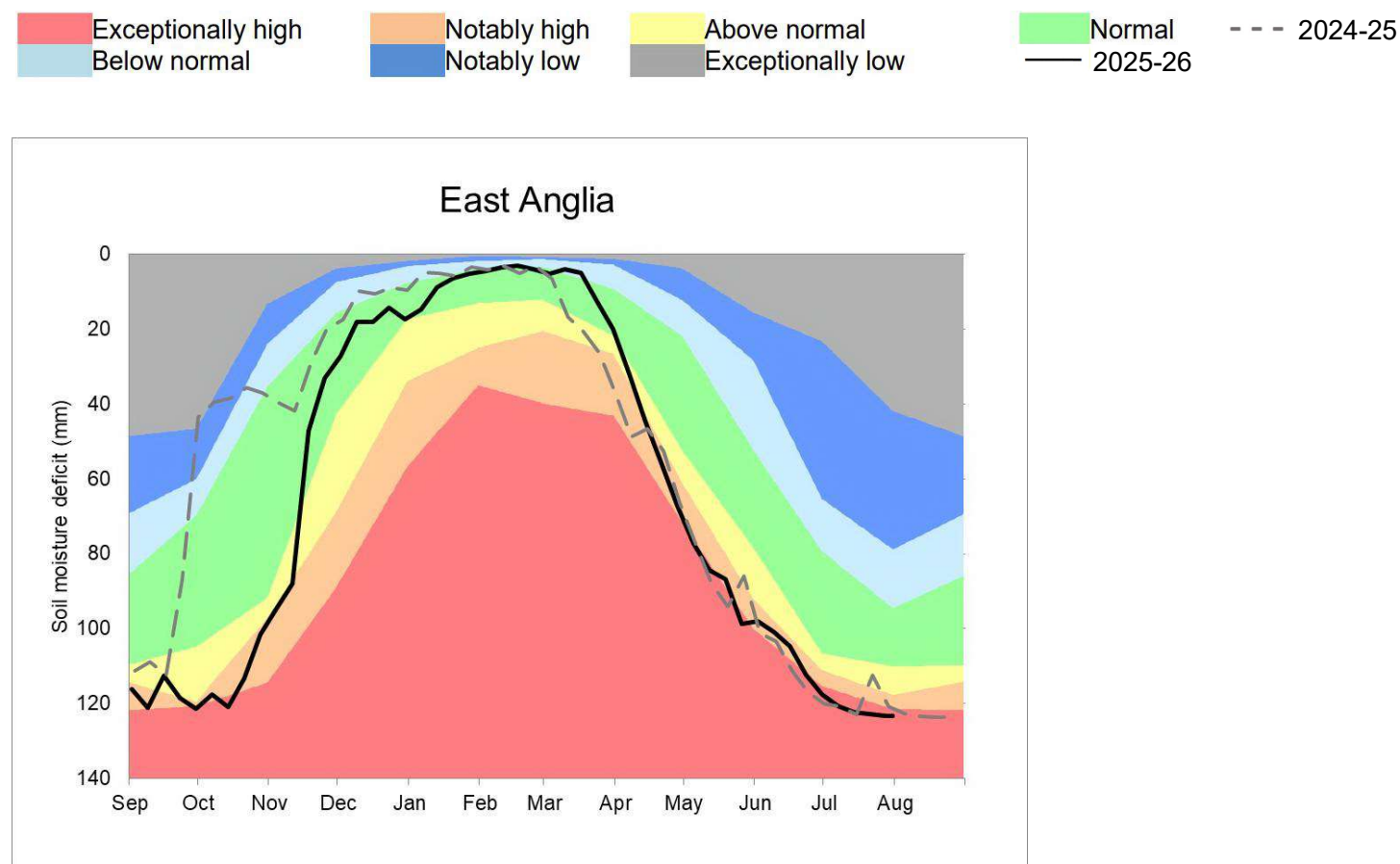
Figure 3.1b: A map displaying soil moisture deficit values (31 July 2026) relative to long term average end of July soil moisture deficit values for hydrometric catchments across East Anglia. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to an analysis of historic 1991 to 2020 long term data set. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.

