

NOVEMBER 2025



MONTHLY STATE OF WATER BULLETIN

WATER IS LIFE - SANITATION IS DIGNITY



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Overview

Over two-thirds of South Africa recorded at least 125 mm of rainfall in November 2025. Above-normal rainfall (200 mm to 500 mm) was received in the Northern Cape, North West, Free State, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga. Over 500 mm to 1,000 mm of rainfall was recorded in isolated parts of the Northern Cape and Free State. SAWS monthly rainfall data indicated that the Northern Cape November rainfall totals in many areas far exceeded historical averages. For instance, Groblershoop and Kakamas received 643% and 764%, of their normal rainfall, respectively.

The SAWS November 2025 report indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is transitioning from a neutral state into a weak La Niña state. The predictions further indicate the weak La Niña state will be short-lived over mid- to late summer. The typical effect of the predicted La Niña state on South Africa during summer is an increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall over the northeastern parts of the country.

The national surface water storage trends for the current hydrological year (2025/26) are compared to those of the past four hydrological years in Figure 5. The graph shows that at the end of November 2025, the national dam levels were 93.1% of Full Supply Capacity (FSC). This level is 16.6% higher than at the same time last year, when the overall storage level was at 76.5% of FSC. At the end of November 2025, the IVRS was at 100.3% of FSC, marking a 2.9% increase from October 2025 and a significant year-on-year rise of 28.2%. Meanwhile, the storage level of the Orange System was at 96.2% of FSC, representing a 1.3% increase from October 2025 and a 16.6% annual increase from November 2024.

The SPI drought map shows that only parts of the Sarah Baartman District Municipality (DM) in the Eastern Cape experienced extreme drought in the last 24 months. While some parts of Sarah Baartman, Chris Hani, and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities indicated a severe drought status.

KwaZulu-Natal regularly experiences extreme weather events in the current season, including floods due to cut-off low-pressure systems, surface troughs, and severe thunderstorms. In November 2025, major floods in New Hanover and Newcastle further highlighted the region's ongoing vulnerability. While SAWS impact-based warnings provided critical lead time, the combination of intense rainfall and settlement in high-risk areas contributed to significant losses, emphasizing the need for the enforcement of settlement planning regulations and the investment in resilient infrastructure.

Rainfall

Figure 1 shows that throughout November, rainfall patterns aligned with expectations across the summer rainfall region. In the first week, the Northern Cape experienced significant rainfall due to a cut-off low-pressure system. During the second week, the Free State recorded over 100 mm of rain, while most north-eastern areas received between 50 mm and 100 mm.

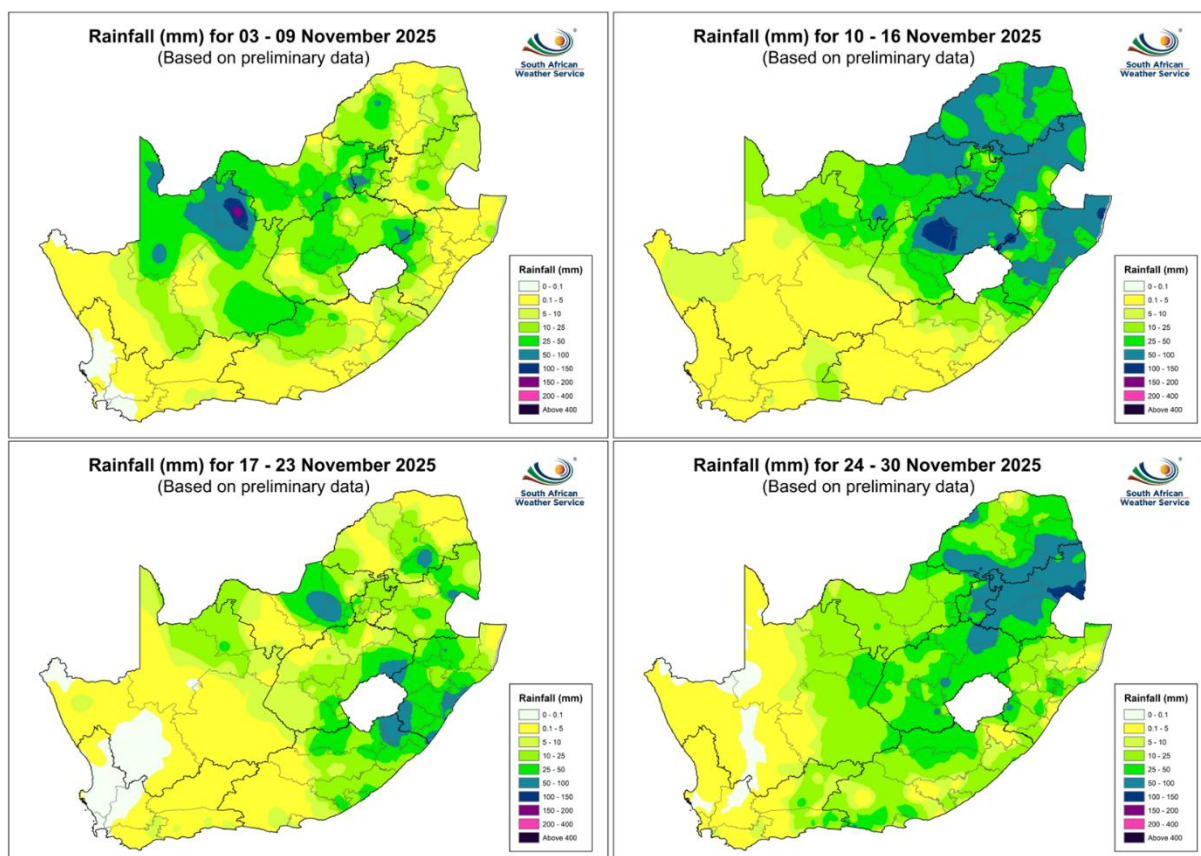


Figure 1: November weekly rainfall distribution.

The monthly rainfall anomalies for the current hydrological year, expressed as a percentage of normal rainfall for November 2025, is presented in Figure 2. Over two-thirds of South Africa recorded at least 125 mm of rainfall in November 2025. Above-normal rainfall (200 mm to 500 mm) was received in the Northern Cape, North West, Free State, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga. Furthermore, the 500 mm to 1,000 mm of rainfall was recorded in isolated parts of the Northern Cape and Free State.

SAWS monthly rainfall data indicated that the Northern Cape November rainfall totals in many areas far exceeded historical averages. For instance, Groblershoop and Kakamas received 643% and 764%, of their normal rainfall, respectively.

