



Water Resources Management Authority

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Hydrological Year

2026/27

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1 Water Situation Summary

This bulletin summarises the status of Zambia's rivers at the end of the 2025/26 hydrological year and the start of 2026/27. It draws on selected strategic stations from WARMA's surface water monitoring networks and on the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) 2026/27 seasonal rainfall outlook. This page gives the overall picture; Sections 2 to 4 give the seasonal outlook, the station-by-station detail and advice to water users.

CURRENT WATER SITUATION AND WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Now (dry season):** Water levels and flows in rivers are falling, as is normal at the height of the dry season. Rising temperatures are increasing evaporation, which is speeding up the decline.
- **Early rains (October–November):** Where the rains start early, river levels and flows may rise slightly after the first storms. The rise is likely to be short-lived and may decline due to potential dry spells.
- **As the rainy season intensifies:** a steady rise in river levels and flows is expected, first in the north (Tanganyika, Chambeshi, Luapula), where above-normal rainfall is forecast, and later in the central and southern catchments, where rainfall is forecast to be normal to below normal. Groundwater responds more slowly and usually starts to rise only after several weeks of sustained rainfall.
- **Compared with drought years:** most of the key river stations reported in this bulletin (10 of 14) are still above the flows/levels of the 2023/24 analogue drought year.
- **Advisory:** water users in the Kafue, Southern Zambezi and Southern Luangwa catchments should plan for reduced river inflows and limited groundwater recharge in 2026/27.

2 Seasonal Rainfall Outlook 2026/27

The Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) 2026/27 seasonal forecast indicates a strong north–south contrast. Above-normal rainfall is expected over the Tanganyika, Chambeshi and Luapula catchments and Northern Luangwa throughout the season. The Kafue catchment, the Southern Zambezi catchment and Southern Luangwa are forecast to receive below-normal rainfall from October to February, easing to normal to below normal in January–March 2027. North-Western Zambia (Upper Zambezi and Kabompo) trends from normal-to-below early in the season to normal-to-above by January–March.

Figure 1 shows the official ZMD forecast maps with the river gauging stations reported in this bulletin, so that the expected rainfall around each station can be read directly. Table 1 summarises the outlook by catchment and what it means for water resources.

Table 1 Seasonal outlook by catchment and implications for water resources

Catchment	OND	NDJ	DJF	JFM	Implication for water resources
Tanganyika	AN	AN	AN	N-AN	Significant inflows into Lake Tanganyika; monitor flood-prone areas.
Chambeshi	AN	AN	AN	AN	Risk of high flows on the Chambeshi plains.
Luapula	AN	AN	AN	N-AN	Favourable recharge; Lakes Bangweulu and Mweru levels are likely to rise.
Luangwa	N-AN	N-BN	N-BN	N-BN	Average river flows due to the favourable forecast north of the catchment.
Kafue	BN	BN	BN	N-BN	Below-average inflows to Itezhi-Tezhi and Kafue Gorge are likely.
Zambezi	N-BN	BN	BN	N-BN	Below-average inflows into Lake Kariba are likely.

