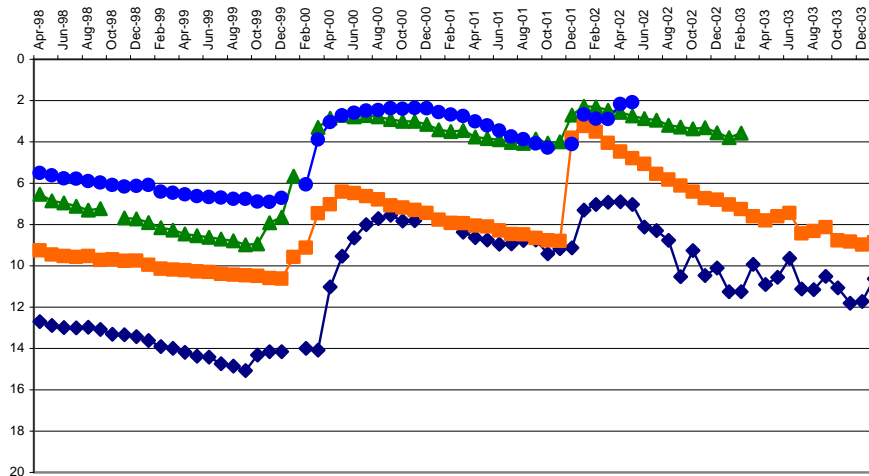




**DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY
LIMPOPO REGION
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**STATUS REPORT ON MONITORING &
GROUNDWATER LEVEL TRENDS
AUGUST 2007 – AUGUST 2008**



**H VERSTER
SEPTEMBER 2008**

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1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Groundwater levels

Water levels used for comparison in the report is the values for 1 August 2007, 1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008. Only a few stations could not be accessed, mostly due to locked gates. Data for the Kruger National Park will only be collected again in November 2008.

Comparison of water levels with the previous quarter: (May 2008 to August 2008)

- Stations visited = 151.
- Stations with data for both dates: = 134

	No of stations	% of stations	Average
Water level down more than 1 m	15	11.2%	-1.78m
Water level down less than 1m	101	75.4%	-0.30m
Higher water levels more than 1m	3	2.2%	3.79m
Higher water levels less than 1m	15	11.2%	0.21m
Total	134	100%	

This period represent the situation since the start to midway through the current dry season. As can be expected for this period, 116 (86.6%) of the 134 stations with data indicate lower water levels. The average decline for these 116 stations is only -0.5m.

Of the 18 stations indicating higher water levels, the increase at 15 of them is insignificant at 0.2m average. The 3 stations with more than 1m rise do not reflect natural conditions at any of them.

Comparison of water levels with the corresponding time last year: (August 2007 to August 2008)

LIMPOPO WATER MANAGEMENT AREA:

Lephalale (A4), Mokolo (A5), Mogalakwena (A6), Sand (A7) and Nzhelele (A8) drainages

Analysis of water level data for the past year, August 2007 to August 2008 mostly indicate no large fluctuations in ambient water levels. Data from 68 monitoring stations indicate 50% of stations with higher water levels than the corresponding period last year and the other 50% with lower water levels. Overall the differences are very small except for the A6 Drainage that indicates an overall rise of almost 1m in water levels.

On the longer term, 2-5 years, the majority of stations indicate some seasonal fluctuations but with an continuous slow decline. This is interpreted as part of a long-term cycle. In areas where long-term data is available, comparison of the current situation with historical trends indicate no serious reason for immediate concern. This however relate to the general condition over a large area and local deviations, especially due to over abstraction will be present.

LEVHUVHU-LETABA WATER MANAGEMENT AREA:

Levhuvhu (A9), Letaba (B8) and Shingwedzi (B9) drainages

No long-term data is yet available for any of these drainages. Data from 36 monitoring stations also indicate 50% of stations with higher water levels than the corresponding period last year and 50% with lower water levels. The overall situation is almost exactly as the

corresponding time last year. Available data only exist for up to 3-4 years in some areas but mostly only 1-2 years. Analysis of the data reveals a very good correlation with that of the Limpopo WMA over the past 2 years and the supposition is made that the correlation may be valid for conditions further in the past. Accepting this, the current situation would also indicate no reason for immediate serious concern overall. Again, local conditions may differ over short distances.

OLIFANTS WATER MANAGEMENT AREA:

Only a few monitoring stations yet in this WMA and spread over a very large area. Data for 15 existing stations indicate 40% with lower water levels and 60 % with higher. Although some stations are widely separated, the same type of correlation with stations in this area could be drawn as with the previous area and the same arguments are deemed valid.

IN GENERAL:

Despite little or no real seasonal recharge the past 2-3 years and general slow decline in water levels, the situation, compared to historical trends, is still in a healthy state. There are a few areas indicating that the declining rates are probably abnormal and should be monitored carefully. The 2 areas of importance is along the Nile River and the Levhuvhu River and is depicted in map 6. The density of the monitoring network do not allow for monitoring of local conditions and aquifer management by the users is, as always, of utmost importance

Monitoring network

Extension of the monitoring network is still ongoing. Replacing of old unsuitable or unstable stations is completed and 12 stations were phased out after May 2008. Some gaps already identified will be filled in 2009.

Summary:

Current stations			Planned stations					Current & planned
Active stations (including new)	Old/unstable phased out	New; No data yet	New boreholes drilled but not equipped yet	Still to be drilled	Project station to include	Possible old existing holes to be used	Total	Total sites to monitor (before gap filling)
185	12	5	10	6	4	7	27	212
(34 in KNP)	(May 2008 last data)	Included in column 1				(Sekhukhune area)		

The position of current and planned stations is depicted in MAP 1.

Other monitoring:

Tshitale project	Taaibosch project	Matlala project	National Groundwater Quality project
4 stations	16 stations	25 stations	55 stations

Except for the stations in the Kruger National Park, all active stations are registered on the National Groundwater Database. 4 of the newly drilled boreholes are also registered leaving 6 new to be registered.

Field verification of possible boreholes for inclusion in the National Groundwater Quality network has started. Field visits to the A7 7 A8 drainages were done and 13 sites visited and verified.

Extension of the rainfall recorder network was halted until a suitable solution to vandalism can be found.

2) STATUS OF MONITORING NETWORK

The Limpopo Province's Groundwater Level Monitoring Network currently consists of 185 active monitoring stations, including 34 in the KNP which were not visited in August. **(Map 1)**

Replacement and phasing out of old stations is completed and 12 stations were phased out after May 2008. 143 Stations were visited during August 2008. 3 Stations were inaccessible due locked gates and 5 are new with no time series data yet. 27 Additional new stations are currently planned of which 10 are already drilled but not yet equipped. Field verification of possible existing boreholes for 7 of the planned stations was done and 4 can be used. The 3 remaining will probably need drilling of new holes added to the 6 outstanding to drill. 4 Project boreholes are planned to be included in the network at a later stage. Some network gaps identified will be addressed next year. Cleaning of station A5N0001 as well as drilling of additional holes to investigate the validity of water level behavior at this station was completed but problems with access to the property prevented re-equipping of this station. 6 of the newly drilled boreholes still have to be registered on the National database

The borehole at Bismarck was severely damaged by cutting the casing off and welding it shut again. The loggers are assumed to have been lost down the hole. The incident is under investigation.

No progress on the phase 2 upgrading of existing stations.

The following project stations are monitored, 25 at Matlala, 4 at Tshitale and 16 at Taaibosch (Monitored by Head Office). **(Map 2)**

Regional and Head Office jointly service a total of 55 stations for the National Groundwater Quality Program in the Limpopo Province. **(Map 3)**

Field verification and station identification of possible additional stations is progressing well and the A7 & A8 drainages were visited with 13 sites completed.

3) DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Data was collected during August 2008 with the value for 1 August representing midway of the current dry season. Comparisons were drawn between 1 August 2007, (Corresponding period the previous year) 1 May 2008 (End of the previous wet season) and 1 August 2008 (Midway of the current dry season) **(Maps 4-6)**

4) LIMPOPO WATER MANAGEMENT AREA.

The area consists of secondary drainage areas A4, A5, A6, A7 and A8.

4.1 A4 Drainage Area. (Matlabas, Mokolo Rivers)

2 New stations were equipped in this drainage but no time series data is available yet. Another 6 boreholes have been drilled but not equipped yet.

4.2 A5 Drainage Area. (Lephalala River)

There are 5 active stations. 1 New borehole drilled must still be equipped and 1 must still be drilled. Station A5N0001, as well as 3 additional project boreholes around it, could not be equipped yet due to access problems.

Fluctuation of water levels at all of these stations is almost negligible.
(**GRAPHS 1-4**)

4.3 A6 Drainage Area. (Nile, Sterk, Mogalakwena & Dorps Rivers)

There are 39 monitoring stations in this drainage, 2 of which are new boreholes with no time series data yet.

Although some recharge the past season is evident in most, levels have, as can be expected, started to decline again since the onset of the dry season. (**GRAPH 5**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

Data for 36 stations is available. 31 Stations (86.1 %) have lower levels and 5 stations (13.9%) indicate higher water levels. Overall an average decline of -0.41m was recorded for the period. (**GRAPHS 6 & 8**)

August 2007 to August 2008

Data for the whole year is available for 28 stations. 10 Stations (35.7%) indicate lower water levels than August last year and 18 stations (64.3%) indicate a rise in water levels. An overall rise of 1.1m was recorded over the past year (**GRAPH 7 & 8**)

Average water levels are still slightly higher than the long-term average values and are 3.73m higher than the maximum average recorded, (**GRAPH 9**)

The slow declining trend over the longer term persists.

4.4 A7 Drainage Area. (Sand, Blood, Diep, Hout, Dwars & Brak Rivers)

There are currently 38 monitoring stations in this drainage.

Water levels are mostly quite stable with little fluctuation the past year with limited recharge evident at some stations. A slow declining trend over the longer term still persists (**GRAPH 10**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

Data is available for 33 stations of which 6 stations (18.2%) indicate higher water levels, average 0.18m, while 27 stations (81.8%) indicate lower water levels, average -0.4m. Overall a decline of -0.29m was recorded over this period (**GRAPHS 11&13**).

August 2007 to August 2008

Data is available for 28 stations, 19 (67.9%) Indicate lower water levels, average -0.54m. 9 Stations (32.1%) indicate higher water levels, average 0.7m. Overall a decline of -0.14m was recorded for the period (**GRAPHS 12&13**).

Current average water levels are lower than the long-term average and only 1.42m above the lowest average recorded (**GRAPH 14**).

Long-term trends show some corresponding behavior with that of drainage A6 .

4.5 A8 Drainage Area ((Nwanedzi, Nzhelele Rivers)

11 Stations are monitored in this area but as for the previous report, the data for the artesian station was not used as it is still overflowing.

A slight initial rise in water levels the past wet season followed by a decline again is evident at all stations. **(GRAPH 15)**

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

7 Stations indicate slightly lower water levels with an average of -0.21m **(GRAPHS 16 & 18)**.

August 2007 to August 2008

3 Stations indicate slightly declining water levels and 7 Stations higher water levels, average 0.57m **(GRAPHS 17 & 18)**.

An overall average rise of 0.33m was recorded over the past year **(GRAPH 18)**

5) LEVHUVHU-LETABA WATER MANAGEMENT AREA.

The area consists of secondary drainage areas A9, B8 & B9.

5.1 A9 Drainage Area. (Mutale, Levhuvhu Rivers)

This drainage has 18 monitoring stations.

Water level trends vary but the general slow declining trend is visible here as in the other drainages, even with evidence of some recharge the past wet season **(GRAPH 19)**.

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

Data is available for all stations and lower water levels are indicated at all, average -0.66m **(GRAPHS 20&22)**.

August 2007 to August 2008)

9 Stations (50%) indicate lower water levels, average -0.6m and also 9 stations indicate higher water levels, average 0.54m **(GRAPHS 21&22)**.

Overall a very slight average decline of 0.04m was recorded over the area the past year.

5.2 B8 Drainage Area. (Groot, Middel & Klein Letaba Rivers)

14 Stations are monitored in this drainage.

Trends mostly indicate very little, or no fluctuation, the past year but a continuous slow decline **(GRAPH 23)**.

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

Data is available for all 14 stations and 13 stations indicate lower water levels, average - 0.43m with 1 station indicating a very slight rise (**GRAPHS 24&26**)

August 2007 to August 2008

An equal amount, 7 each, indicate lower and higher water levels (**GRAPHS 25&26**)

Overall the situation is exactly the same as the corresponding time last year.

5.3 B9 Drainage Area. (Shingwidzi, Mphongolo Rivers)

3 Of the 4 stations monitored indicate an initial small rise in water level declining again in the dry season (**GRAPH 27**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

Water levels at all stations indicate a decline, average -0.6m (**GRAPHS 28 & 30**).

August 2007 to August 2008

2 Stations each indicate lower and higher water levels but the fluctuations are generally small (**GRAPHS 29&30**)

6) OLIFANTS WATER MANAGEMENT AREA.

The part of this Water Management Area within the Limpopo Province mostly consists of the B3, B5 & B7 secondary drainage areas.

6.1 B3 Drainage Area. (Elands, Gotwane Rivers (Springbok flats area)

3 Stations are monitored in this area.

Rising water levels at all stations but very little at B3N0022 (**GRAPH 31**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

All stations indicate higher levels (**GRAPH 32**)

August 2007 to August 2008

All Stations indicate higher water levels (**GRAPH 33**)

Despite the evident recovery of the water levels at B3N0001 and B3N0012, the current water levels are still far below long-term average (**GRAPH 34**)

6.2 B5 Drainage Area. (Olifants, Nkumpi Rivers)

Access to B5N0011 could not be gained in August and may pose real problems in future.

As in most other drainages, an initial rise in water levels followed by a decline (**GRAPH 35**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

4 Stations indicate lower water levels and 2 slightly higher (**GRAPHS 36&38**)

August 2007 to August 2008

4 Stations indicate higher water levels and 1 slightly lower **GRAPHS 37&38**)

Current average water levels are above the long-term averages as well as the lowest average recorded (**GRAPH 39**)

6.3 B7 Drainage Area (Olifants, Selati, Klaserie, Makhutswi Rivers)

8 Stations are monitored in this drainage.

Very little fluctuation the past year (**GRAPH 40**)

Comparison with previous levels:

May 2008 to August 2008 (beginning to midway of current dry season)

All stations with data indicate lower water levels; average -0.5m (**GRAPHS 41&43**)

August 2007 to August 2008

5 Stations indicate lower water levels; average -1.5m and 2 higher (**GRAPHS 42&43**).

Overall a decline of -0.96 was recorded the past year.

Areas of notable lower water levels: (Map 6).

- There are 2 discernable areas characterized by a concentration of boreholes with water levels declining more than 1, and even more than 2m since the beginning of the dry season. (Red polygons)
- Another area contains a concentration of boreholes with water levels declining 0,5m to 1m. (Orange polygon)
- A third area have a scattering of stations with water levels declining more than 0,5m (Blue dotted polygon)

AREA 1: This area is located from around Mokopane southwards along the Nile River and somewhat west into the Springbok Flats. The water level behavior is probably an indication of the effect of abstraction for irrigation in the southern part and for town use in the area of Mokopane.

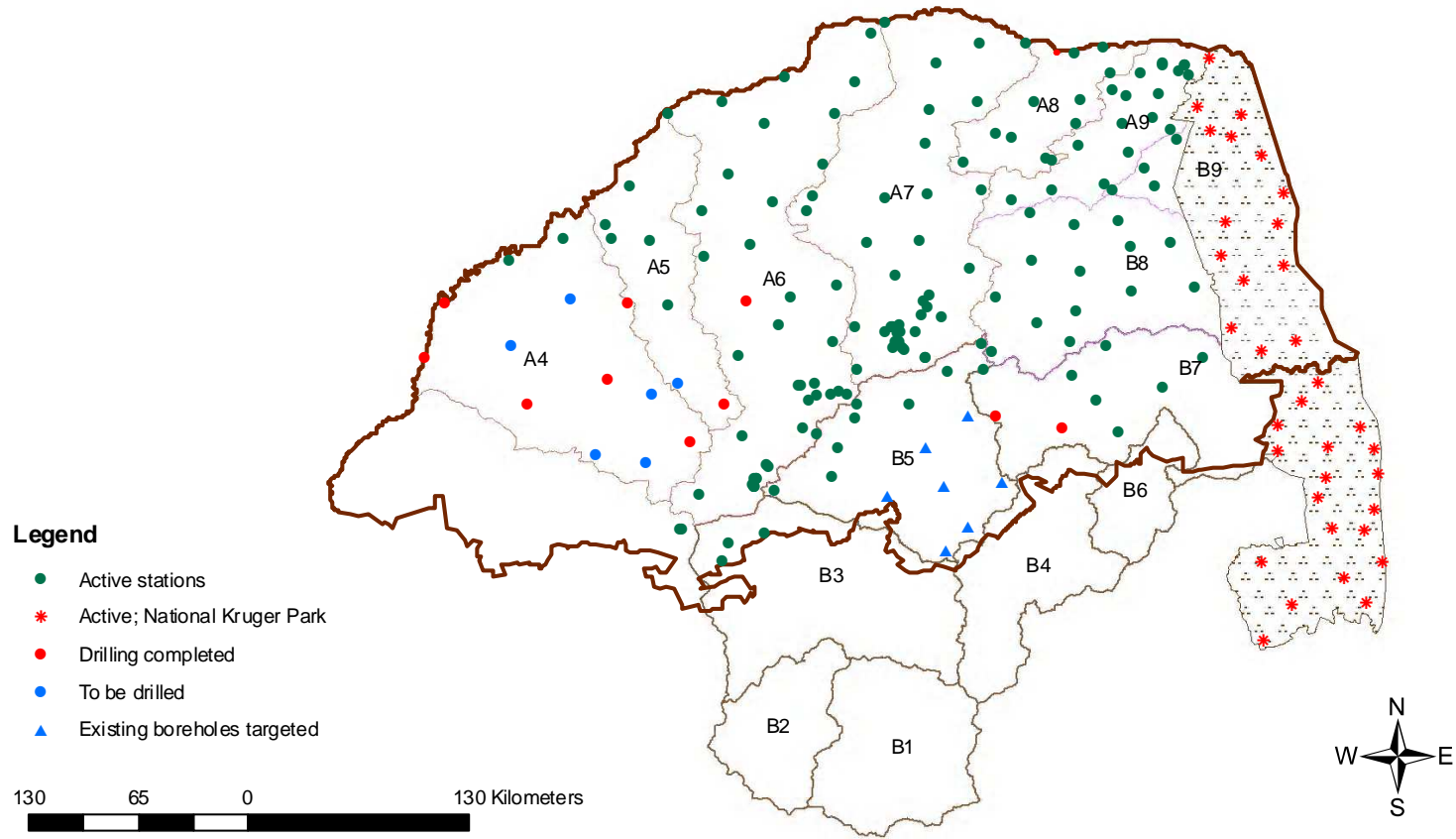
AREA 2: This area is located along the drainages of the Levhuvhu and Mutale Rivers from origins at Mpheni (Elim) and Tshidzivhe respectively down to the Kruger National Park

border at Punda Maria. This is a densely populated area and the main source of water supply is probably from groundwater.

AREA 3: The area in question is the western part of the B8 and the central part of the B7 drainages. The decline in water levels in this area is not so drastic and range between 0,5 to 1m. The behavior in the B8 drainage part may be the affect of abstraction as this is also a populated area. The area in B7 is however mostly cattle and game farming area which is usually not subjected to heavy abstraction.

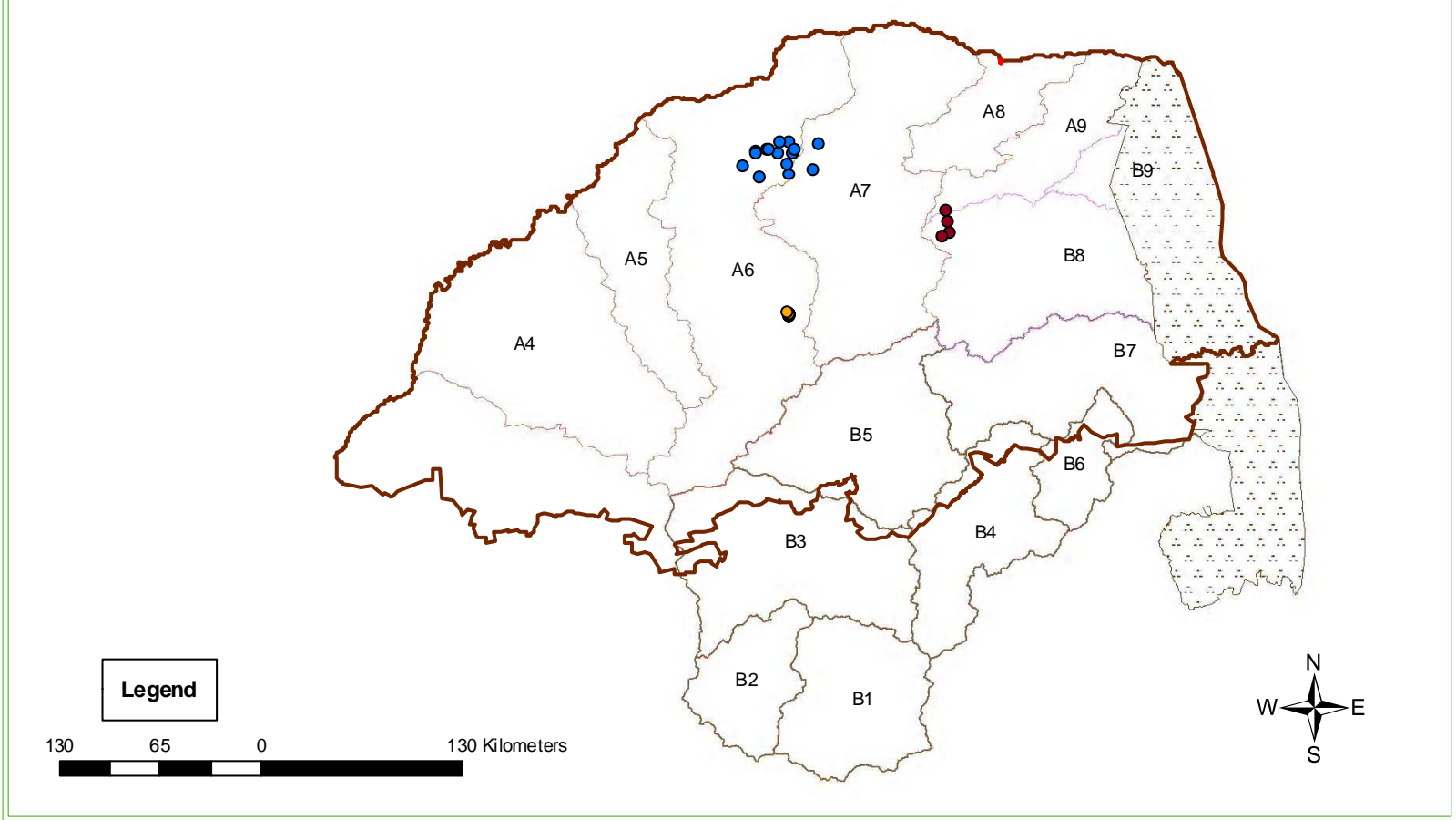
AREA 4: This is mostly around Polokwane with 2 exceptions. A close look at these boreholes indicated that all of them are located in the vicinity of abstraction points or either for irrigation or human consumption. The decline is mostly less than 1m

LIMOPO GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING POSITIONS OF ACTIVE AND PLANNED MONITORING STATIONS; SEPTEMBER 2008



