

Hydrological Summary

for the United Kingdom

General

The persistent, and seasonally unusual, southerly track of the jet stream contributed to June weather conditions more typical of the late autumn. Record June rainfall totals were recorded in many areas and the reversal in the normal seasonal decline in runoff and aquifer recharge rates, which began in April, was dramatically accentuated. The record April-June rainfall has resulted in an almost complete termination of drought conditions (north-west Scotland aside – see below) and, very unusually for the summer, the focus of hydrological concern has switched decisively to the risk of flooding. Estimated June outflows from Great Britain also exceeded the previous maximum by a considerable margin and flood warnings – relating to both fluvial and flash flood risk – were both common and very widespread. The exceptional runoff rates impacted severely on property, transport, agriculture and leisure activities but the post-March runoff has also transformed the water resources outlook. Overall reservoir stocks for England & Wales registered their highest May-June increase in a series from 1988 and the early July level was appreciably above the previous maximum. Stocks in almost all index reservoirs are close to, or above, the normal early July level. The remarkable temporal contrast in rainfall amounts over the last ten months has caused an unprecedented shift in the aquifer recharge season. After very meagre winter replenishment, groundwater levels in responsive aquifer units have risen healthily through the late spring and early summer – in other areas, levels are set to rise as the recharge currently in the unsaturated zone reaches the water table.

Rainfall

June was a cool, cloudy month with synoptic patterns dominated by low pressure. Slow moving fronts and troughs brought pulses of rain, often intense, at regular intervals throughout the month; sequences of three or more dry days were rare in many areas. There were many notable storm totals, e.g.: a reported 48-hour total of 186mm on the 8/9th east of Aberystwyth; storm totals of around 50mm on the 21/22nd at a number of locations in Northern Ireland; a 24-hour total of 93.8mm at Blencathra (Cumbria) on the 22/23rd. On the 28th, torrential downpours of typically 25mm in 30 minutes resulted in widespread flash-flooding across parts of the Midlands and northern England. Intense convective rainfall made for substantial local variations in June rainfall totals but many areas reported more than twice of average with totals reaching 300% in some areas (e.g. in West Sussex). The UK reported its wettest June in a series from 1910 and accumulated rainfall totals since March are even more exceptional. At a national scale, the April-June rainfall established a new maximum by a considerable margin and, for England, the previous maximum was eclipsed by the equivalent of an extra month's rainfall. Correspondingly, long term rainfall deficiencies have been greatly reduced and 12-month rainfall totals are close to, or above, average (notably so in parts of Scotland). A few longer term deficiencies remain (e.g. in the west Midlands) and, with most frontal systems being deflected to the south, the Western Isles and parts of the Scottish mainland were again relatively dry – resulting in the interruption of whisky production on some islands (e.g. Mull and Islay).

River flows

June began with flows in most index rivers within the typical early summer range but, in contrast to the normal seasonal pattern, runoff rates increased dramatically and by the second week flood alerts were widespread across central and south-west Britain. In Wales, the Rheidol exceeded its previous maximum, on the 9th, in a 30-year record by a wide margin and flows in the neighbouring Ystwyth closely approached the maximum in a series from 1963. With the flooding accentuated by high tide levels, approximately 1000 people were evacuated from the Aberystwyth area. Flooding was widespread again on the 22-24th and further floodplain inundations occurred around the end of the month. The fluvial flooding was most severe in northern England, southern Scotland and the Midlands and was often accompanied by local flash

flooding (with associated landslides in some areas) which contributed to severe transport disruption – the east and west coast mainlines to Scotland were both closed on the 28th. Rivers registering new maximum June runoff totals showed a very wide distribution from the Clyde to the Exe and the Bush to the Great Ouse. More notably, estimated outflows from England & Wales were around 30% greater than the previous highest for June in a 62-year series. June flows were however very depressed in some rivers in the western Highlands of Scotland (e.g. the Carron) and remain modest in some spring-fed rivers in southern England but across most of the country runoff rates were more typical of December than the early summer. 2007 provides the only modern parallel to the runoff transformation witnessed since the spring this year.

Groundwater

June rainfall was more than twice the 1971-2000 average across most of the major aquifers and end-of month soil moisture deficits, averaged across the Chalk outcrop, were the lowest in the MORECS series for June. Recharge, normally meagre in June, was substantial. The full impact of this seasonally rare groundwater replenishment will not be evident until the water currently in the unsaturated zone reaches the water table and this, combined with locally intense rainfall continuing into July, means that local groundwater flooding may become an issue in upcoming months. Notable recent high levels have been recorded in the Chalk for the western part of the South Downs and Dorset, with levels above, or approaching, the June maximum at Compton, Chilgrove and Ashton Farm. Last month, Killyglen in Northern Ireland appears to have registered both its lowest and highest June levels. A more muted rise typifies most of the Chalk aquifer, with levels at the slow-responding Lime Kiln Way and Hay Farm remaining very low. All the limestone boreholes showed significant rises, with levels above those previously recorded for June in the Cotswolds and the Peak District; levels at Alstonfield rose by more than 14m to over 3m above the previous June maximum. More muted responses were observed in the Magnesian Limestone and Lincolnshire Limestone where levels remain below the average for the month. In the Permo-Triassic sandstones Bussels and Yew Tree Farm are now approaching maximum levels, although levels continued to fall across some of the slow-responding sandstone boreholes, with a record June minimum being recorded at Heathlanes.

June 2012



Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL



British
Geological Survey
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Rainfall . . . Rainfall . . .



Rainfall accumulations and return period estimates

Percentages are from the 1971-2000 average.

Area	Rainfall	June 2012	Apr 12 - Jun 12	Jan 12 - Jun 12	Jul 11 - Jun 12	Apr 10 - Jun 12
			RP	RP	RP	RP
United Kingdom	mm %	145 209	339 170 >>100	540 110 5-10	1222 113 5-10	2429 103 2-5
England	mm %	143 232	329 192 >>100	446 118 8-12	853 104 2-5	1686 93 5-10
Scotland	mm %	129 164	334 144 15-25	674 104 2-5	1781 124 50-80	3537 114 20-35
Wales	mm %	205 249	443 185 >100	655 106 2-5	1398 102 2-5	2809 94 2-5
Northern Ireland	mm %	169 238	294 140 10-15	494 97 2-5	1261 114 8-12	2556 105 2-5
England & Wales	mm %	151 235	345 191 >>100	474 115 5-10	928 104 2-5	1841 93 5-10
North West	mm %	196 251	374 177 >>100	587 113 5-10	1385 118 5-10	2732 107 2-5
Northumbria	mm %	164 270	380 214 >>100	482 124 10-15	973 117 5-10	1971 107 2-5
Midlands	mm %	135 217	316 185 >100	421 117 5-10	730 96 2-5	1457 86 15-25
Yorkshire	mm %	145 232	354 202 >>100	478 125 10-15	899 111 2-5	1733 96 2-5
Anglian	mm %	104 192	267 183 >>100	350 124 10-15	598 99 2-5	1216 90 5-10
Thames	mm %	139 246	312 194 >>100	402 122 10-15	703 100 2-5	1371 88 5-10
Southern	mm %	130 234	309 197 >>100	406 115 2-5	752 96 2-5	1529 89 5-10
Wessex	mm %	154 256	349 203 >>100	459 114 5-10	872 101 2-5	1671 88 8-12
South West	mm %	170 235	405 191 >>100	579 104 2-5	1198 99 2-5	2321 88 5-10
Welsh	mm %	202 252	437 187 >100	637 107 2-5	1346 102 2-5	2702 94 5-10
Highland	mm %	76 85	300 115 2-5	792 103 2-5	2097 122 30-45	4083 111 10-15
North East	mm %	111 169	348 181 >100	490 113 2-5	1136 120 5-10	2449 117 8-12
Tay	mm %	144 208	372 177 45-65	581 98 2-5	1577 124 20-30	3230 118 35-50
Forth	mm %	175 254	374 189 >100	566 109 2-5	1439 127 25-40	2925 119 30-50
Tweed	mm %	190 292	398 209 >>100	525 119 5-10	1261 132 30-50	2469 118 10-20
Solway	mm %	225 286	390 166 50-80	702 112 5-10	1790 127 70-100	3565 117 40-60
Clyde	mm %	176 198	353 137 5-10	780 102 2-5	2233 129 60-90	4330 116 25-40

