



INTERNET ARTICLE

SA water levels continue to drop week-on-week

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South Africa's dam continue to drop their levels by a percent week, amid fears that parts of the country may experience water challenges before the beginning of summer rains next month. However, the Department of Water and Sanitation has allayed any fears of water shortages as the water that is stored in reservoirs is sufficient to sustain the country until the next rains

The good news is that the levels in Eastern Cape have stabilized at 50,6%, a sign that water users in the province have doubled their water conservation efforts.

In 2019 the province experienced a debilitating drought ever that left vast parts of the region without a drop to drink. This led the Provincial Government declaring the province a disaster area and millions of rands were spent to refurbish dysfunctional boreholes and water tankers and jojo tanks were introduced.

The latest weekly report on dams by the department of Water and Sanitation shows that national dam levels have dropped by a percentage from 66,2% to 65,7% this week. There is 21 026,7 (60%) cubic metres of water in reservoirs for any use until the next summer rains.

Although Free State dams experienced a marginal drop from 76,9% to 76,2% this week, the province continues to lead the pack with the largest volumes of water in the country. Two of the biggest dams, Gariep and Vanderkloof, recorded 79,6% and 92,6% apiece, while Sterkfontein Dam on the north east of the province, rose marginally to 94% The dam forms part of the Integrated Vaal River System and is occasionally used for supplementing struggling dams in the system.

Gauteng, with its small dams, is holding out at 97,1% after dropping marginally from 97,4% last week. Bon Accord, the smallest water reservoir in the province, is overflowing at 104,5% while Roodeplaats remains stable 100,2%

Northern Cape, also with smaller dams, dropped its water levels from 95,5% to 92,1% this week. Mpumalanga dams also dropped from 68% to 67,4%, followed by North West which dropped from 65,9% to 65,1% at the beginning of this week. Limpopo remained fairly stable despite its slight drop from 60,9% to 60,5%. However the big three dams in Mopani District – Tzaneen, Middel-Letaba and Modjadji – have not risen above 20%, a phenomenon that has had an adverse effect on the citrus industry in the region. The situation in Giyani is particularly dire as Middel-Letaba Dam is almost completely dry at 1,3%. Local residents rely on piped water from Nandoni Dam and underground water that is pumped from boreholes.

Dam levels in KwaZulu-Natal are a source of main concern as they continue to drop alarmingly. In the past three months the levels have plummeted from 62,4% to 55,5% this week.





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Winter rains in Western Cape have seen a phenomenal rise in the province's dam levels to a whopping 85,2% this week. At this rate, the levels are likely to reach a record 90% before the province ends its hydrological season and a dry summer sets in.

Against this backdrop, the Department of Water and Sanitation has appealed to water users in dry provinces to intensify their water saving practices until the next summer rains.

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