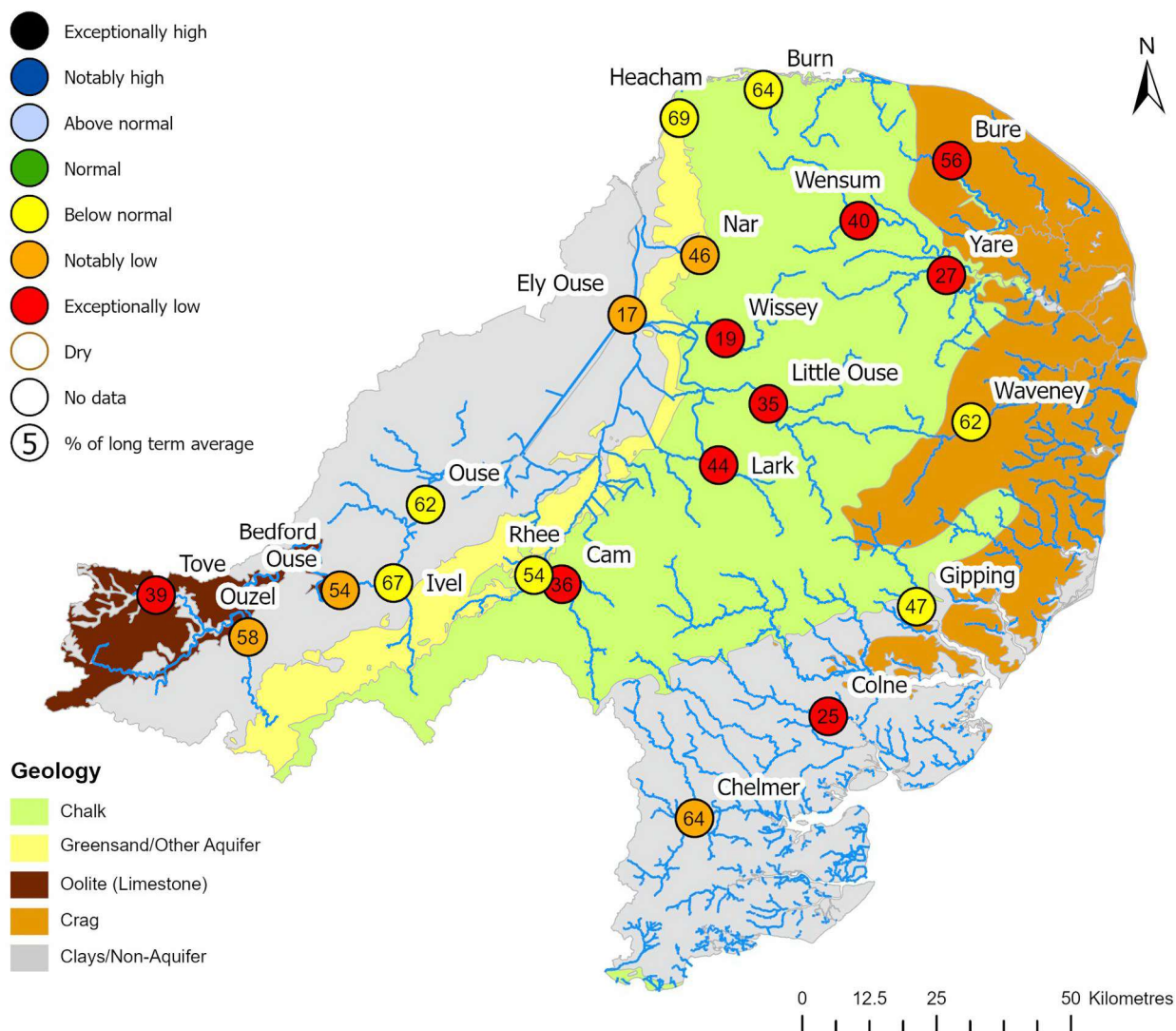


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

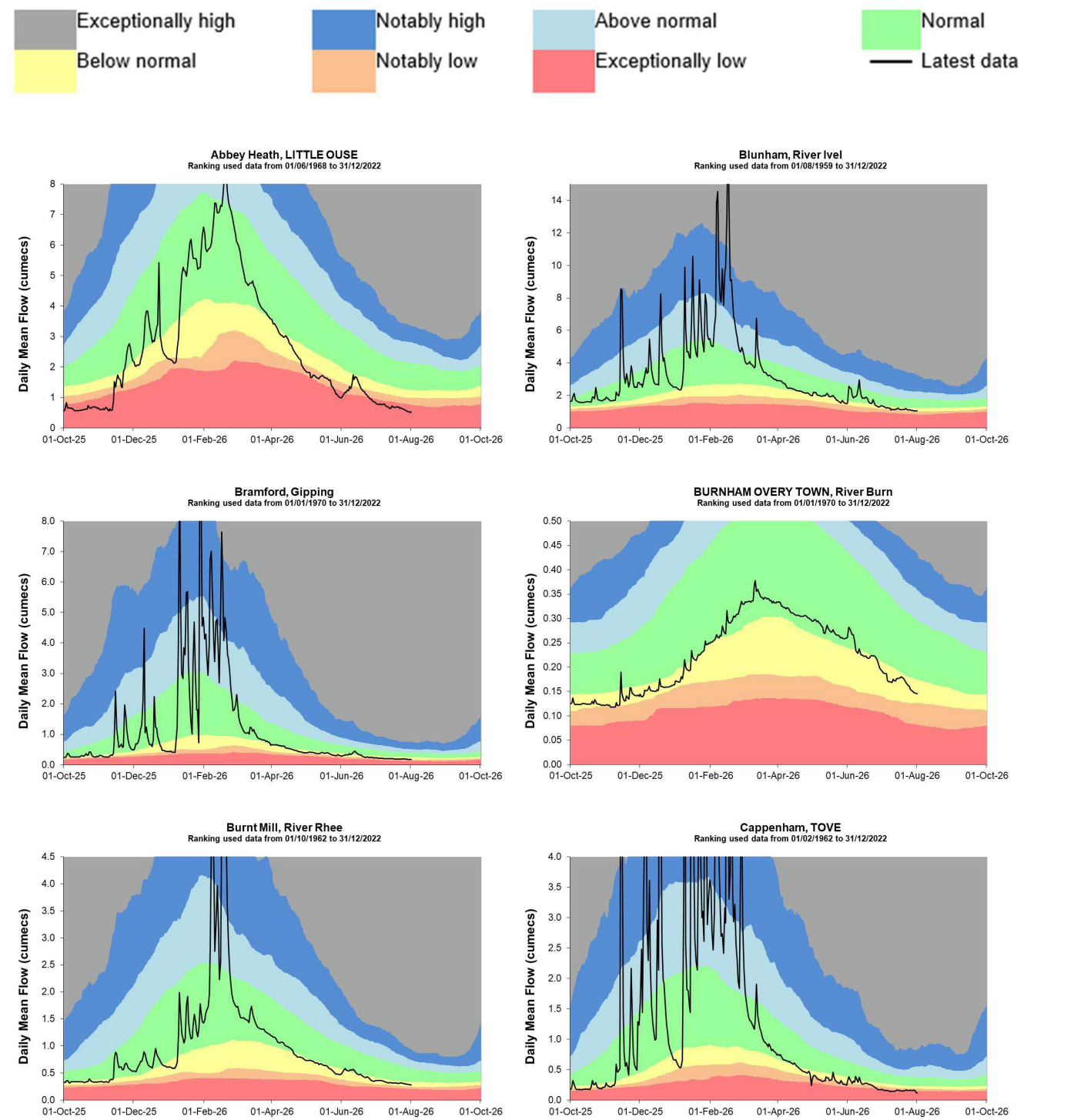
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for July 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic July monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