Percentage of Normal Rainfall for November 2025
 (Based on preliminary data. Normal period 1991-2020)

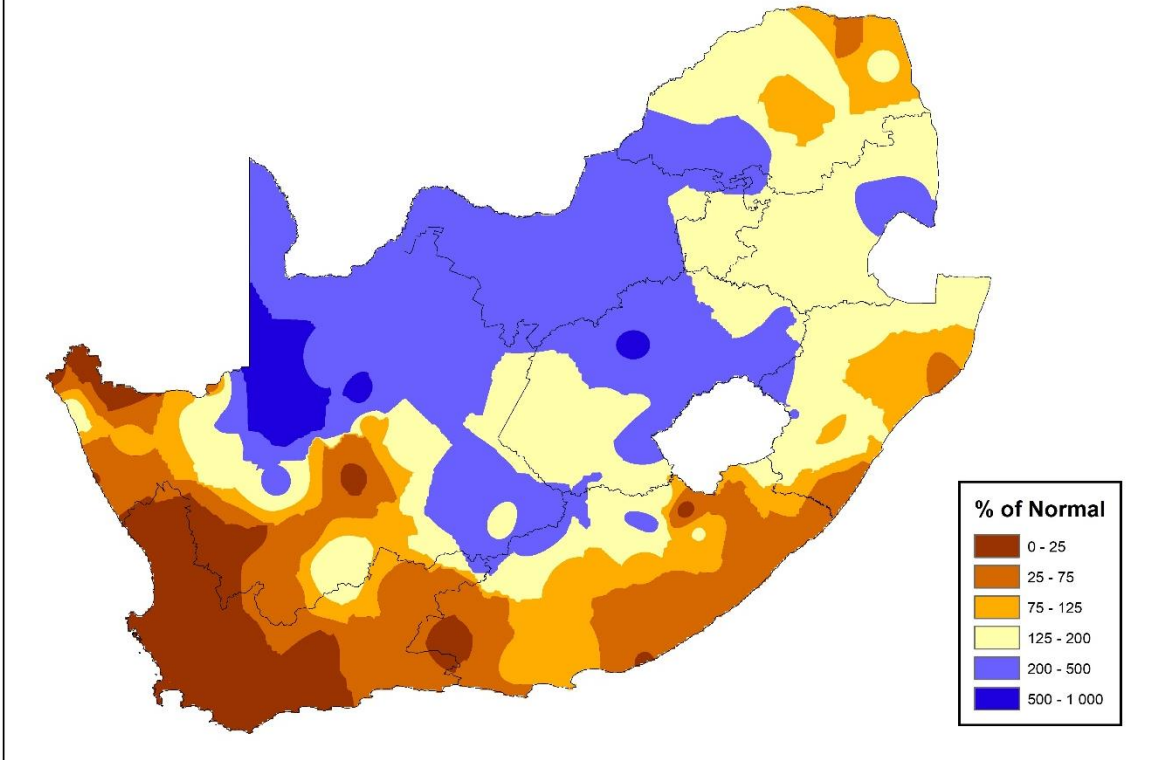


Figure 2: Summer season Percentage of normal rainfall for November 2025. Blue shades are indicative of above-normal rain, and the darker yellow shades of below-normal rainfall

Table 1: SAWS preliminary November 2025 rainfall data for the Northern Cape.

Preliminary monthly rainfall data ! Month ending at 08:00 on 2025-12-01	Rainfall in mm	Norm	% of Norm
NORTHERN CAPE			
ALEXANDERBAAI	0		
AUGRABIES FALLS	29		
BARKLY WEST - TNK	91	38	241%
BOEGOEBERGDAM - IRR	32		
DE AAR WO	79		
FRASERBURG	25	15	174%
GARIES AWS	5		
GROBLERSHOOP - POL	90	14	643%
HANOVER	32		
KAKAMAS - POL	68	9	764%
KATHU	121		
KIMBERLEY WO	71	42	169%
KOINGNAAS	4		
KURUMAN	229		

Weather Forecast and Early Warning

The weather has a significant impact on water resources. Rising temperatures increase evaporation and reduce water availability, while extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, exacerbate water scarcity and pollution, respectively. Changes in precipitation patterns also affect water availability.

The South African Weather Services (SAWS) Seasonal Climate Watch November 2025 report indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is transitioning from a neutral state into a weak La Niña state (SAWS, 2025). The predictions further indicate the weak La Niña state will be short-lived over mid- to late summer. The typical effect of the predicted La Niña state on South Africa during summer is an increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall over the northeastern parts of the country. Most of these areas are expected to receive above-normal rainfall during the forecast period up until late summer (Figure 3).