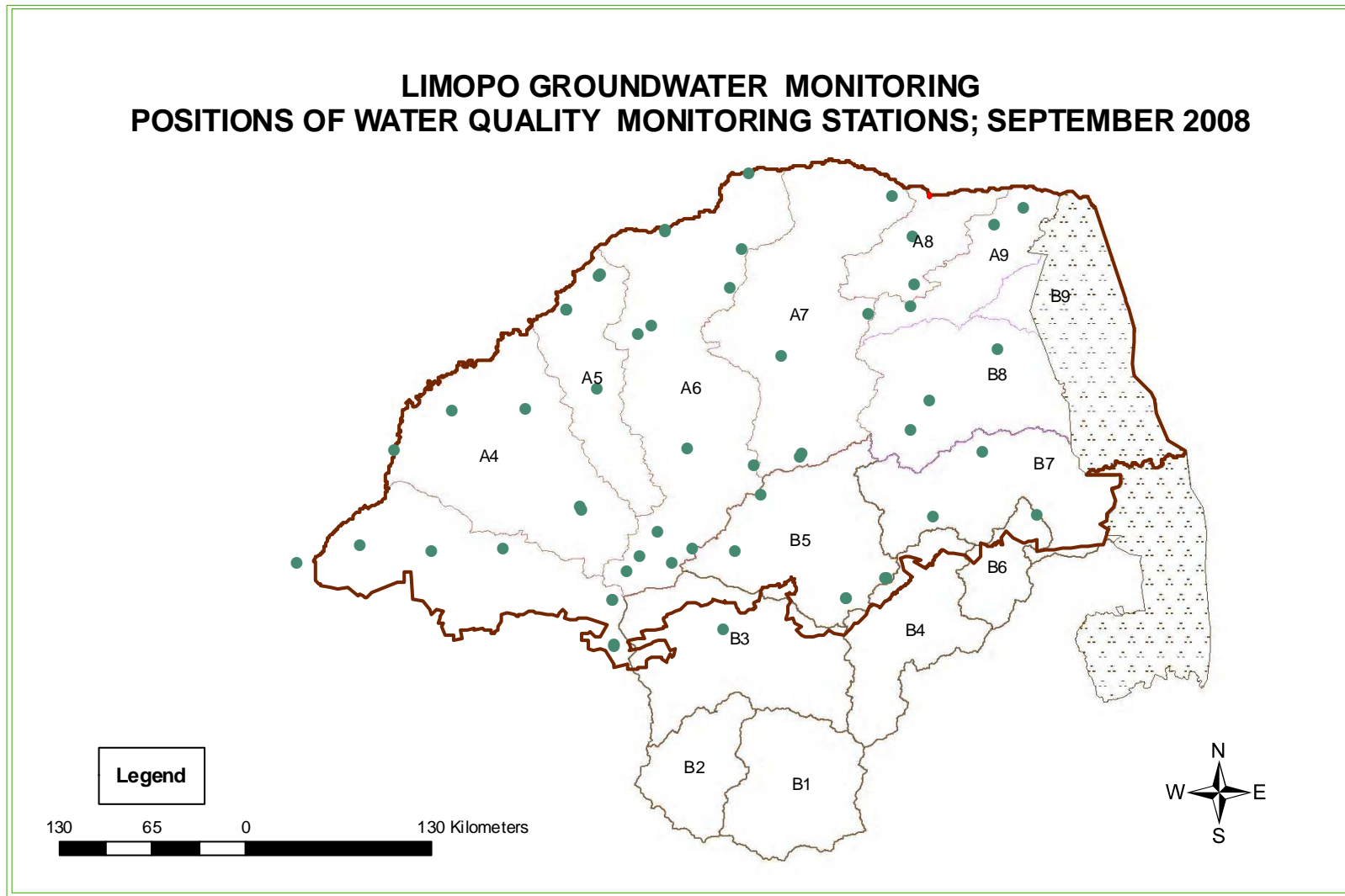
MAP 1

LIMOPO GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING POSITIONS OF PROJECT MONITORING STATIONS; SEPTEMBER 2008



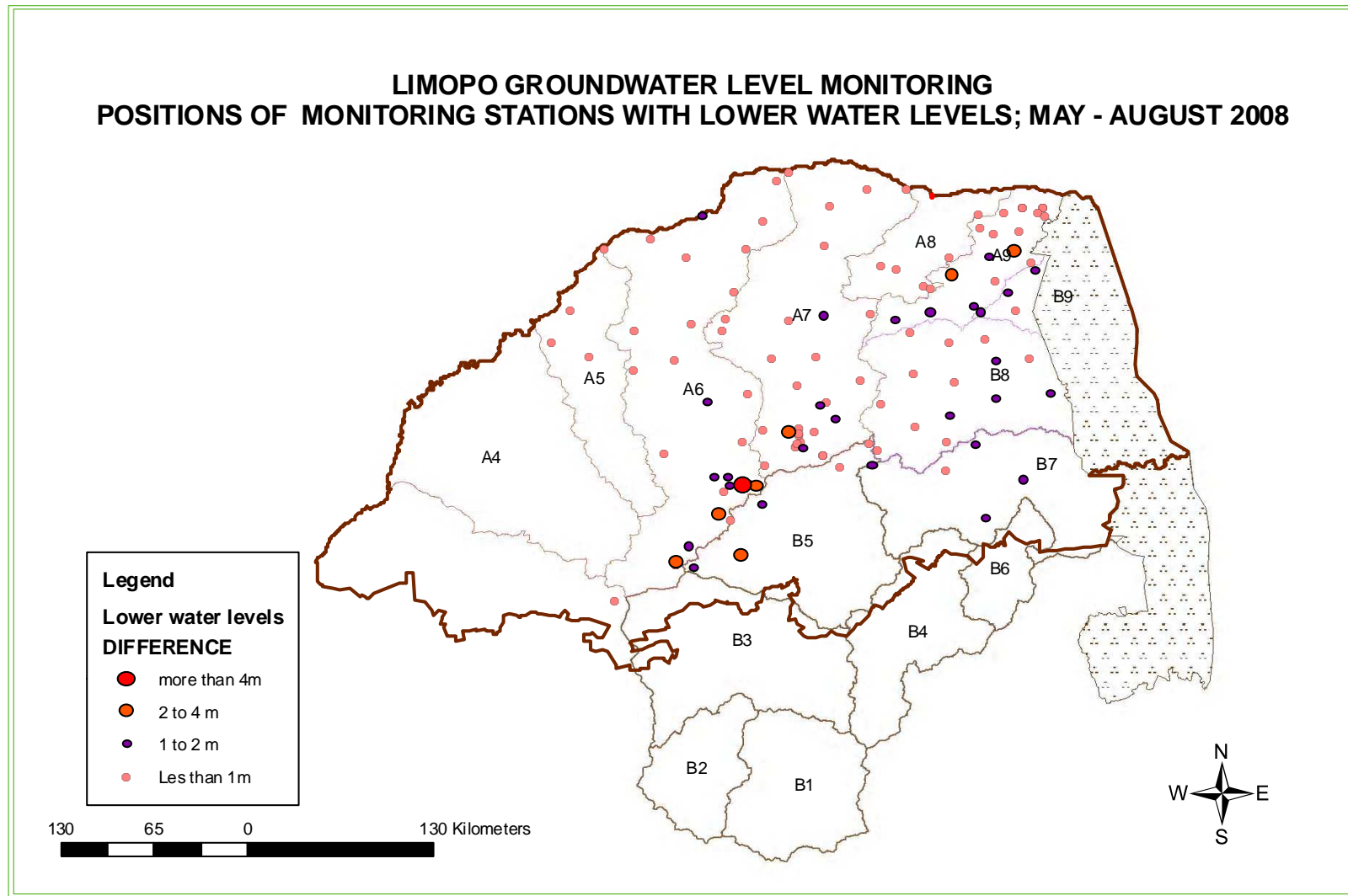
MAP 2

LIMOPO GROUNDWATER MONITORING POSITIONS OF WATER QUALITY MONITORING STATIONS; SEPTEMBER 2008



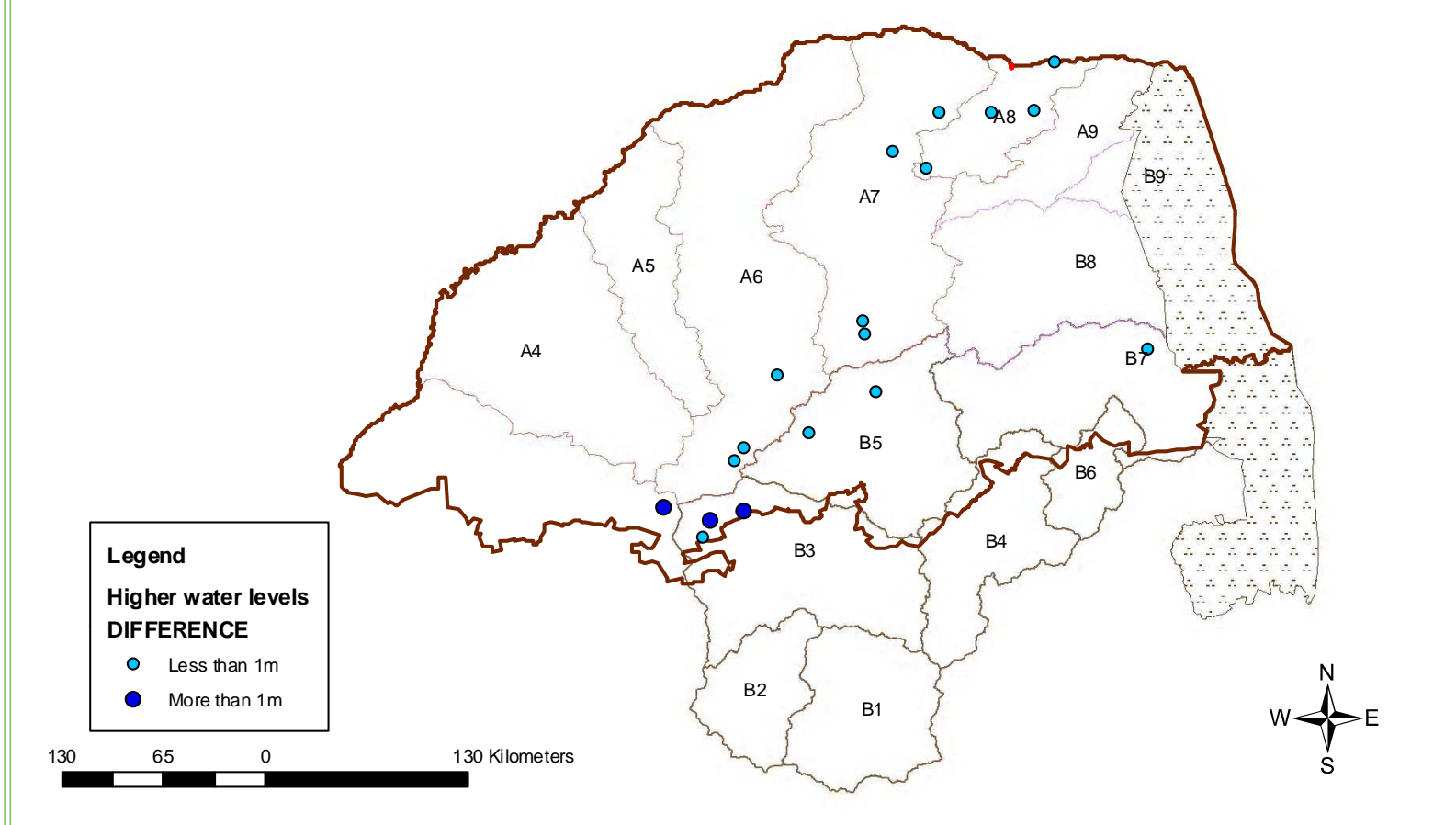
MAP 3

**LIMOPO GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING
POSITIONS OF MONITORING STATIONS WITH LOWER WATER LEVELS; MAY - AUGUST 2008**



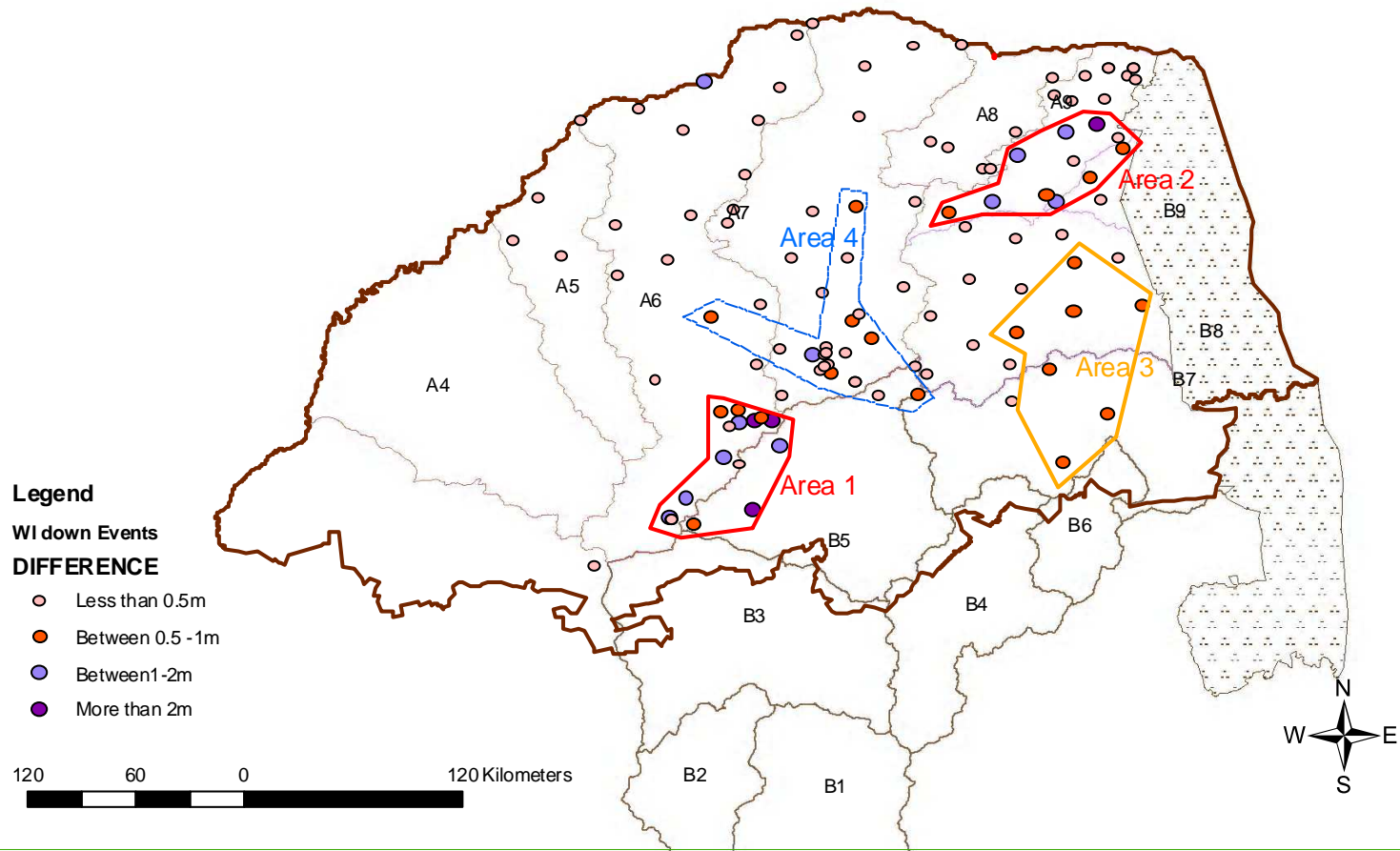
MAP 4

**LIMOPO GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING
POSITIONS OF MONITORING STATIONS WITH HIGHER WATER LEVELS; MAY - AUGUST 2008**



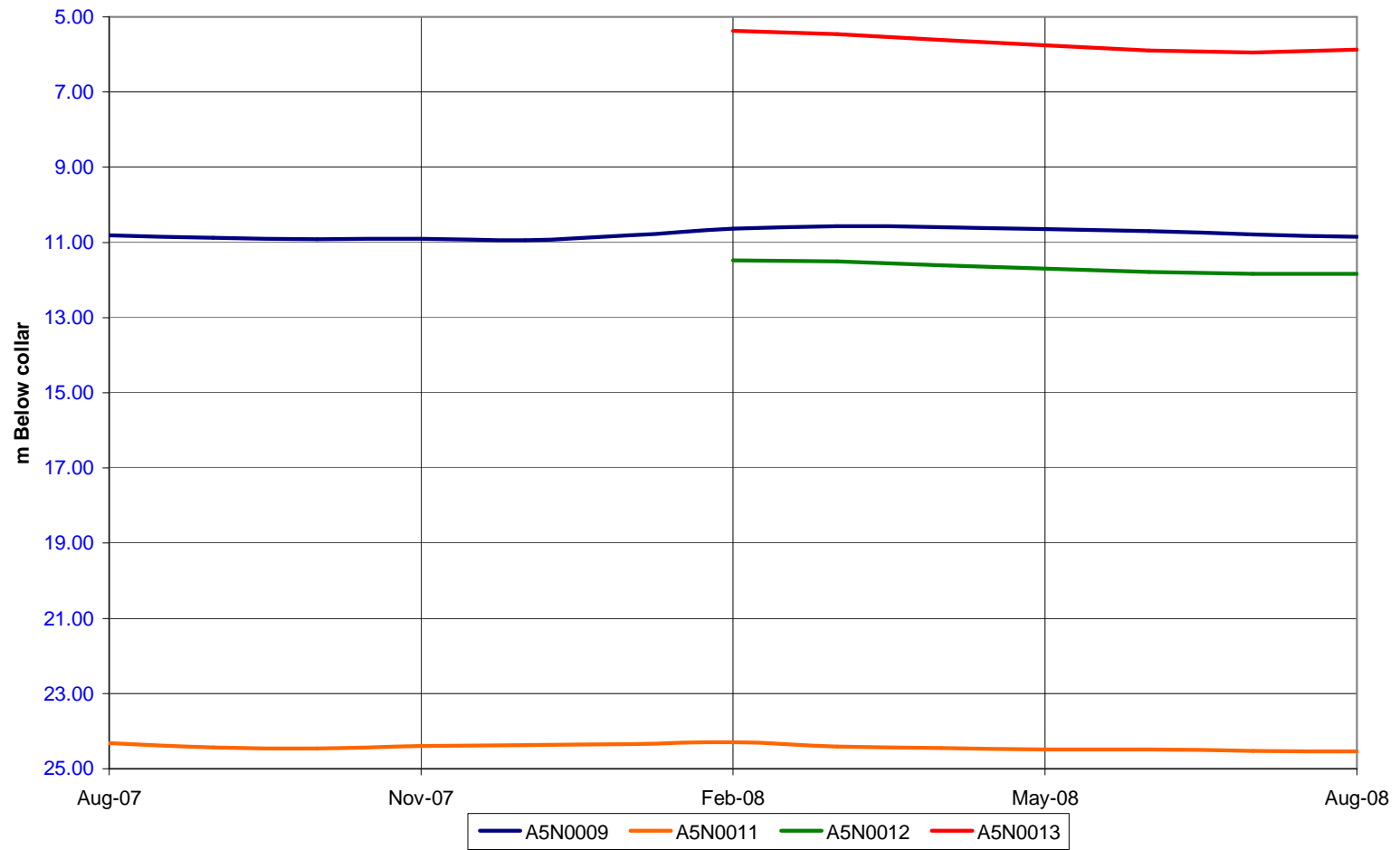
MAP 5

LIMOPO GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING AREAS WITH NOTABLE LOWER WATER LEVELS; MAY - AUGUST 2008



