

Environment Agency taking action in dry weather

After the fifth consecutive month of below average rainfall and the driest spring and early summer since 1996, river flows and reservoir levels are below normal in most parts of the region.

The dry weather has been most prevalent in the Tees catchment, which recorded its driest 12 months ending July since 1976.

In the North East, the Environment Agency is working with Northumbrian Water to maintain the health of the region's rivers, with the company's Kielder Transfer Scheme moving around 30 megalitres of water per day from Kielder reservoir into the River Wear through its Frosterley outfall for 12 days at the end of July, the first time a Tyne-Wear transfer has been made in 16 years. The transfer started again on Thursday afternoon (11 August) due to low river levels at Chester-le-Street.

The Agency also requested Northumbrian Water make additional releases from Kielder reservoir into the River Tyne to maintain oxygen levels in the estuary to support salmon migration in the country's top salmon river. Almost 12,000 fish were counted moving upstream during July, the highest July total on record.

They've worked with holders of 35 abstraction licences to issue 'hands off flow' conditions, which means licence holders have been told that river levels are low and as a result abstraction must stop to protect the environment.

Rachael Caldwell, Environment Agency Area Environment Manager in the North East, said:

River flows across most of the North East are low after a prolonged period of dry weather, and with the warm weather set to continue we expect levels will continue to drop.

We're looking at the impacts of dry weather across the region to make sure we can act to preserve water for wildlife and people as we experience extreme weather conditions.

We are taking action alongside Government, water companies, environmental and angling groups and farmers to manage these impacts, such as operating water transfer schemes and managing abstraction licences.

On 9 August the Environment Agency declared prolonged dry weather in the North East.

Prolonged dry weather is a natural event which has become more likely with climate change. It occurs as a result of low rainfall for an extended period of time. Once prolonged dry weather is declared, actions are taken to minimise impacts on the environment.

For water saving tips visit [Waterwise](#).

If people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, it should be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60.

[Yorkshire drought order application approved](#)

This week the Environment Secretary granted the application. It means the Environment Agency can ask Yorkshire Water to slow the flow of water leaving the reservoir to manage habitats and river flows to protect wildlife. The flow from the reservoir will reduce from 2million litres per day to 1million litres.

The order will have no impact on the public water supply as the Holme Styes Reservoir is a historic mill reservoir and not part of the public water infrastructure.

Victoria Slingsby, environment planning and engagement manager for the Environment Agency in Yorkshire, said:

We're pleased the drought order request we submitted for Holme Styes reservoir has been approved, which means we can reduce the flow from the reservoir to protect habitats and wildlife. Without it, the reservoir could run dry and plants and animals that rely on it would die.

It's an example of the action we are taking right across the country as the extreme temperatures increase the likelihood of local impacts and put pressure on the water environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency declared prolonged dry weather in Yorkshire on 13 July.

Prolonged dry weather is a natural event which has become more likely with climate change. It occurs as a result of low rainfall for an extended period of time. Once prolonged dry weather is declared, actions are taken to

minimise impacts on the environment.

Action is being taken by Government, Environment Agency, water companies, environmental and angling groups and farmers to manage the impacts. For example, the Environment Agency is responding to environmental risks and increasing fisheries incident response, as well as operating a large number of augmentation and water transfer schemes.

In Yorkshire, they have worked with holders of 128 abstraction licences to issue 'hands off flow' conditions, which means licence holders have been told that river levels are low and as a result abstraction must stop to protect the environment.

July recorded the fifth month in a row of below average long term average rainfall for Yorkshire, with most of Yorkshire's rivers in below normal flow conditions.

If people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, it should be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60.

[Highlands and Islands play 'key role' in UK defence](#)

Press release

Key defence sites in western Scotland were visited by UK Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin, to meet personnel and tour the facilities.



- Minister visits test, evaluation and training sites in Applecross and the Hebrides
- Sites play important role in major joint military exercises
- More than 250 people employed, supporting the local economy

The Minister visited the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC) based in Applecross on the north-west coast. The facility is used for noise ranging of surface ships and submarines and for testing underwater weapons, such as torpedoes. Run by QinetiQ, Minister Quin met the personnel who operate it on behalf of the MOD and the Royal Navy.