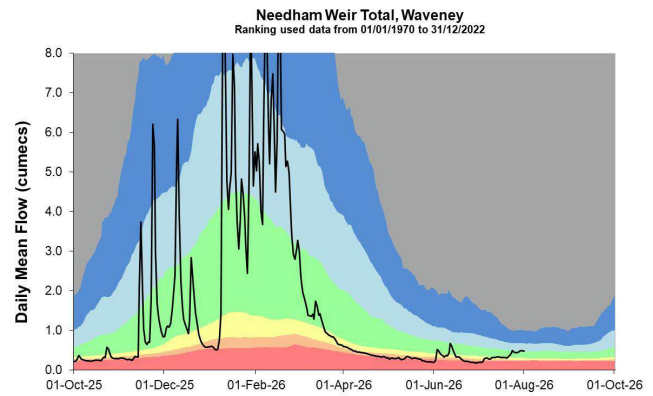
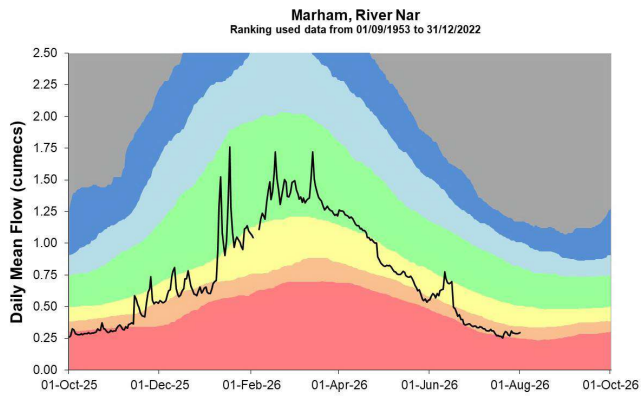
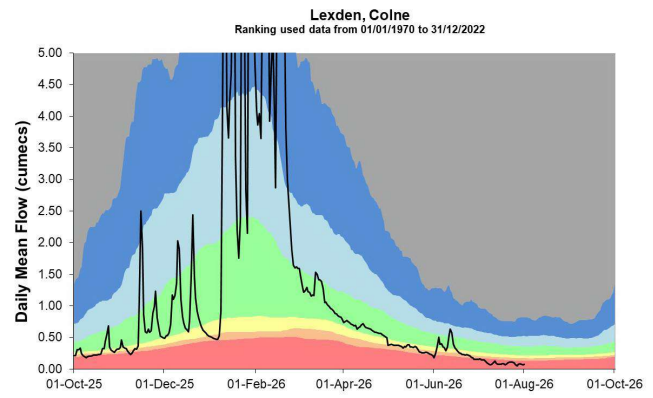
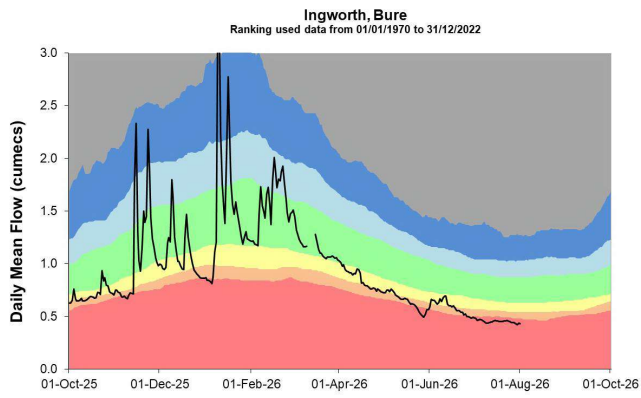
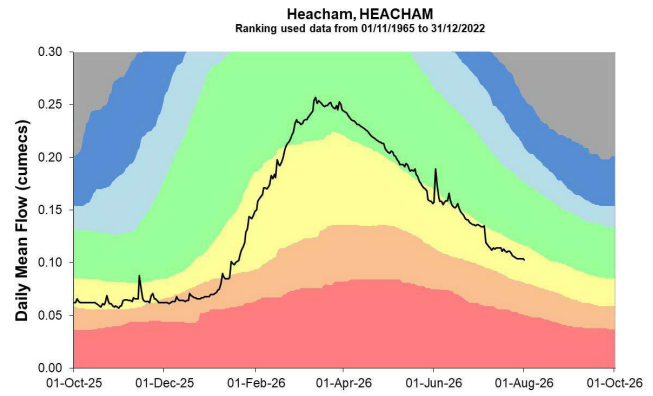
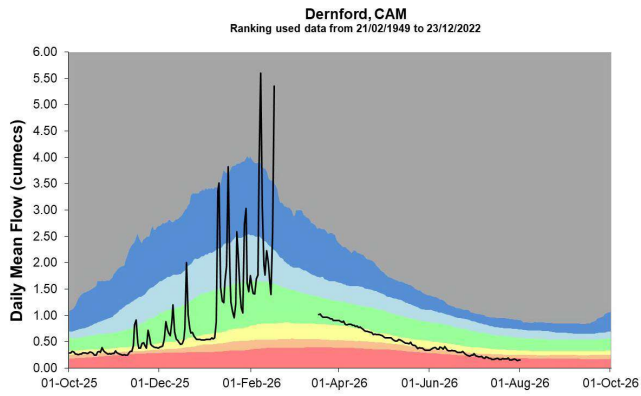
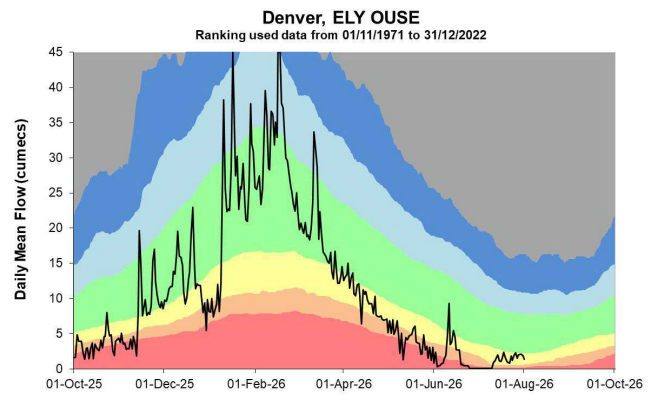
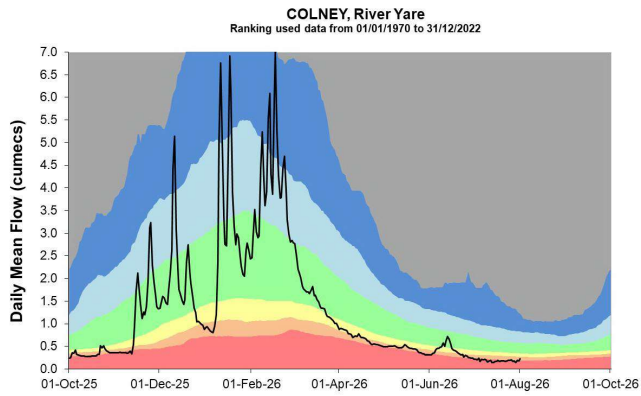