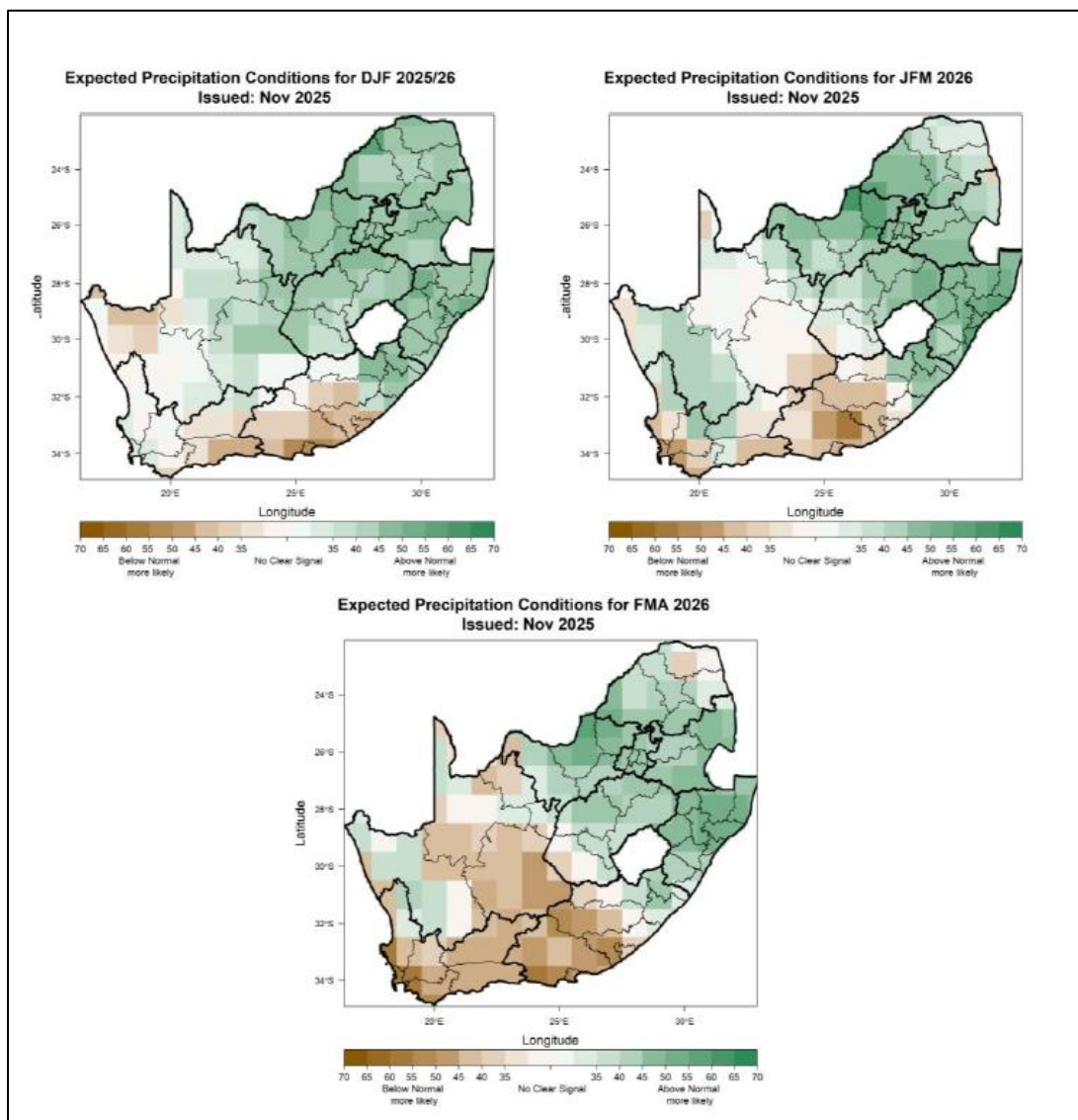


Figure 3: December-January-February 2025/26 (DJF; left), January-February-March 2026 (JFM; right), February-March-April 2026 (FMA; bottom) seasonal precipitation prediction. (Source: SAWS, 2025).

The SAWS 2025 report also indicates that the minimum temperatures are largely expected to be above-normal for most parts of the country during summer, with maximum temperatures likely to be below-normal for the north-eastern parts of the country and above-normal for the south-west (Figure 4). This increased likelihood of below-normal maximum temperatures indicates prolonged cloud cover and gives additional confidence in an above-normal summer rainfall season.

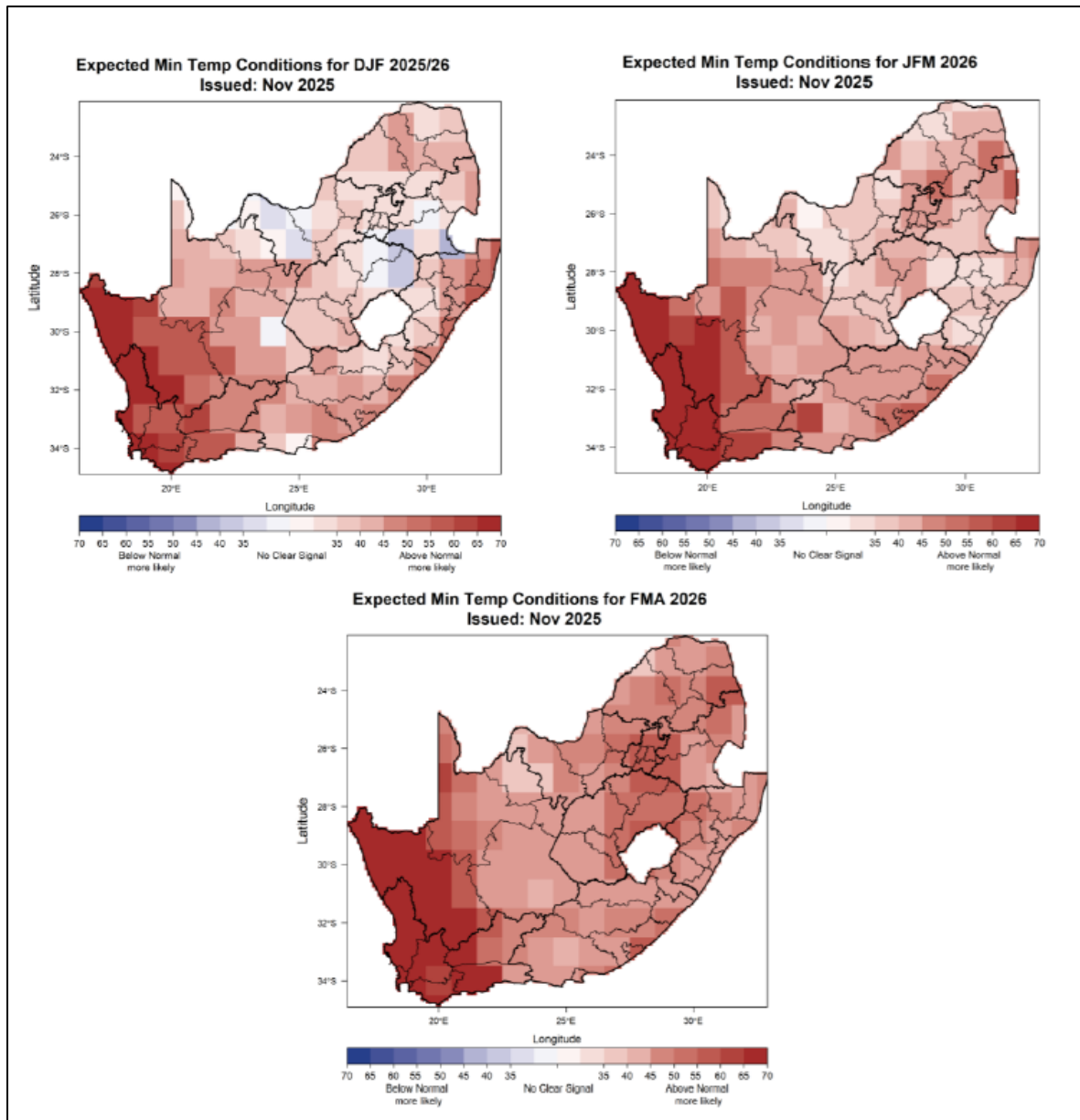


Figure 4: December-January-February 2025/26 (DJF; left), January-February-March 2026 (JFM; right), February-March-April 2026 (FMA; bottom) seasonal minimum temperature prediction. (Source: SAWS, 2025).

National Dam Storage

The national surface water storage trends for the current hydrological year (2025/26) are compared to those of the past four hydrological years in Figure 5. The graph shows that at the end of November 2025, the national dam levels were 93.1% of Full Supply Capacity (FSC). This level is 16.6% higher than at the same time last year, when the overall storage level was at 76.5% of FSC (Table 2).