AN Above Normal N-AN Normal to Above N-BN Normal to Below BN Below Normal

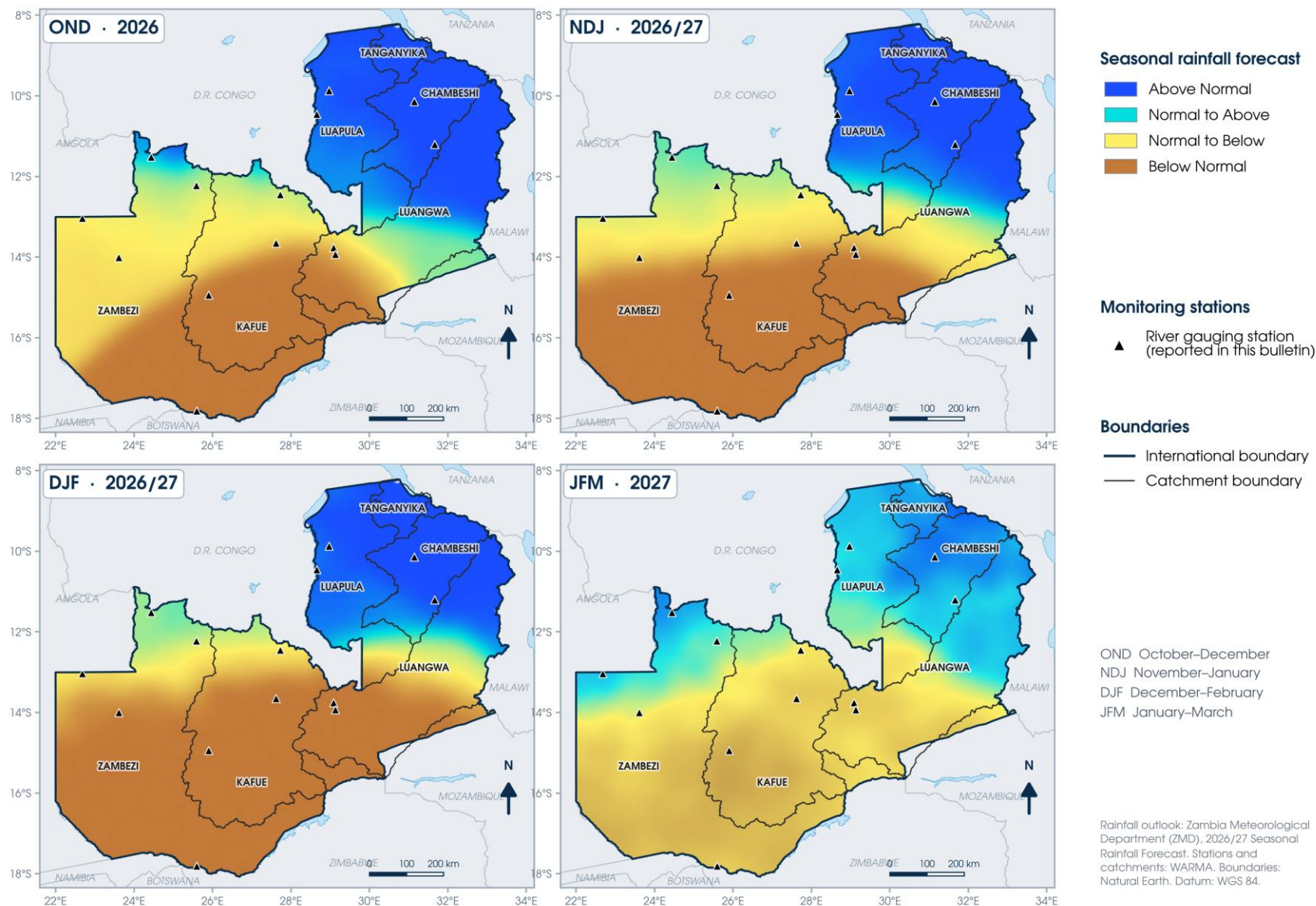


Figure 1 ZMD seasonal rainfall outlook for OND, NDJ, DJF and JFM 2026/27, with the WARMA river gauging stations reported in this bulletin.

3 River Flows

River flow conditions are reported at selected strategic stations drawn from WARMA's network of 167 surface water monitoring stations. Daily discharge for the current year is compared with the same dates in the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and with the long-term mean (LTM), which defines normal flow. Figure 2 shows the location of all reporting stations.