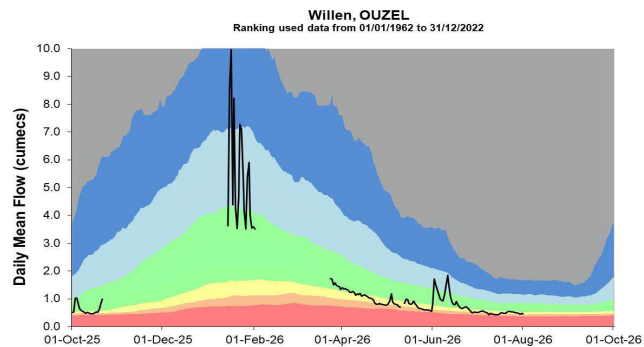
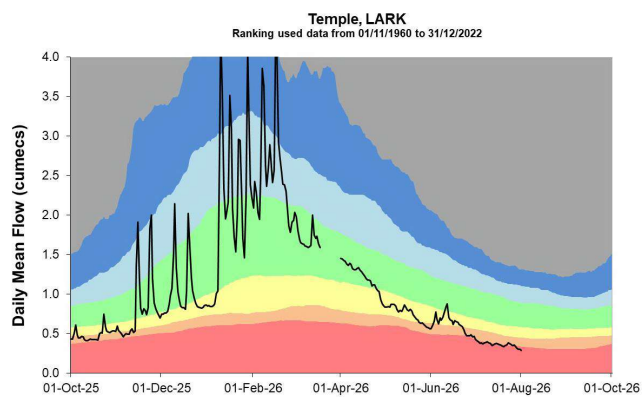
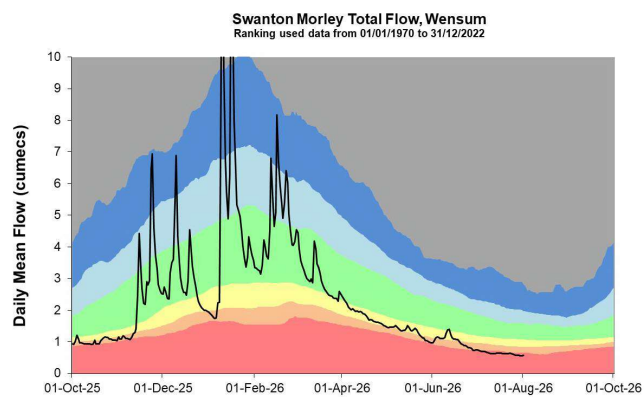
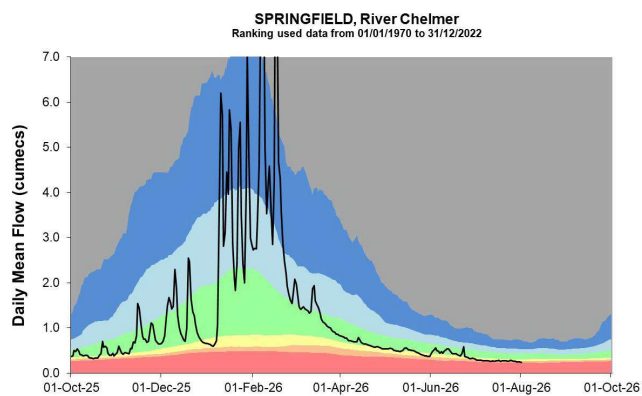
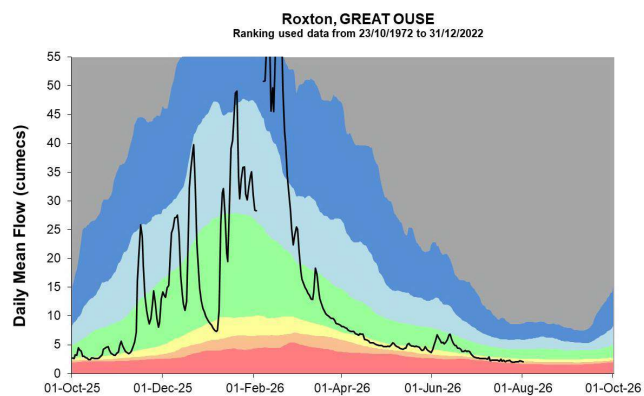
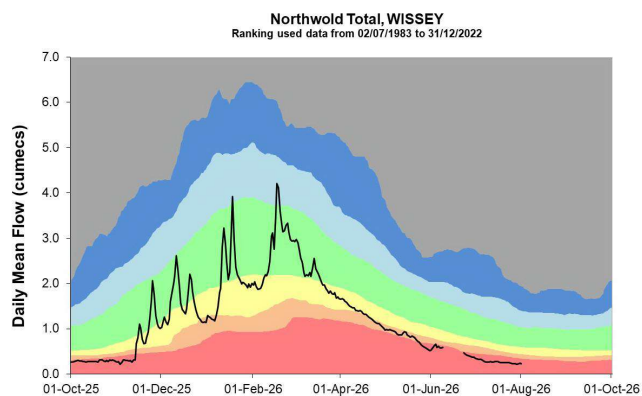
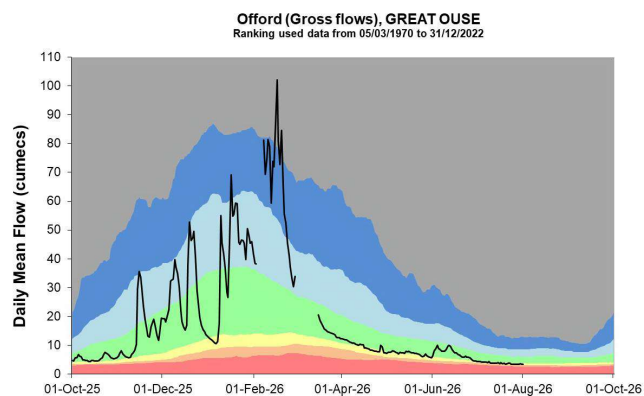
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