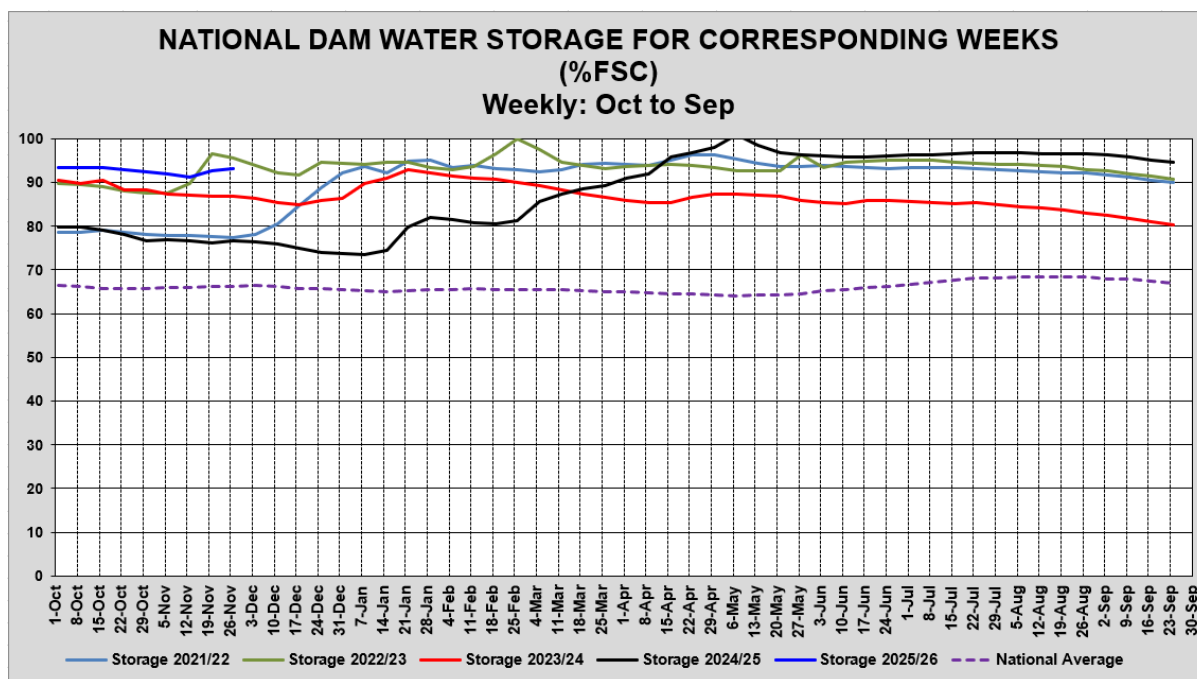


Figure 5: Weekly National Dam Storage at the end of November 2025, for five hydrological years.

Table 2 show a summary of the status of 219 South African dams, plus three dams from the Kingdoms of Eswatini and Lesotho. Based on 24 November 2025 dam data, at least 64 of 222 national dams were above 100% of FSC, and only one (<1%) dam was below 10% of FSC (critically low). Gauteng dam levels remain above 101%, which is 16% higher than last year, at the same time. Figure 6 further shows the spatial distribution of the 222 national dams and their respective Water Supply Systems.

Table 2: National Surface Water Storage – 24 November 2025.

Provinces/Countries sharing Water Resources with RSA	FSC million m ³	Total No. of Dams	Number of Dams per Province/ Country				% of Full capacity		
			<10%	>=10%<50%	>=50%<100%	>=100%	Last Year	Last Week	This Week
							24/11/2024	17/11/2025	24/11/2025
Kingdom of Eswatini	333.75	1			1		70.7	89.1	97.0 ↑
Eastern Cape	1 727.66	46		5	38	3	85.1	74.7	74.4 ↓
Free State	15 656.9	21		2	11	8	73.6	97.7	98.0 ↑
Gauteng	128.08	5			1	4	84.7	101.1	101.1 =
KwaZulu-Natal	4 909.66	19			9	10	79.3	88.4	89.0 ↑
Kingdom of Lesotho	2 362.63	2			1	1	80.7	100.0	99.2 ↓
Limpopo	1 484.64	29	1	3	13	12	69.3	80.7	83.0 ↑
Mpumalanga	2 538.20	22		1	13	8	78.1	95.7	96.5 ↑
Northern Cape	146.33	5			3	2	65.5	90.6	98.1 ↑
North West	866.23	28			13	15	57.6	91.8	93.0 ↑
Western Cape - Other Rainfall	269.61	22		12	10		93.4	45.1	42.4 ↓
Western Cape - Winter Rainfall	1 596.80	22			21	1	92.9	80.8	78.6 ↓
Western Cape - Total	1 866.41	44	0	12	31	1	92.9	75.7	73.4 ↓
Grand Total:	32 020.5	222	1	23	134	64	76.5	92.7	93.1 ↑

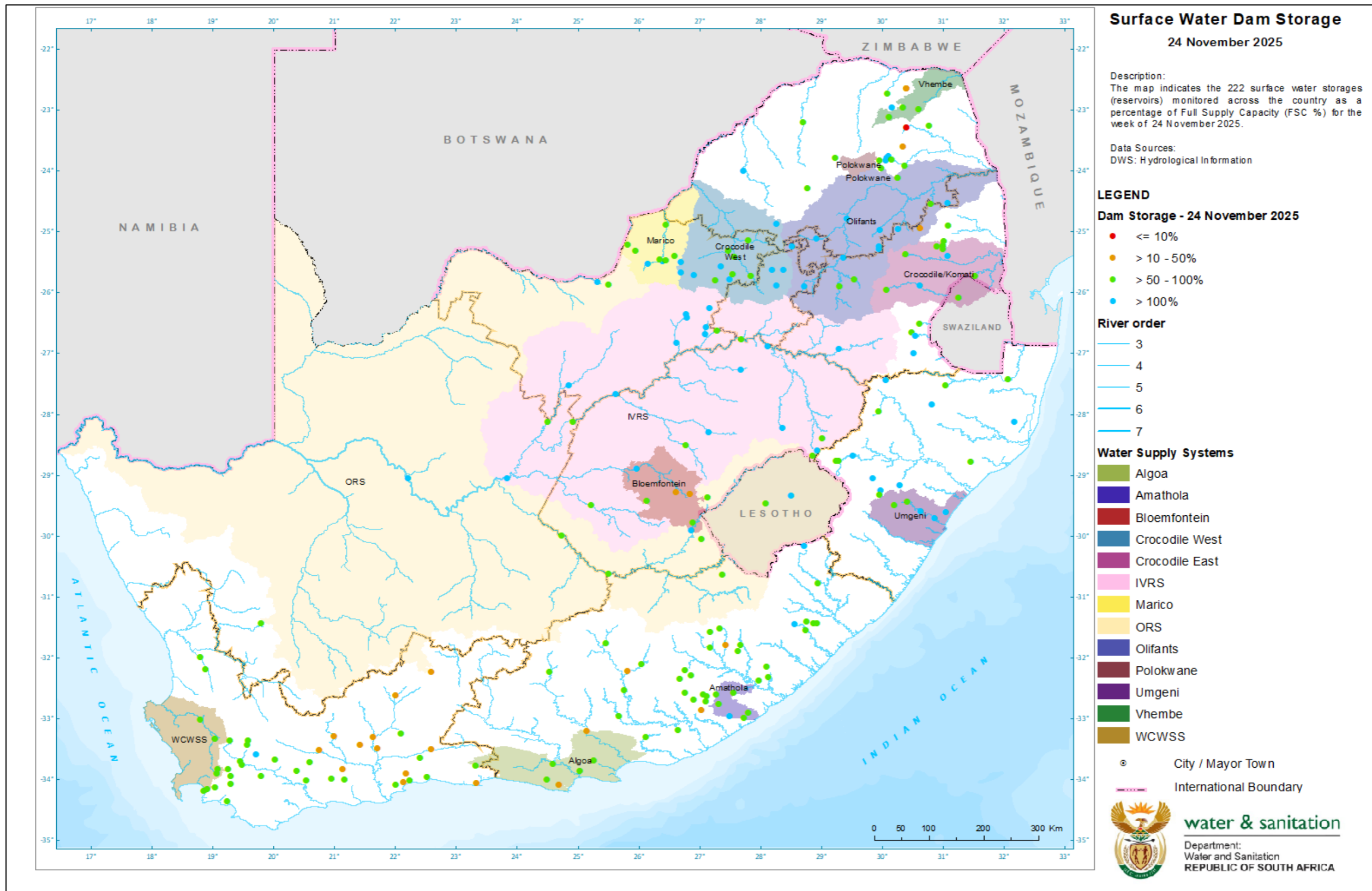


Figure 6: Surface Water Storage Levels – November 2025.