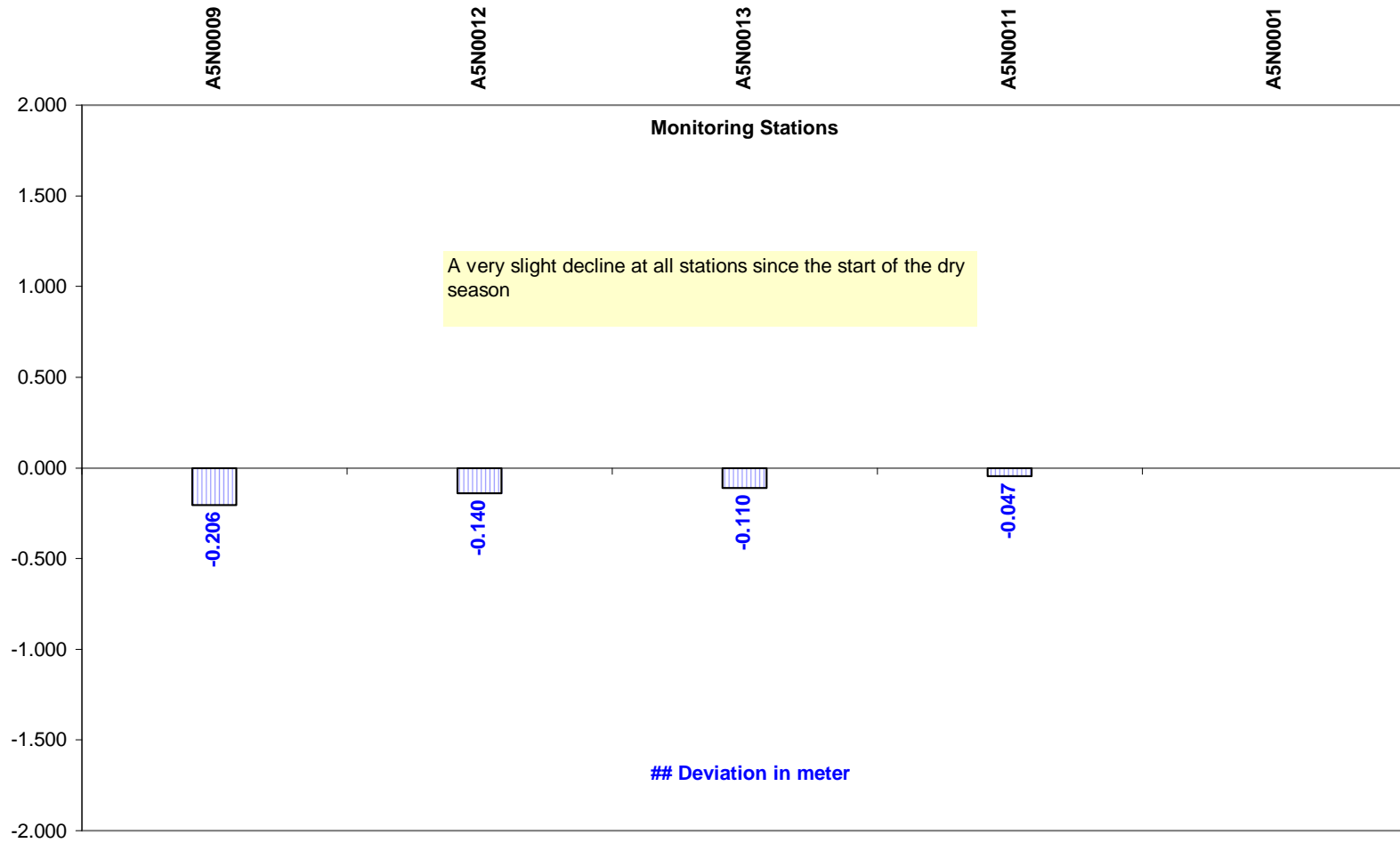
MAP 6

**Comparison of water level trends at stations in A5 drainage: 1 August 2007
to 1 August 2008**



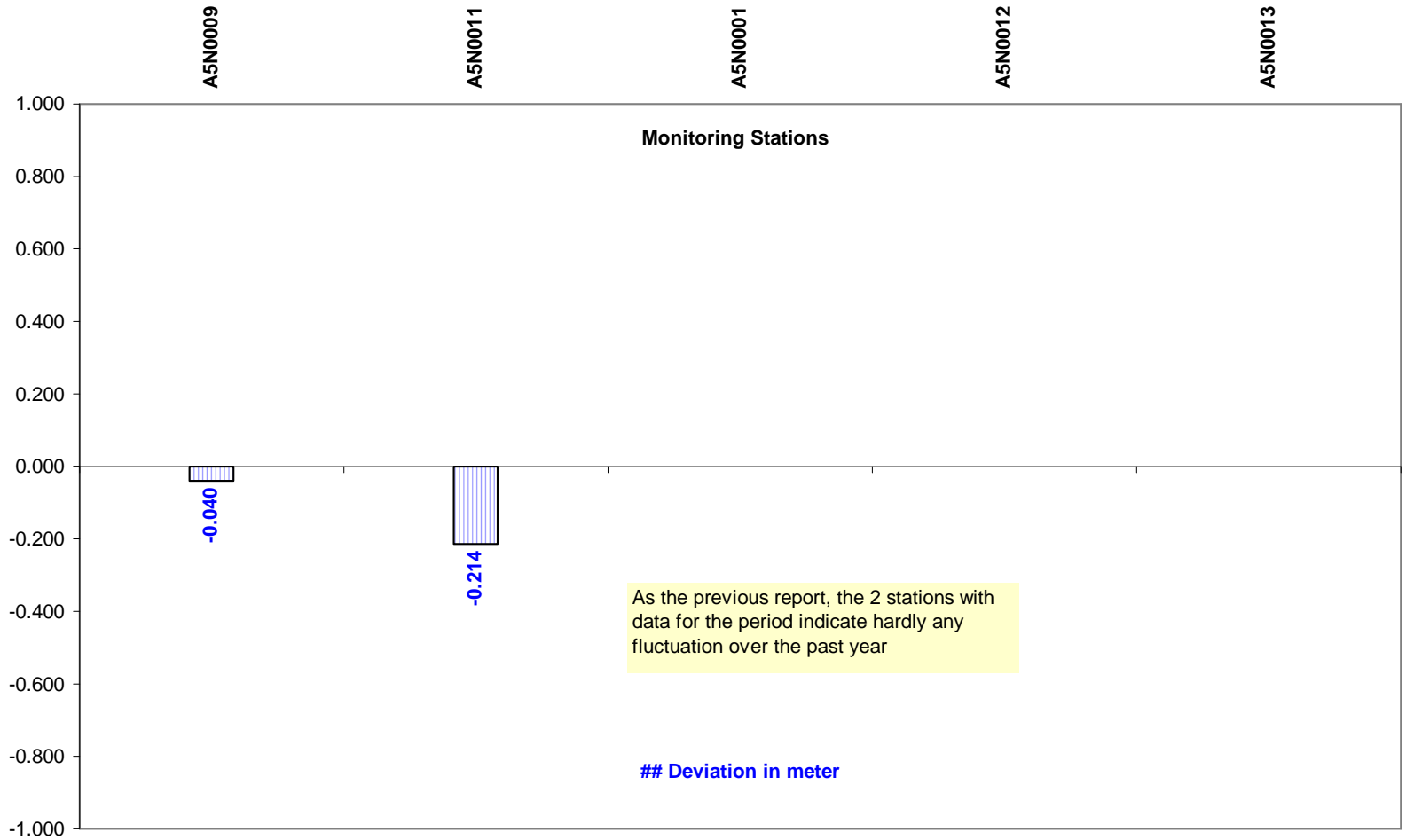
GRAPH 1

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



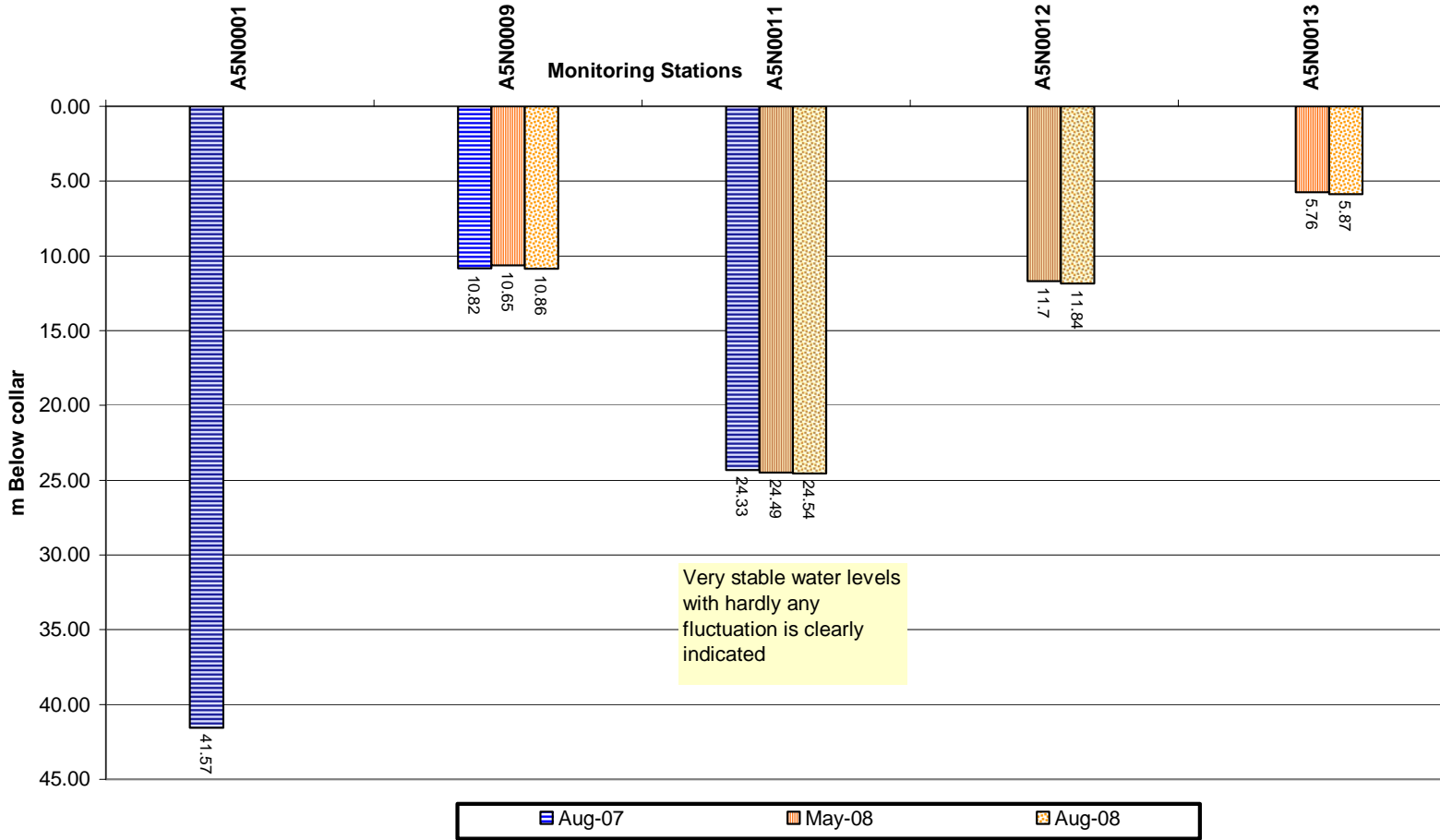
GRAPH 2

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



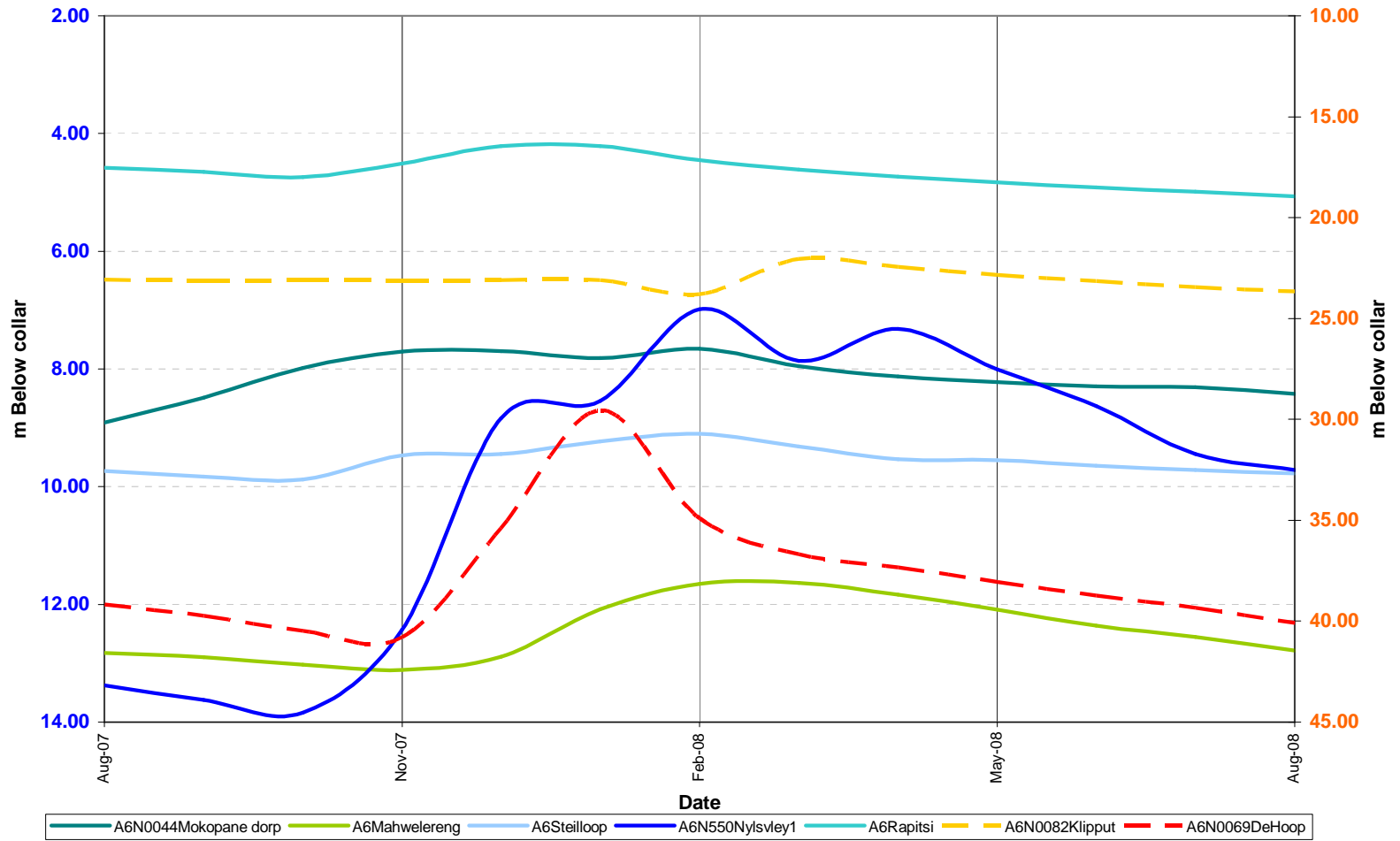
GRAPH 3

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths : 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



GRAPH 4

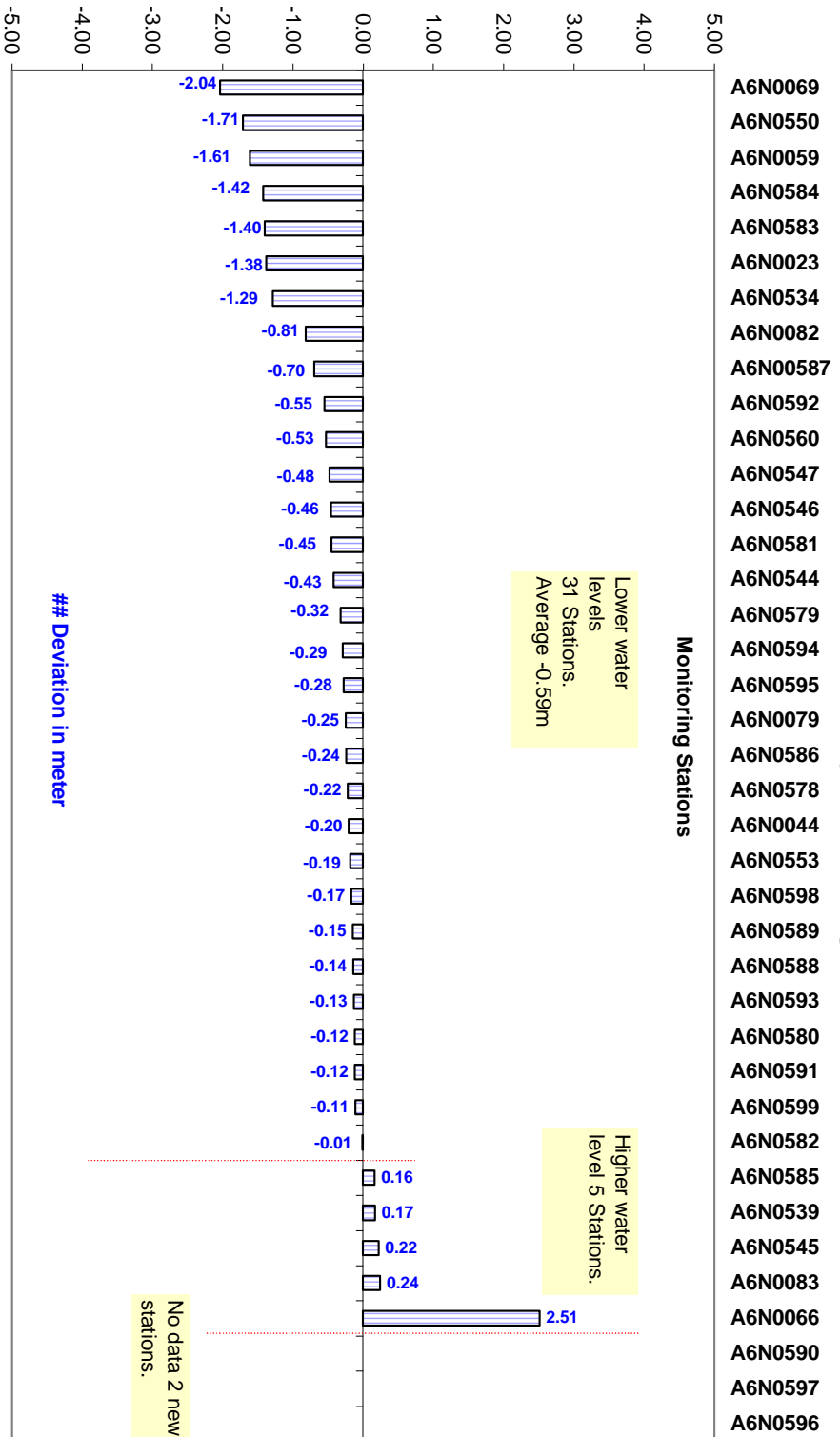
Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A6 drainage: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



GRAPH 5

A6 DRAINAGE AREA

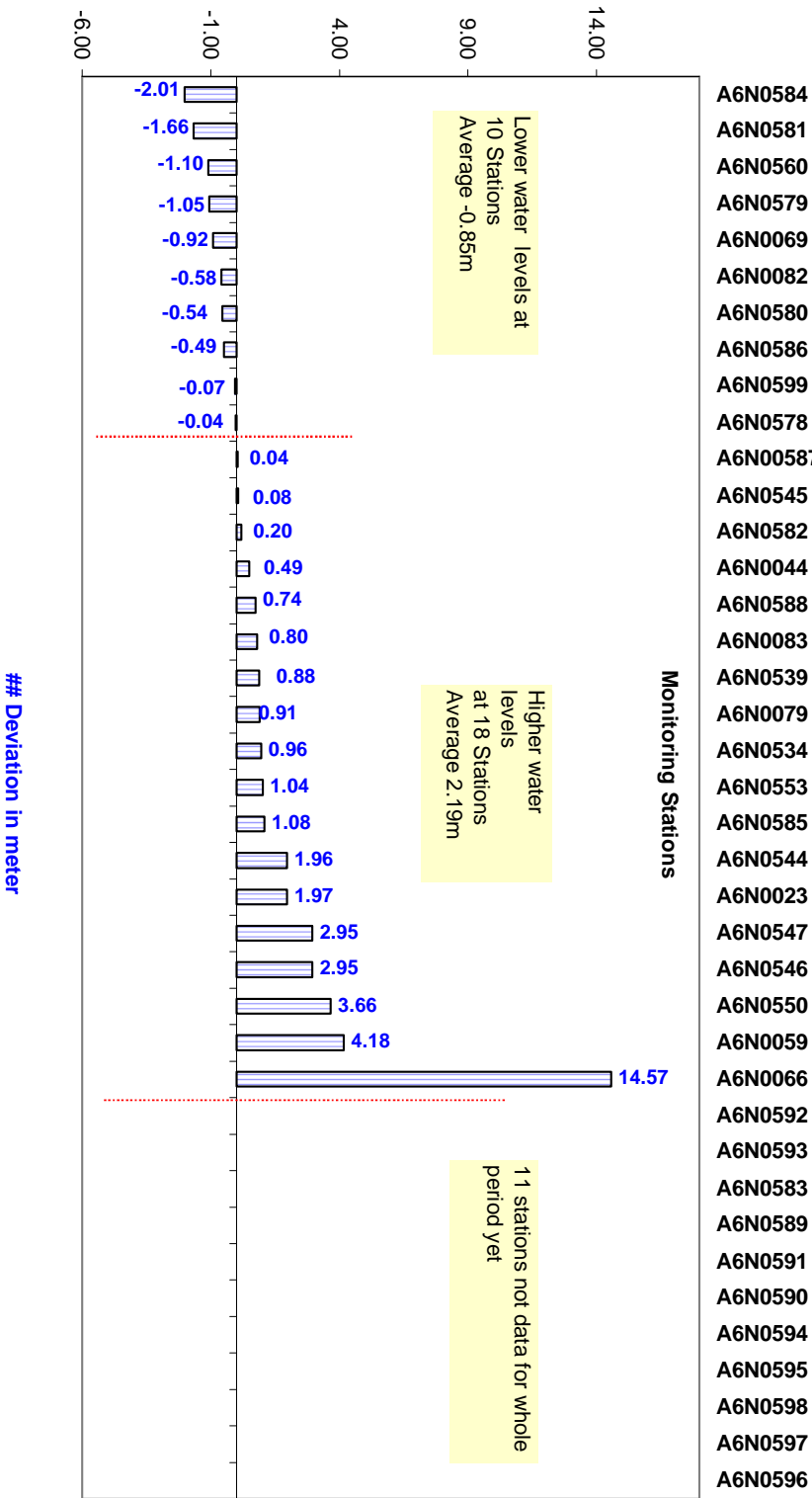
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



GRAPH 6

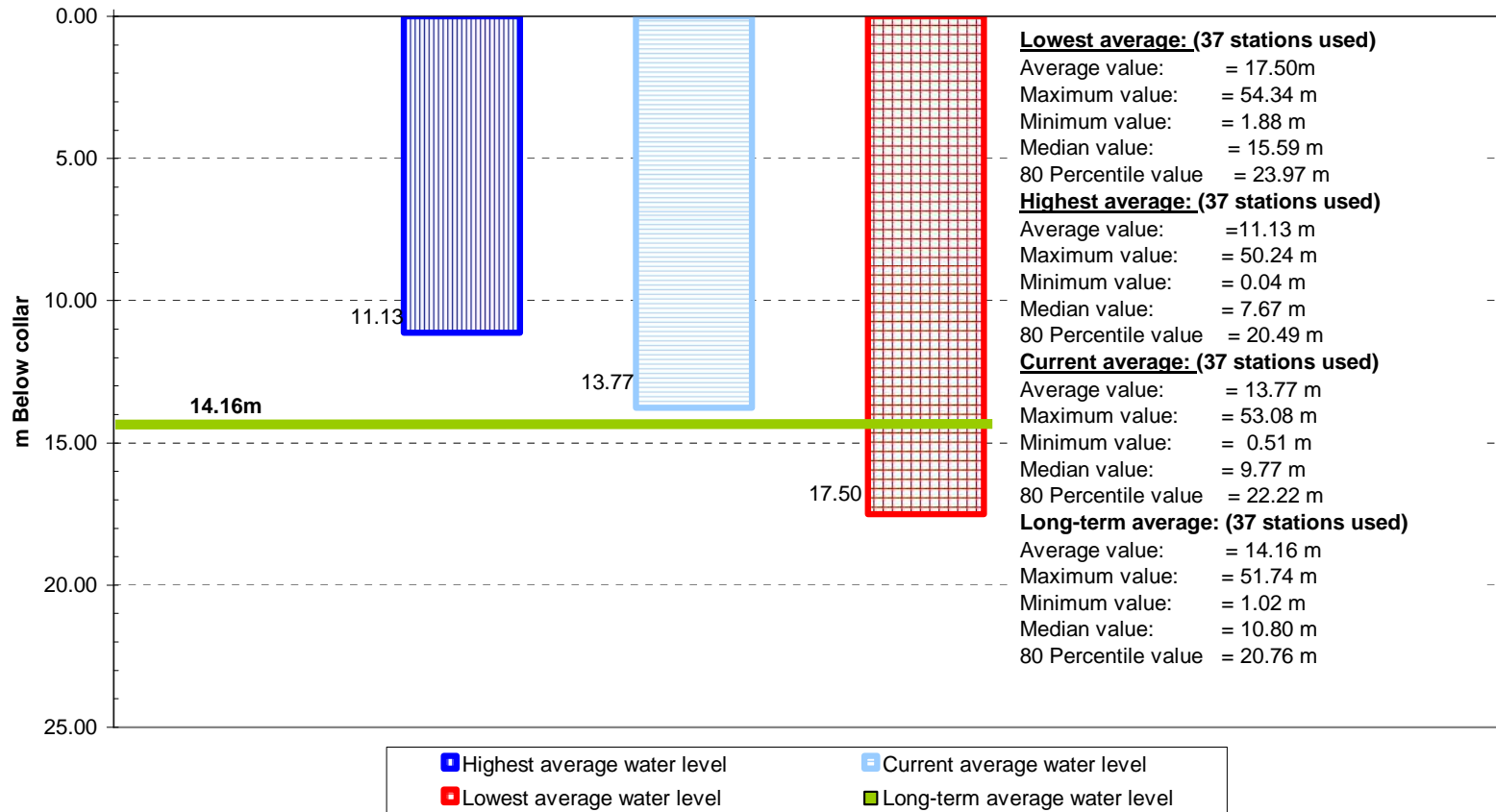
A6 DRAINAGE AREA

Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



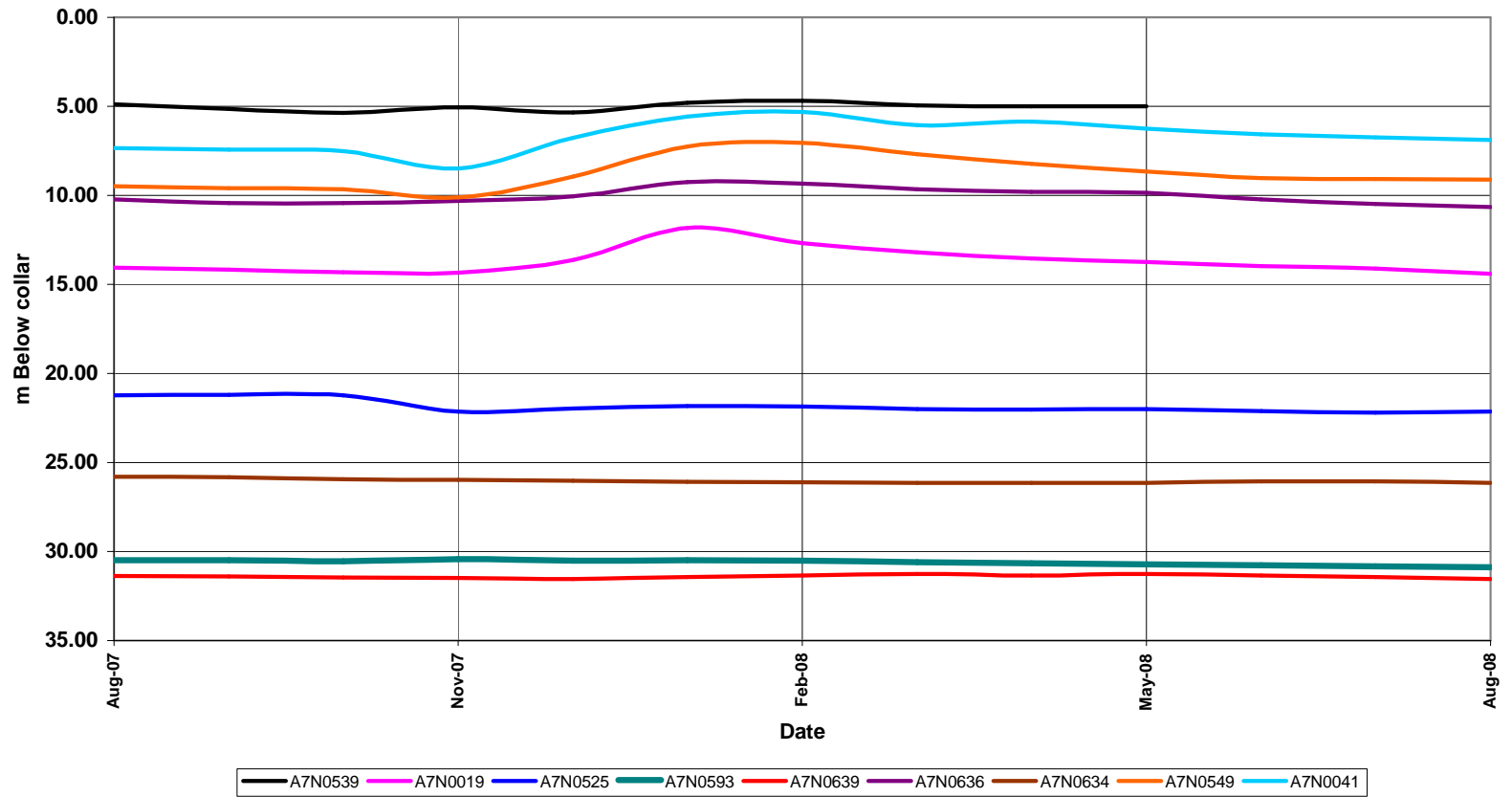
GRAPH 7

A6 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison of average current water level depths with highest, lowest & long-term average water level depths recorded