4.2 River flow charts

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





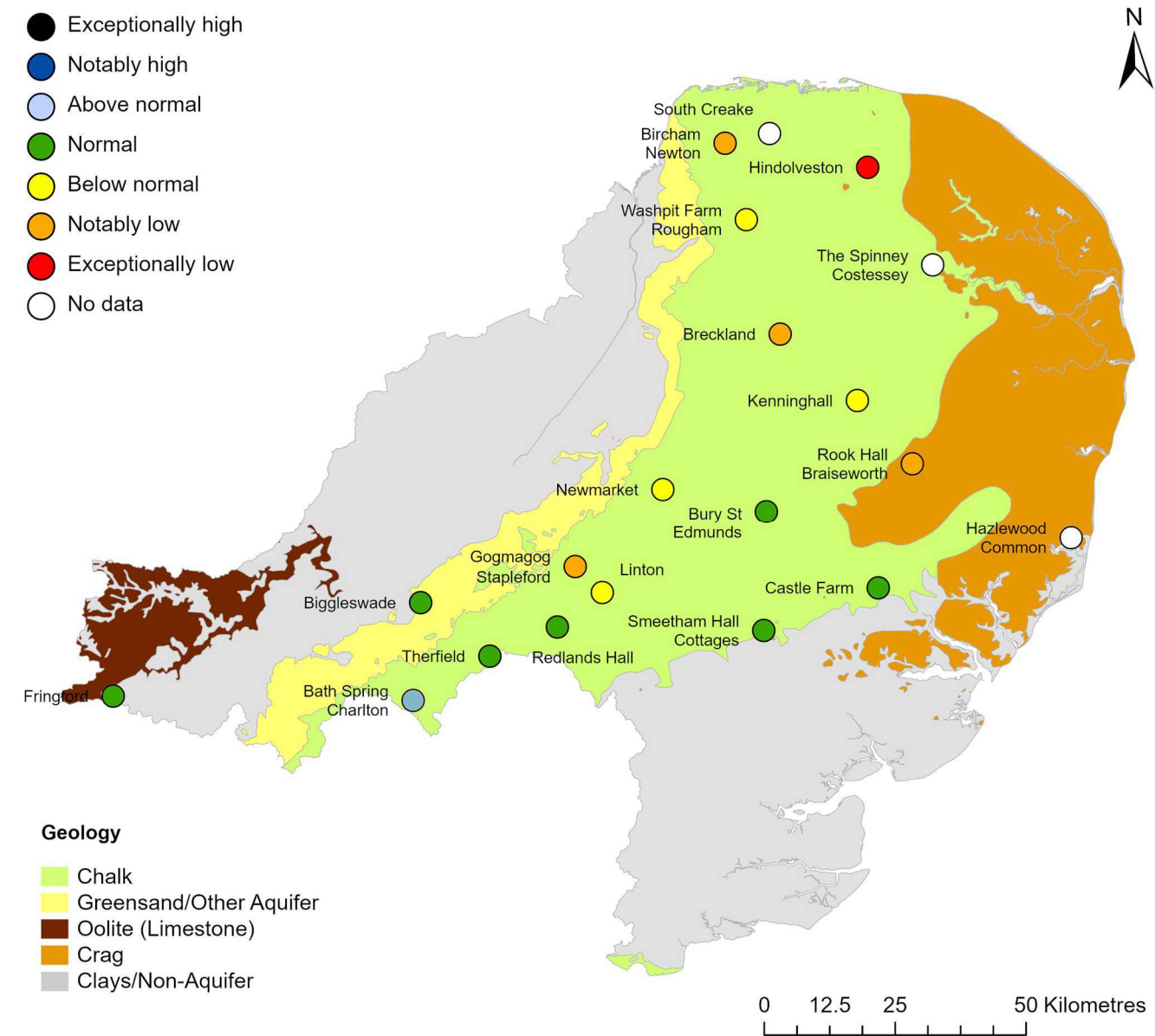


Source: Environment Agency.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

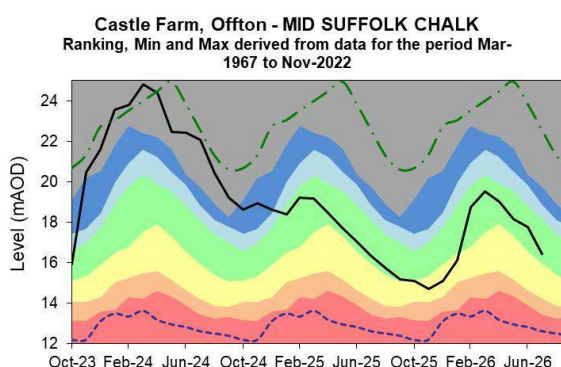
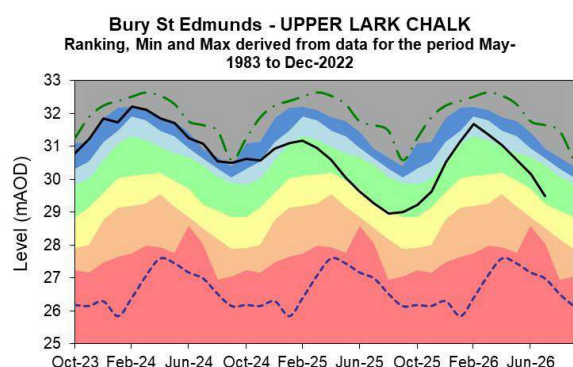
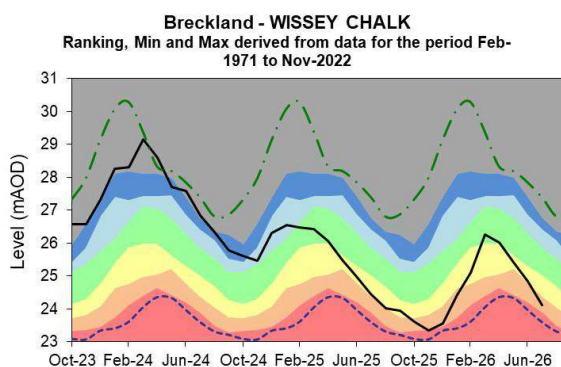
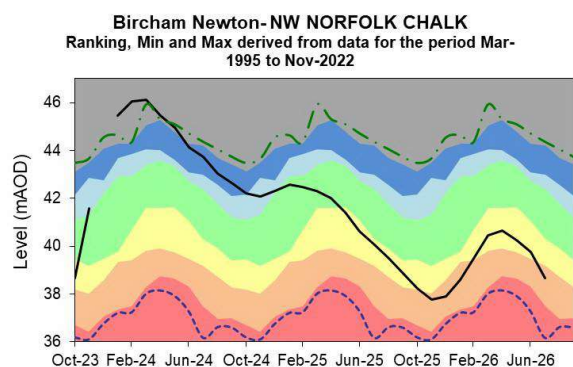
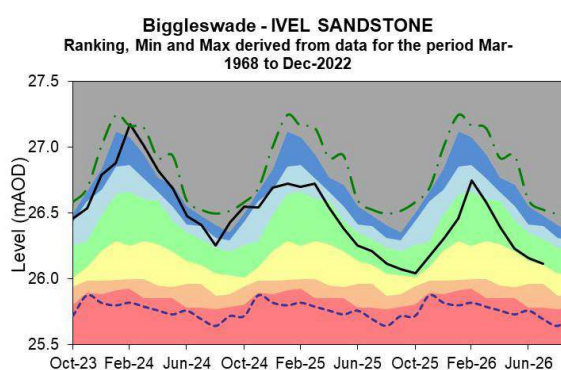
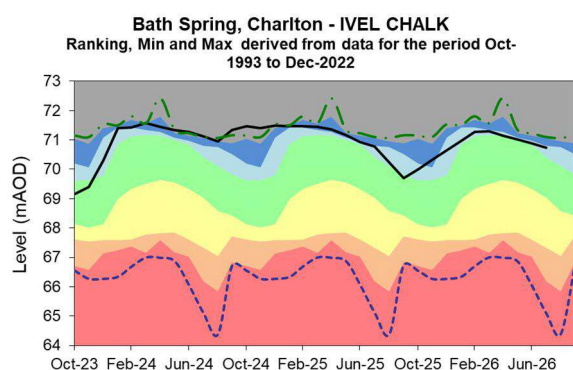
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of July 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic July levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