The comparison of the storage levels per province (plus the Kingdoms of Eswatini and Lesotho) for November 2024 and November 2025 is graphically presented in Figure 7. The North West is showing the most significant increase of 35.4%, year-on-year. The increase in the overall dam storage indicates higher-than-normal stream flows, as a result of above-normal rainfall received during the past hydrological year. The other notable increases were observed in the Northern Cape (32.6%), Free State (+24.4%), Gauteng (+16.4%), and Mpumalanga (+18.5%) of FSC. The Kingdoms of Eswatini and Lesotho experienced increases of 11.4% and 16%, respectively, compared to the previous year.

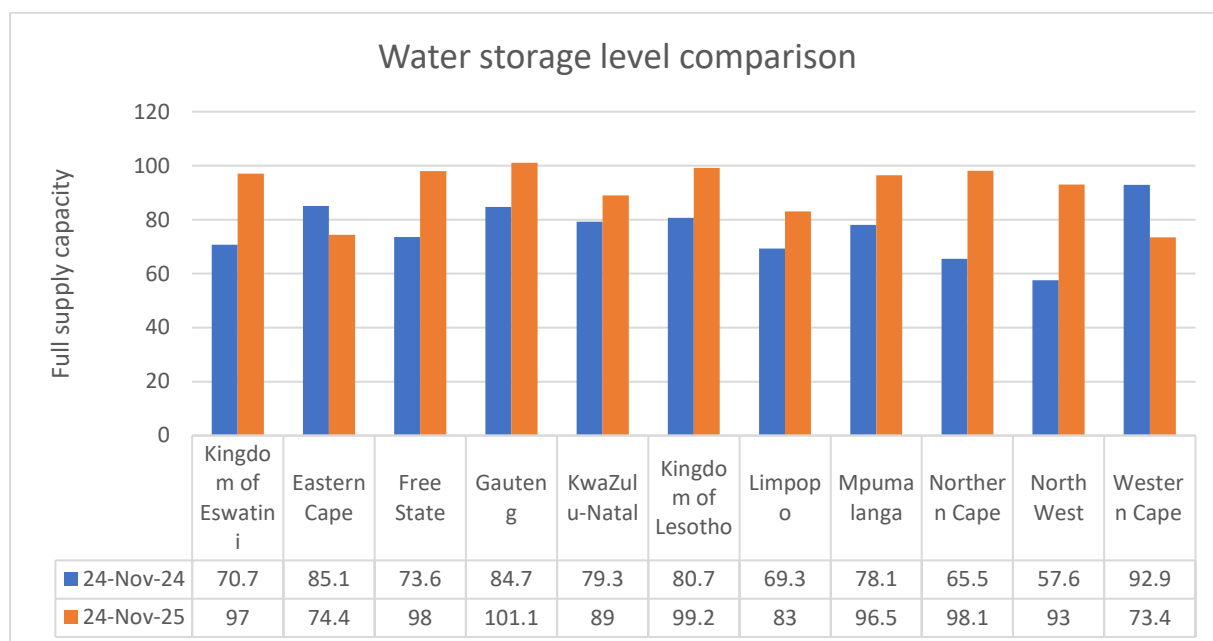


Figure 7: Water Storage Levels November 2024 vs. November 2025.

The comparison between November 2024 and November 2025 of the country's five largest dam storage is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Storage Levels comparison for the Five Largest storage dams (by volume).

Reservoir	River	Province	Full Supply Capacity (Mm3)	24 November 2024 (% FSC)	24 November 2025 (% FSC)	Difference (%)
Gariep Dam	Orange River	Free State	4 903.45	73.5	99.3	+25.8
Vanderkloof Dam	Orange River	Free State & Northern Cape	3 136.93	89.1	91.4	+2.3
Sterkfontein Dam	Nuwejaarspruit River	Free State	2 616.90	97.8	99.6	+1.8
Vaal Dam	Vaal River	Free State	2 560.97	30.0	101.3	+71.3
Pongolapoort Dam	Phongolo River	KwaZulu-Natal	2 395.24	72.4	82.7	+10.3

The surface water storage levels at the five major dams in the country exceed 80%, with Gariep and Vaal Dam showing increases of 25.8% and 71.3%, respectively, compared to the previous year. Earlier this year, the Vaal Dam's storage levels dropped to 24.1% of FSC. However, by the end of November 2025, the dam's capacity reached 101.3% of FSC, exceeding last year's levels by more than 70%.

Another year-on-year improvement was observed in the critical level category at the Middle-Letaba Dam in Limpopo, which rose from below 0.9 to 4.9% of FSC at the end of November 2025 (Table 4).

Table 4: Dam below 10% of FSC compared to last year

Reservoir	River	Province	Full Supply Capacity (Mm ³)	24 November 2024 (% FSC)	24 November 2025 (% FSC)	Difference (%)
Middel-Letaba Dam	Middel-Letaba River	Limpopo	171.93	0.9	4.9	+4

Figure 8 presents the 24-month Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) map analysed at the end of October 2025 alongside November 2025 dam levels. The SPI drought map shows that only parts of the Sarah Baartman DM in the Eastern Cape experienced extreme drought in the last 24 months. While some parts of Sarah Baartman, Chris Hani, and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities indicated a severe drought status.

District Municipalities

The year-on-year comparison of water storage levels per district municipality is presented in Figure 9. Ngaka Modiri Molema DM and Sedibeng DM experienced the most significant increases (>60%) in dam storage levels in November 2025, followed by Capricon DM and Fezile Dabi DM (>40%). Also noteworthy, the Central Karoo and Garden Route DM experienced a significant annual decline (>-40%) in dam levels.