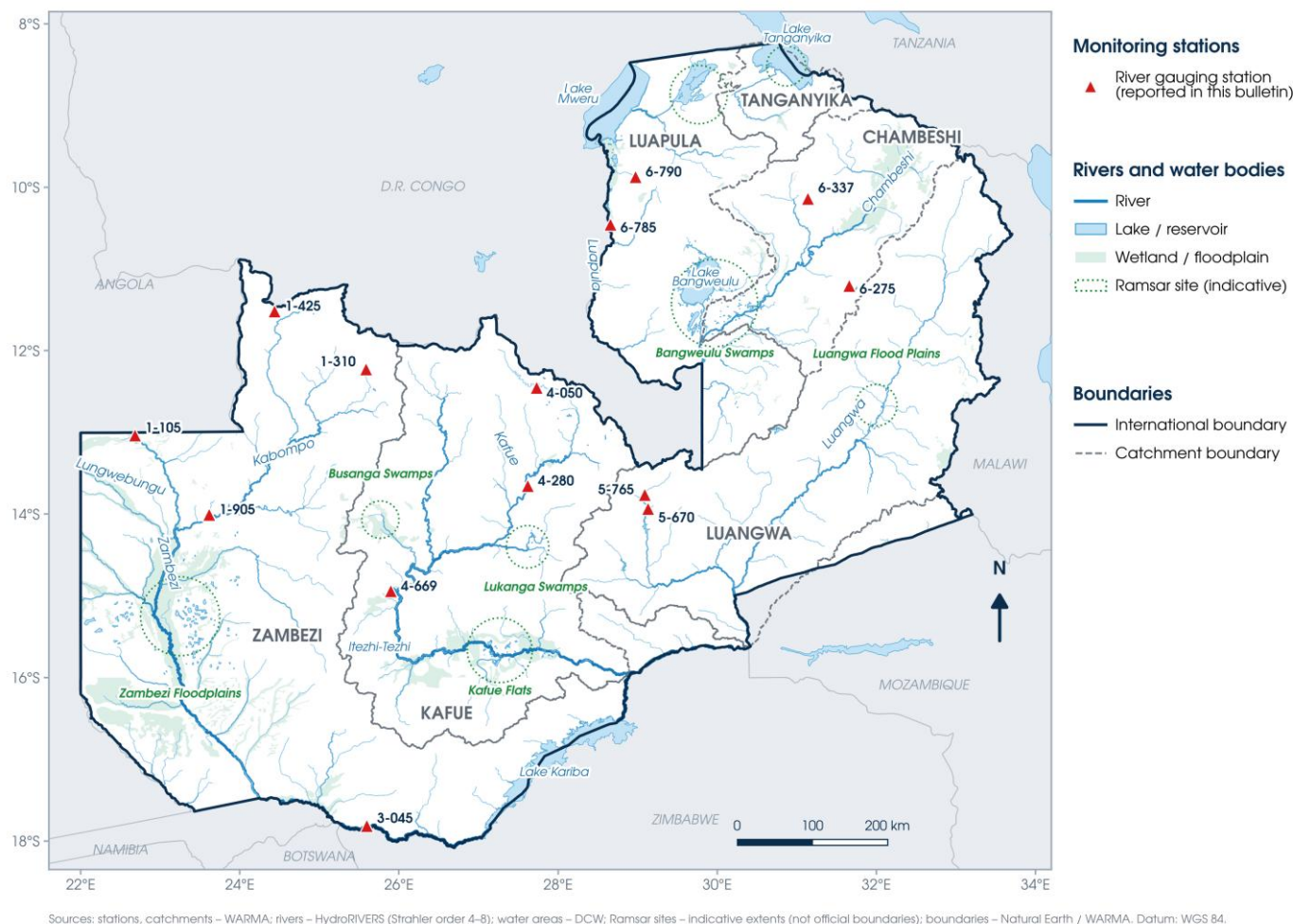


Figure 2 WARMA river gauging stations reported in this bulletin, with major rivers, catchments, lakes, wetlands and Ramsar sites.

3.1 Lukupa River at Pump House (6-337) | Chambeshi Catchment

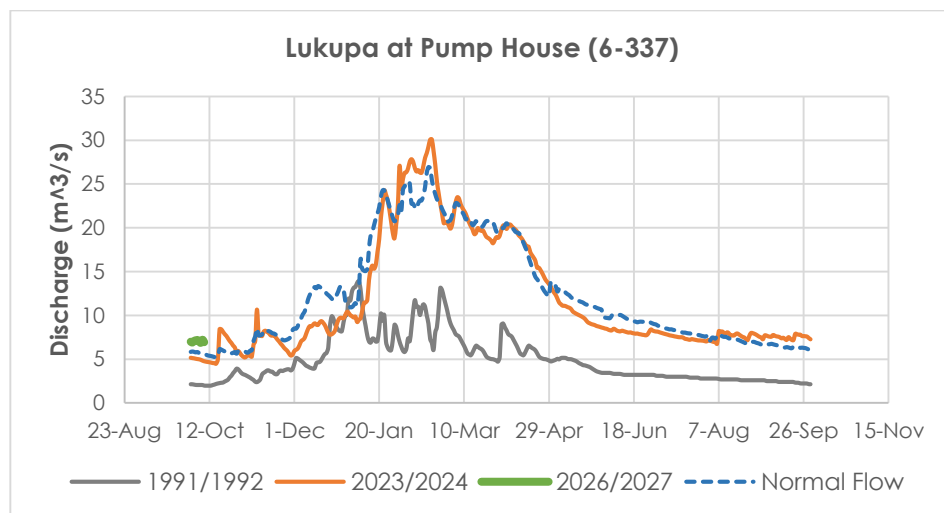


Figure 3 Daily discharge at Lukupa River at Pump House (6-337): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 2 Key indicators – 6-337

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	6.95	1.99	4.76	5.60	Gently rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **6.95m³/s** above **4.76m³/s** for the analogue year (2023/2024) and above 1.99m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 5.60m³/s.

3.2 Mansha River at Shiwang'andu (6-275) | Chambeshi Catchment

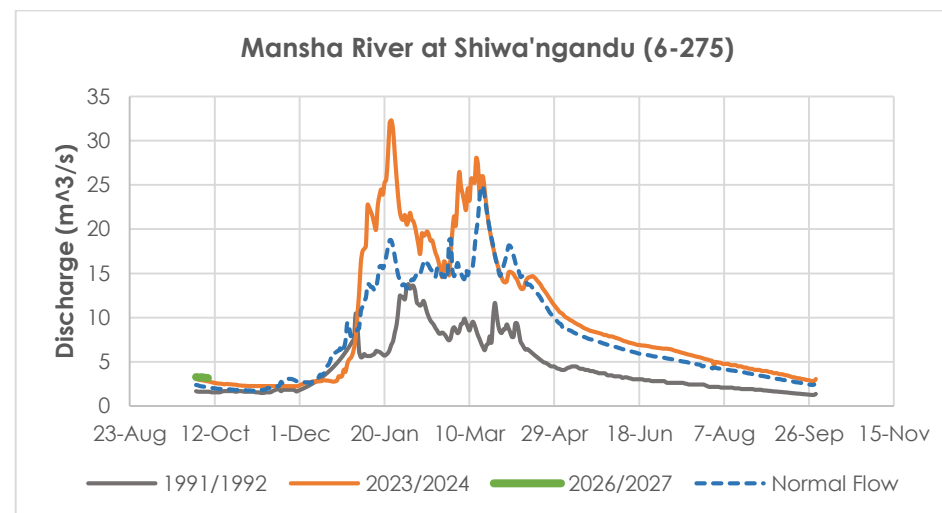


Figure 4 Daily discharge at Mansha River at Shiwang'andu (6-275): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 3 Key indicators – 6-275

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
8-Oct	3.18	1.63	2.79	2.13	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 8th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **3.18m³/s** above **2.79m³/s** for the analogue year (2023/2024) and above 1.63m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 2.13m³/s.