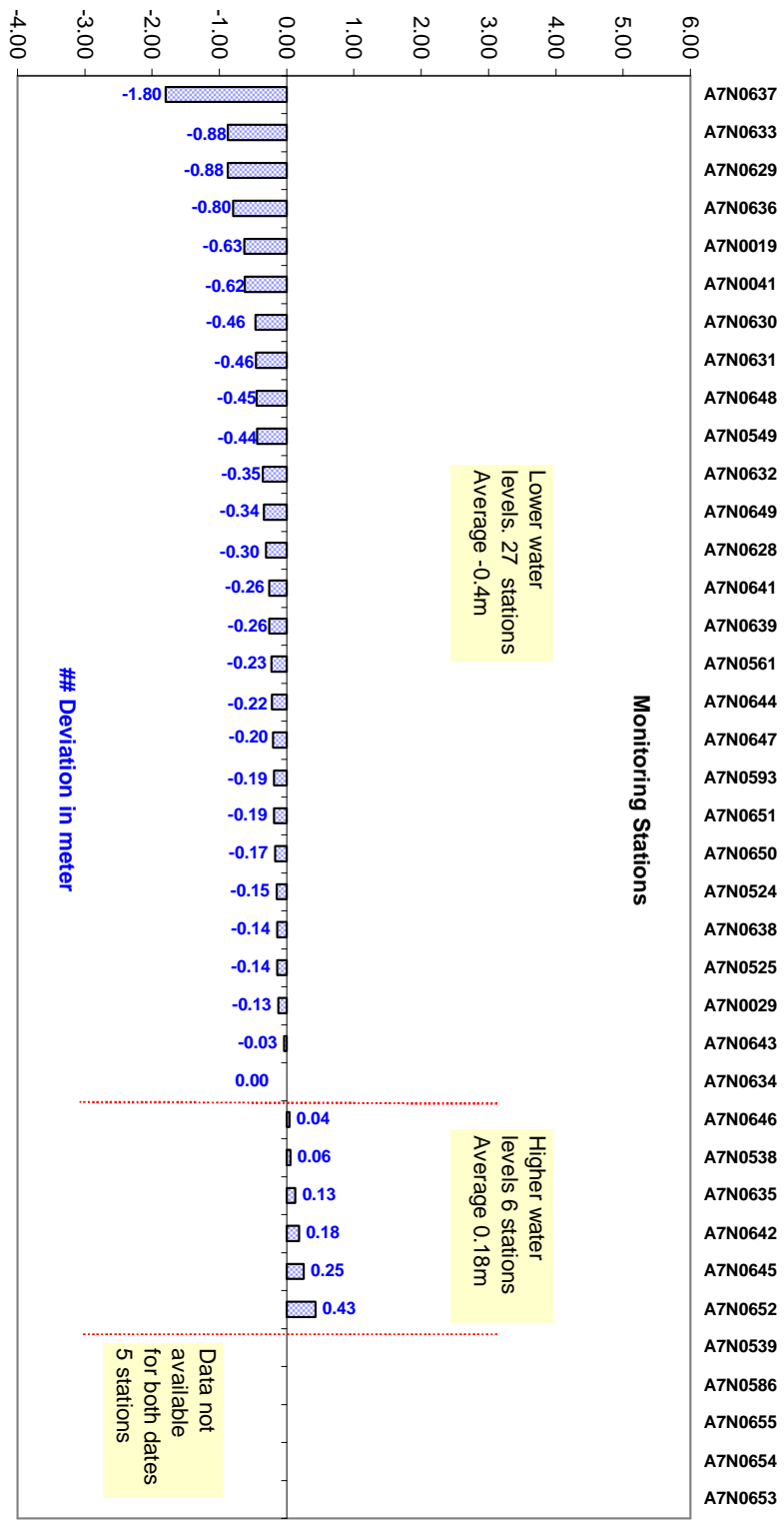
GRAPH 9

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A7 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008

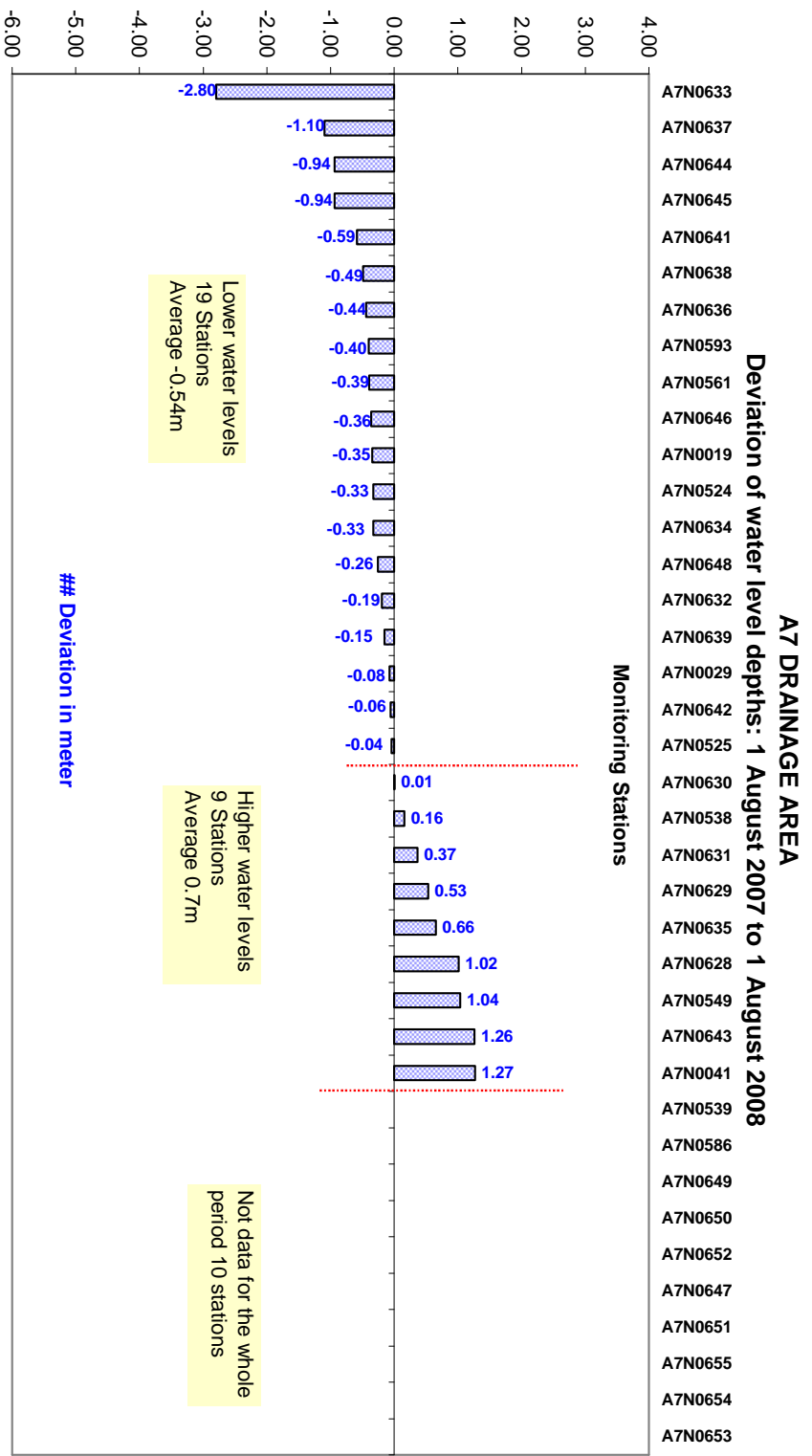


GRAPH 10

A7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water level depths: 1 May 2008
to 1 August 2008

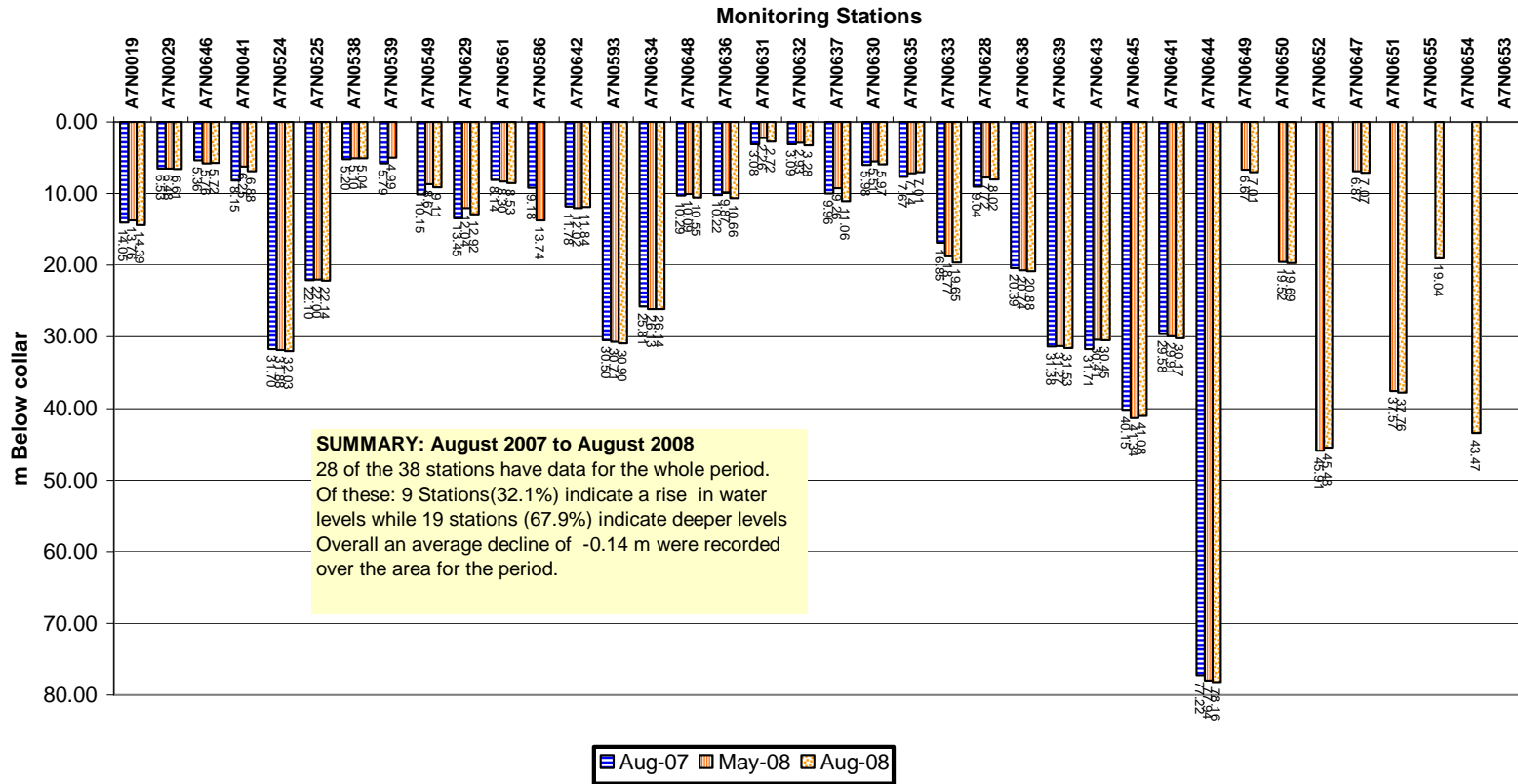


GRAPH 11



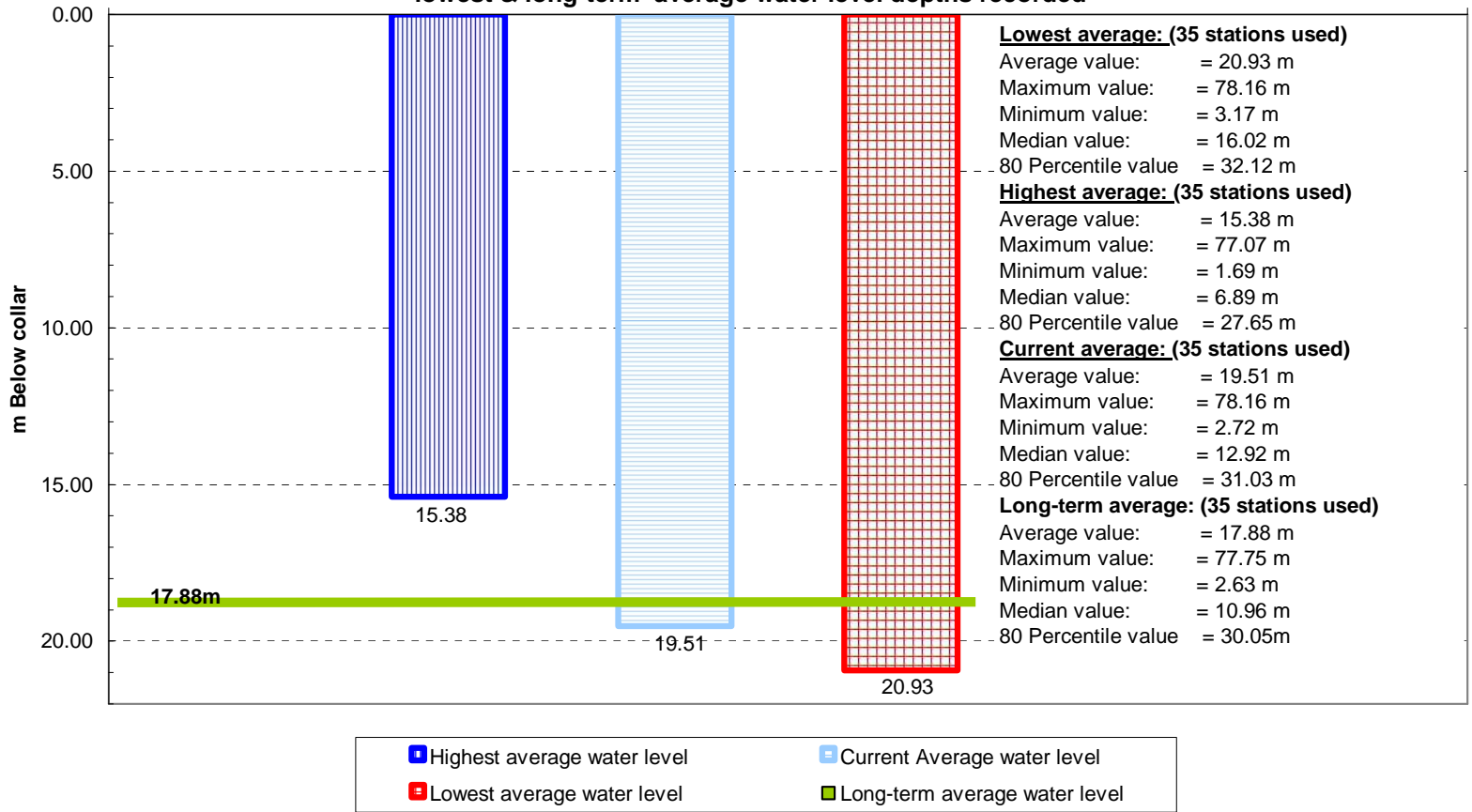
GRAPH 12

A7 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



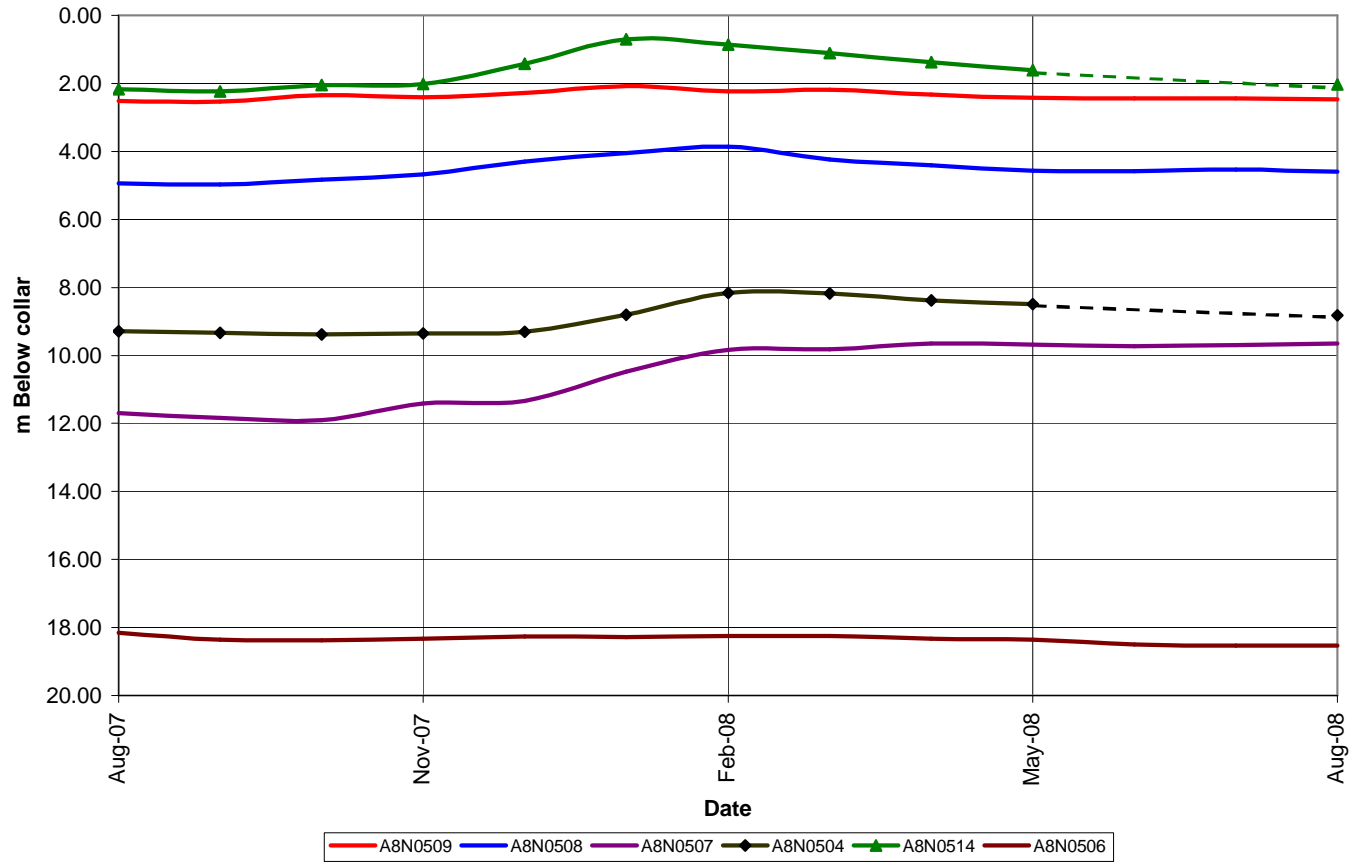
GRAPH 13

A7 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison of average current water level depth with highest, lowest & long-term average water level depths recorded



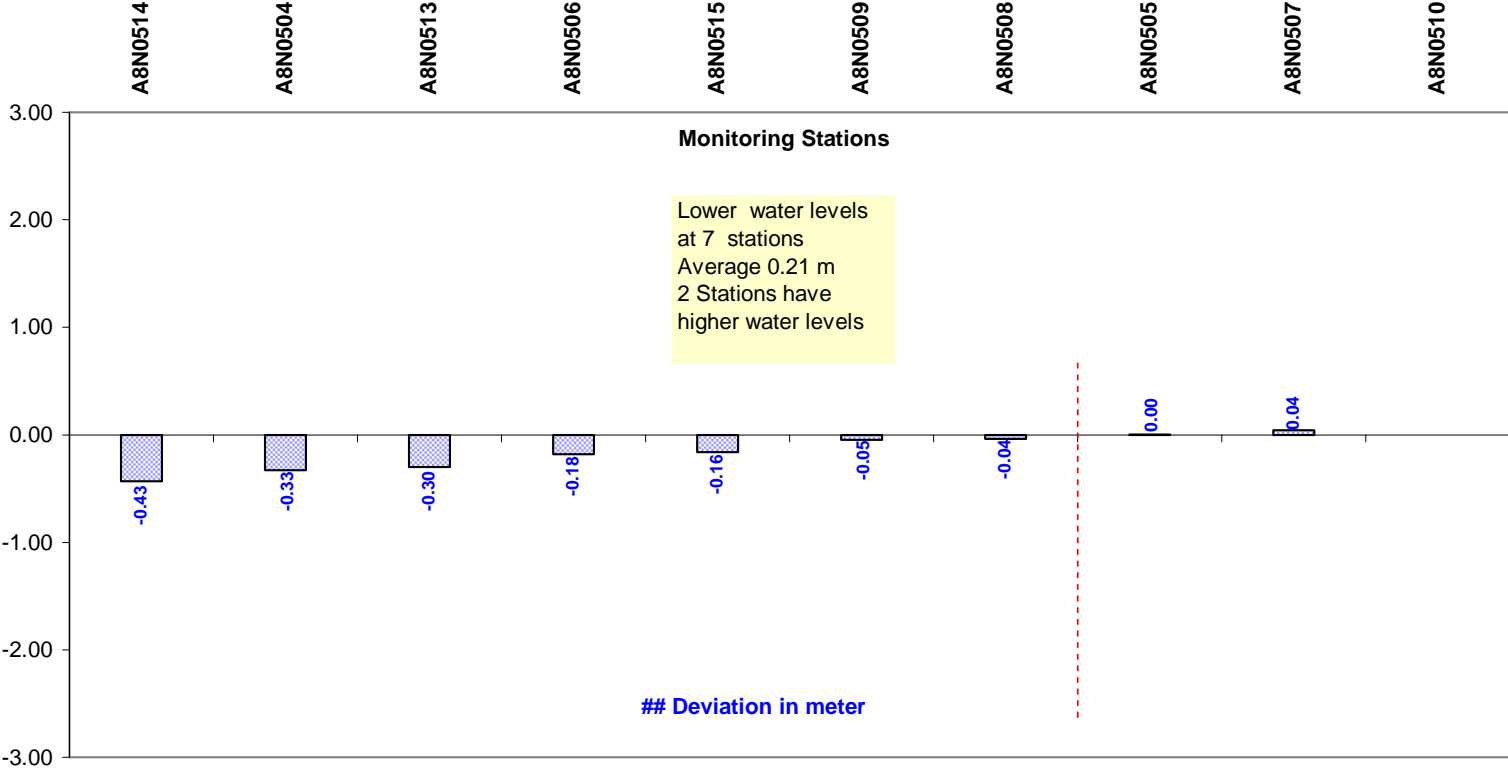
GRAPH 14

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A8 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