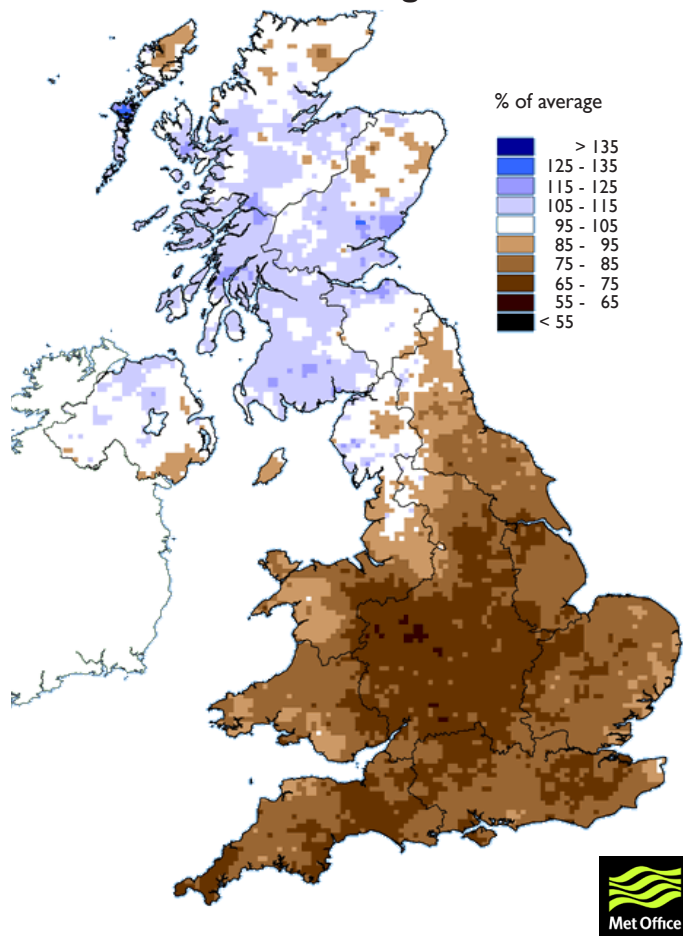
% = percentage of 1971-2000 average

RP = Return period

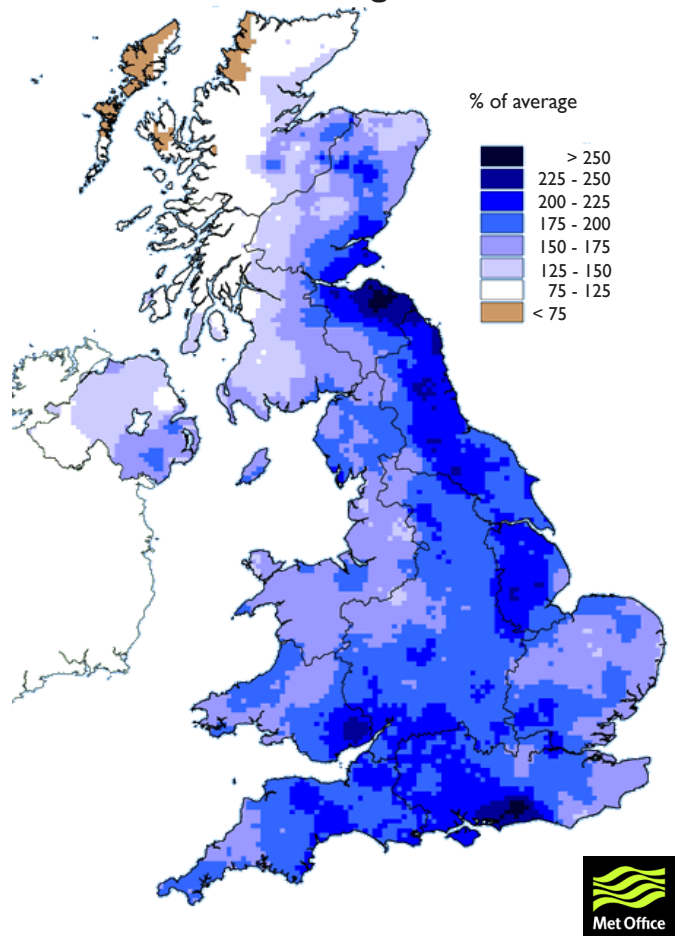
Important note: Figures in the above table may be quoted provided their source is acknowledged (see page 12). Where appropriate, specific mention must be made of the uncertainties associated with the return period estimates. The RP estimates are based on data provided by the Met Office and reflect climatic variability since 1910; they also assume a stable climate. The quoted RPs relate to the specific timespans only; for the same timespans, but beginning in any month the RPs would be substantially shorter. The timespans featured do not purport to represent the critical periods for any particular water resource management zone. For hydrological or water resources assessments of drought severity, river flows and/or groundwater levels normally provide a better guide than return periods based on regional rainfall totals. All monthly rainfall totals since December 2011 are provisional.

Rainfall . . . Rainfall . . .

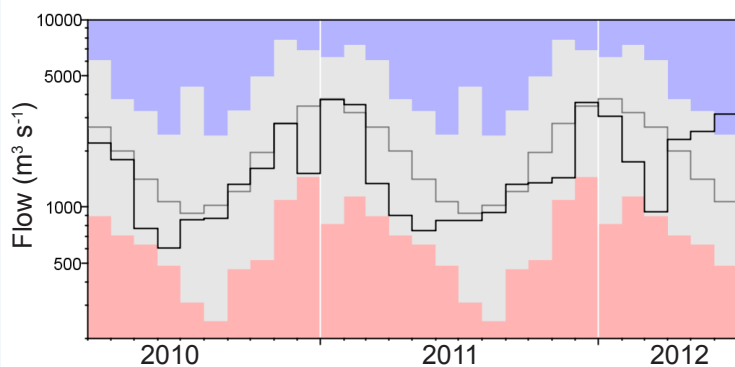
**April 2010 - March 2012 rainfall
as % of 1971-2000 average**



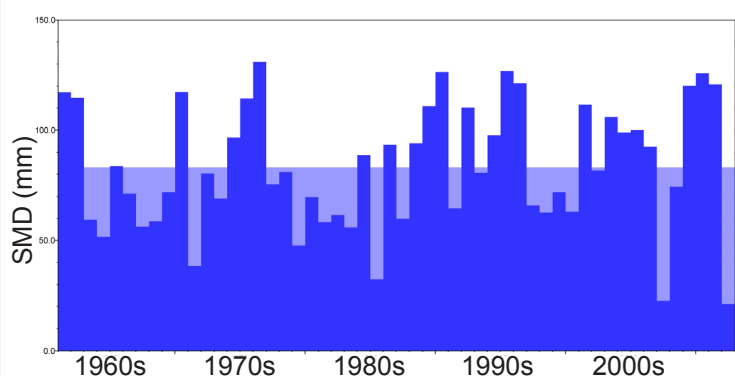
**April 2012 - June 2012 rainfall
as % of 1971-2000 average**



**Monthly outflows from England & Wales (with period
of record maxima and minima)**



MORECS end-of-June SMDs across the Chalk outcrop



Met Office
3-month outlook
Updated: July 2012

For UK-average rainfall, the predicted probabilities slightly favour above normal rainfall during both July and the July-August-September period, although the spread of possible outcomes is large. Consequently, confidence in this prediction is not high, and there is still a significant probability of below normal rainfall.