3.3 Ngona River at Ntumbachushi (6-790) | Luapula Catchment

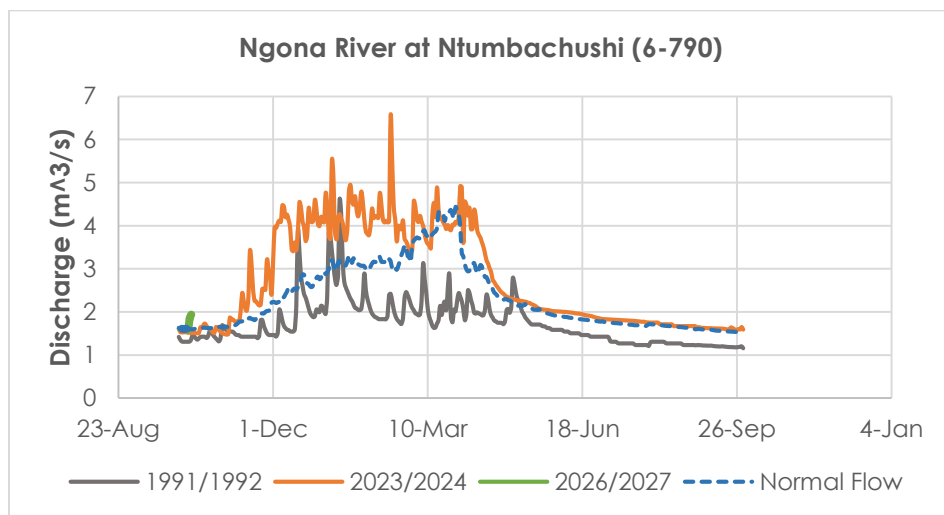


Figure 5 Daily discharge at Ngona River at Ntumbachushi (6-790): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 4 Key indicators – 6-790

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	1.94	1.36	1.51	1.59	Rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **1.94m³/s above 1.51m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 1.36m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 1.59m³/s.

3.4 Luapula River at Kashiba (6-785) | Luapula Catchment

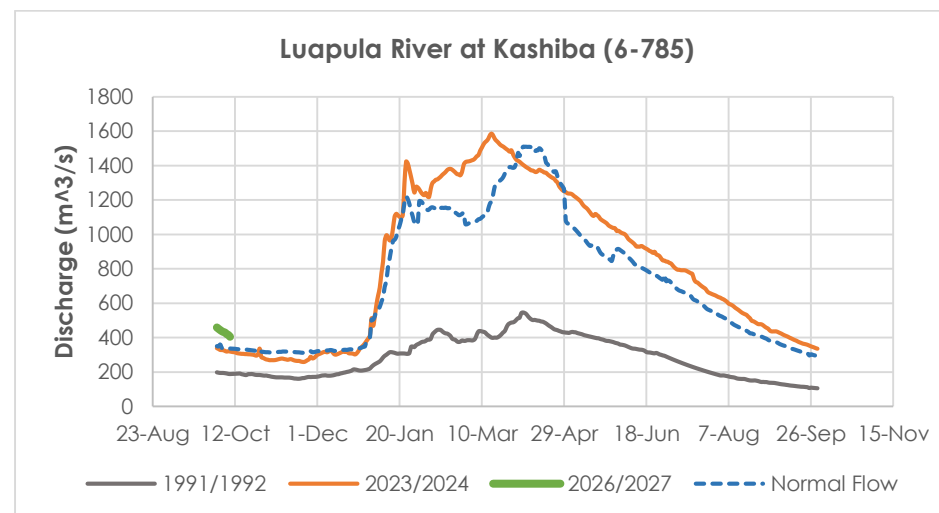


Figure 6 Daily discharge at Luapula River at Kashiba (6-785): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 5 Key indicators – 6-785

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	405.69	187.94	319.26	336.24	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **405.69m³/s above 319.26m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 187.94m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 336.24m³/s.

3.5 Kafue River at Ragland (4-050) | Kafue Catchment

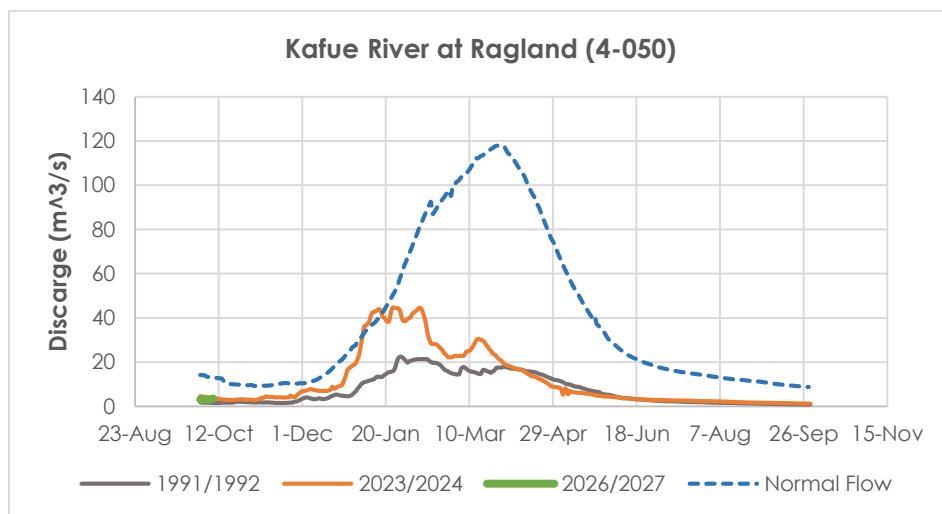


Figure 7 Daily discharge at Kafue River at Ragland (4-050): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 6 Key indicators – 4-050

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	3.62	1.59	3.70	13	Gently rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **3.62m³/s below 3.70m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 3.05m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year are below the normal (long term mean) flow of 13 m³/s.