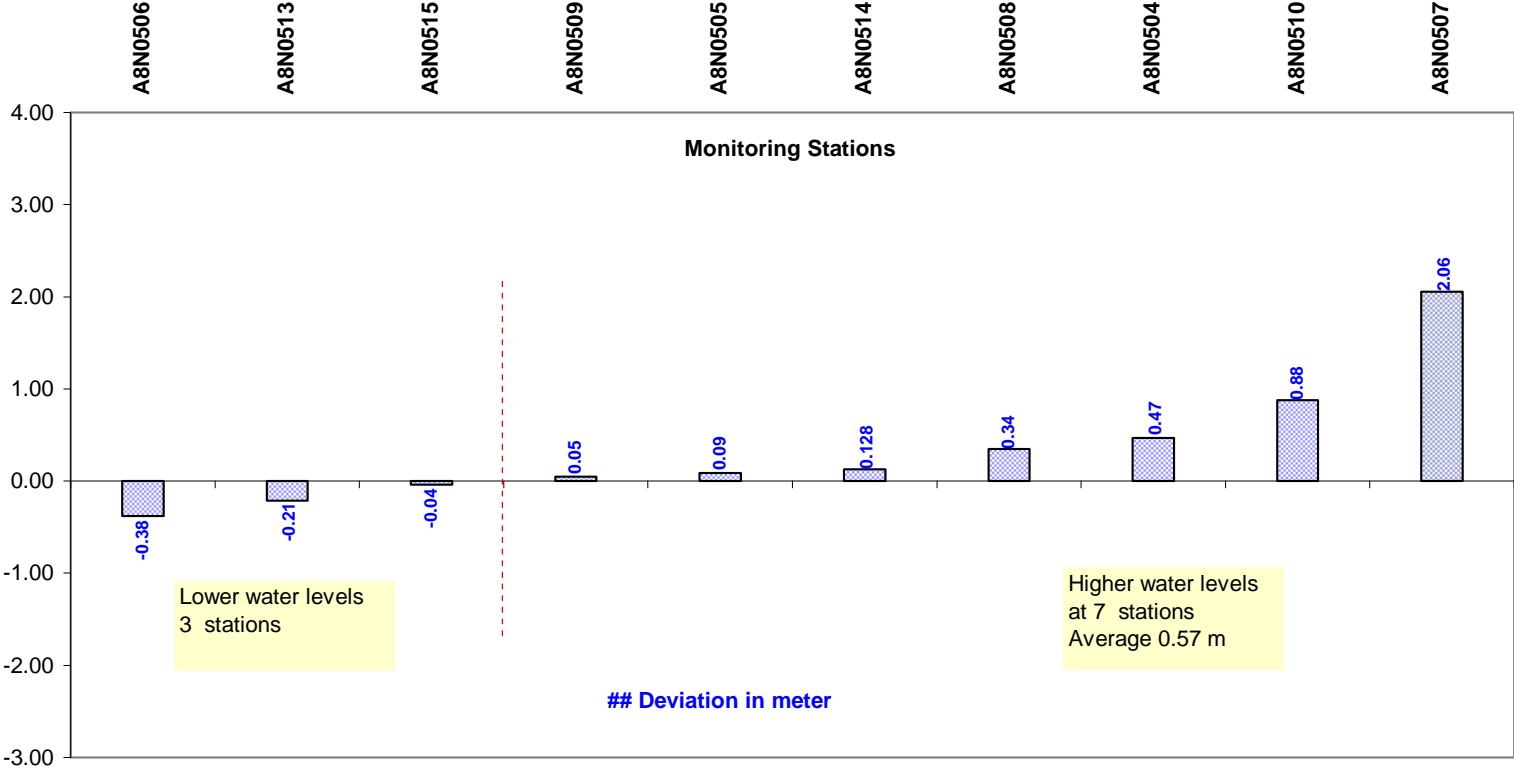
GRAPH 15

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water level depths: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



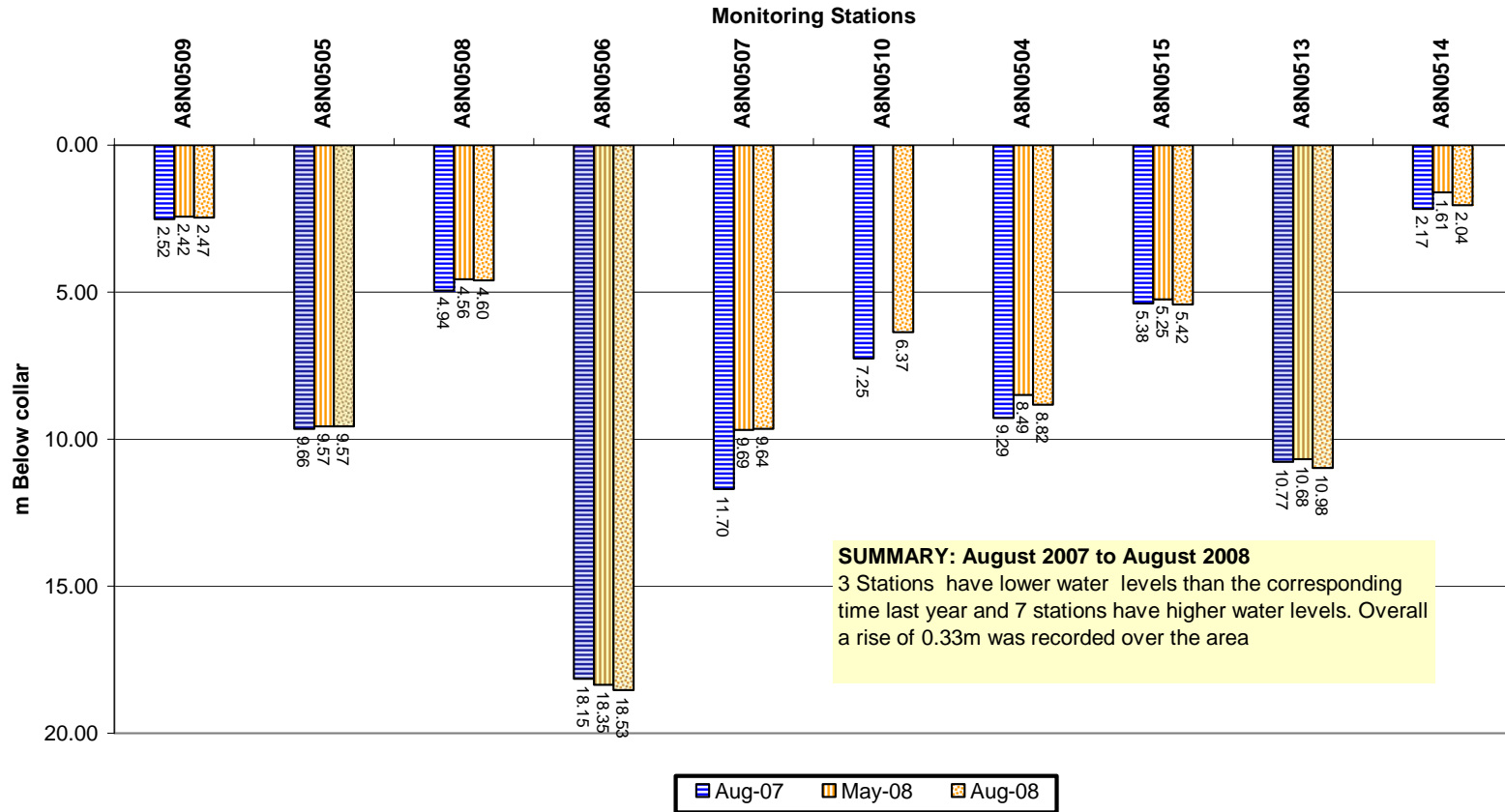
GRAPH 16

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



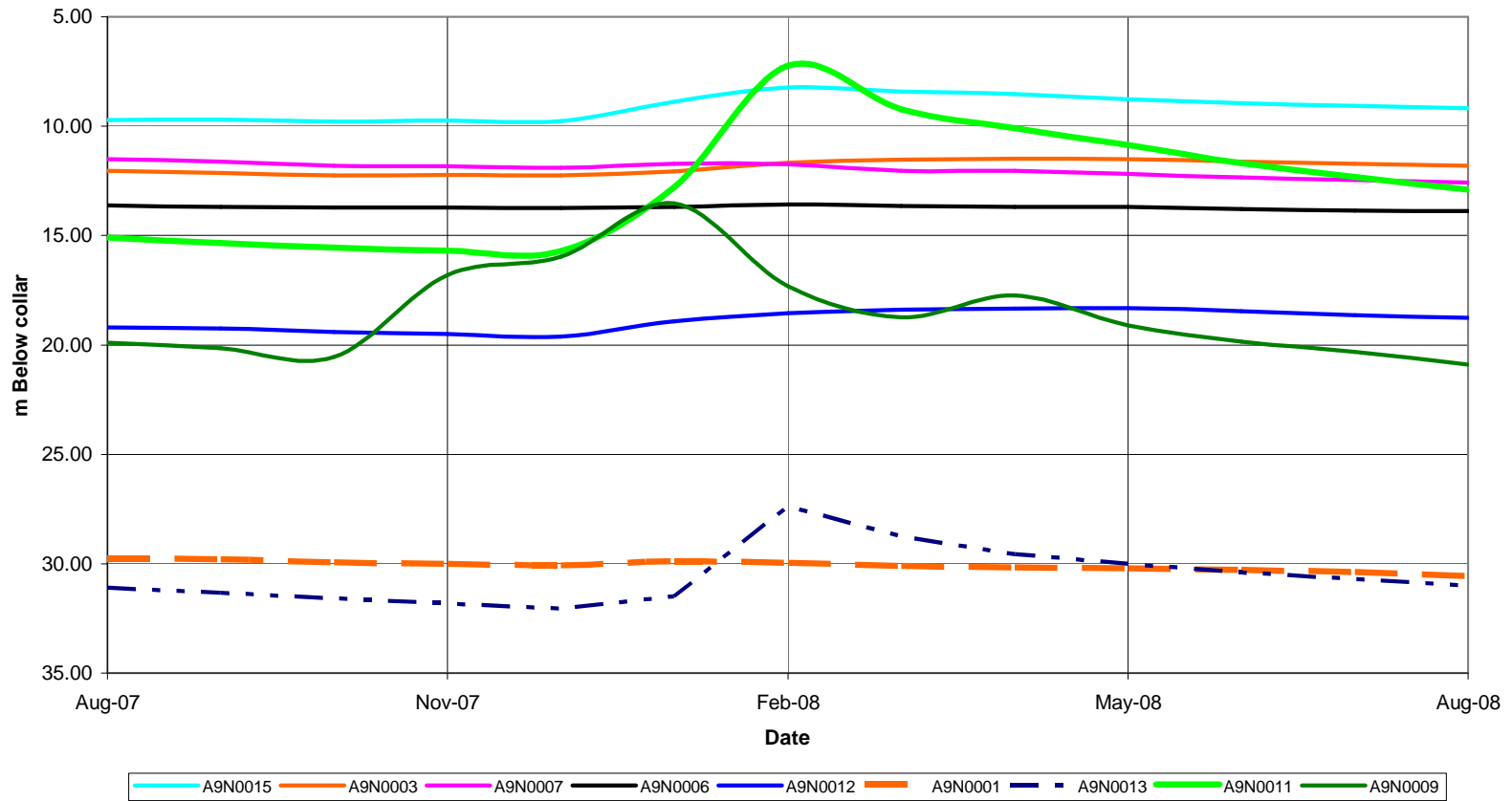
GRAPH 17

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



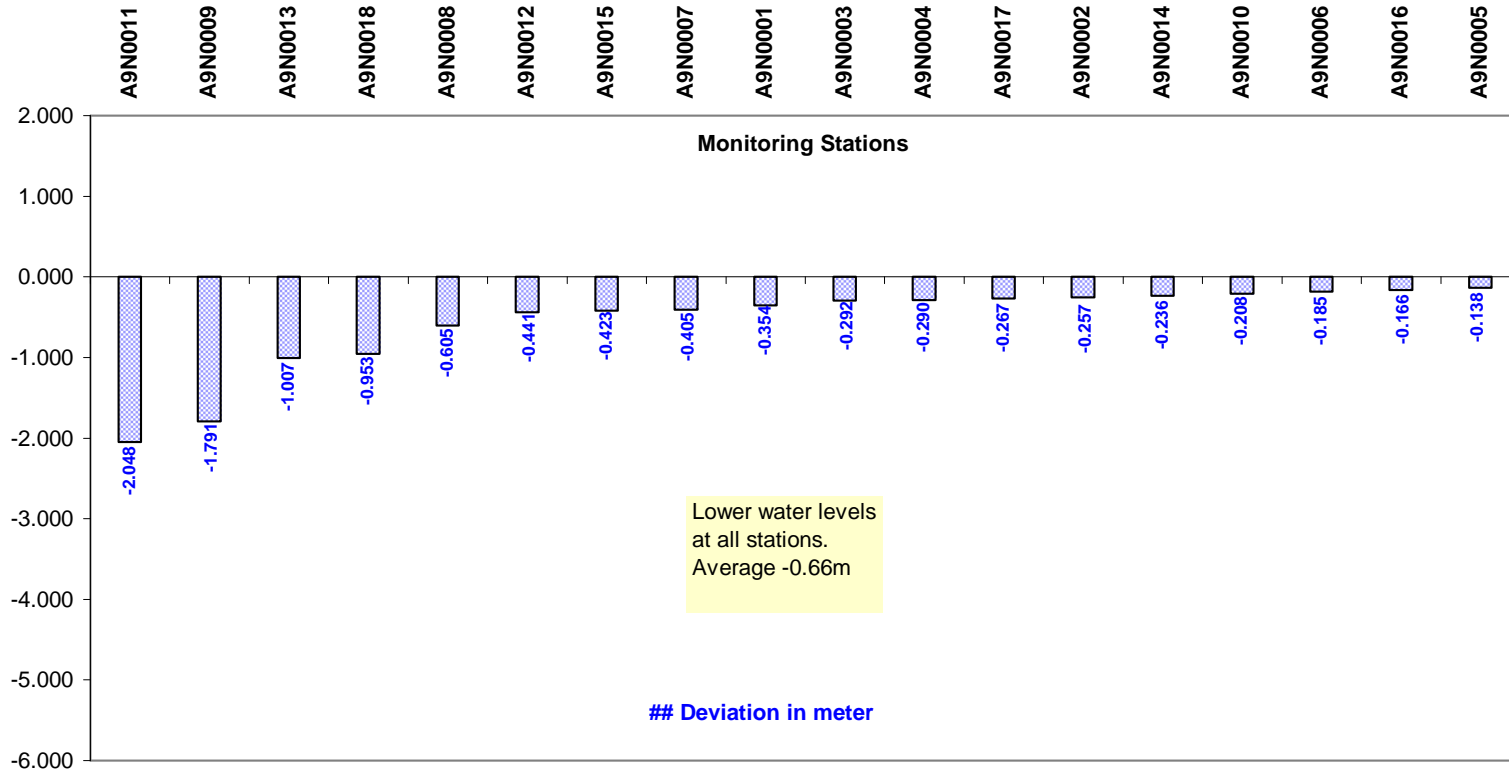
GRAPH 18

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A9 drainage
: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