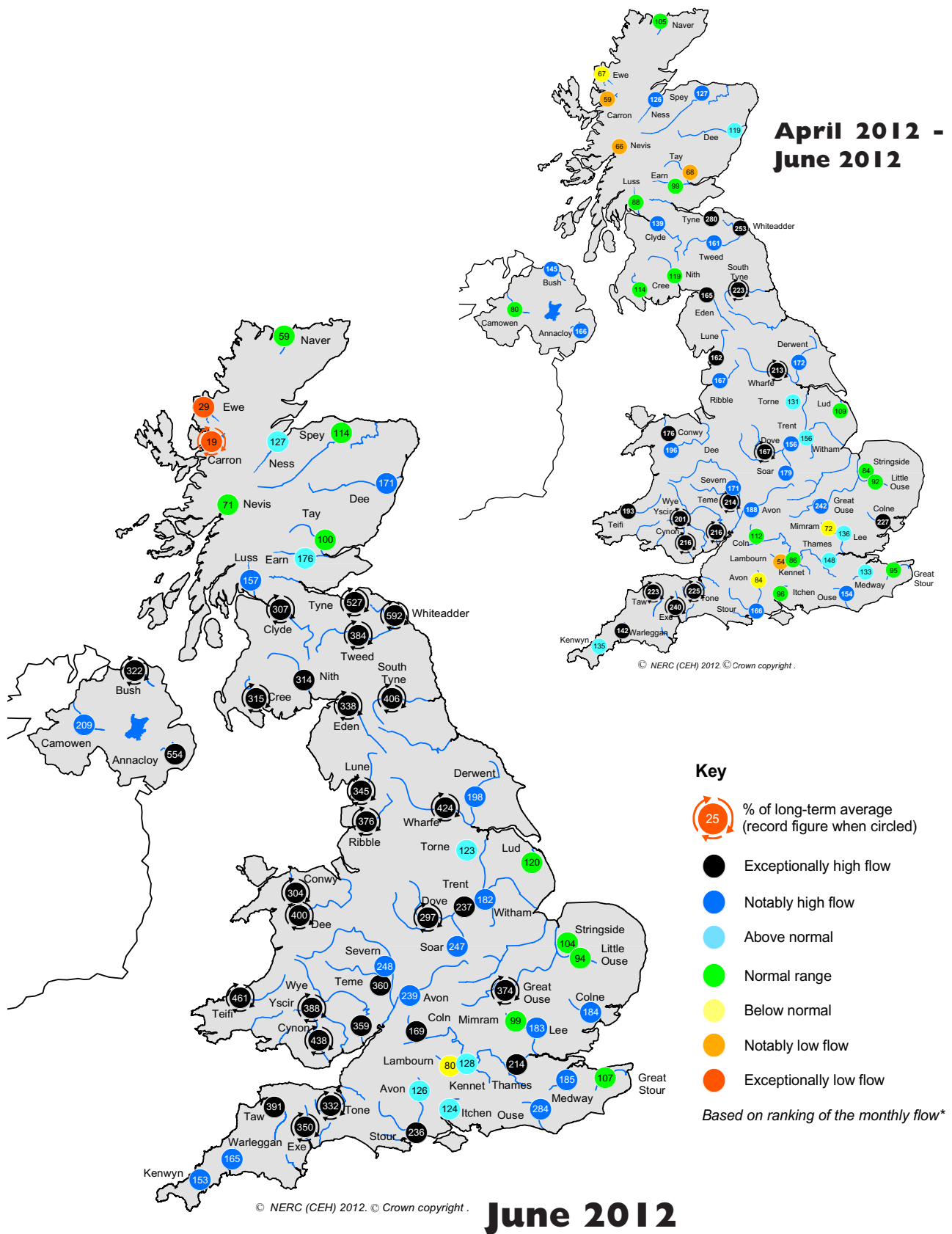
Recent wet weather, which has helped to substantially improve surface and groundwater resources across much of the country, is likely to continue into the first part of July. Indeed the forecast for July includes a significant probability of the monthly accumulation being above normal.

The probability that UK precipitation for July-August-September will fall into the driest of our five categories is around 20% whilst the probability that it will fall into the wettest of our five categories is also around 20% (the 1971-2000 climatological probability for each of these categories is 20%).

The complete version of the 3-month outlook may be found at:
<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/publicsector/contingency-planners>
This outlook is updated towards the end of each calendar month.

The latest shorter-range forecasts, covering the upcoming 30 days, can be accessed via:
http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/uk_forecast_weather.html
These forecasts are updated very frequently.

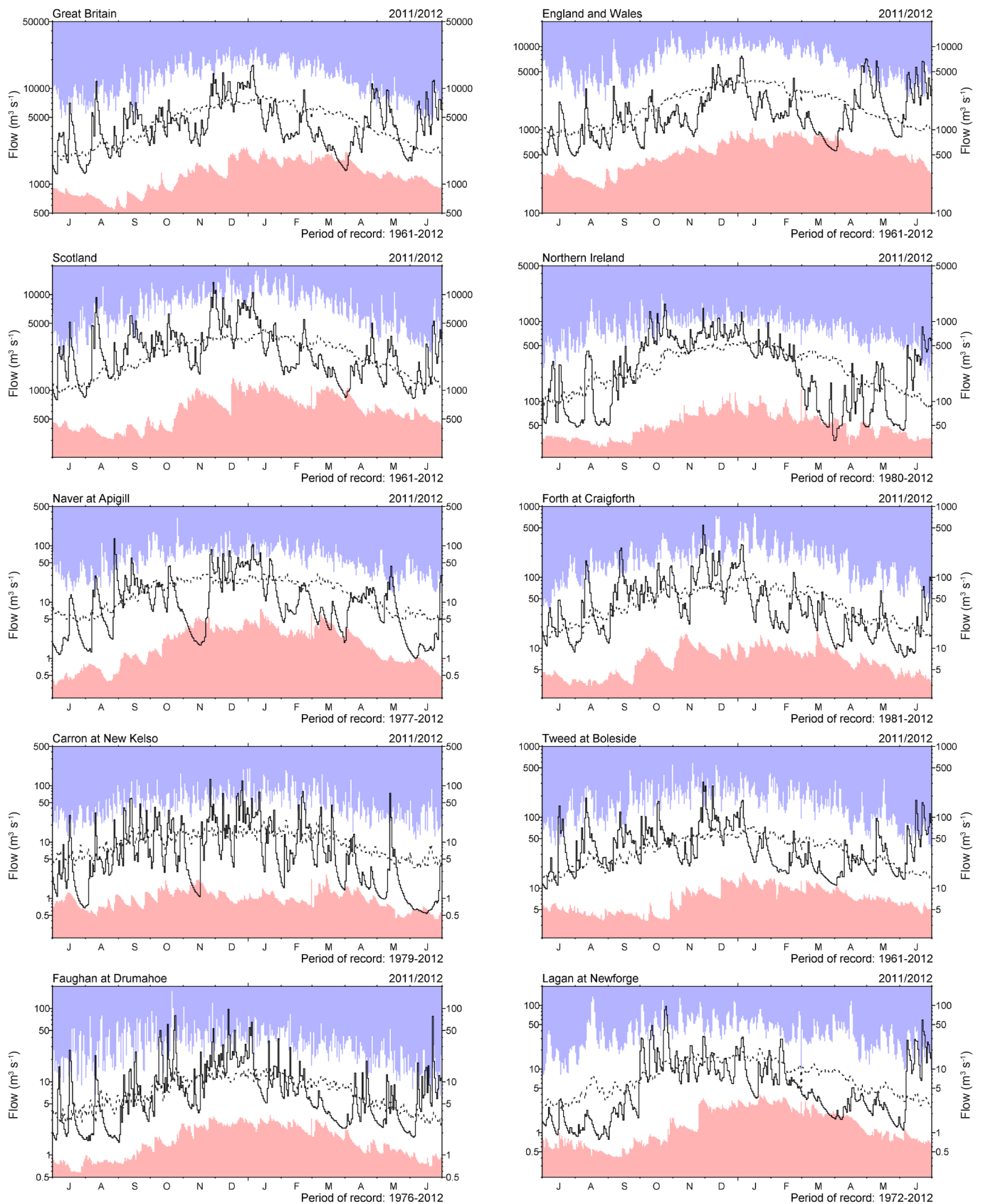
River flow . . . River flow . . .