3.6 Kafue River at Hook Bridge (4-669) | Kafue Catchment

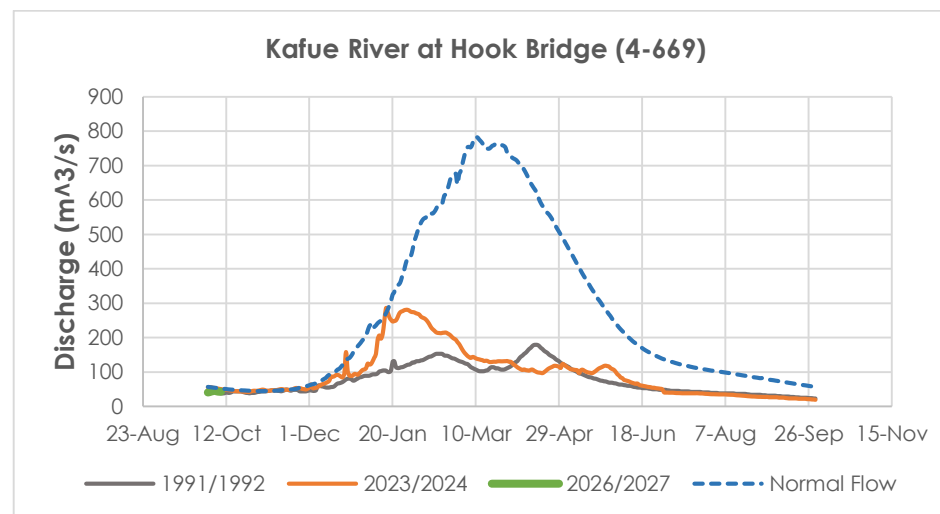


Figure 8 Daily discharge at Kafue River at Hook Bridge (4-669): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 7 Key indicators – 4-669

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	43.01	38.31	50.17	52.27	Gently rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **43.01m³/s below 50.17m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 38.31m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year are below the normal (long term mean) flow of 52.27m³/s.

3.7 Kafue River at Machiya Ferry (4-280) | Kafue Catchment

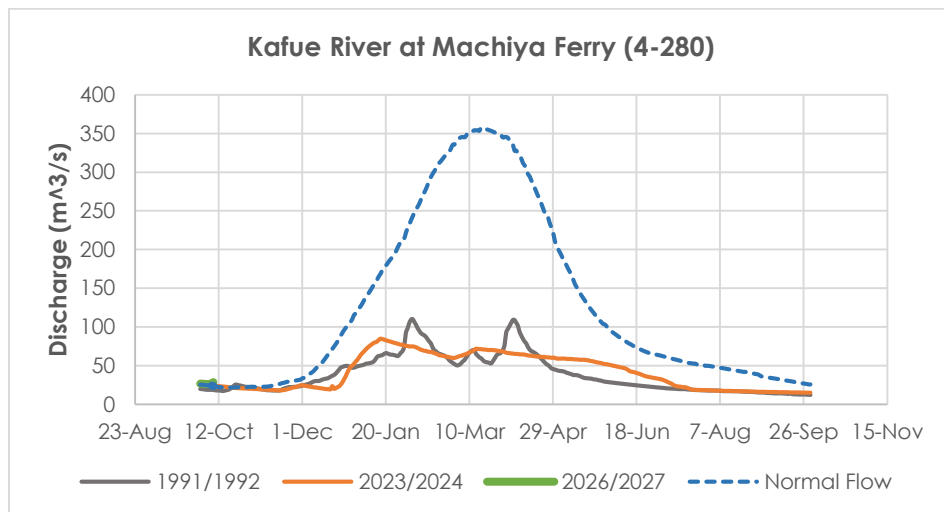


Figure 9 Daily discharge at Kafue River at Machiya Ferry (4-280): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 8 Key indicators – 4-280

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	28.93	18.41	24.58	23.71	Gently rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **28.93m³/s above 24.58m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 18.41m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 23.71m³/s.