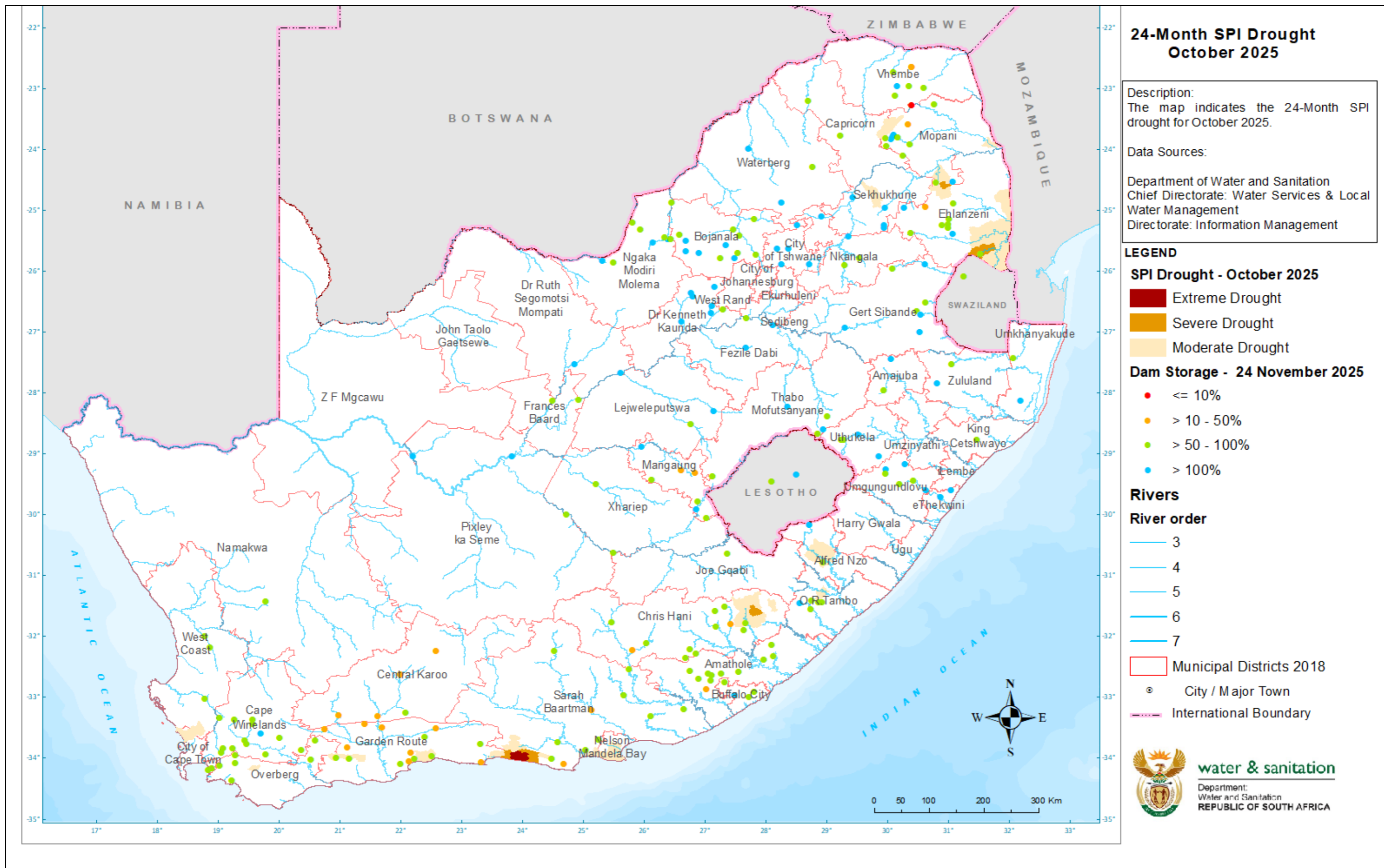


Figure 8: 24-Month Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) – October 2025, including dam levels - November 2025.

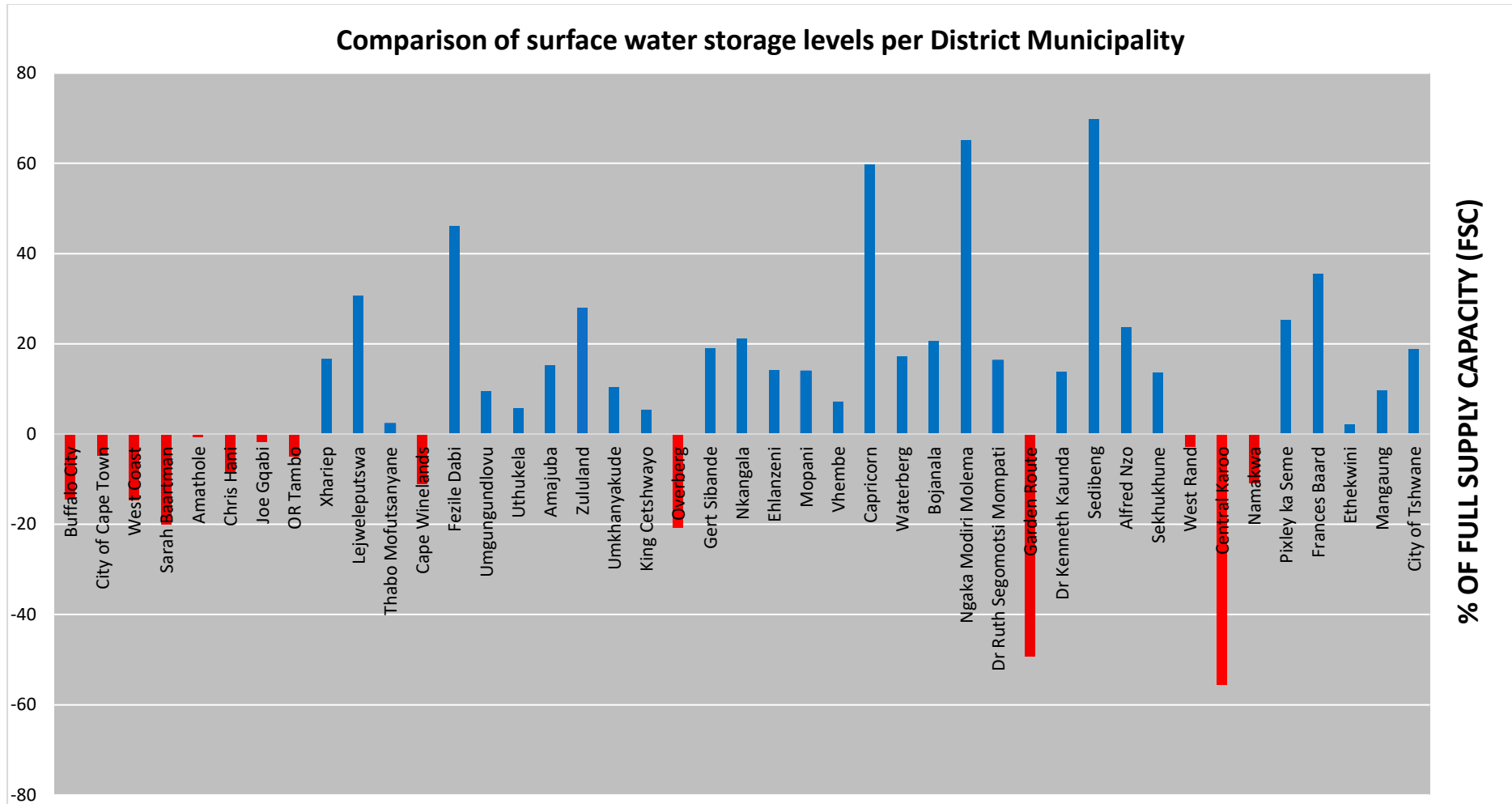


Figure 9: Comparison of water storage levels per District Municipality, November 2024 vs November 2025.