River flows

*Comparisons based on percentage flows alone can be misleading. A given percentage flow can represent extreme drought conditions in permeable catchments where flow patterns are relatively stable but be well within the normal range in impermeable catchments where the natural variation in flows is much greater. Note: the period of record on which these percentages are based varies from station to station. Percentages may be omitted where flows are under review.

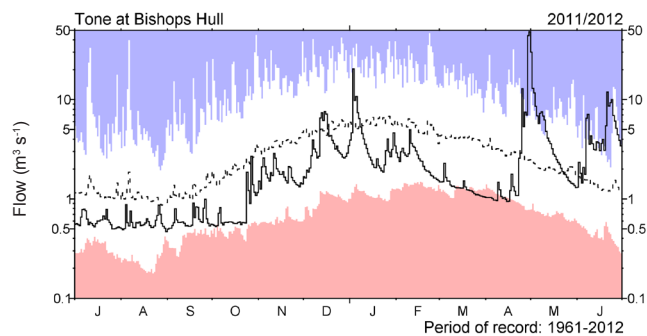
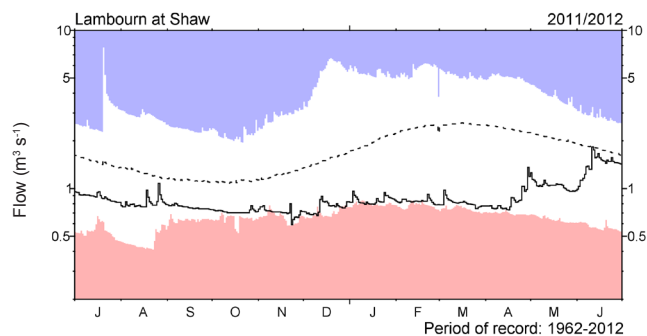
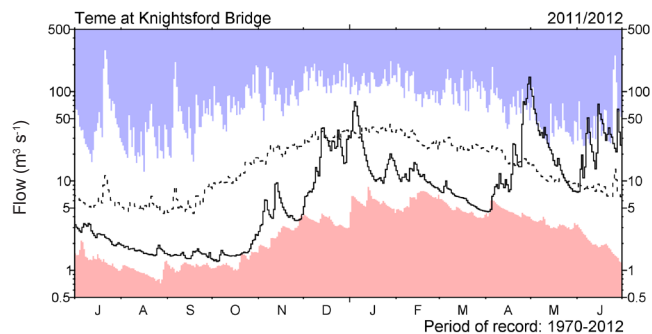
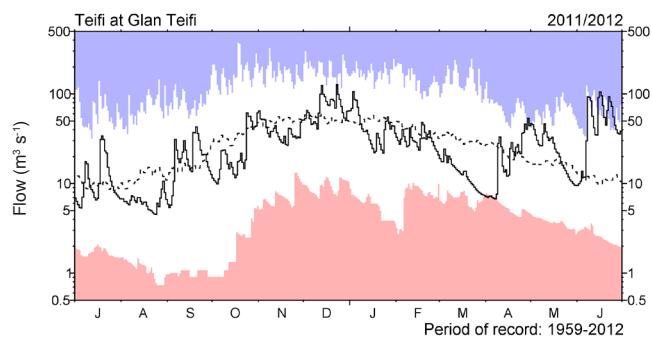
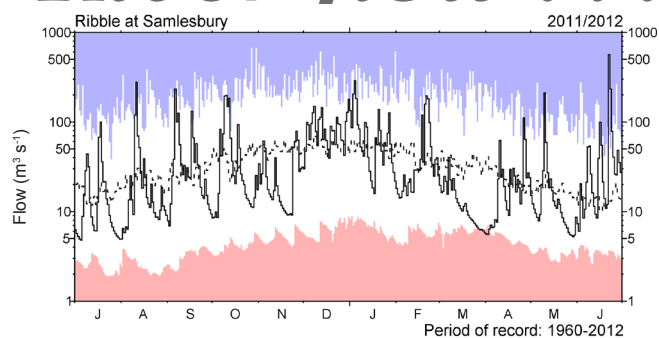
River flow . . . River flow . . .



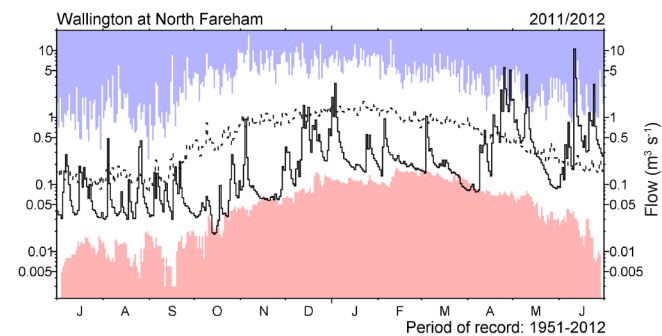
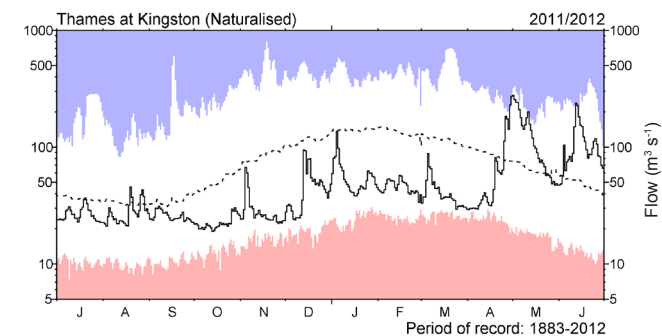
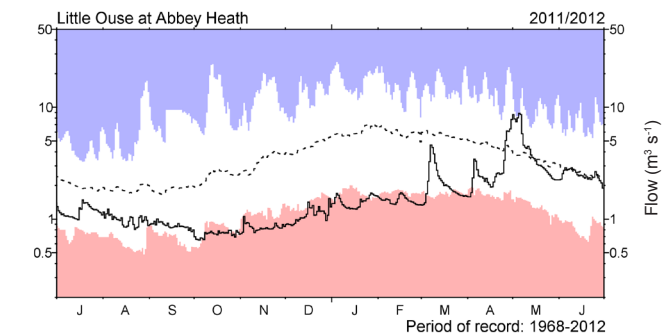
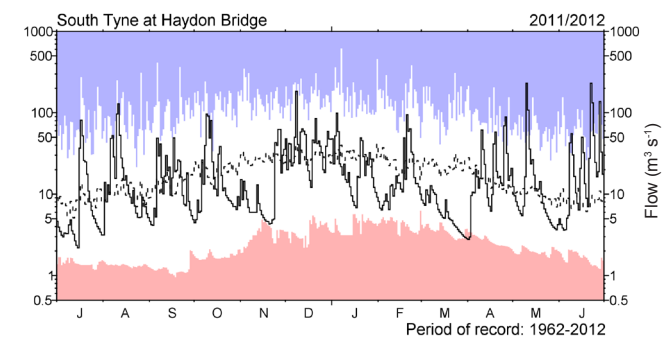
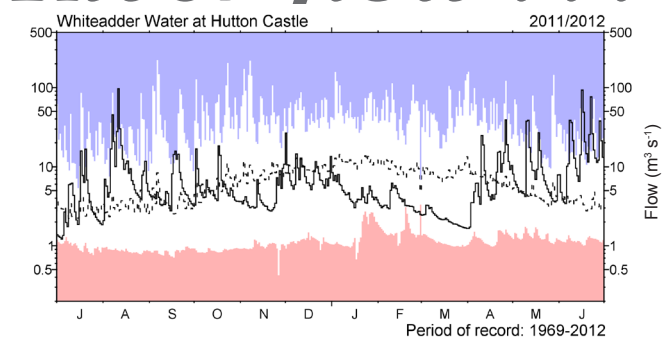
River flow hydrographs