3.8 Mwombezhi River at Solwezi-Mwinilunga Rd Bridge (1-310) | Zambezi Catchment

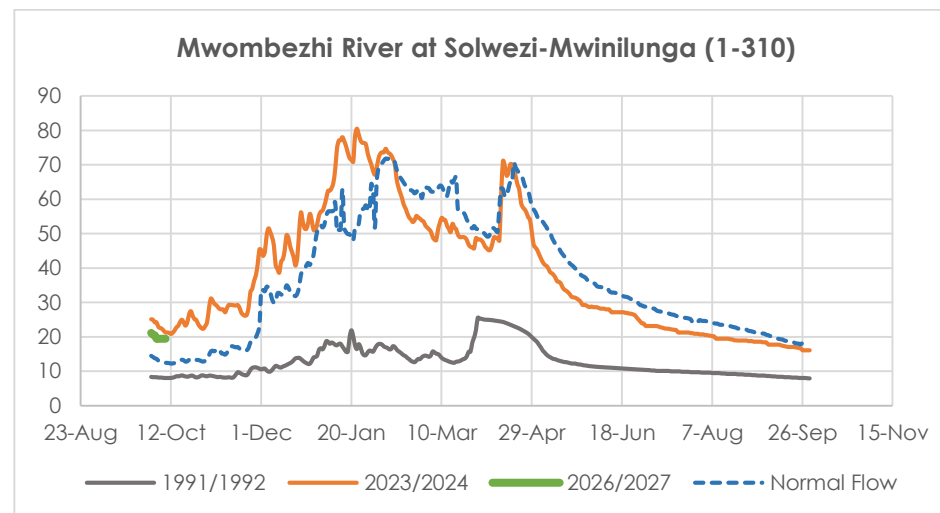


Figure 10 Daily discharge at Mwombezhi River at Solwezi-Mwinilunga Road Bridge (1-310): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 9 Key indicators – 1-310

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	19.45	8	21.29	12.44	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **19.45m³/s below 21.29m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 8m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 12.44m³/s.

3.9 Zambezi River at Nanas Farm (3-045) | Zambezi Catchment

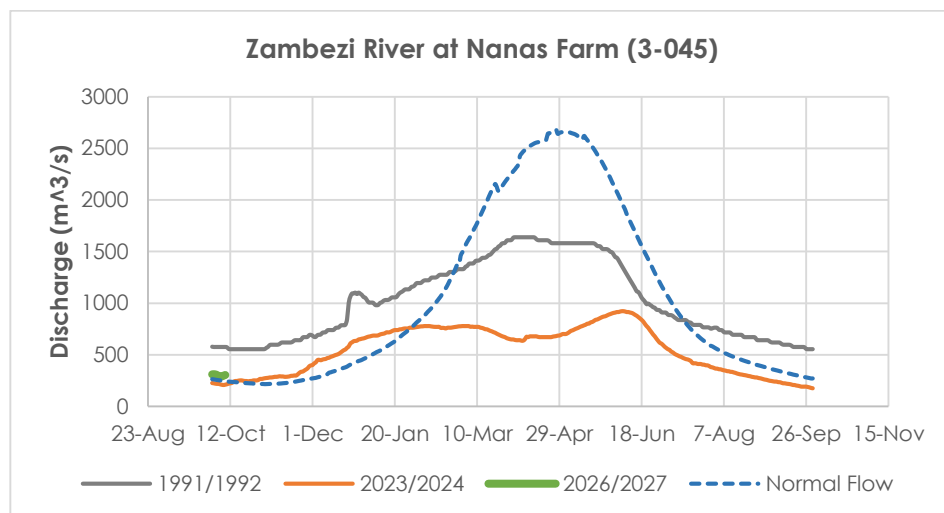


Figure 11 Daily discharge at Zambezi River at Nanas Farm (3-045): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 10 Key indicators – 3-045

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	303.75	576.09	211.40	244.83	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at 303.75m³/s above 211.4m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024) and below 576.09m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year exceed the normal (long term mean) flow of 244.83m³/s.

3.10 Luakela River at Sachibondu (1-425) | Zambezi Catchment

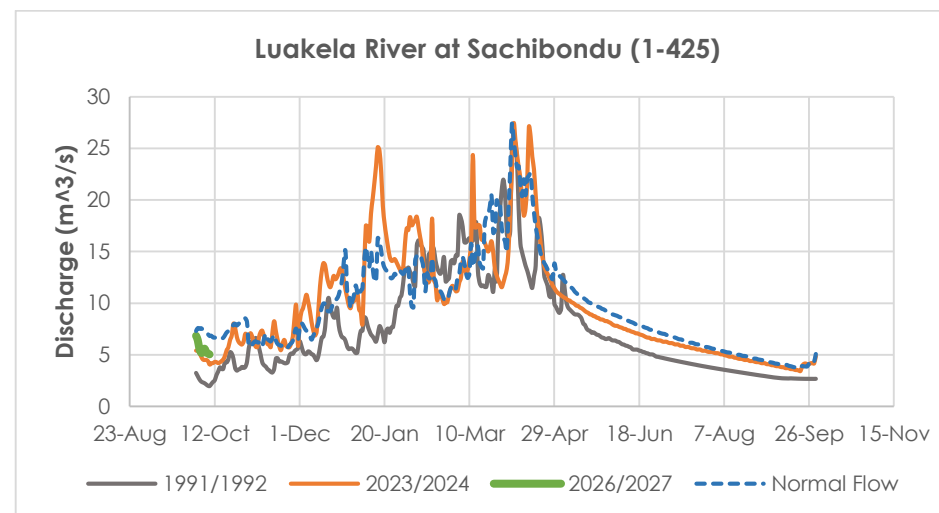


Figure 12 Daily discharge at Luakela River at Sachibondu (1-425): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 11 Key indicators – 1-425

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	5.05	1.98	4.05	6.83	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at 5.05m³/s above 4.05m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024) and above 1.98m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year are below the normal (long term mean) flow of 6.83m³/s.

