

# East Anglia Drought Update April 2023 Briefing

17 April 2023

## An improving situation, but most catchments remain in Drought

Following a very dry February the area has benefitted from well above average rainfall in March, with totals varying between 163% to 256% of long-term averages. This has resulted in an extended groundwater recharge season and has improved conditions in some catchments, allowing them to move into 'Recovering Drought', whilst others continue to see the effects of Drought on surface water flows, groundwater levels ecology and abstractors.

### The following catchments remain in 'Drought' status:

- North-West Norfolk
- North Norfolk
- Cam and Ely Ouse
- Broadland
- East Suffolk

### The following catchments are in 'Recovering Drought' status:

- Upper Bedford Ouse
- Essex
- Old Bedford & Middle Level



Map of catchments in East Anglia

## What does this mean?

Recovering Drought 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?

We are still actively managing the situation with our teams continuing to monitor and report on the situation, and producing regular water situation reports available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). We are working with abstractors to manage water availability and will continue to collect and analyse ecology samples 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 improved over winter.

## 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

Graham Verrier, East Anglia Area Director  
Iceni House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9JD or  
Brampton Office, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE

Email: [areamanagercorrespondence.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:areamanagercorrespondence.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk)

More information can be found here:

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