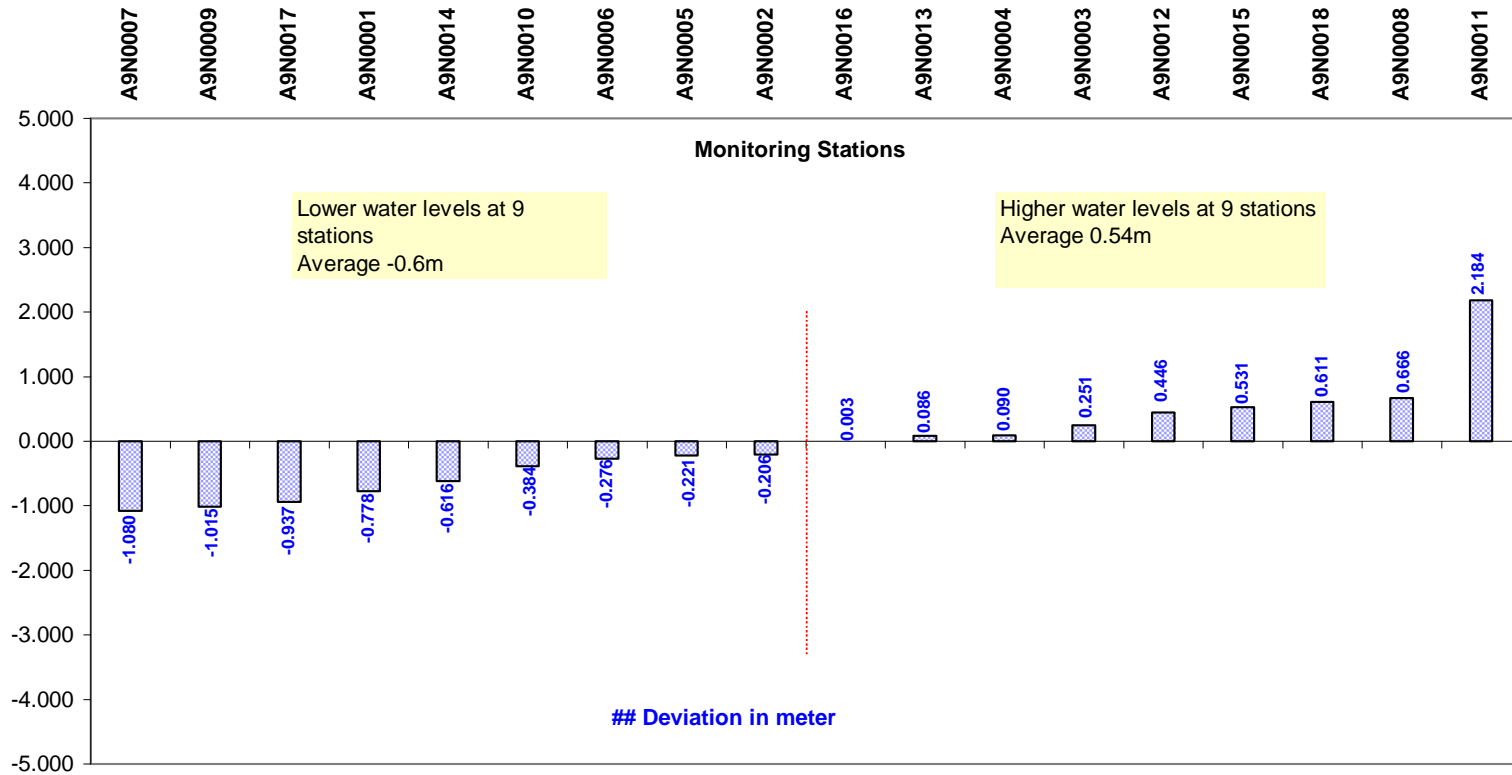
GRAPH 19

A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



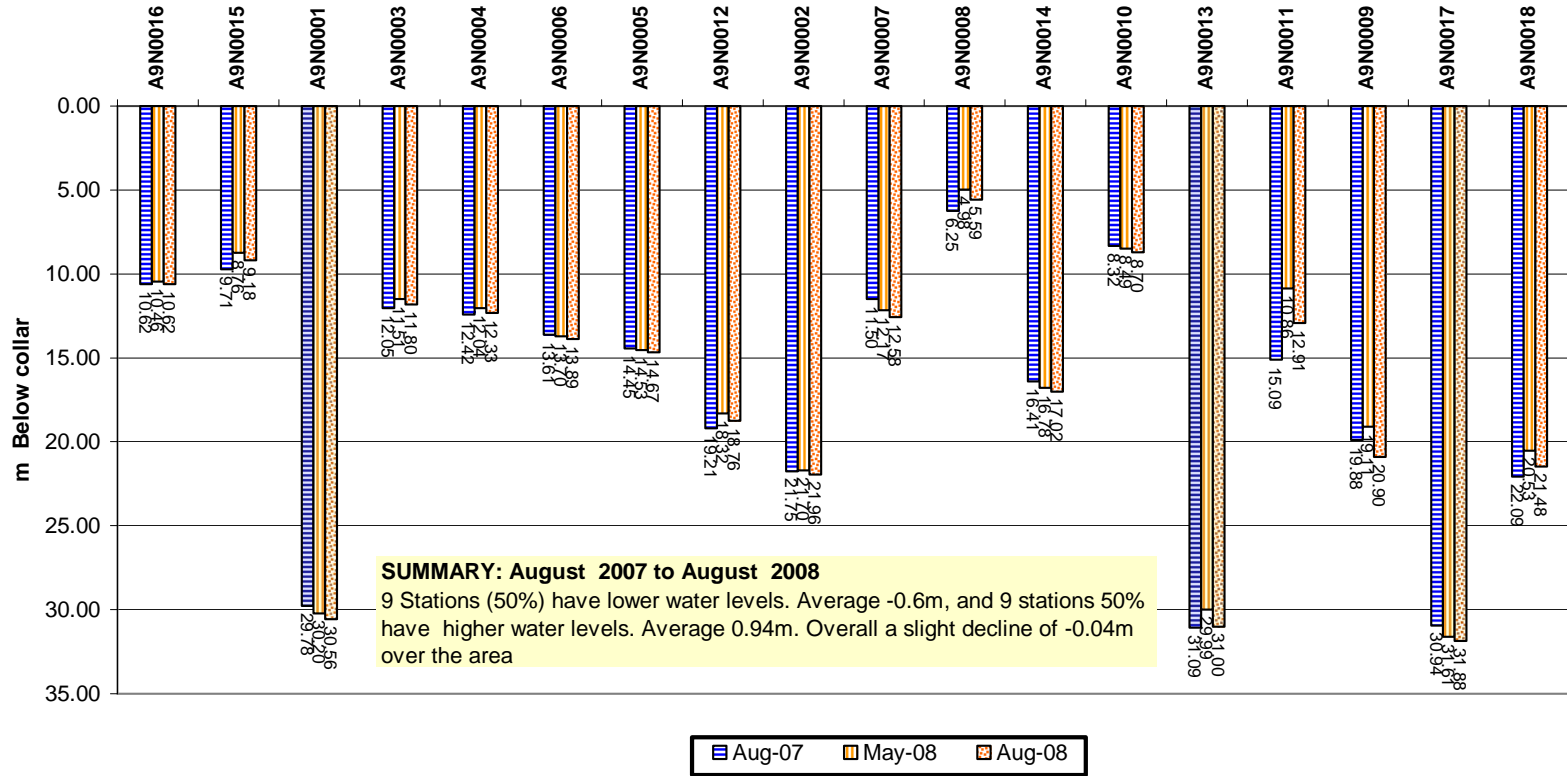
GRAPH 20

A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



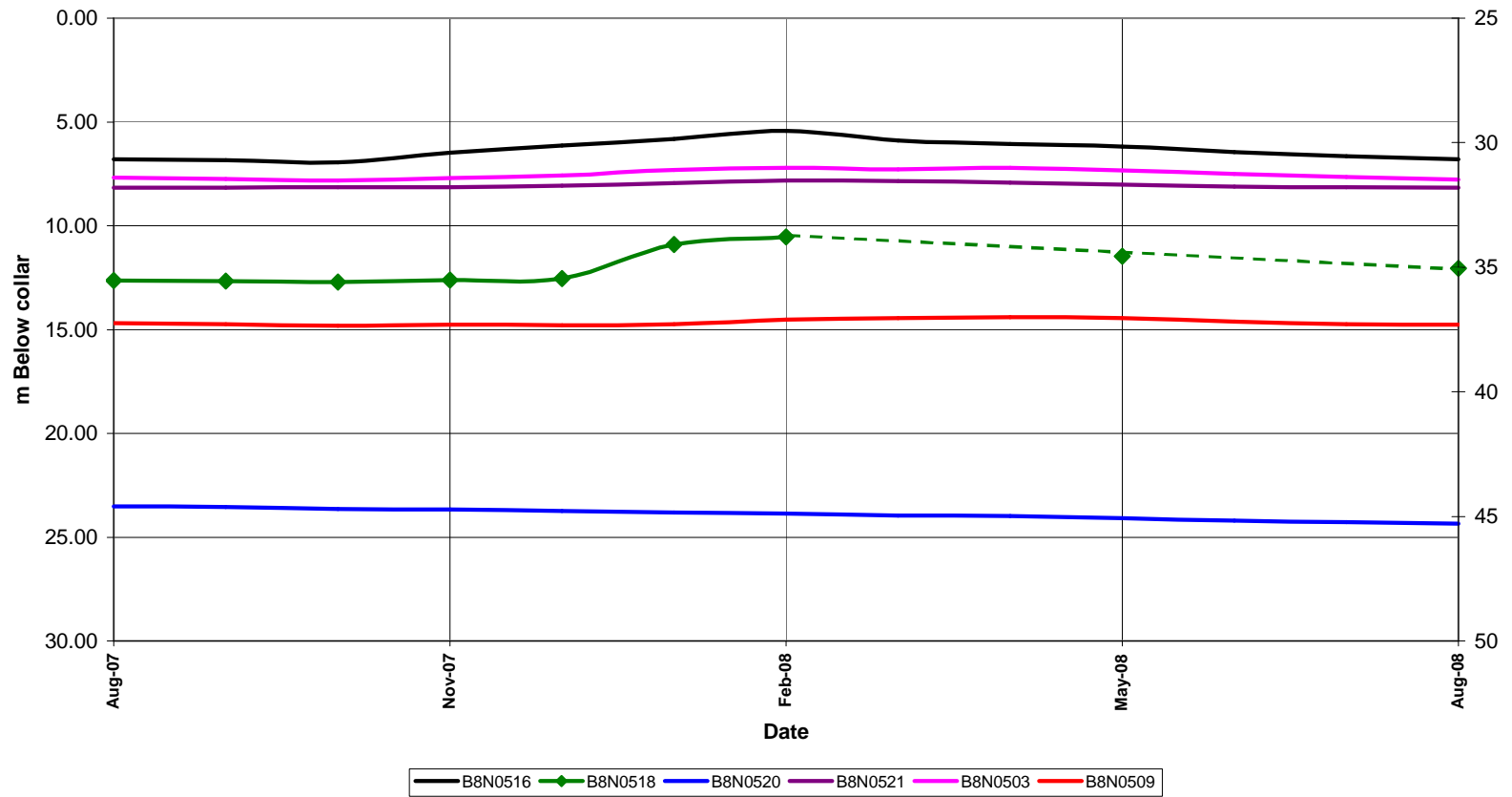
GRAPH 21

A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008
Monitoring Stations



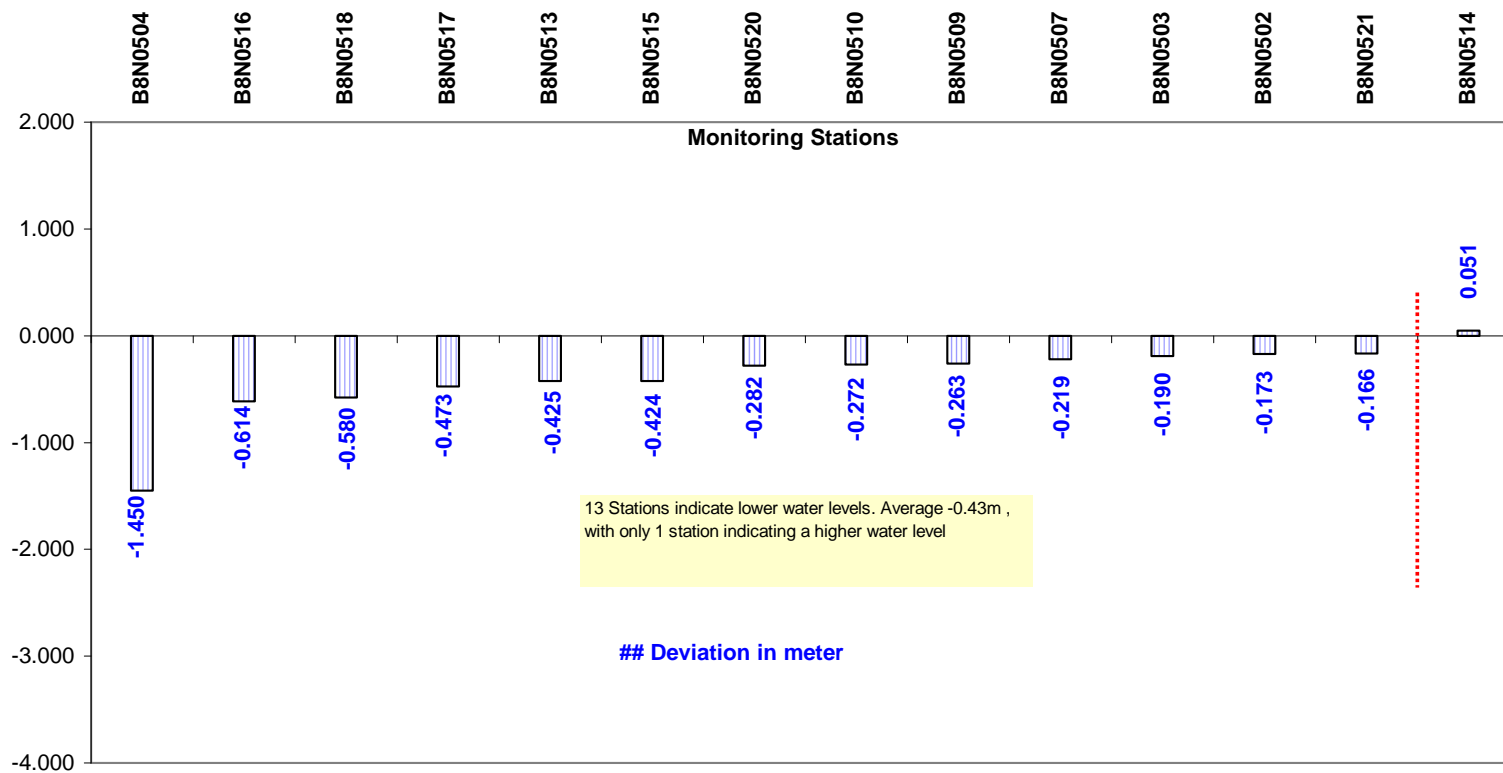
GRAPH 22

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in B8 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008

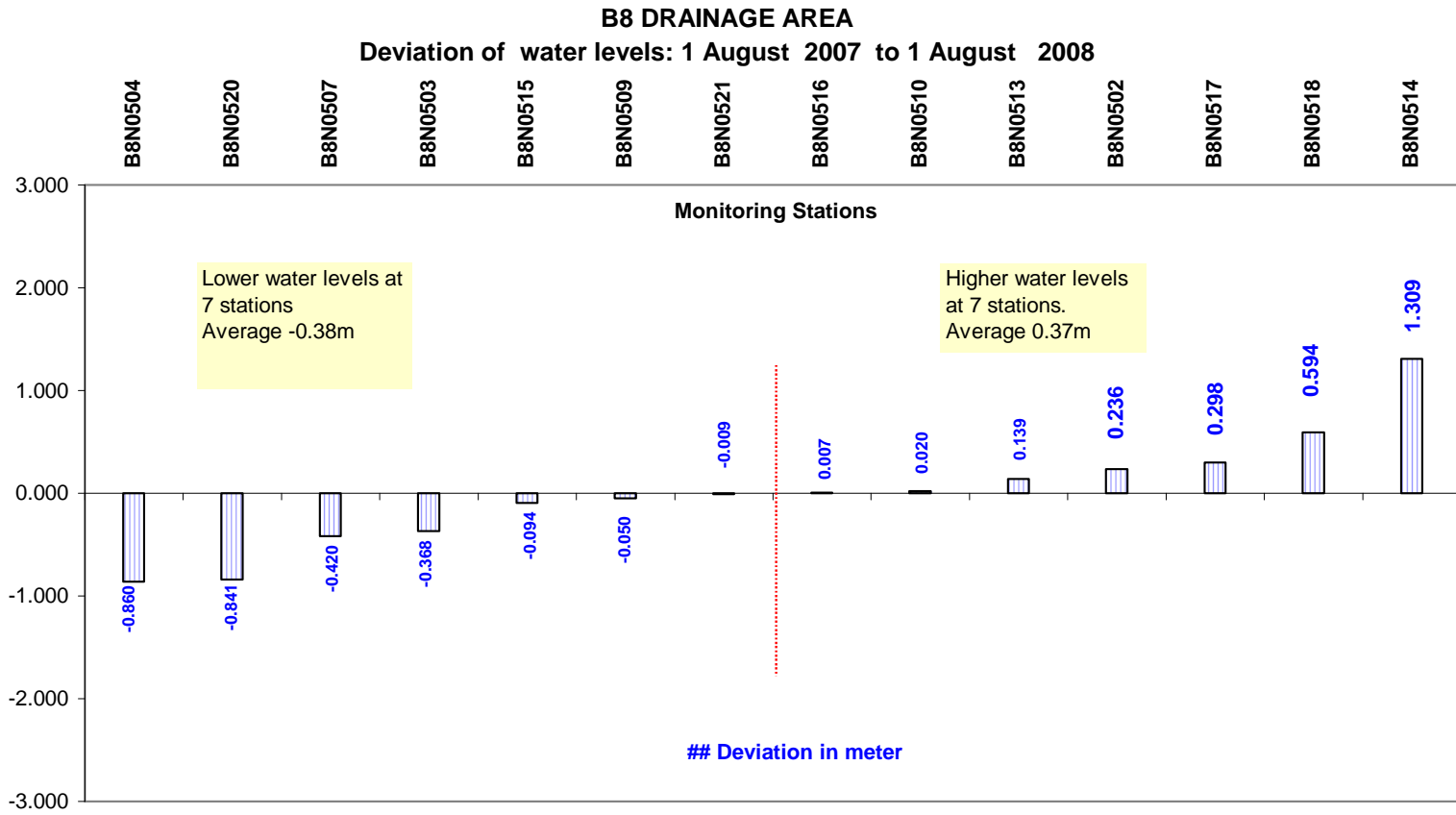


GRAPH 23

B8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008

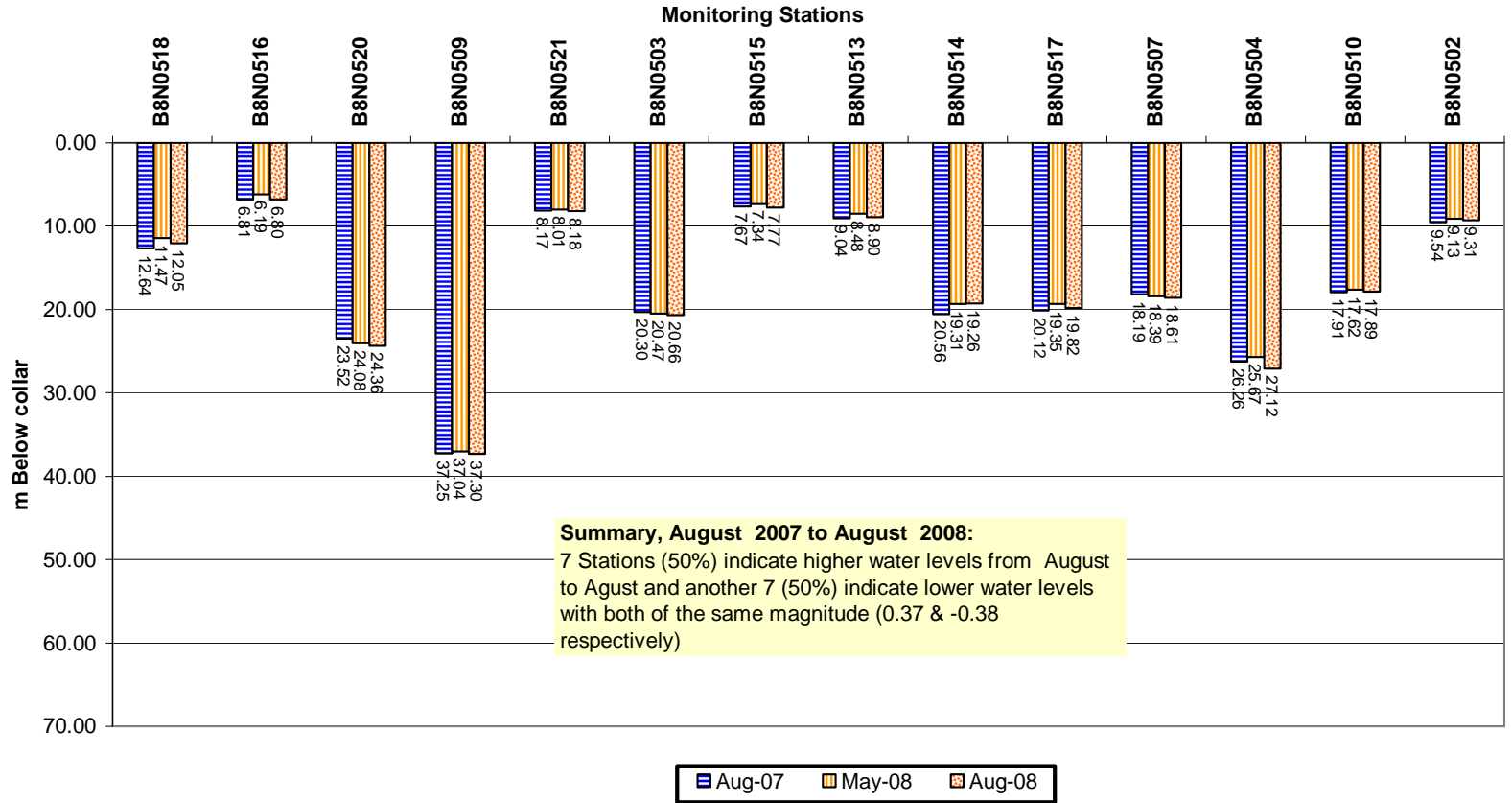


GRAPH 24



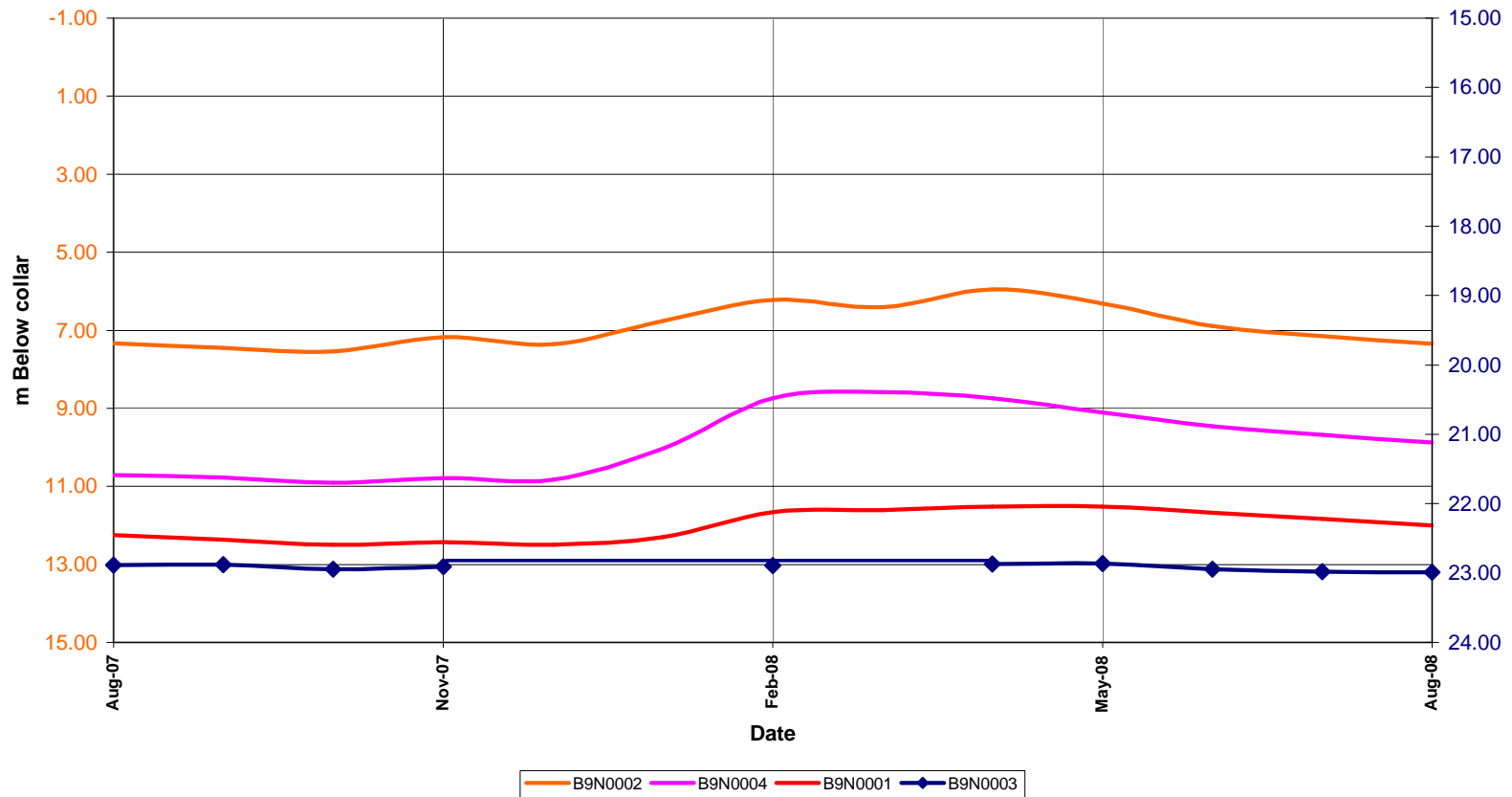
GRAPH 25

B8 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



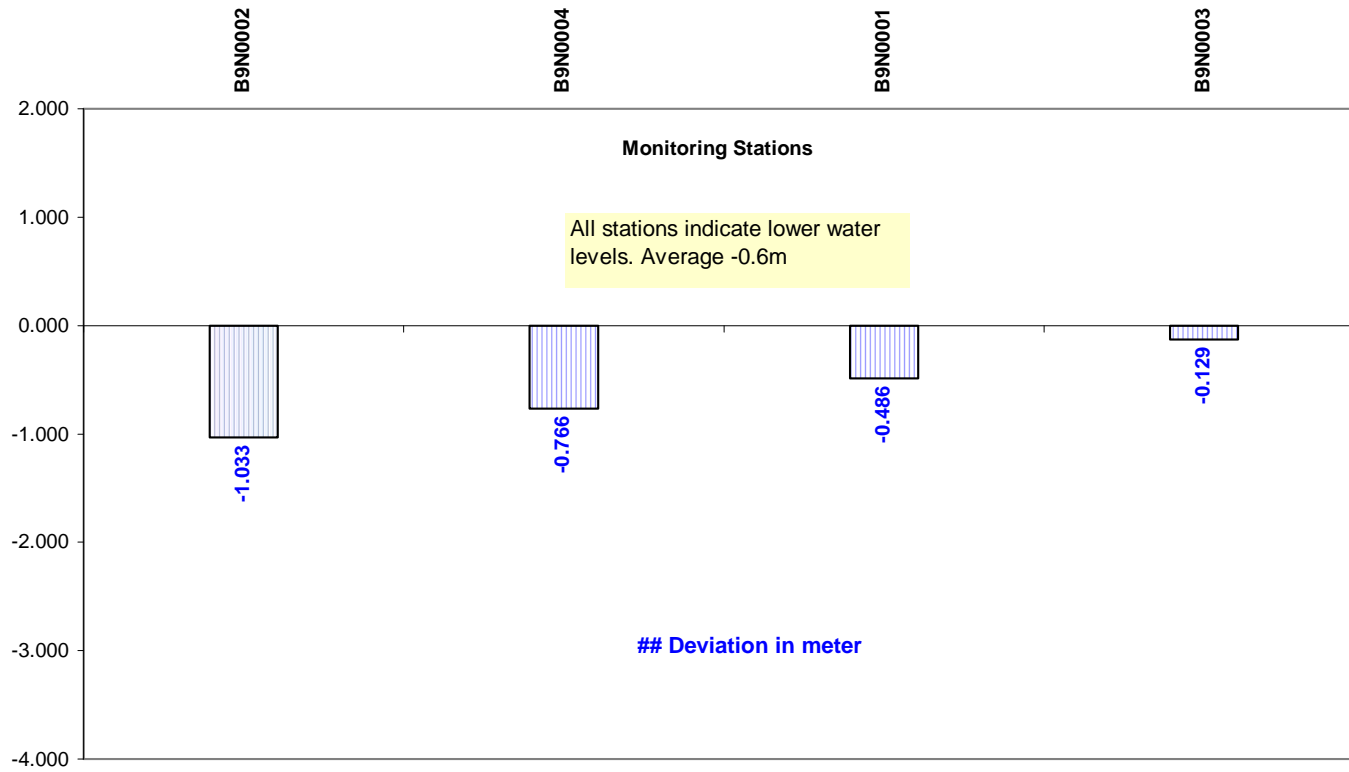
GRAPH 26

Comparison of water level trends of stations in B9 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