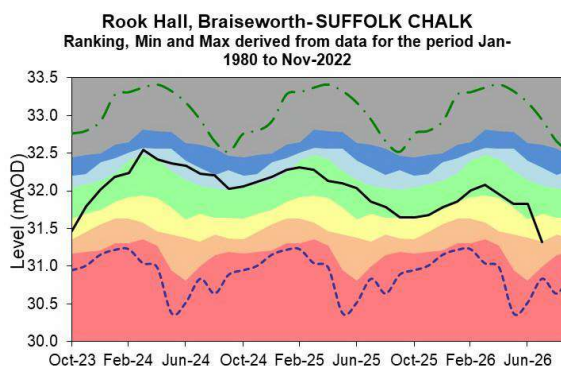
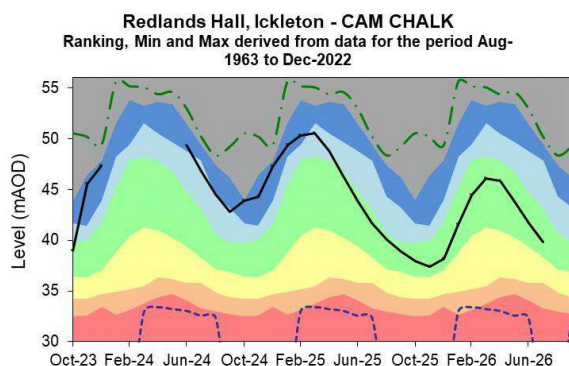
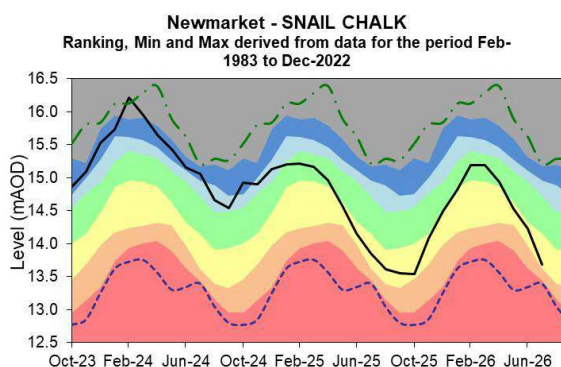
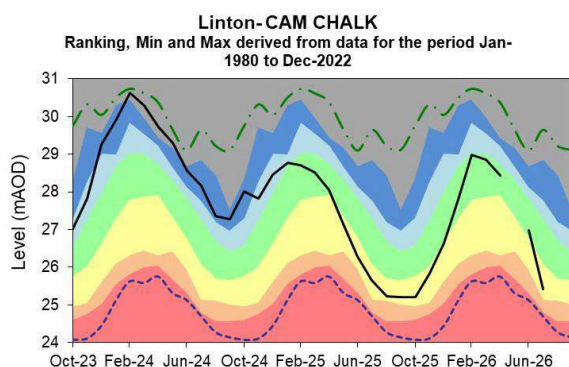
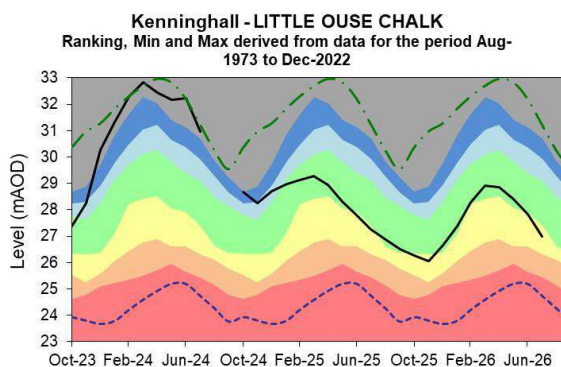
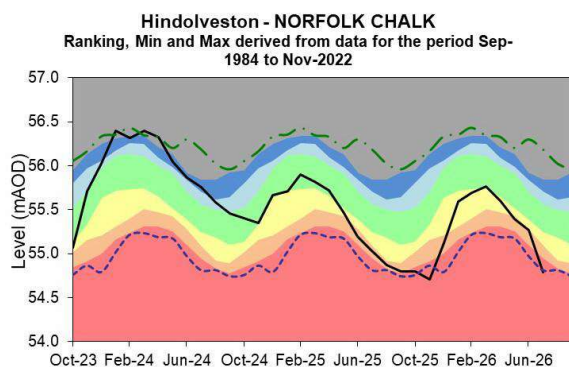
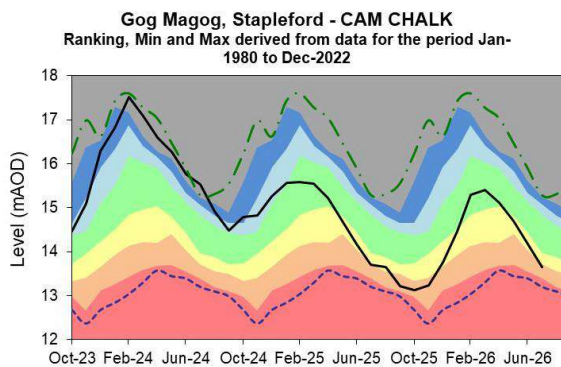
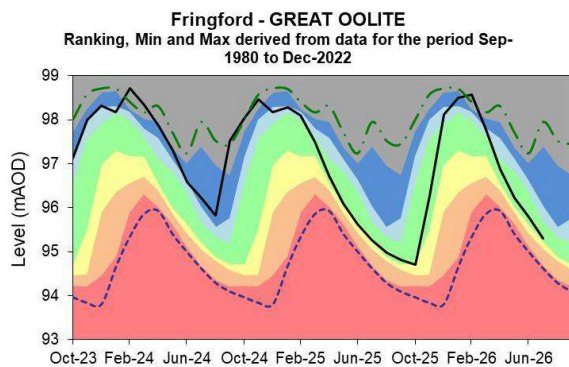