3.11 Kabompo River at Watopa (1-905) | Zambezi Catchment

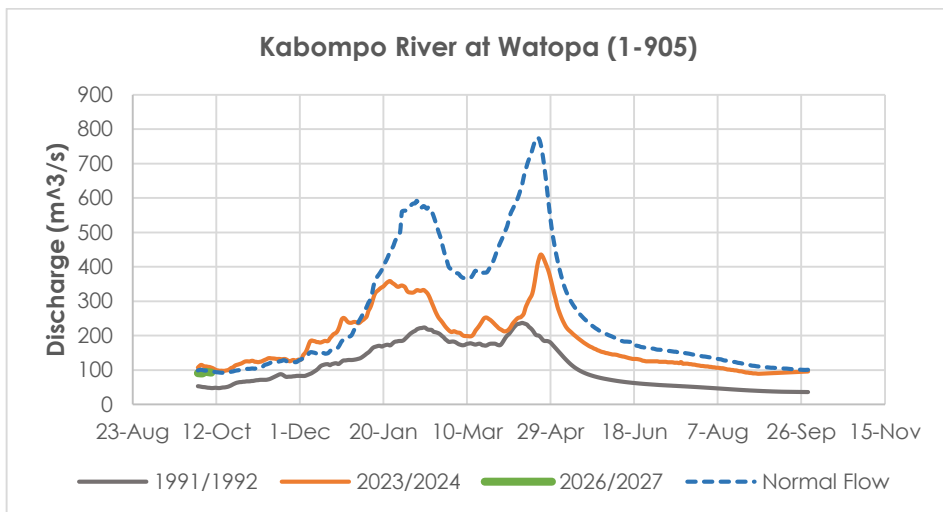


Figure 13 Daily discharge at Kabompo River at Watopa (1-905): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 12 Key indicators – 1-905

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	92.33	47.97	107.36	96.35	Gently rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **92.33m³/s below 107.36m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 47.97m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year are below the normal (long term mean) flow of 96.35m³/s.

3.12 Zambezi River at Chavuma (1-105) | Zambezi Catchment

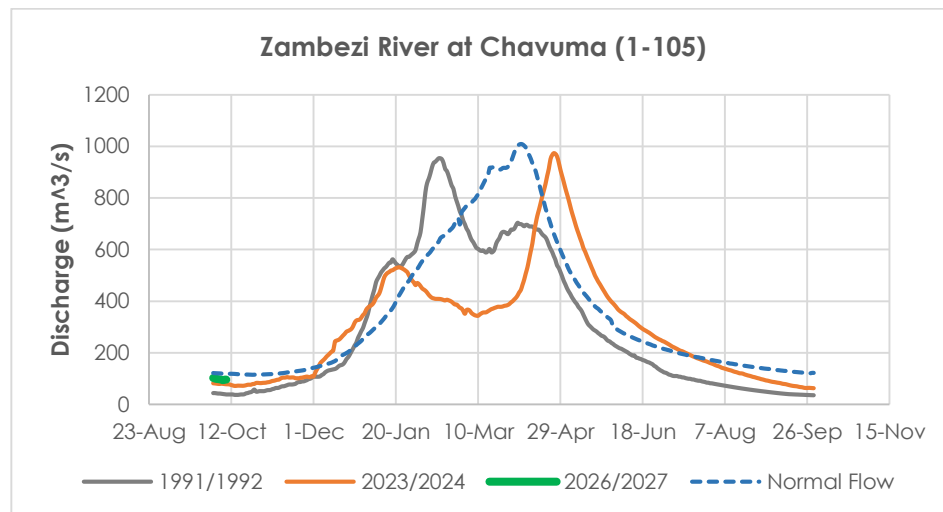


Figure 14 Daily discharge at Zambezi River at Chavuma (1-105): 2026/27 compared with the 1991/92 and 2023/24 drought years and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 13 Key indicators – 1-105

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	96.14	38.01	78.57	118.67	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **96.14m³/s above 78.57m³/s for the analogue year (2023/2024)** and above 38.01m³/s for the 1991/1992 hydrological year on the same date. The flows for the current year are below the normal (long term mean) flow of 118.67m³/s.

3.13 Lunsemfwa River at GNRB (5-765) | Luangwa Catchment

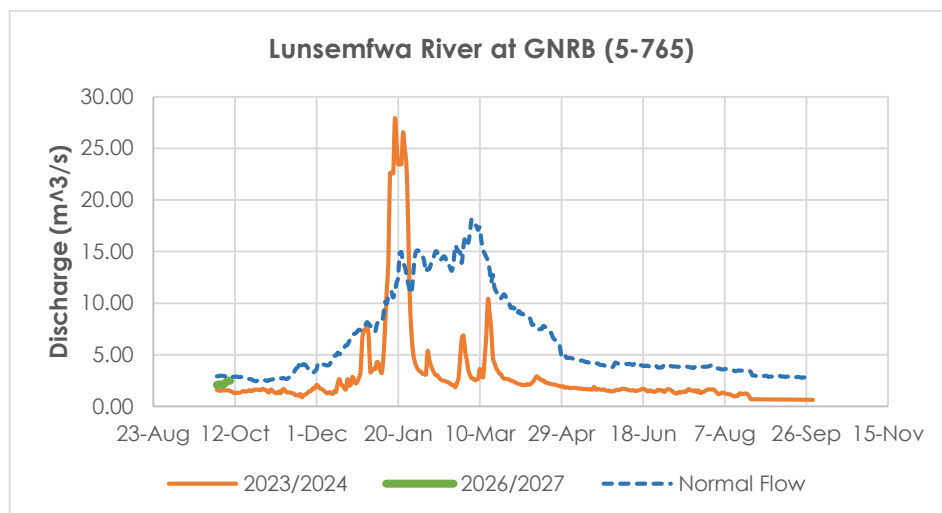


Figure 15 Daily discharge at Lunsemfwa River at GNRB (5-765): 2026/27 compared with the 2023/24 drought year and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 14 Key indicators – 5-765

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	2.48	-	1.49	2.96	Rising

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **2.48m³/s** above **1.49m³/s** for the analogue year (2023/2024) and below the normal (long term mean) flow of 2.96m³/s.