The river flow hydrographs show the daily mean flows together with the maximum and minimum daily flows prior to July 2011 (shown by the shaded areas). Daily flows falling outside the maximum/minimum range are indicated where the bold trace enters the shaded areas. Mean daily flows are shown as the dashed line.

River flow . . .



River flow . . .

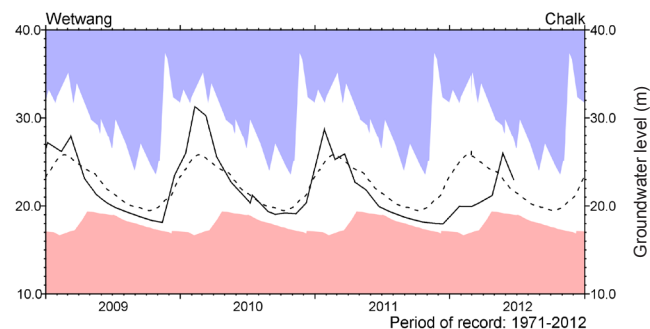
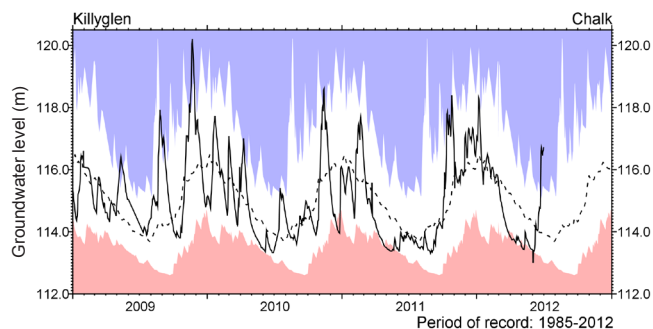
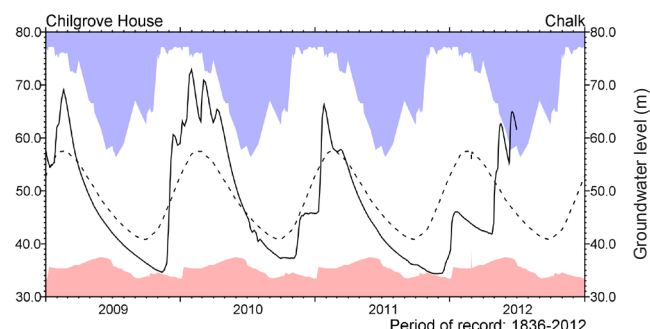
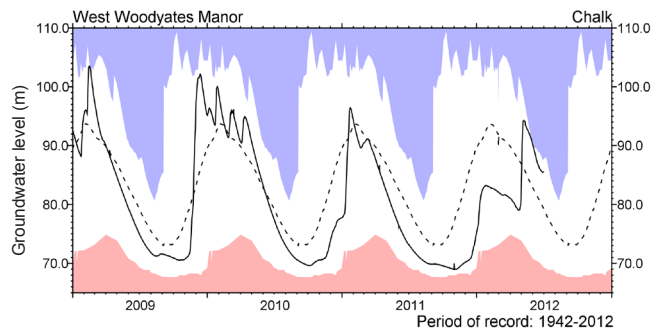
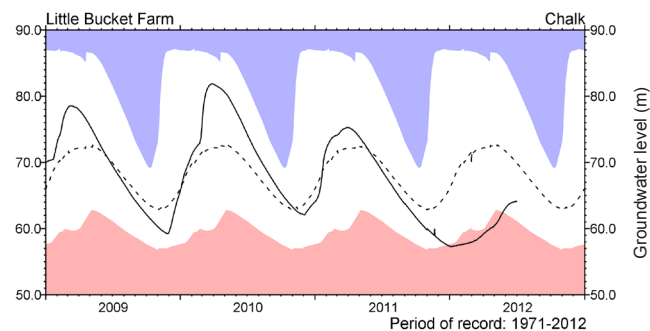
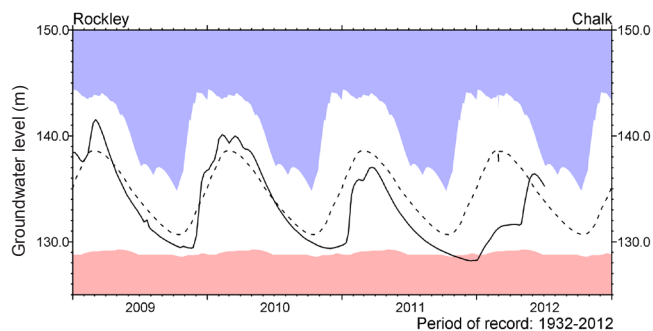
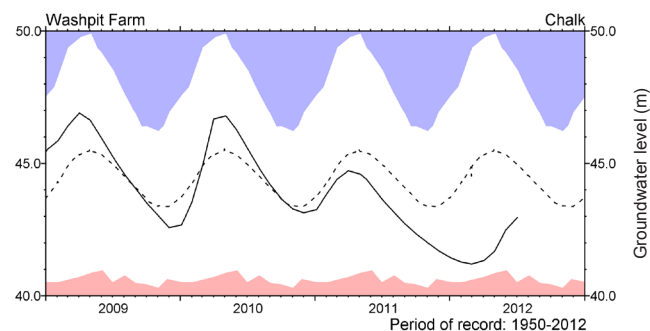
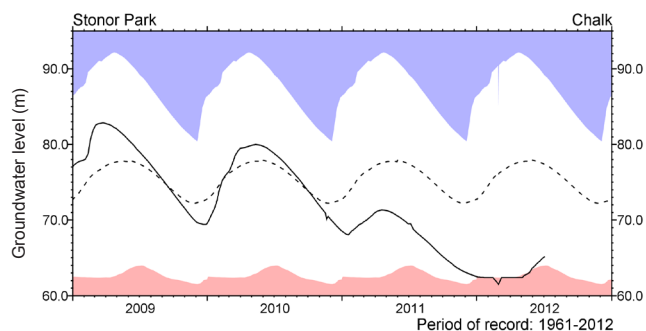
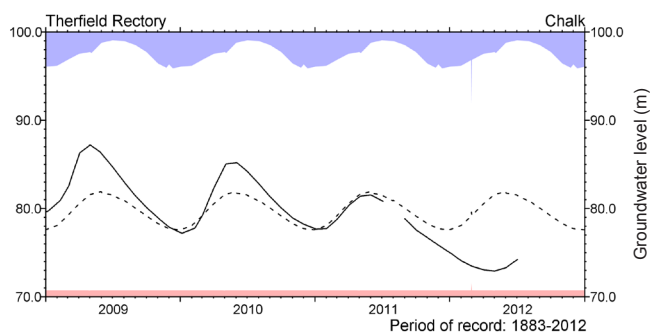
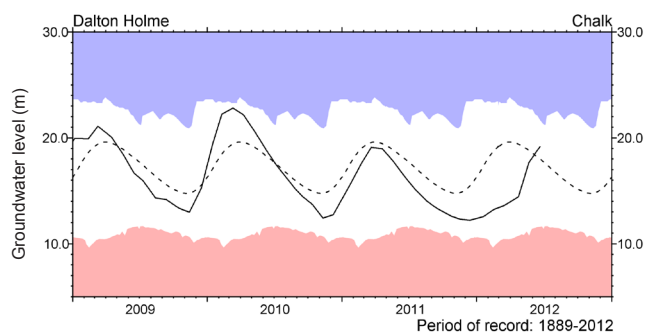