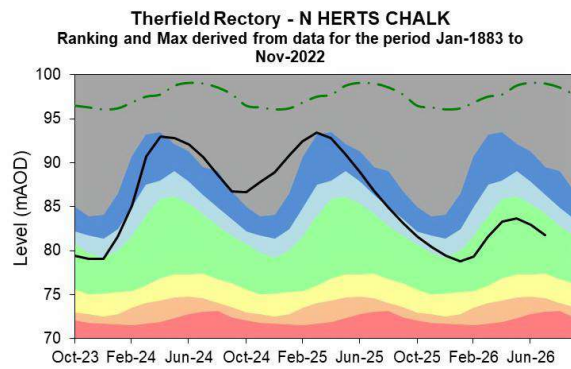
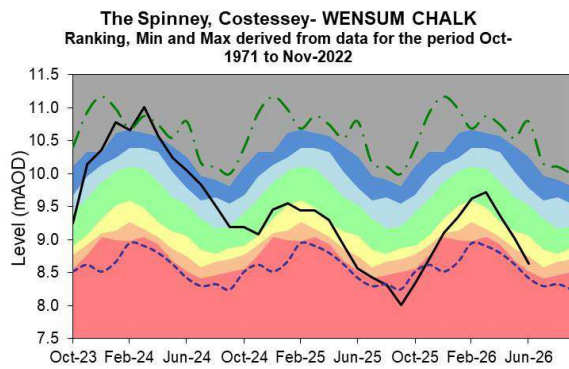
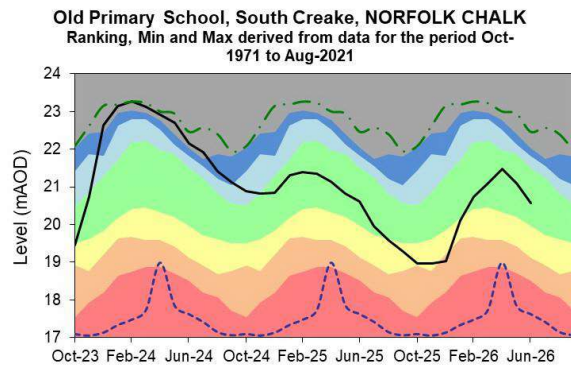
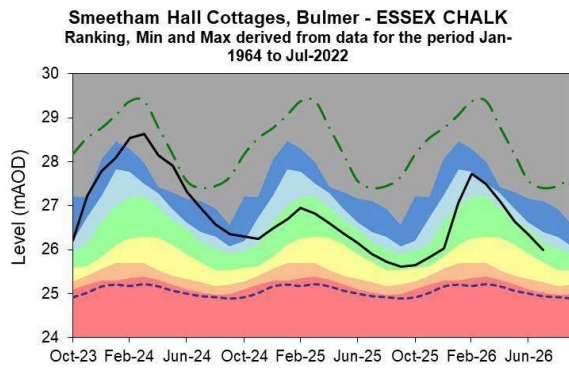
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

5.2 Groundwater level charts

Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 34 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.