Water Supply Restrictions

The water supply systems and their respective restrictions are given in Table 5. Due to infrastructure limitations, permanent restrictions are applicable for the Polokwane and Bloemfontein Water Supply Systems.

Table 5: Water Supply Systems with Restrictions

System Name	Areas	Water Users	% Restrictions	Gazette Information	Next Review
Algoa WSS	Kromme subsystem	NMBM & Kouga LM Irrigation	23% domestic & industrial 43% irrigation	4 July 2025 No. 6392	Nov' 2026
Mangaung WSS	Caledon-Modder	Mangaung Metro	25% domestic & industrial when below 95%	13 Sep' 2024 Gazette no.5200	May 2025
Liebensbergvlei River	Run-off River abstractions Free State towns and irrigation	Towns of Bethlehem, Reitz, Tweeling within Dihlabeng, Mafube and Nketoana Local Municipalities	Irrigation users to abstract water on an alternative day basis Municipalities to use water sparingly	20 Sep' 2024 Gazette no. 5223	Once off until the end of the LHWP tunnel shutdown for the planned maintenance
Middle Letaba/ Nsami	Middle Letaba/ Nsami	Irrigation Mopani Municipality	100% irrigation 25% domestic	28 Jun' 2024	May 2025
Mutshedzi Dam	Mutshedzi Dam	Makhado Municipality	35% domestic		May 2025
Nzhelele	Nzhelele	Nzhelele Government Irrigation Scheme Nzhelele Regional Scheme	20% domestic 20% irrigation	28 Jun' 2024	May 2025
Nwanedi/ Luphephe	Nwanedi/ Luphephe	Mutale Local Municipality Irrigation	20% D&I 45% irrigation	28 Jun' 2024	May 2025
Polokwane Water Supply System Letaba System	Seshego, Mashashane, Houtrivier and Chuniespoort Dams Ebenezer and Groot Letaba System	Capricorn District, Polokwane Local Municipality Groot Letaba Water Users Association, Mopani Municipality	30% domestic & industrial water uses 27% agricultural use	28 Jun' 2024	May 2025

Table 6 presents the dam storage levels of South Africa's National Water Supply Systems. The Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) is the largest and most economically vital system in the country, consisting of 14 dams with a combined capacity exceeding 10,620 Mm³. At the end of November 2025, the IVRS was at 100.3% of FSC, marking a 2.9% increase from October 2025 and a significant year-on-year rise of 28.2% compared to November 2024. The Orange Water Supply System, the second-largest, comprises only two dams yet holds over 7,996 Mm³. The storage level of the Orange System was at 96.2% of FSC, indicating a 1.3% increase from October 2025 and a 16.6% annual increase from November 2024.

At the end of November 2025, the storage level of the Orange System was at 96.2% of FSC, indicating 1.3% increase from October 2025 and an annual increase of 16.6% from November 2024. These significant year-on-year improvements in dam levels are largely attributed to the above-average rainfall received earlier this year.

Table 6: Water Supply Systems storage levels November comparisons

Water Supply Systems/ Clusters	Capacity in 106m3	24 Nov 2024 (% FSC)	17 Nov 2025 (% FSC)	24 Nov 2025 (% FSC)	System Description
Algoa System	192	84.6	57.1	56.0	<u>Five dams serve the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Sarah Baartman (SB) DM, Kouga LM and Gamtoos Irrigation:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Kromrivier Dam</u> <u>2. Impofu Dam</u> <u>3. Kouga Dam</u> <u>4. Loerie Dam</u> <u>5. Groendal Dam</u>
Amathole System	241	101.7	92.9	92.5	<u>Six dams serve Bisho & Buffalo City, East London:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Laing Dam</u> <u>2. Rooikrans Dam</u> <u>3. Bridle Drift Dam</u> <u>4. Nahoon Dam</u> <u>5. Gubu Dam</u> <u>6. Wriggleswade Dam</u>
Klipplaat System	57	96.3	93.2	91.5	<u>Three dams serve Queenstown (Chris Hani DM, Enoch Ngijima LM):</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Boesmanskrantz Dam</u> <u>2. Waterdown Dam</u> <u>3. Ockraal Dam</u>
Butterworth System	14	96.6	94.3	95.1	<u>Xilinx Dam and Gcuwa weirs serve Butterworth</u>
Integrated Vaal River System	10 620	72.1	100.3	101.1	<u>14 dams serve Gauteng, Sasol, and ESKOM:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Vaal Dam</u> <u>2. Grootdraai Dam</u> <u>3. Sterkfontein Dam</u> <u>4. Bloemhof Dam</u> <u>5. Katse Dam</u> <u>6. Mohale Dam</u> <u>7. Woodstock Dam</u> <u>8. Zaaihoek Dam</u> <u>9. Jericho Dam</u> <u>10. Westoe Dam</u> <u>11. Morgenstond Dam</u> <u>12. Heyshope Dam</u> <u>13. Nootgedacht Dam</u> <u>14. Vygeboom Dam</u>
Luvuvhu	215	86.7	90	91.0	<u>Three dams serve Thohoyandou:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Albasini Dam</u> <u>2. Vondo Dam</u> <u>3. Nandoni Dam</u>

Water Supply Systems/ Clusters	Capacity in 106m3	24 Nov 2024 (% FSC)	17 Nov 2025 (% FSC)	24 Nov 2025 (% FSC)	System Description
Bloemfontein	184	75.6	79.2	79.5	<u>Four dams serve Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu:</u> 1. <u>Rustfontein Dam</u> 2. <u>Groothoek Dam</u> 3. <u>Welbedacht Dam</u> 4. <u>Knellpoort Dam</u>
Polokwane	257	79.4	94.6	103.5	<u>Two dams serve Polokwane</u> 1. <u>Flag Boshielo Dam</u> 2. <u>Ebenezer Dam</u>
Crocodile West	438	75.2	87.8	89.3	<u>Seven dams serve Tshwane up to Rustenburg:</u> 1. <u>Hartbeespoort Dam</u> 2. <u>Rietvlei Dam</u> 3. <u>Bospoort Dam</u> 4. <u>Roodeplaat Dam</u> 5. <u>Klipvoor Dam</u> 6. <u>Vaalkop Dam</u> 7. <u>Roodekopies Dam</u>
uMgeni System	905	85.6	92.1	93.2	<u>Five dams serve Ethekwini, iLembe & Msunduzi:</u> 1. <u>Midmar Dam</u> 2. <u>Nagle Dam</u> 3. <u>Albert Falls Dam</u> 4. <u>Inanda Dam</u> 5. <u>Spring Grove Dam</u>
Cape Town System	742	97.4	83.1	81.2	<u>Six dams serve the City of Cape Town:</u> 1. <u>Voelvlei Dam</u> 2. <u>Wemmershoek Dam</u> 3. <u>Berg River Dam</u> 4. <u>Steenbras-Lower Dam</u> 5. <u>Steenbras-Upper Dam</u> 6. <u>Theewaterskloof Dam</u>
Crocodile East	159	63.7	77.4	83.3	<u>Kwena Dam supplies Nelspruit, Kanyamazane, Matsulu, Malelane and Komatipoort areas & Surroundings</u>
Orange	7 988	79.6	93.6	96.2	<u>Two dams service parts of the Free State, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces:</u> 1. <u>Gariiep Dam</u> 2. <u>Vanderkloof Dam</u>
uMhlathuze	297	89.8	94.2	95.2	<u>Goedertrouw Dam supplies Richards Bay, Empangeni Towns, small towns, surrounding rural areas, industries and irrigators, supported by lakes and transfer from Thukela River</u>

Extreme Weather Events – November 2025

Each year, cut-off low-pressure systems, surface troughs, and severe thunderstorms generate extreme weather conditions in KwaZulu-Natal, frequently resulting in flash flooding, infrastructure damage, and disruption to socio-economic activities (SAWS, 2025). According to the South African Weather Service (SAWS), these events are typically associated with intense rainfall, hail, damaging winds, and hazardous conditions for residents in low-lying and poorly drained areas. In November 2025, two significant flood events impacted Newcastle and New Hanover.