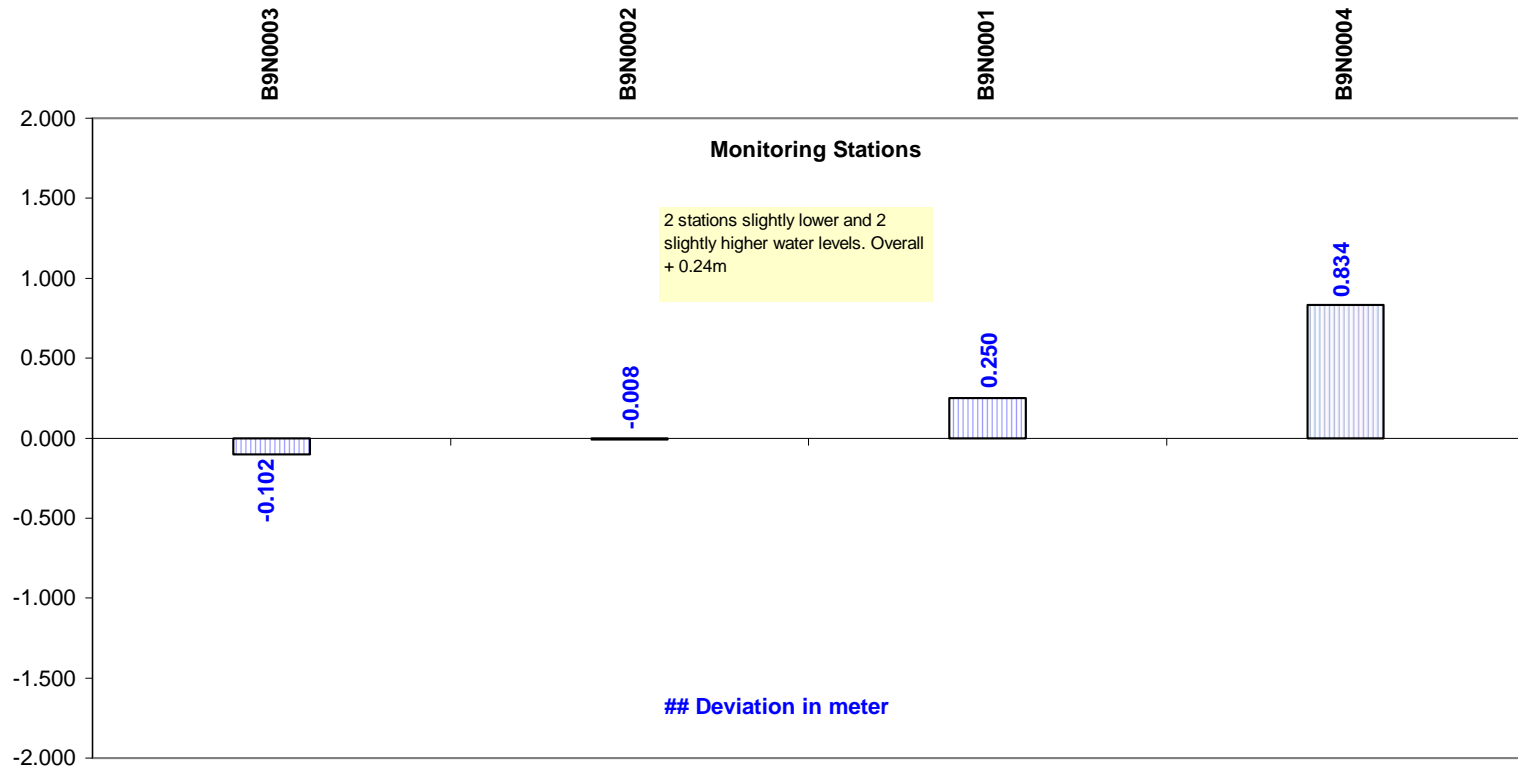
GRAPH 27

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



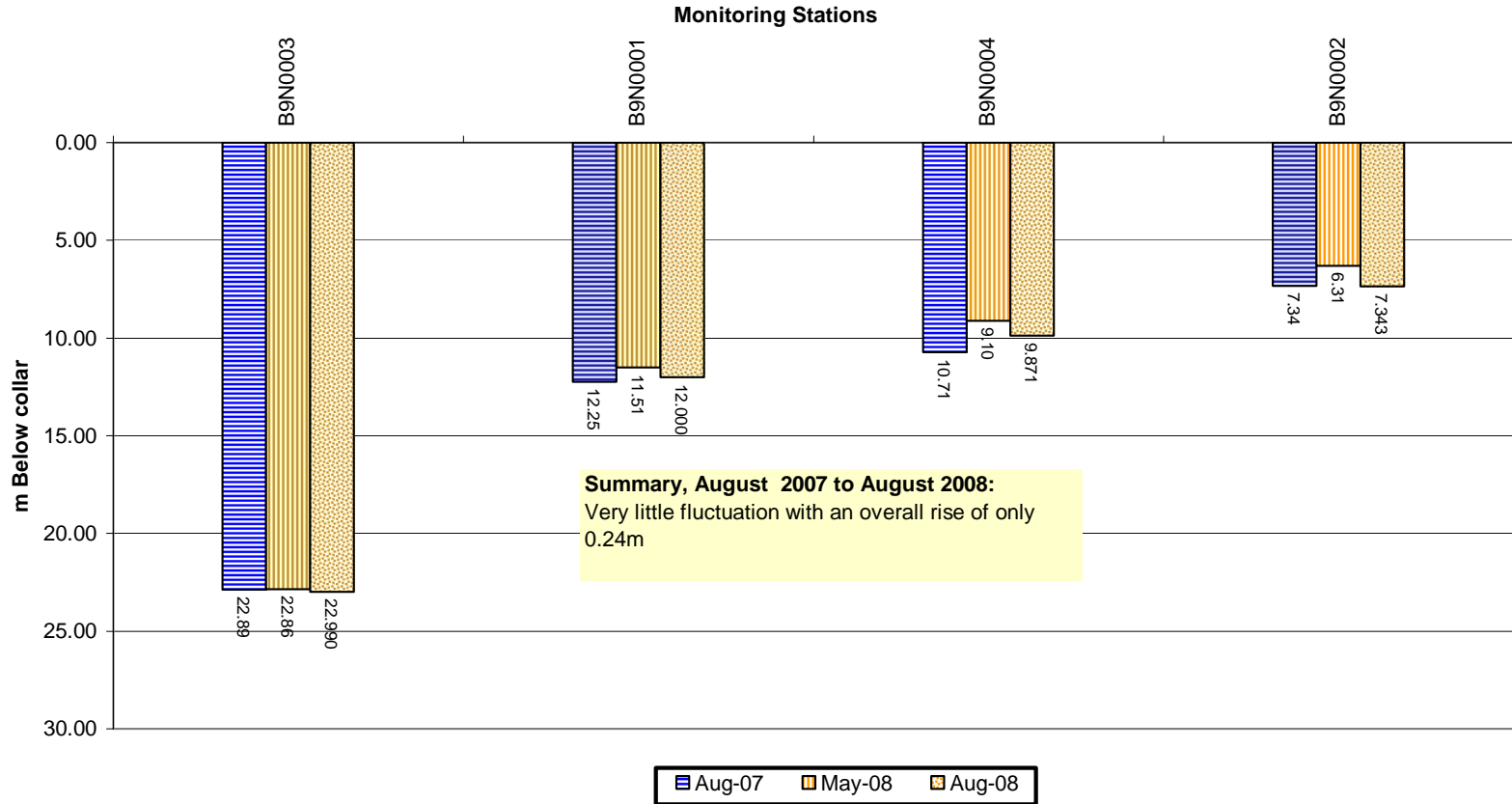
GRAPH 28

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



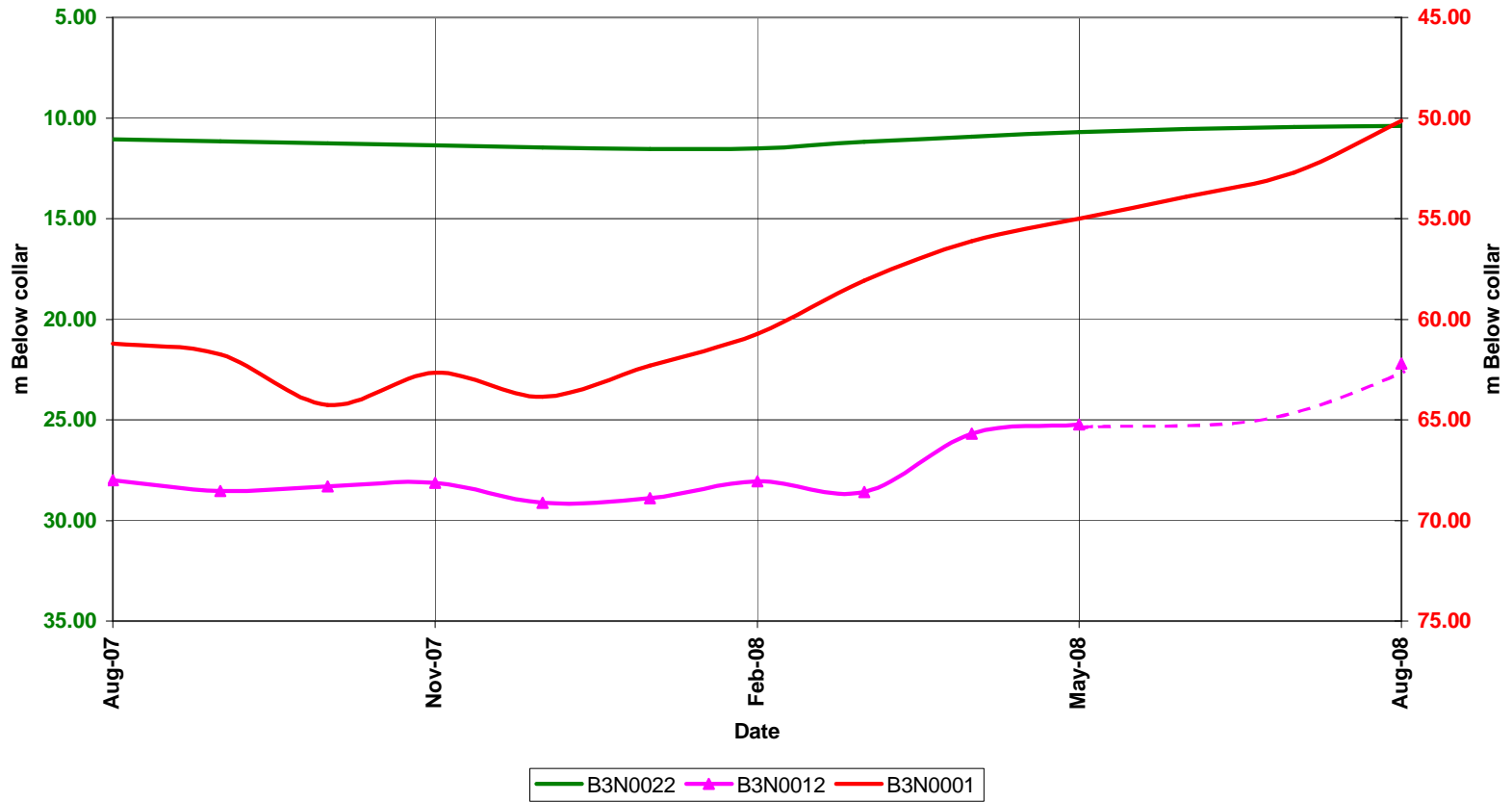
GRAPH 29

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



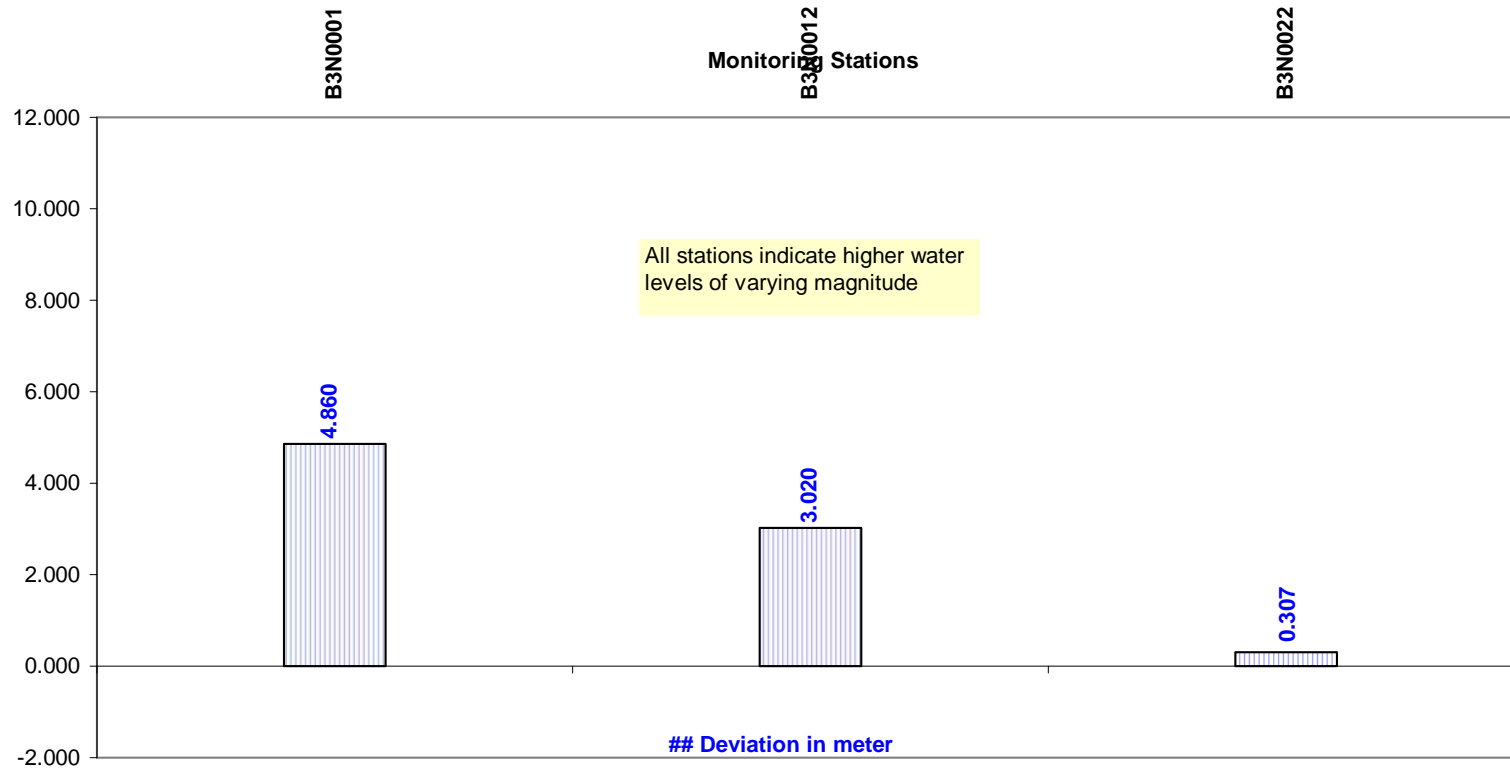
GRAPH 30

Comparison of water level trends at stations in B3 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



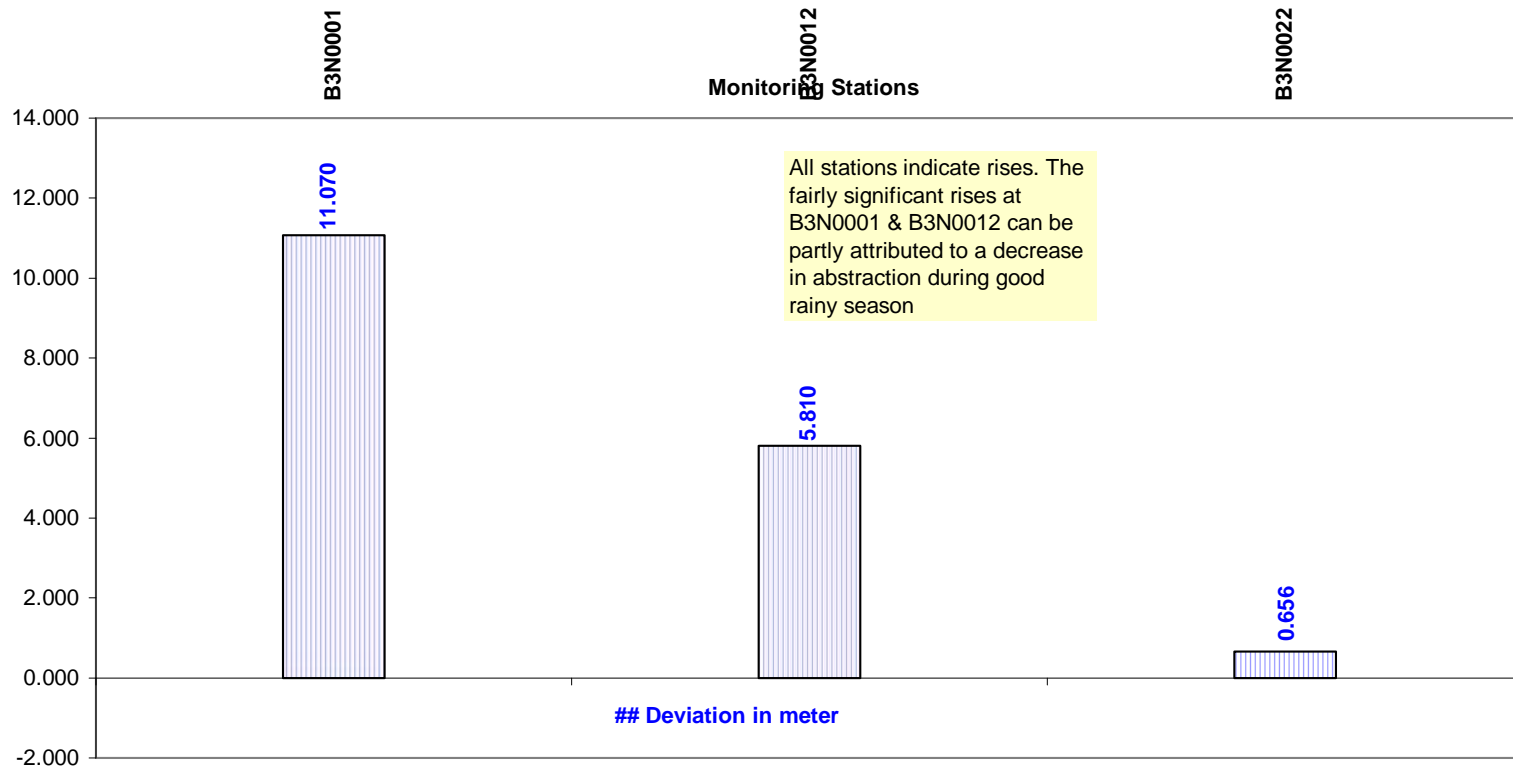
GRAPH 31

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



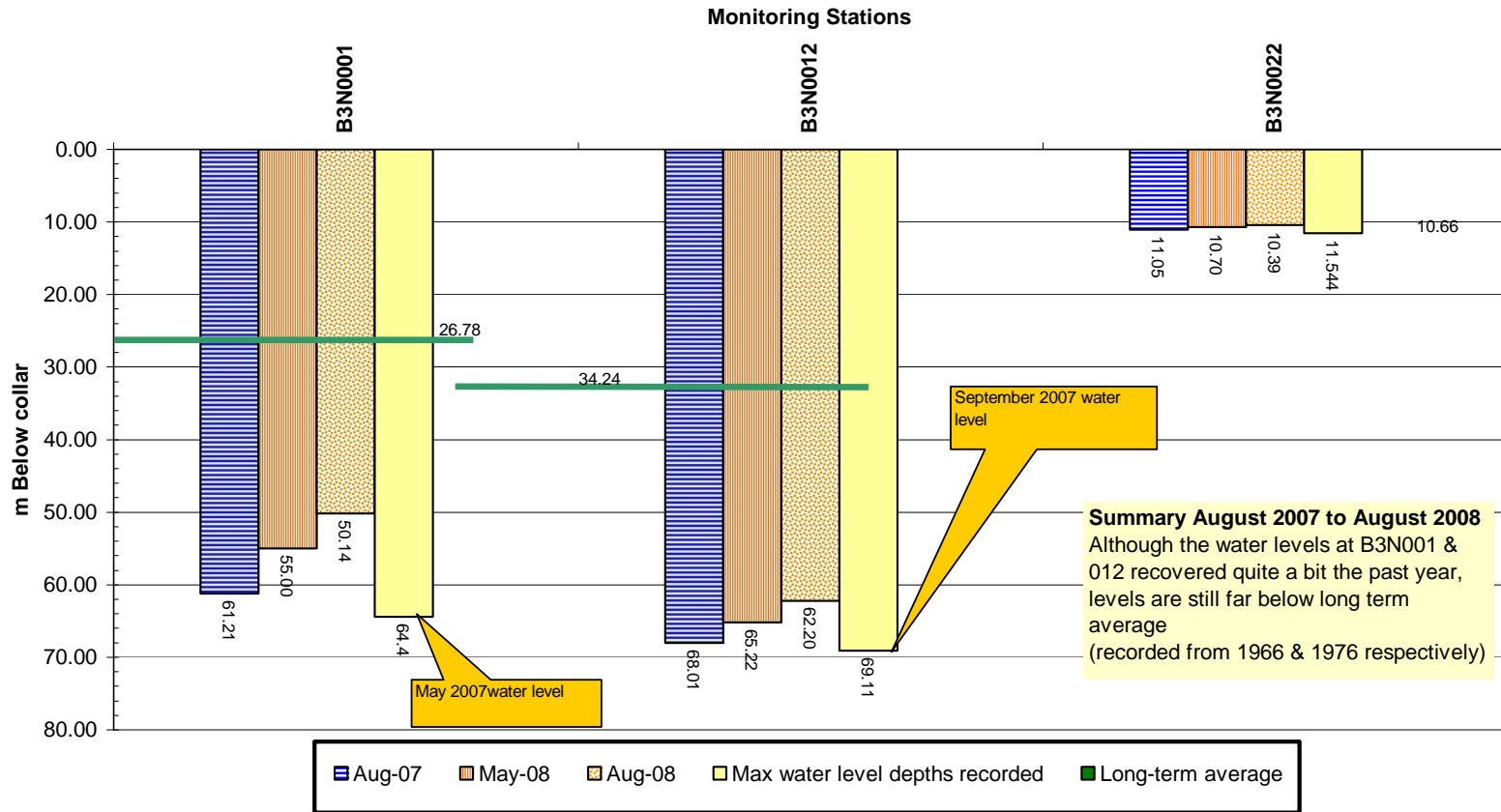
GRAPH 32

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



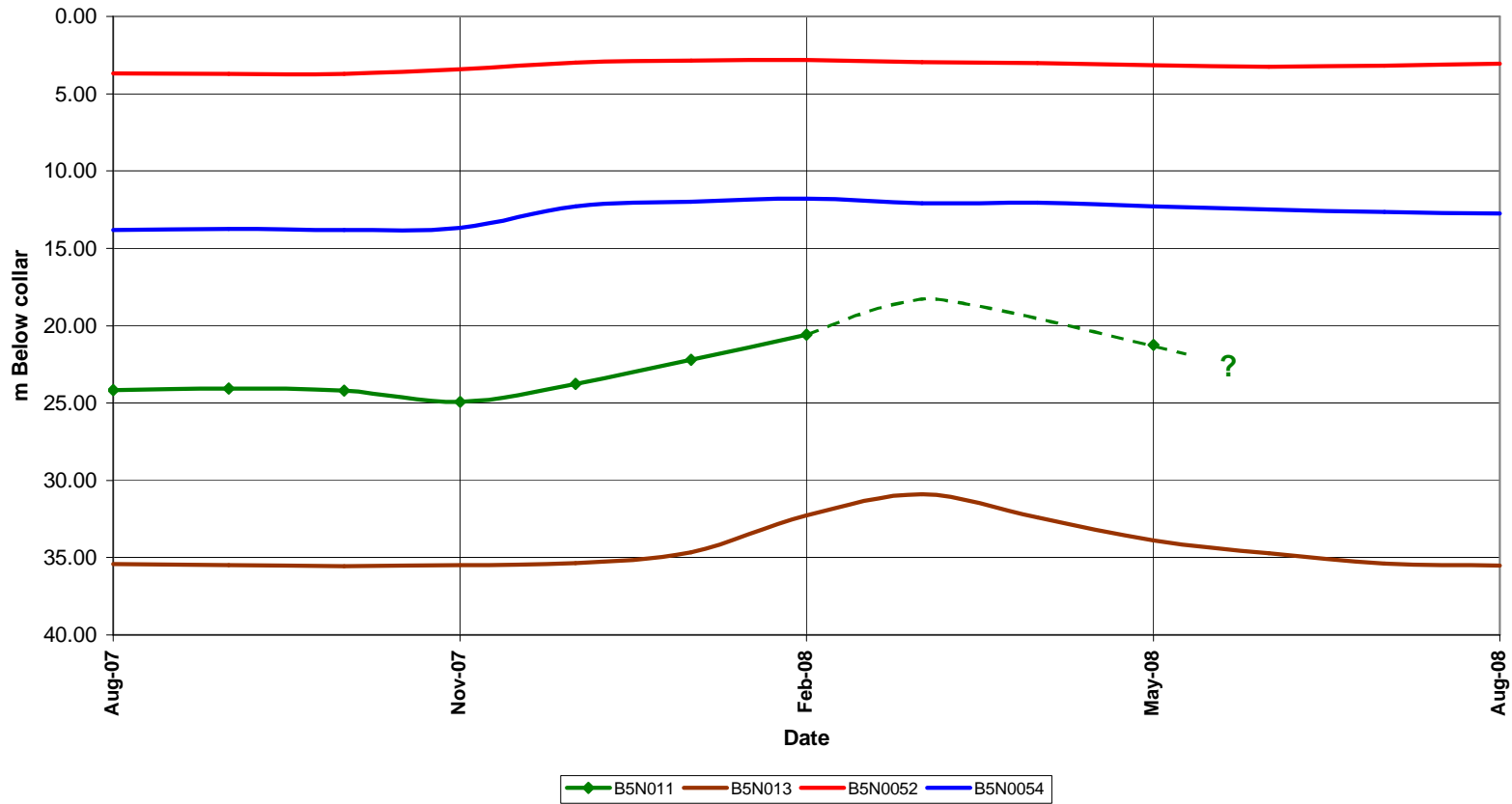
GRAPH 33

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007
1 May 2008, 1 August 2008 and maximum depths recorded



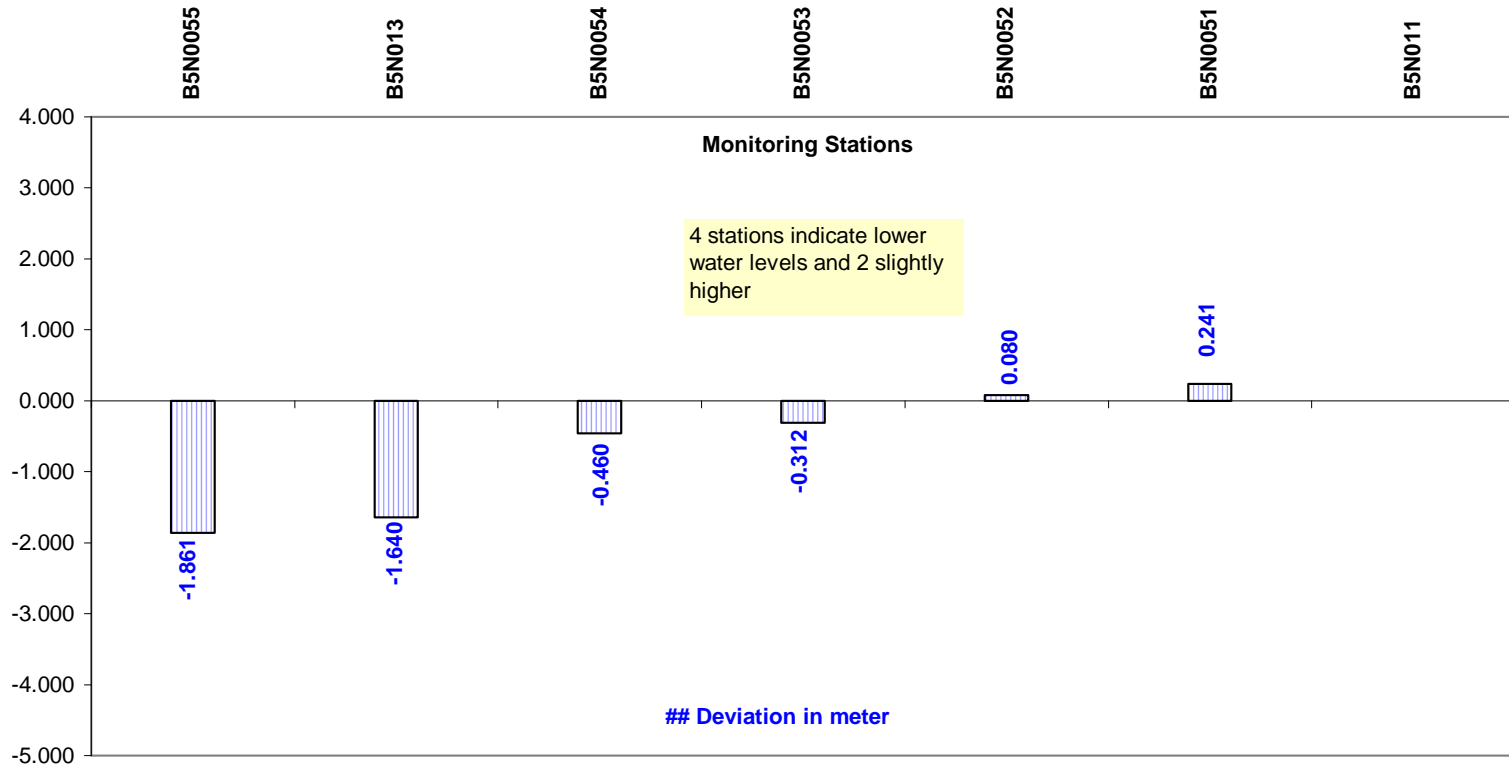
GRAPH 34

Comparison of water level trends at stations in B5 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