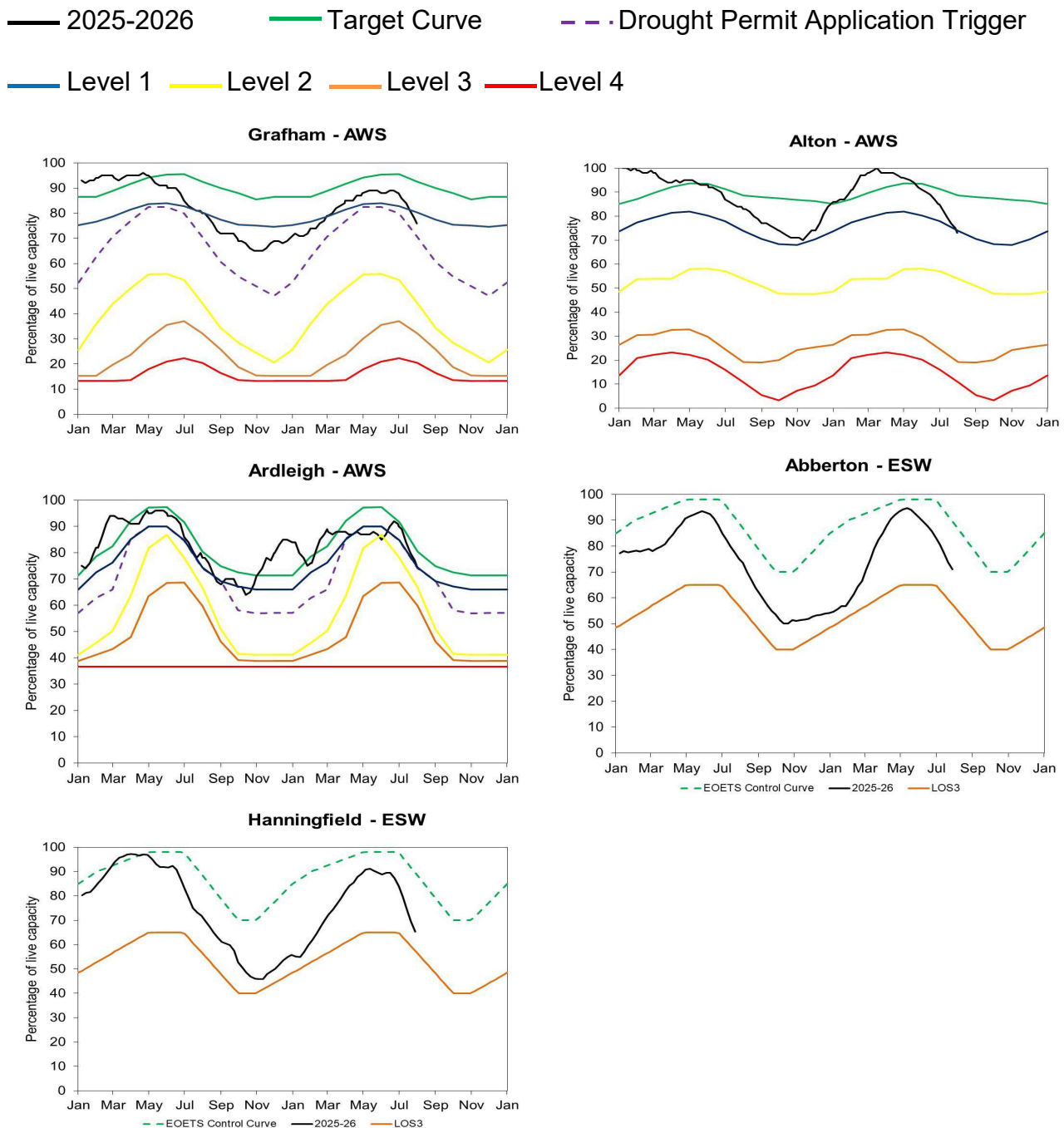




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the target curve and drought permit application trigger. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length.



(Source: water companies. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir levels, please view their [Drought Plan](#)).

7 Glossary

7.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second (m^3s^{-1}).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1991 to 2020. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.

Recharge

The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Reservoir gross capacity

The total capacity of a reservoir.

Reservoir live capacity

The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (for example, storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as 'net' or 'deployable' capacity.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD)

The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

7.2 Categories

Exceptionally high

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

Notably high

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

Above normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Normal

Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time.

Below normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Notably low

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

Exceptionally low

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

8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Jul 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jul 2026 band	May 2026 to July cumulative band	Feb 2026 to July cumulative band	Aug 2025 to July cumulative band
Broadland Rivers	9	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Notably low	Below normal
Cam	8	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Central Area	6	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
East Suffolk	3	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Notably low	Normal
Little Ouse And Lark	9	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Notably low	Below normal
Lower Bedford Ouse	5	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Notably low	Normal
North Essex	2	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Notably low	Normal
North Norfolk	6	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Nw Norfolk And Wissey	5	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Below normal
South Essex	1	Exceptionally Low	Exceptionally low	Notably low	Below normal
Upper Bedford Ouse	3	Exceptionally Low	Notably low	Below normal	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Jul 2026 band	Jun 2026 band
Abbey Heath	Little Ouse	Little Ouse	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Blunham	Ivel	Ivel	Below normal	Normal
Bramford	Gipping	Gipping	Below normal	Below normal
Burnham Overy	Burn	Burn	Below normal	Below normal
Burnt Mill	Rhee	Rhee	Normal	Below normal
Cappenham	Tove	Tove	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Colney	Yare	Yare	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Denver	Ely Ouse	Cutoff and Renew Channel	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Dernford	Cam	Cam	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Heacham	Heacham	Heacham	Below normal	Below normal
Ingworth	Bure	Bure	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Lexden	Colne	Colne Essex	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Marham	Nar	Nar	Notably low	Below normal
Needham Weir Total	Waveney (lower)	Waveney	Below normal	Notably low
Northwold Total	Wissey	Wissey	Below normal	Exceptionally low
Offord (gross Flows)	Great Ouse	Ouse Beds	Below normal	Normal
Roxton	Great Ouse	Ivel	Notably low	Normal
Springfield	Chelmer	Chelmer Upper	Notably low	Normal
Swanton Morley Total	Wensum	Wensum	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Temple	Lark	Lark	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Willen	Ouzel	Ouzel	Notably low	Normal

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Jul 2026 band	End of Jun 2026 band
Biggleswade	Ivel Woburn Sands	Normal	Normal
Bircham Newton	North West Norfolk Chalk	Notably low	Below normal
Breckland	Wissey Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Bury St Edmunds	Upper Lark Chalk	Normal	Normal
Castle Farm, Offton	East Suffolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Gog Magog, Stapleford	Cam Chalk	Notably low	Below normal
Hazlewood Common	East Suffolk Crag	No Data	No Data
Hindolveston	Norfolk Chalk	Exceptionally low	Notably low
Kenninghall	Little Ouse Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Linton	Cam Chalk	Below normal	Normal
Newmarket	Snail Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Old Primary School, South Creake	North Norfolk Chalk	No Data	Normal
Redlands Hall, Ickleton	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal
Rook Hall, Braiseworth	East Suffolk Chalk	Notably low	Normal
Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer	North Essex Chalk	Normal	Normal
The Spinney, Costessey	Wensum Chalk	No Data	Notably low
Washpit Farm, Rougham	North West Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Therfield Rectory	Upper Lee Chalk	Normal	Normal
Fringford P.s.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Normal	Normal