He then travelled to the MOD Hebrides range, also run by QinetiQ, where NATO exercises are conducted, ground-based air defence weapons are tested and complex weapons trials are run.

The Minister received a thorough overview of both facilities, including their use in major joint exercises, and gained a better understanding of their contribution to the local economy, with more than 250 people employed in engineering, logistics and other technical and administrative roles.

Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

It has been excellent to see first-hand the operational importance of these facilities in the north-west Highlands and the Western Isles, and to engage with those playing a key role in UK defence.

I have also seen the impact the sites have on the local economy in the areas they are based, not only providing high quality that will drive innovation in Defence, but also the positive impact of a Defence presence supporting small businesses in rural communities.

QinetiQ Chief Executive Officer, Steve Wadey said:

It was a pleasure to host the Minister at the sites and give him the chance to meet some of our brilliant employees. As a major local employer in the area, we take our responsibilities seriously to ensure that we support the community and have a positive impact. In recent years, we have already committed £120m into both sites to modernise them and help sustain and attract work from our UK and international customers.

We remain committed to these sites, which are key to helping secure the vital interests of the UK, whether that be helping to host major NATO live-fire exercises or providing high value technical services to the Royal Navy on how to avoid detection by reducing noise on their platforms.

Earlier this week, Minister Quin also visited Defence Munitions Beith, in Ayrshire, a facility which produces, tests and stores weapons for the UK's Armed Forces. He was able to meet staff and see some of the complex weapons which are tested at BUTEC and MOD Hebrides.

GAD in Scotland

News story

GAD builds its client offer in Scotland by enhancing the level of expertise and the breadth of experience, so the team continues from strength-to-strength.



The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) has continued to strengthen its client offer by increasing the level of expertise in based in Scotland.

Our work with clients helps government improve stewardship of public finances through our expertise as actuaries and consultants.

Scotland presence

GAD has had a presence in Scotland for over a decade, but this has grown considerably in recent years. This enhanced level of expertise and breadth of experience means the GAD Edinburgh team continues to go from strength-to-strength.

GAD staff in London and Edinburgh work closely together to support clients based across the UK including Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Our enhanced presence in Scotland makes it easier to work onsite and have in-person meetings with our clients in Scotland.

Networking and engagement

As part of our collaborative approach in working with other departments, actuaries from GAD launched a networking and engagement programme from the Edinburgh office. At the first event we talked about the impact we make across government by:

- enabling effective policy
- enabling better informed decisions
- saving public money

The inaugural networking and engagement event.

Attendees of the inaugural event held at Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh included key decision makers from the:

1. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2. Office for Statistics Regulation
3. HM Treasury
4. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
5. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
6. Building Digital UK
7. Department for International Trade
8. HMRC
9. Cabinet Office
10. Office of the Advocate General for Scotland

Here to help

We work across insurance, investments, financial risk management, pensions, climate change, quality assurance and bespoke advice. We can help organisations with initial stages of project scoping and planning, policy design and implementation.

If you are based in Scotland and want to find out how GAD can help you, please get in touch: scottish-enquiries@gad.gov.uk

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[A47 North Tuddenham to Easton development consent decision announced](#)

The application involves the dualling of the single carriageway section of the A47 between Norwich and Dereham, linking together two existing sections of dual carriageway. The scheme will provide a new route to the south of Hockering and to the north of Honningham and include new junctions with locations yet to be determined.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by National Highways on 15 March 2021 and accepted for Examination on 12 April 2021.

Following an Examination during which the public, Statutory Consultees and

Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, recommendations were made to the Secretary of State on 12 May 2022.

This is the 115th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 42nd transport application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate has now examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects since the Planning Act 2008 process was introduced, ensuring local communities have had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them.

"The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in the six-month long examination.

"The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the Examination before making its recommendation."

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation are publicly available on the [project pages of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate's [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.