Notable runoff accumulations (a) April 2012 - June 2012, (b) February 2011 - June 2012, (c) May 2010 - June 2012

River	%lta	Rank	River	%lta	Rank	River	%lta	Rank
a) Ouse (Skelton)	215	42/42	b) Earn	131	63/64	c) Kennet	65	2/49
Mole	261	39/39	Medway	41	1/47	Coln	62	1/47
Wallington	229	60/60	Avon (Amesbury)	55	1/47	Pang	58	2/42
Lymington	273	52/52	Kenwyn	69	1/43	Stour	62	2/38
Otter	188	50/50	Nith	125	53/54	Piddle	67	1/45
Dart	192	54/54	Clyde (Blairston)	135	49/49	Tone	69	2/50
Tawe	190	54/54	Mourne	124	29/29	Brue	66	2/44
Dyfi	230	45/45	Bush	140	37/37	Usk (Chain Bridge)	75	2/54

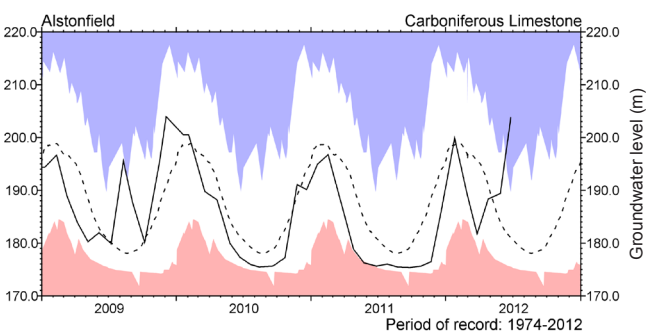
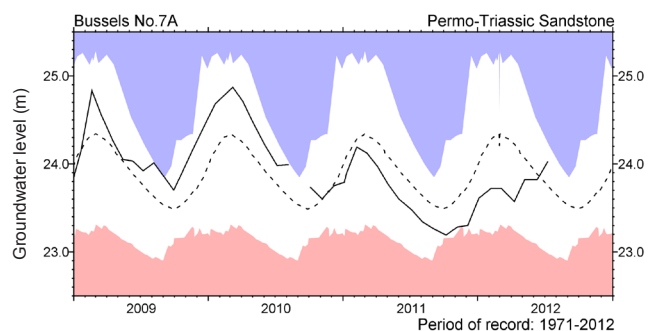
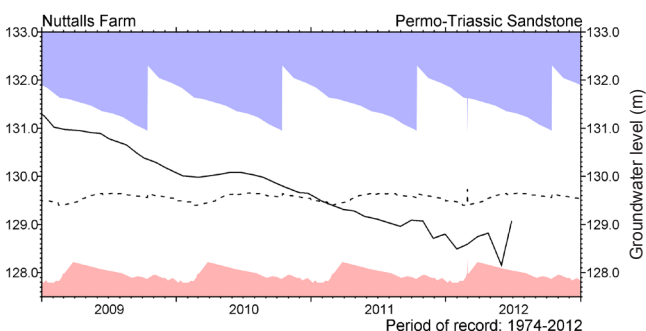
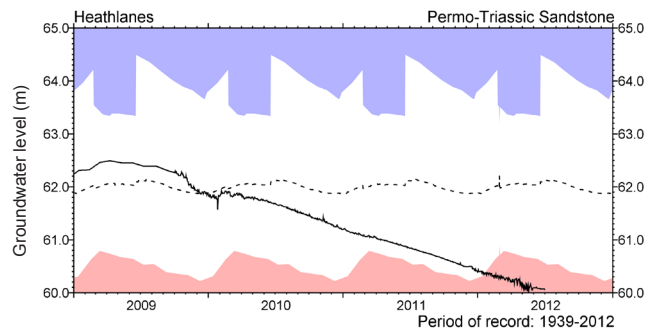
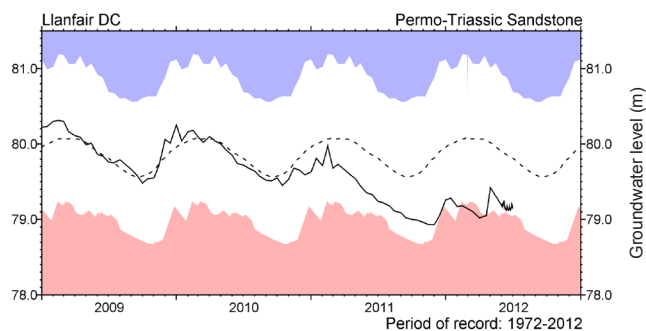
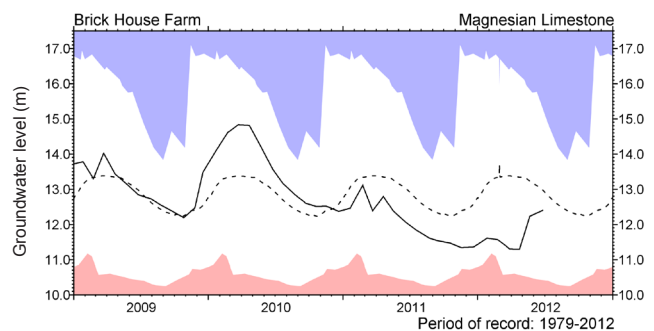
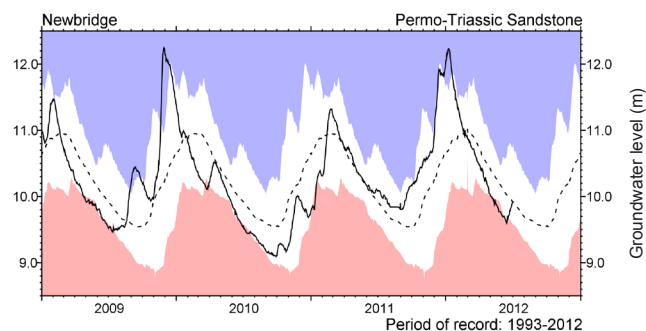
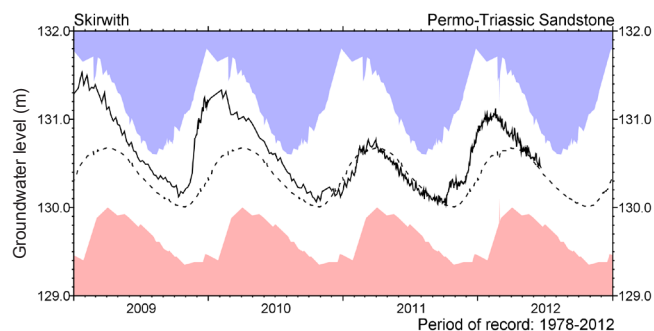
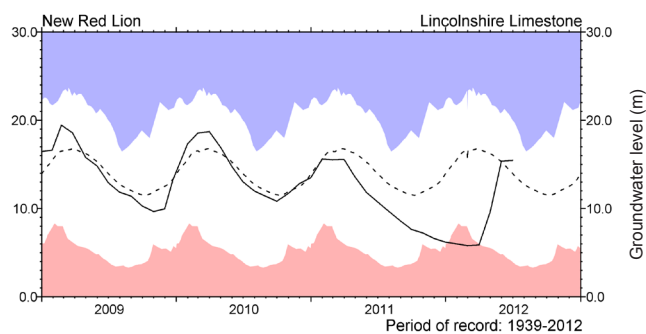
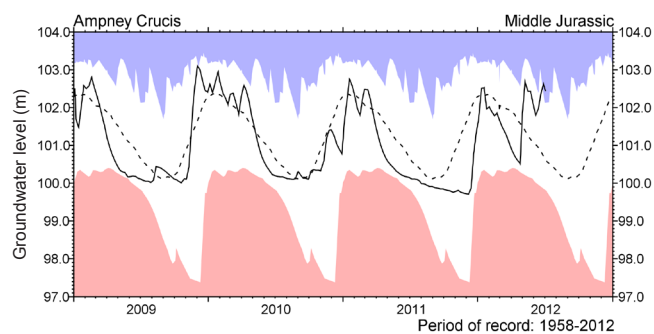
lta = long term average; Rank 1 = lowest on record

