

30th April 2022

Updated prospects for irrigation - forecast for 2022

Summary

This document contains our updated prospects for irrigation across England in 2022 which show an overall decline in status since February. (See Figure 1 - The insert shows the position for February). Following the dry weather in March and April, there are no Areas in good status and only five classified as good to moderate, showing a deterioration when compared to the February prospects.

Rainfall between October 2021 to March 2022 across England ranged from 85% to 110% of the long-term average. After a wet February, rainfall has been below average for March and especially April (around 50% of long term average for the month).

The irrigation prospects reflects the water situation using current river flows, groundwater conditions and latest available weather forecasts. River flows at the end of April are classed as normal or lower for the time of year across the country. Groundwater levels are normal at the majority of sites, although some are below normal.

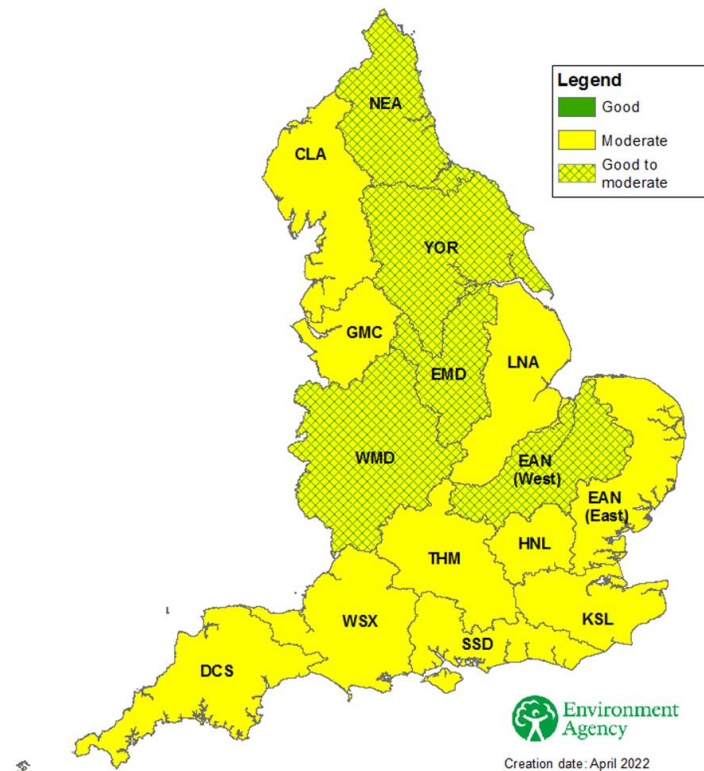
The Met Office is forecasting that dry and settled conditions are likely to predominate into mid May, especially in southern parts of the country, with more unsettled weather predicted towards the end of the month. For a more longer term forecast please go to the [3 month Met Office forecast](#).

More detailed Area irrigation prospects are contained in a separate accompanying document. We will continue to monitor the situation and advise irrigators as we progress through the summer. [Dry weather abstraction](#) advice is available at .gov.uk.

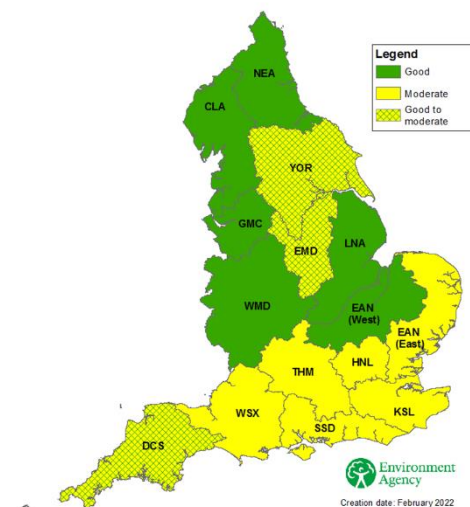
Definitions

Prospects for spray irrigation are defined as 'Good', 'Moderate' or 'Poor'.

Figure 1 - Updated Irrigation Prospects spring - summer 2022



Initial Irrigation Prospects spring - summer 2022



customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Good	Water levels are average or above average and supplies are expected to be safe. There is a possibility of minor local controls on abstraction from surface water in late summer if the weather is exceptionally hot and dry.
Moderate	Water levels are low. Some controls on surface water abstraction are possible by midsummer if the weather is hot and dry. Controls on abstraction from groundwater are possible in small, sensitive groundwater areas.
Poor	Water levels are well below average. Soil moisture deficit is developing early and significant restrictions on abstraction from surface and groundwater are probable.

Kelly Hewson-Fisher, the NFU's Water Resources National Specialist said, "The rainfall in February was welcomed but short lived. March and April continued to see dry weather and during April, this, coupled with warmer temperatures and wind, whipped the moisture from soils and crops, particularly on the east coast, where the ground is significantly drier than normal for the time of year. Irrigation has started earlier than normal on potatoes, onions and carrots and on some cereal crops. With little indication of rainfall the irrigation demand will increase. Farmers are closely following the weather forecasts and what this could mean for water availability as the irrigation season builds".

Prospects for individual areas (and compared to February)

Area	Prospects
Environment Agency Cumbria and Lancashire	Moderate (from Good)
Environment Agency Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	Moderate (from Good to Moderate)
Environment Agency East Anglia East (covering Essex Norfolk and Suffolk)	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency East Anglia West (covering Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire)	Good to Moderate (from Good)
Environment Agency East Midlands	Good to Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire	Moderate (from Good)
Environment Agency Hertfordshire and North London	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency Kent, South London and East Sussex	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire	Moderate (from Good)
Environment Agency North East	Good to moderate (from Good)
Environment Agency Solent and South Downs	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency Thames	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency Wessex	Moderate (Unchanged)
Environment Agency West Midlands	Good to Moderate) from Good
Environment Agency Yorkshire	Good to Moderate (Unchanged)