Newcastle Floods: 9–10 November 2025

On 9 and 10 November 2025, a severe thunderstorm system impacted Newcastle and the surrounding northern KwaZulu-Natal. SAWS issued a Level 4 warning for thunderstorms, predicting heavy rainfall, hail, and a high risk of flash flooding and infrastructure disruption (SAWS, 2025b).

Within a 24-hour period, Newcastle recorded over 80 mm of rainfall, with certain neighbourhoods experiencing rapid water accumulation that overwhelmed stormwater drainage systems (Newcastillian, 2025). The Newcastle Central Business District experienced severe flooding, with roads submerged, pavements collapsing, and multiple sinkholes forming. These events led to power outages and significant traffic disruptions. Some of the storm's aftermath is shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10: The aftermath of the hailstorm and flooding: accumulated ice and submerged buildings. (Source: KZN CoGTA)

New Hanover Floods: 23–24 November 2025

On 23 November 2025, SAWS issued a Level 4 (Yellow) warning for severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall expected over northwestern and central KwaZulu-Natal (Figure 11), specifically highlighting the uMshwathi Local Municipality (which includes New Hanover). The warning anticipated heavy downpours, hail, and localised flooding, urging residents to remain vigilant and avoid river crossings (SAWS, 2025a).

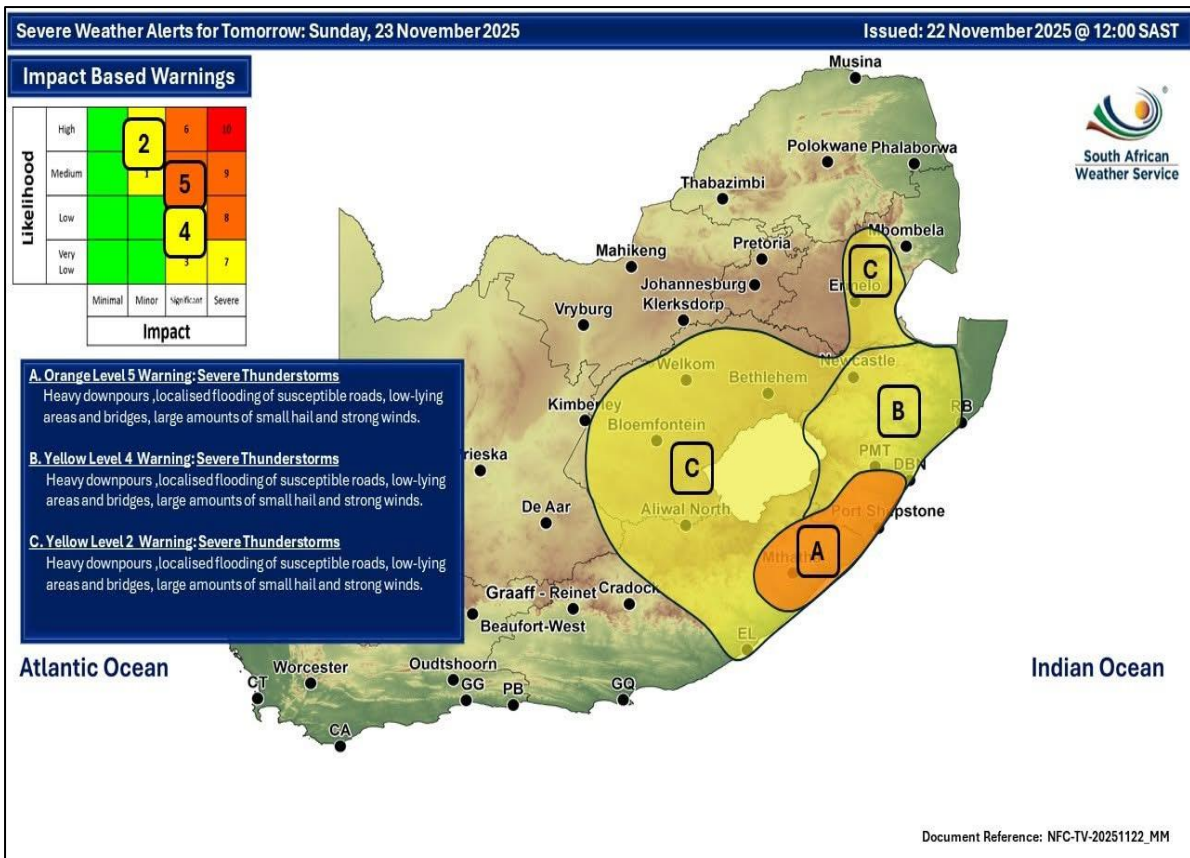


Figure 11: SAWS Level 4 warning map for KwaZulu-Natal, 23 November 2025.

As predicted, New Hanover experienced intense rainfall, with unofficial reports indicating localised accumulations exceeding 90 mm in less than 12 hours (Central News, 2025). The Njasuthi River burst its banks, leading to flash flooding that swept through informal settlements and damaged main roads and bridges. Three residents were swept away by floodwaters and died.

The uMshwathi Municipality reported the destruction of at least 19 homes, while dozens more were damaged. Roads between Wartburg and New Hanover were rendered impassable, complicating rescue and relief efforts. Provincial authorities activated disaster management protocols, set up temporary shelters, and began relocating the most vulnerable residents out of high-risk areas near the riverbanks (Central News, 2025). Figure 12 shows some houses in New Hanover that were damaged by floods.



Figure 12: Houses in New Hanover that were damaged by floods. (Photo: KZN CoGTA)

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<https://www.dws.gov.za/Projects/National%20State%20of%20Water%20Report/MonthlyBulletin.aspx>

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Glossary

Term	Definition
DM	District Municipality
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
FSC	Full Storage Capacity
IVRS	Integrated Vaal River System
SAWS	South African Weather Services
SPI	Standardised Precipitation Index. A widely used index to characterise meteorological drought on a range of timescales. On short timescales, the SPI is closely related to soil moisture, while at longer timescales, the SPI can be related to groundwater and reservoir storage
WSS	Water Supply System. A typical town/city water supply system consists of a gravity or pumping-based transmission and distribution system from a local or distant water source, with a needed water treatment system

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