Groundwater . . . Groundwater



Groundwater levels normally rise and fall with the seasons, reaching a peak in the spring following replenishment through the winter (when evaporation losses are low and soil moist). They decline through the summer and early autumn. This seasonal variation is much reduced when the aquifer is confined below overlying impermeable strata. The monthly mean and the highest and lowest levels recorded for each month are displayed in a similar style to the river flow hydrographs. Note that most groundwater levels are not measured continuously and, for some index wells, the greater frequency of contemporary measurements may, in itself, contribute to an increased range of variation. The latest recorded levels are listed overleaf.

Groundwater . . . Groundwater



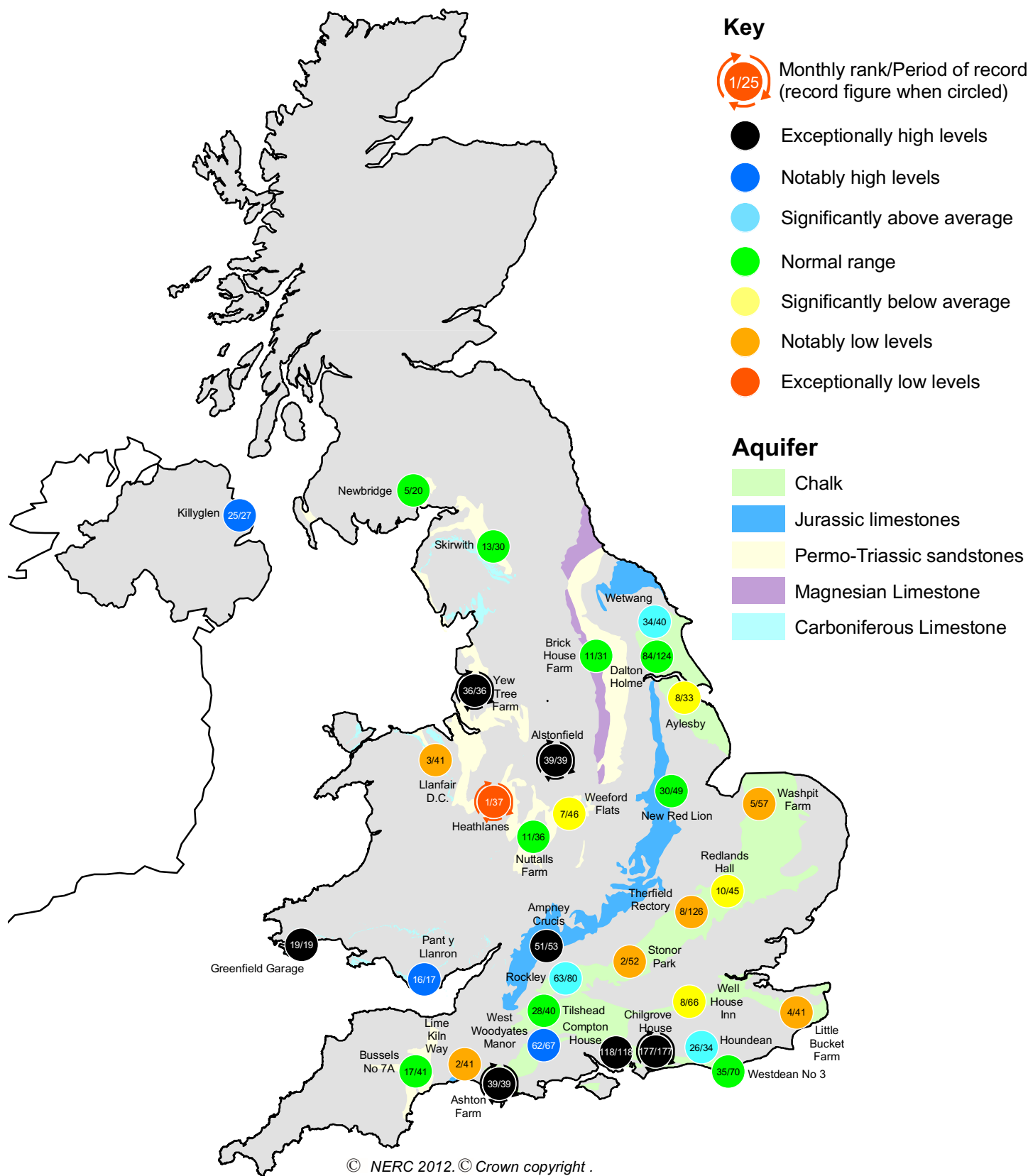
Groundwater levels June / July 2012

Borehole	Level	Date	Jun av.
Dalton Holme	19.16	20/06	18.10
Therfield Rectory	74.21	02/07	81.87
Stonor Park	65.12	02/07	77.63
Tilshead	88.24	30/06	87.64
Rockley	135.27	02/07	134.55
Well House Inn	93.37	02/07	96.45
West Woodyates	85.54	30/06	80.87

Borehole	Level	Date	Jun av.
Chilgrove House	61.40	30/06	46.01
Killyglen (NI)	116.71	30/06	113.98
New Red Lion	15.44	30/06	14.34
Ampney Crucis	102.45	02/07	100.84
Newbridge	9.91	30/06	9.99
Skirwith	130.44	20/06	130.51
Morris Dancers	30.68	26/06	32.11
Brick House Farm	12.40	25/06	13.10
Llanfair DC	79.15	30/06	79.86
Heathlanes	60.06	30/06	62.15
Nuttalls Farm	129.06	27/06	129.65
Bussels No.7a	24.02	08/07	23.86
Alstonfield	203.70	25/06	181.39

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum

Groundwater . . . Groundwater



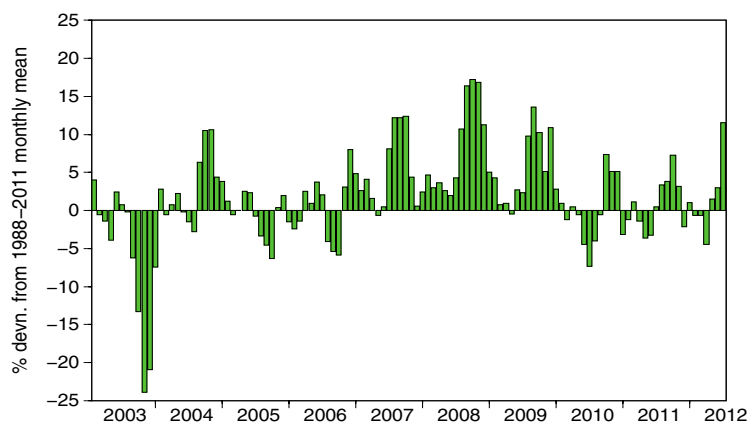
Groundwater levels - June 2012

The rankings are based on a comparison between the average level in the featured month (but often only single readings are available) and the average level in each corresponding month on record. Rankings – and the designation of period of record maxima and minima – need to be interpreted with caution; where the latest monthly mean values are based on one or two level measurements only, their recording dates can be very influential, particularly during periods of relatively rapid change. Rankings may be omitted where they are considered misleading.

