

# East Anglia Drought Update May 2023 Briefing

22 May 2023

## Continuing improvement but still impacts for groundwater and ecology

East Anglia Area received above average rainfall in April, with totals varying between 113% to 156% of long-term averages. This has further extended groundwater recharge enabling improved conditions in some catchments, allowing them to move into 'Recovering' status, whilst others continue to see the effects of Drought on surface water flows, groundwater levels, ecology, and abstractors.

### These catchments are in 'Drought' status:

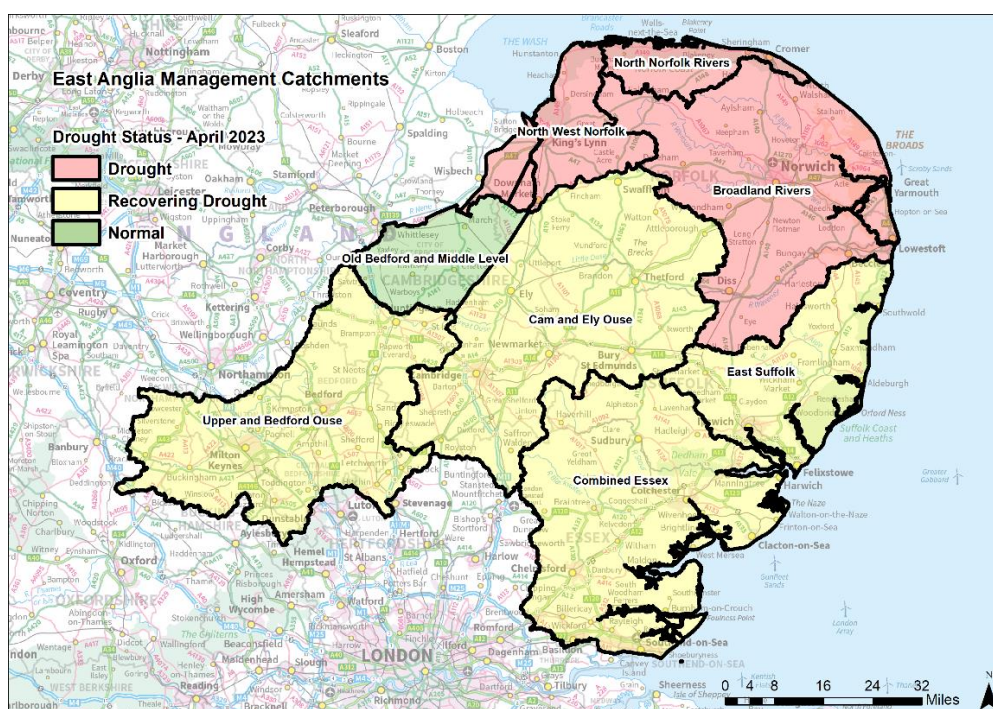
North-West Norfolk  
North Norfolk  
Broadland Rivers

### These catchments are in 'Recovering' status:

Upper Bedford Ouse  
Combined Essex  
East Suffolk  
Cam and Ely Ouse

### These catchments are in 'Normal' status:

Old Bedford & Middle Level



Map of catchments in East Anglia

### What does this mean?

Recovering status means our catchments have received enough effective rainfall to benefit the water environment. These catchments are seeing improving surface water flows, groundwater levels and ecological recovery.

Catchments remaining in Drought still have low groundwater levels and continuing ecological impacts.

### What are we doing?

Our teams are continuing to manage this incident by monitoring and reporting on the situation, and producing regular water situation reports available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). As we move towards summer, we are working with abstractors to manage water availability and collecting ecological samples for analysis to observe the ecological response and effect of drought.

We are planning for further dry weather impacts this year and do not rule out the potential need for active restrictions to abstraction, including Section 57 action, if we experience an extremely hot dry spell, though this is currently considered low risk.

### Water companies

We are liaising regularly with water companies to share information on water availability, operational activities, and planning for continued drought response.

Water company reservoir levels have continued to improve.

### Looking ahead

With average rainfall we can expect the situation to continue to improve, but cannot rule out the potential for abstraction restrictions in accordance with the pre-agreed terms and conditions on abstractors' licences.

### How you can help

We can all do our part to use water wisely and manage this precious resource, and there are useful water saving tips for us all at [Waterwise](#).

Abstraction licence holders should check their pre-agreed terms and conditions for taking water.

We encourage the public to report sightings of fish in distress or other impacts on the environment by telephoning our 24hr Incident Hotline: 0800 80 70 60.

Kind regards

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More information can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)