3.14 Lusiwasi River at Masase (5-670) | Luangwa Catchment

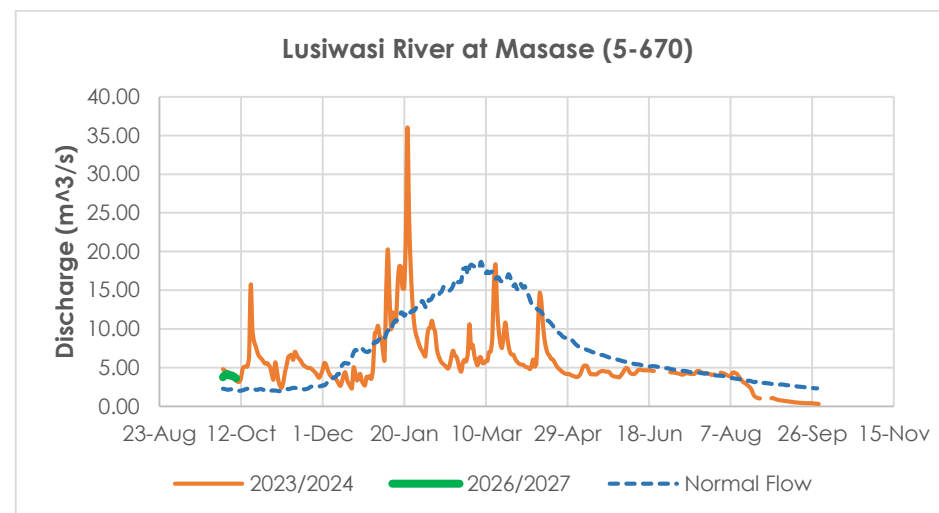


Figure 16 Daily discharge at Lusiwasi River at Masase (5-670): 2026/27 compared with the 2023/24 drought year and the long-term mean (Normal flow).

Table 15 Key indicators – 5-670

Date	Current flow (m³/s)	1991/92 Drought Year (m³/s)	2023/24 Drought Year (m³/s)	Normal Flow (LTM) (m³/s)	Current Trend
9-Oct	3.62	-	3.40	2.08	Receding

ASSESSMENT

As of 9th October 2026, the flows for the current year were at **3.62m³/s** above **3.40m³/s** for the analogue year (2023/2024) and above the normal (long term mean) flow of 2.08m³/s.

4 Outlook and Water User Advisory

River levels and flows will continue to fall until the rains are established, with high temperatures increasing evaporation. Where the rains start early, a slight, short-lived rise is likely before levels fall again through evaporation and infiltration into the dry ground. As rainfall intensifies in the coming weeks, a steady rise in river levels and flows is expected – first in the north, where ZMD forecasts above-normal rainfall, and later in the Kafue, southern Zambezi and southern Luangwa catchments, where below-normal rainfall raises the risk of reduced inflows and limited groundwater recharge. WARMA will continue close monitoring and will issue updates through this bulletin. Technical notes on methods, reference years and data status are available on the WARMA website (www.warma.org.zm).

Advisory to water users

Surface water users

- Use water efficiently and avoid unnecessary abstraction.
- Comply with the conditions of water permits.
- Plan irrigation and storage on the basis of the seasonal outlook for your catchment.
- Report illegal abstraction to WARMA.

Groundwater users

- Groundwater responds slowly to rainfall. Where below-normal rainfall is forecast (Kafue, southern Zambezi and southern Luangwa catchments), recharge will be limited and water levels in boreholes and wells may stay low into early 2027.
- Shallow and hand-dug wells are most at risk: expect lower yields, and some wells may dry up before the rains are well established.
- Use groundwater sparingly: repair leaks, avoid over-pumping boreholes and spread pumping through the day.
- Obtain a permit from WARMA and use a WARMA-licensed driller before drilling a new borehole.
- Keep latrines, waste pits and livestock away from boreholes and wells, as the first rains can wash pollutants into shallow wells. Boil or chlorinate drinking water from shallow wells.
- In the north, where above-normal rainfall is forecast, groundwater levels should recover after several weeks of sustained rain. Report wells that dry up, or changes in water quality, to WARMA.

Water Resources Management Authority

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Disclaimer: This bulletin is based on provisional data and the ZMD seasonal forecast available at the time of issue. It is intended for general information and early warning; WARMA accepts no liability for decisions made on the basis of its content.

Groundwater: This edition reports on surface water (rivers) only. Groundwater level information will be added to future editions of this bulletin once groundwater monitoring data have been organised by their respective monitoring stations.