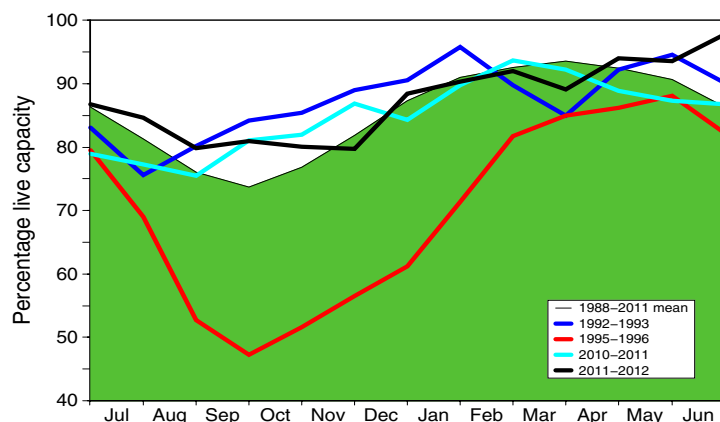
Notes: i. The outcrop areas are coloured according to British Geological Survey conventions.
ii. Yew Tree Farm levels are now received quarterly.

Reservoirs . . . Reservoirs . . .

Guide to the variation in overall reservoir stocks for England and Wales



Comparison between overall reservoir stocks for England and Wales in recent years



These plots are based on the England and Wales figures listed below.

Percentage live capacity of selected reservoirs at start of month

Area	Reservoir	Capacity (MI)	2012 May	June	July	July Anom.	Min July	Year* of min	2011 July	Diff 12-11
North West	N Command Zone	• 124929	83	80	95	23	52	2010	83	12
	Vyrnwy	55146	100	94	99	17	65	1990	86	13
Northumbrian	Teesdale	• 87936	100	90	100	21	58	1989	93	7
	Kielder	(199175)	91	93	99	9	71	1989	94	5
Severn Trent	Clywedog	44922	99	100	98	4	72	1989	100	-2
	Derwent Valley	• 39525	99	96	100	21	53	1996	63	37
Yorkshire	Washburn	• 22035	100	94	96	15	63	1995	72	24
	Bradford supply	• 41407	98	92	99	21	54	1995	73	26
Anglian	Grafham	(55490)	96	95	96	3	70	1997	93	3
	Rutland	(116580)	85	95	98	10	75	1997	81	17
Thames	London	• 202828	98	98	98	6	85	1990	95	3
	Farmoor	• 13822	97	99	98	1	94	1995	100	-2
Southern	Bewl	28170	60	79	91	9	52	1990	73	18
	Ardingly*	4685	69	89	100	5	82	2005	84	16
Wessex	Clatworthy	5364	100	96	100	18	61	1995	71	29
	Bristol WW	• (38666)	91	96	97	15	64	1990	73	24
South West	Colliford	28540	79	80	83	2	51	1997	66	17
	Roadford	34500	85	85	89	8	49	1996	60	29
	Wimbleball	21320	100	99	100	15	63	2011	63	37
	Stithians	4967	90	93	95	16	53	1990	71	24
Welsh	Celyn and Brenig	• 131155	100	100	100	6	77	1996	97	3
	Brianne	62140	100	98	100	8	76	1995	89	11
	Big Five	• 69762	100	96	100	16	61	1989	87	13
	Elan Valley	• 99106	100	95	100	11	75	1989	85	15
Scotland(E)	Edinburgh/Mid Lothian	• 97639	95	94	97	11	54	1998	91	6
	East Lothian	• 10206	100	100	100	6	81	1992	94	6
Scotland(W)	Loch Katrine	• 111363	89	80	73	-7	55	2010	95	-22
	Daer	22412	100	98	100	16	62	1994	99	1
	Loch Thom	• 11840	97	93	93	7	69	2000	100	-7
Northern	Total ⁺	• 56920	84	82	96	14	61	2008	82	14
Ireland	Silent Valley	• 20634	80	76	100	23	54	1995	78	22

() figures in parentheses relate to gross storage

• denotes reservoir groups

*excludes Lough Neagh

*last occurrence

Details of the individual reservoirs in each of the groupings listed above are available on request. The percentages given in the Average and Minimum storage columns relate to the 1988-2011 period except for West of Scotland and Northern Ireland where data commence in the mid-1990's. In some gravity-fed reservoirs (e.g. Clywedog) stocks are kept below capacity during the winter to provide scope for flood attenuation purposes.

* The monthly record of Ardingly reservoir stocks is under review.

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Location map . . . Location map



National Hydrological Monitoring Programme

The National Hydrological Monitoring Programme (NHMP) was instigated in 1988 and is undertaken jointly by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) and the British Geological Survey (BGS) – both are component bodies of the Natural Environment Research Council. The National River Flow Archive (maintained by CEH) and the National Groundwater Level Archive (maintained by BGS) provide the historical perspective within which to examine contemporary hydrological conditions.

Data Sources

River flow and groundwater level data are provided by the Environment Agency, the Environment Agency Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and, for Northern Ireland, the Rivers Agency and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In all cases the data are subject to revision following validation (flood and drought data in particular may be subject to significant revision). Reservoir level information is provided by the Water Service Companies, the EA, Scottish Water and Northern Ireland Water.

Most rainfall data are provided by the Met Office (address opposite).

To allow better spatial differentiation the monthly rainfall data for Britain are presented for the regional divisions of the precursor organisations of the EA and SEPA.

The monthly, and n-month, rainfall figures have been produced by the Met Office, National Climate Information Centre (NCIC) and are based on gridded data from raingauges. They include a significant number of monthly raingauge totals provided by the EA and SEPA. The Met Office NCIC monthly rainfall series extends back to 1910 and forms the official source of UK areal rainfall statistics which have been adopted by the NHMP. The gridding technique used is described in Perry MC and Hollis DM. (2005) available at http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/about/Monthly_gridded_datasets_UK.pdf

The regional figures for the current month are based on limited raingauge networks so these (and the return periods associated with them) should be regarded as a guide only.

The Met Office NCIC monthly rainfall series are Crown Copyright and may not be passed on to, or published by, any unauthorised person or organisation.

From time to time the Hydrological Summary may also refer to evaporation and soil moisture figures. These are obtained from MORECS, the Met Office services involving the routine calculation of evaporation and soil moisture throughout the UK.

For further details please contact:

The Met Office
FitzRoy Road
Exeter
Devon
EX1 3PB

Tel.: 0870 900 0100

Fax: 0870 900 5050

E-mail: enquiries@metoffice.com

The National Hydrological Monitoring Programme depends on the active cooperation of many data suppliers. This cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

Enquiries

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Selected text and maps are available on the WWW at <http://www.ceh.ac.uk/data/nrfa/nhmp/nhmp.html>
Navigate via Hydrological Summary for the UK.

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