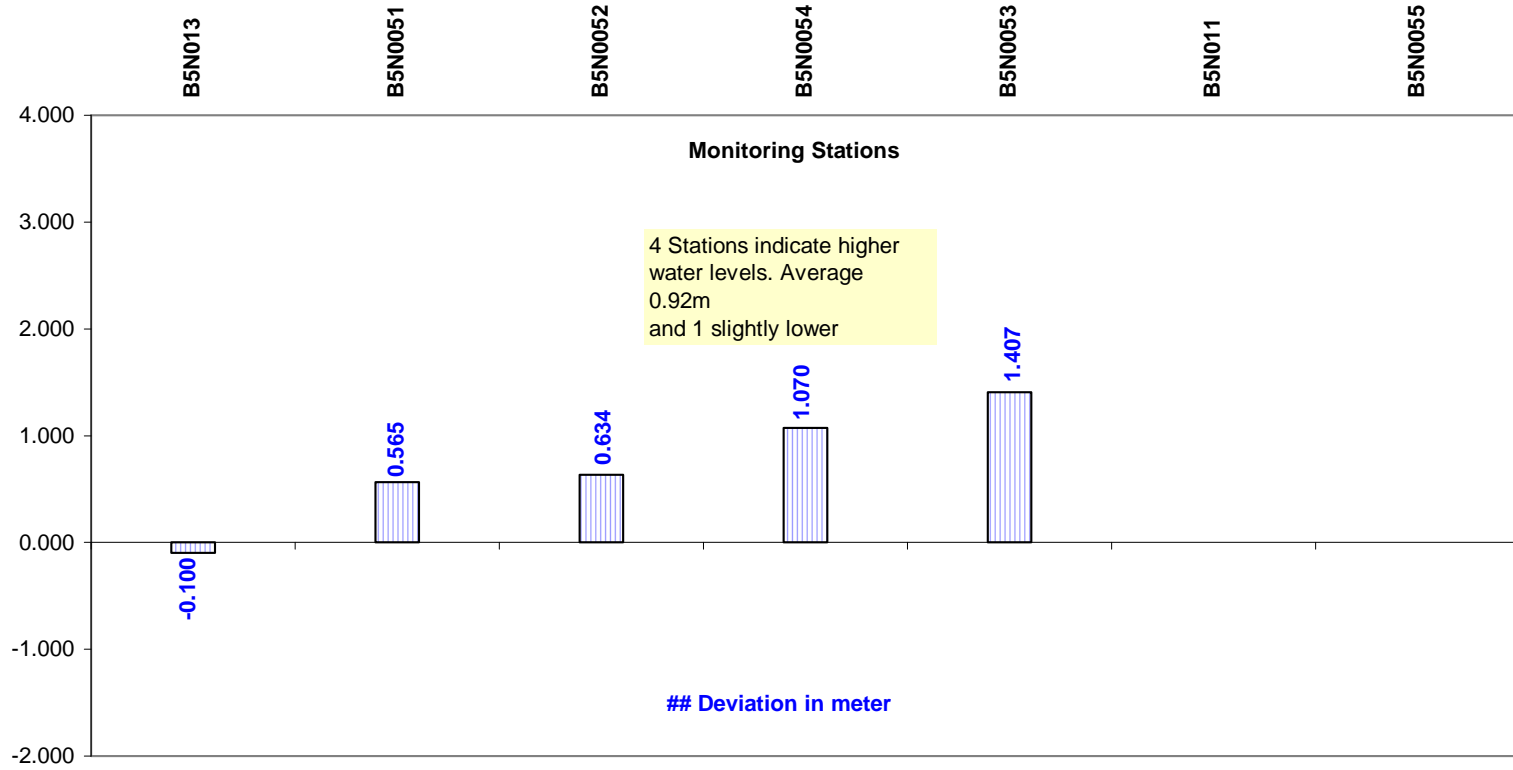
GRAPH 35

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



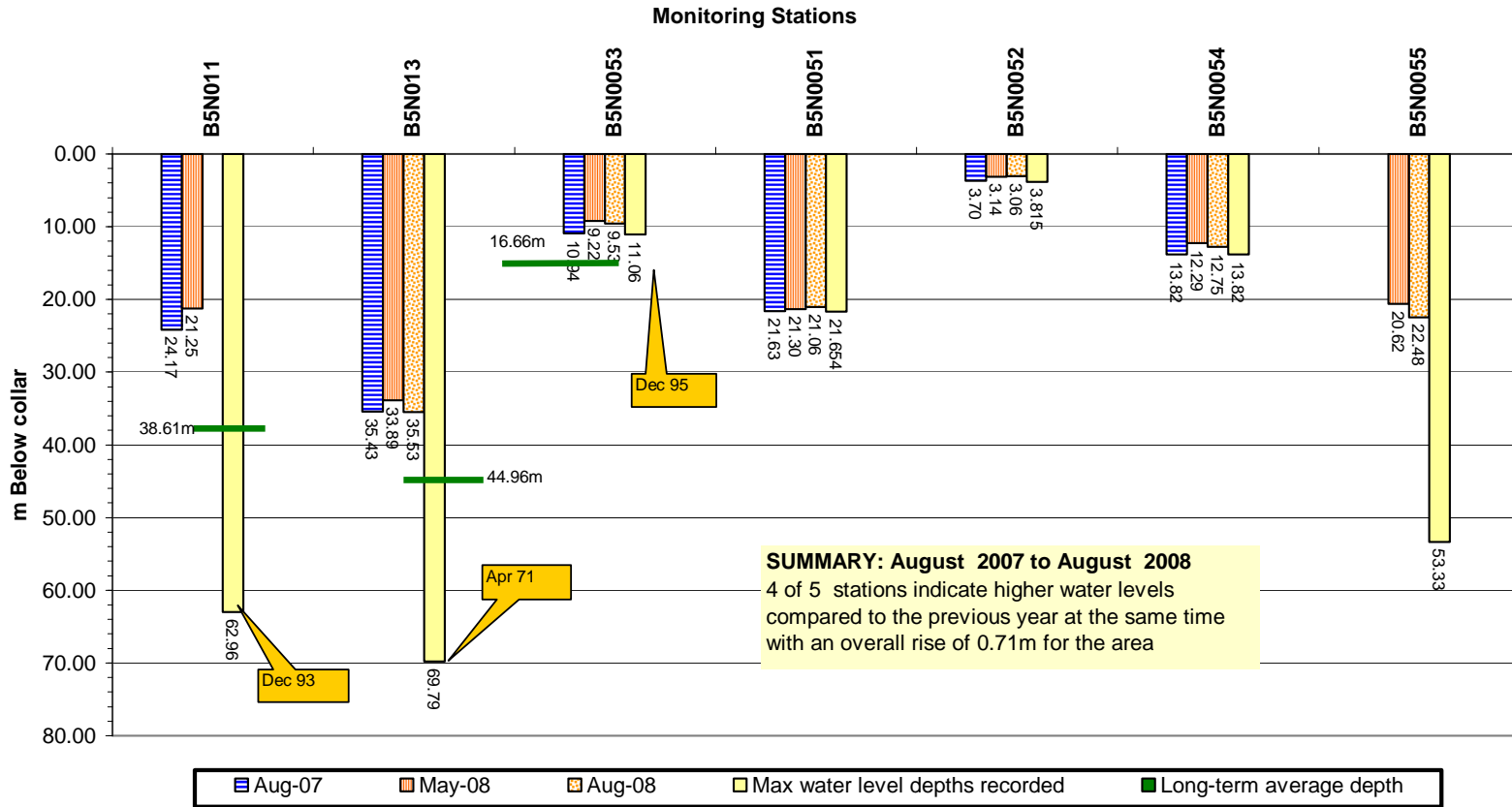
GRAPH 36

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



GRAPH 37

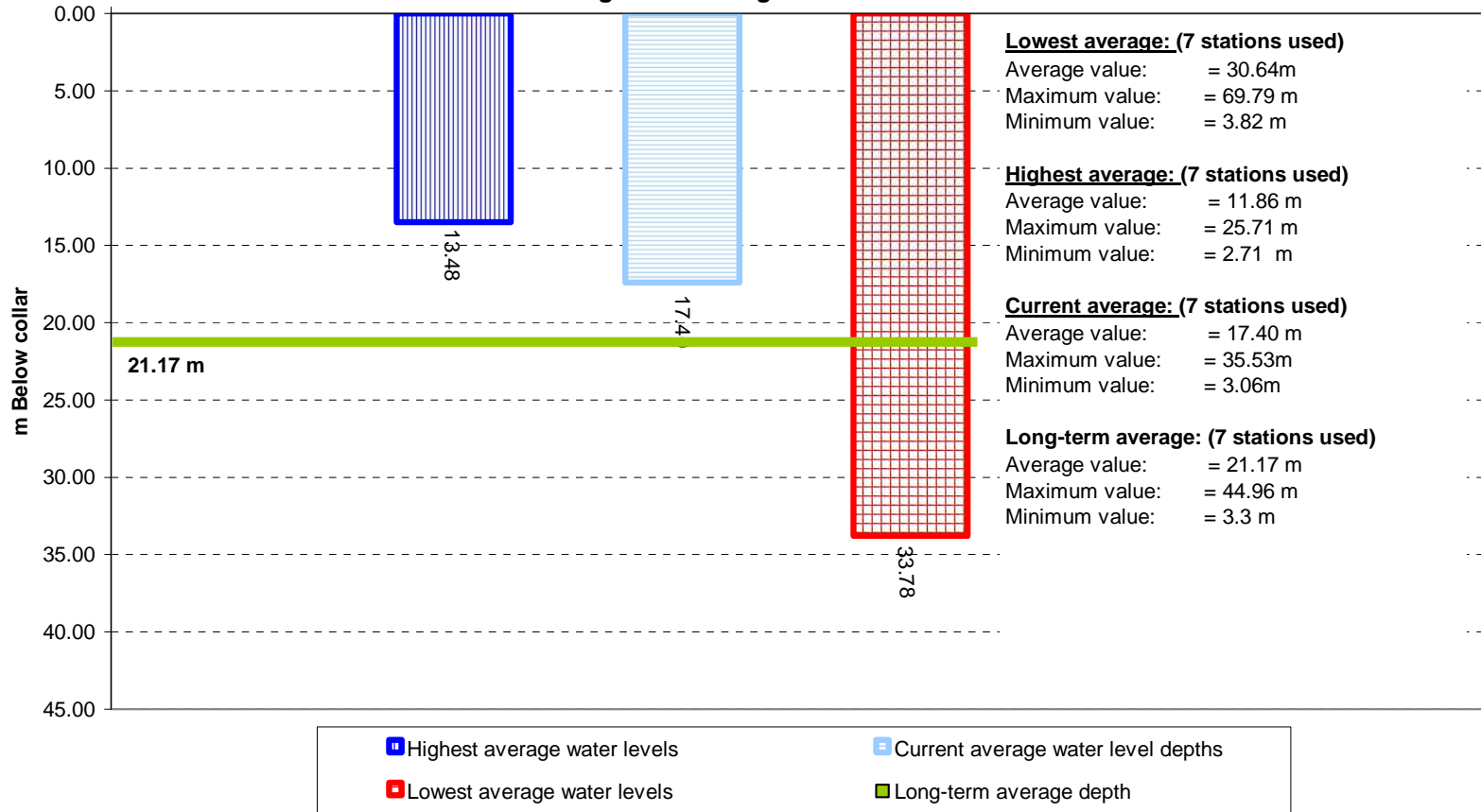
B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 , 1 August 2008 and maximum depths recorded



GRAPH 38

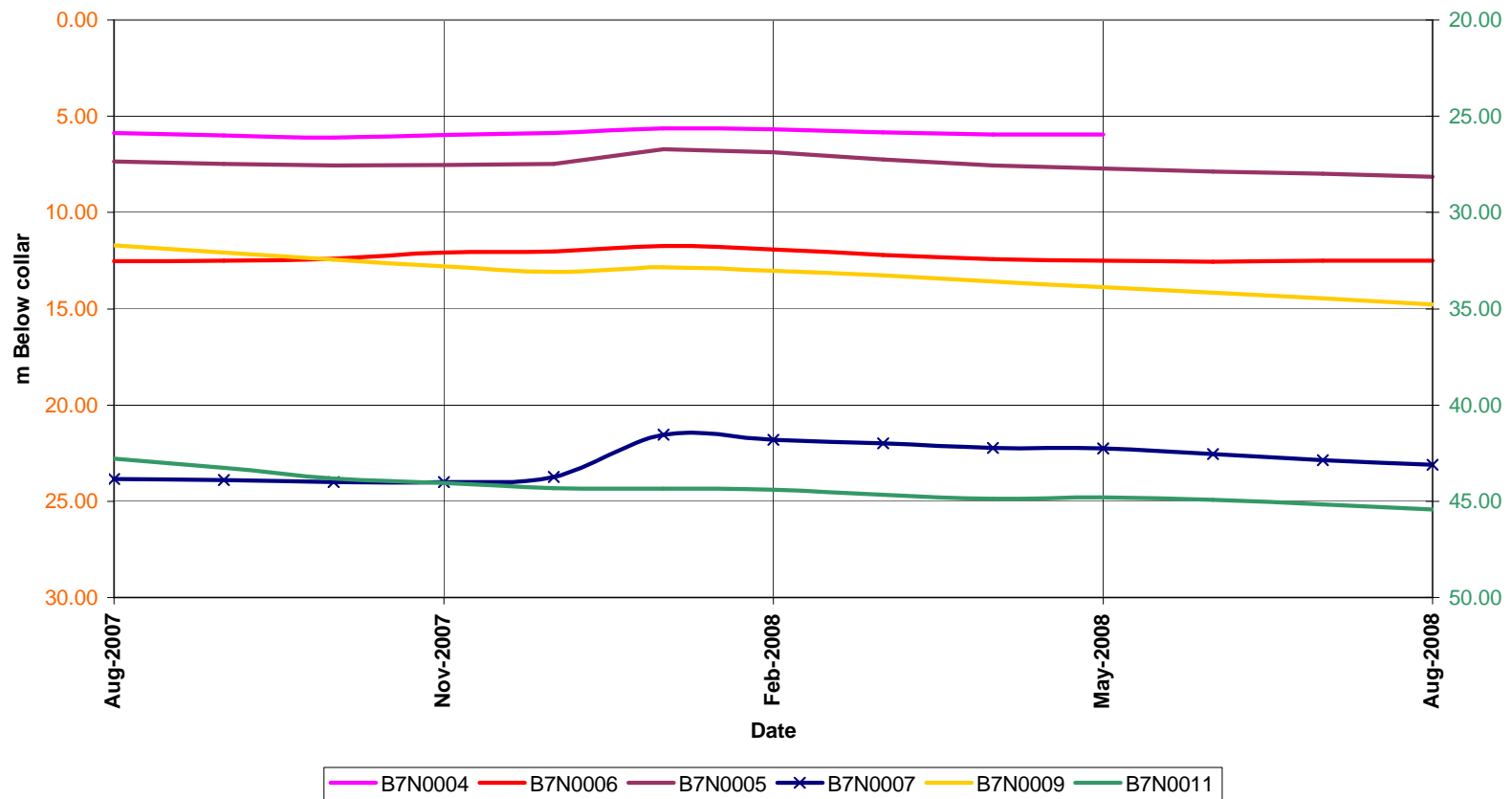
B5 DRAINAGE AREA

Comparison of average current water level with highest, lowest & long-term average water levels recorded



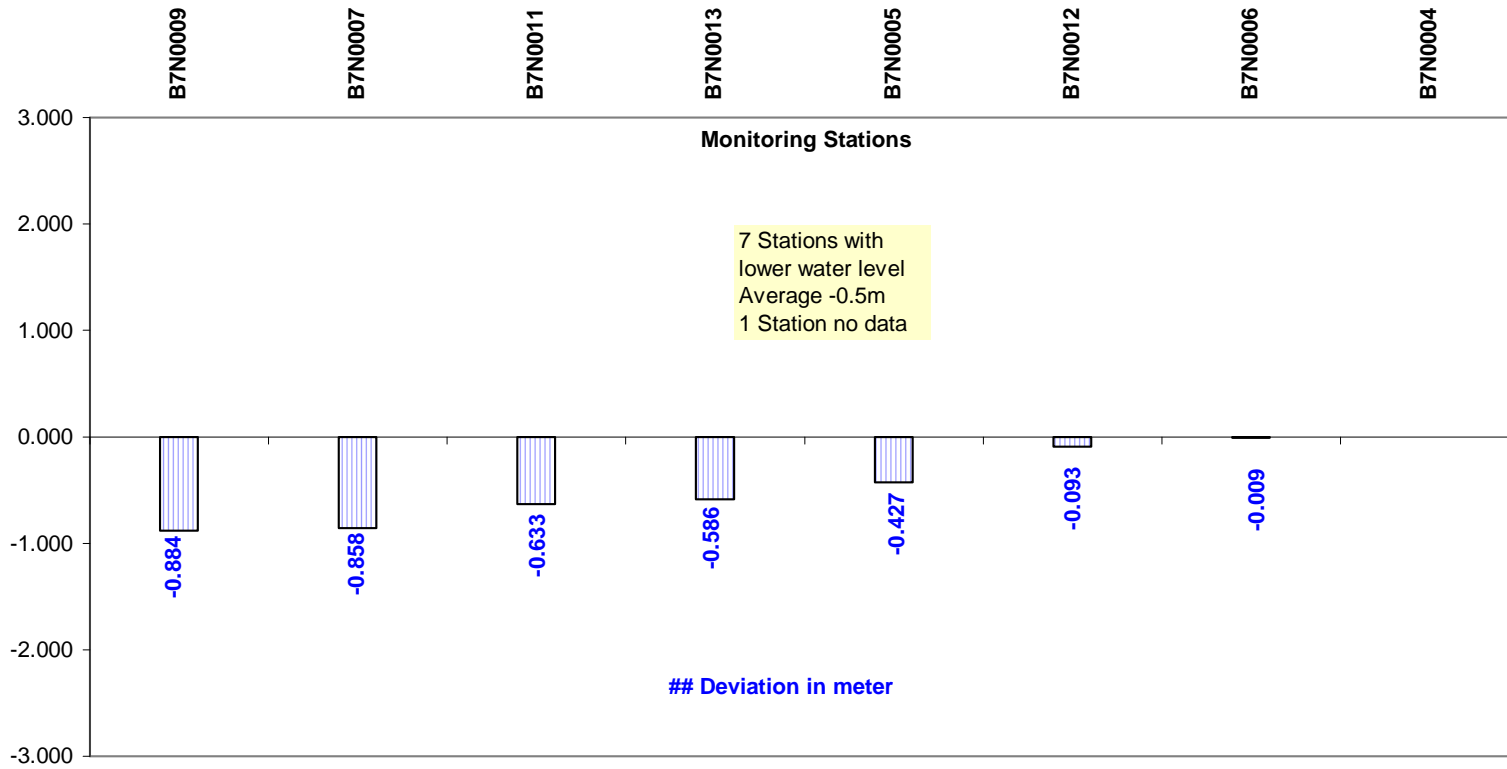
GRAPH 39

Water level trend of some stations in B7 drainage:
1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



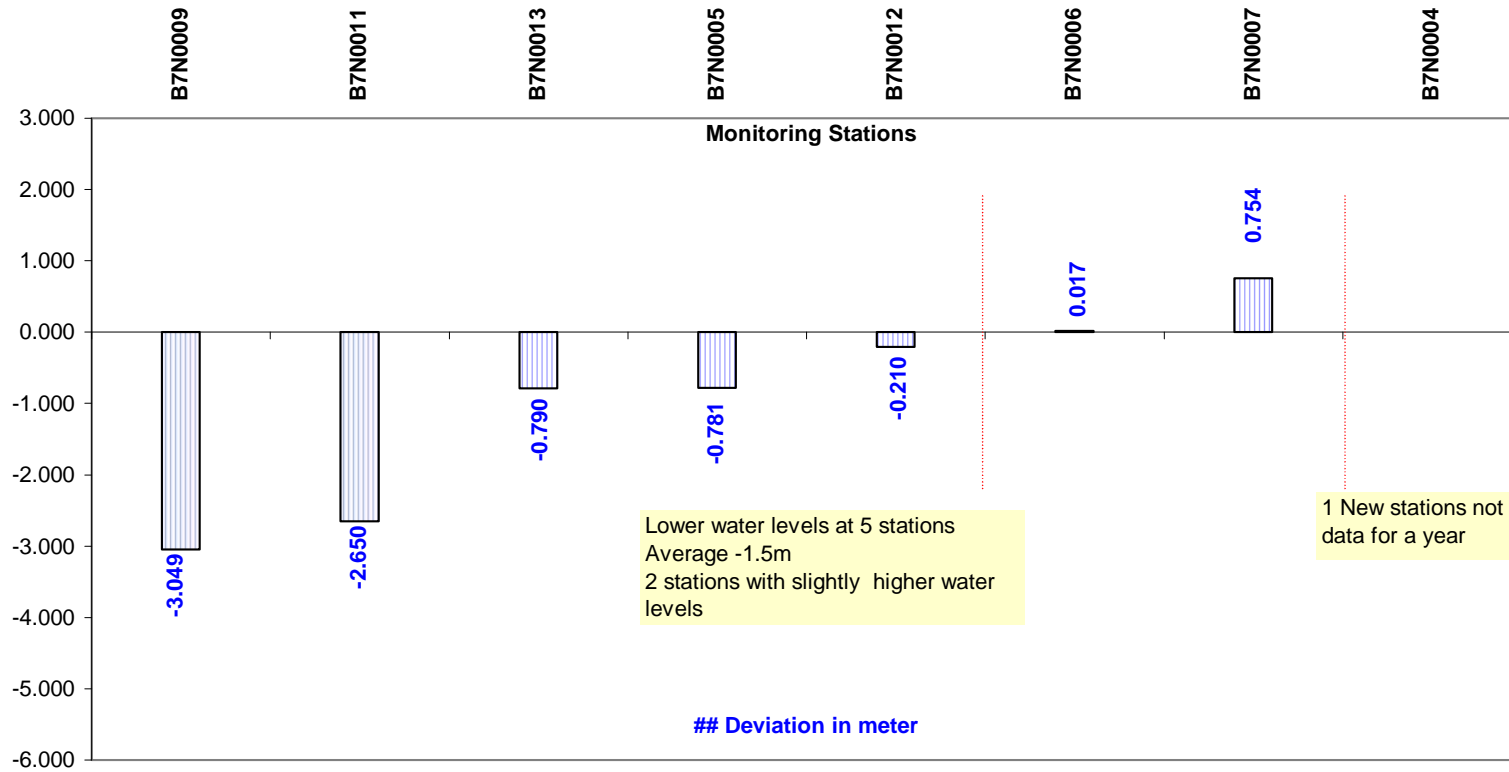
GRAPH 40

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 May 2008 to 1 August 2008



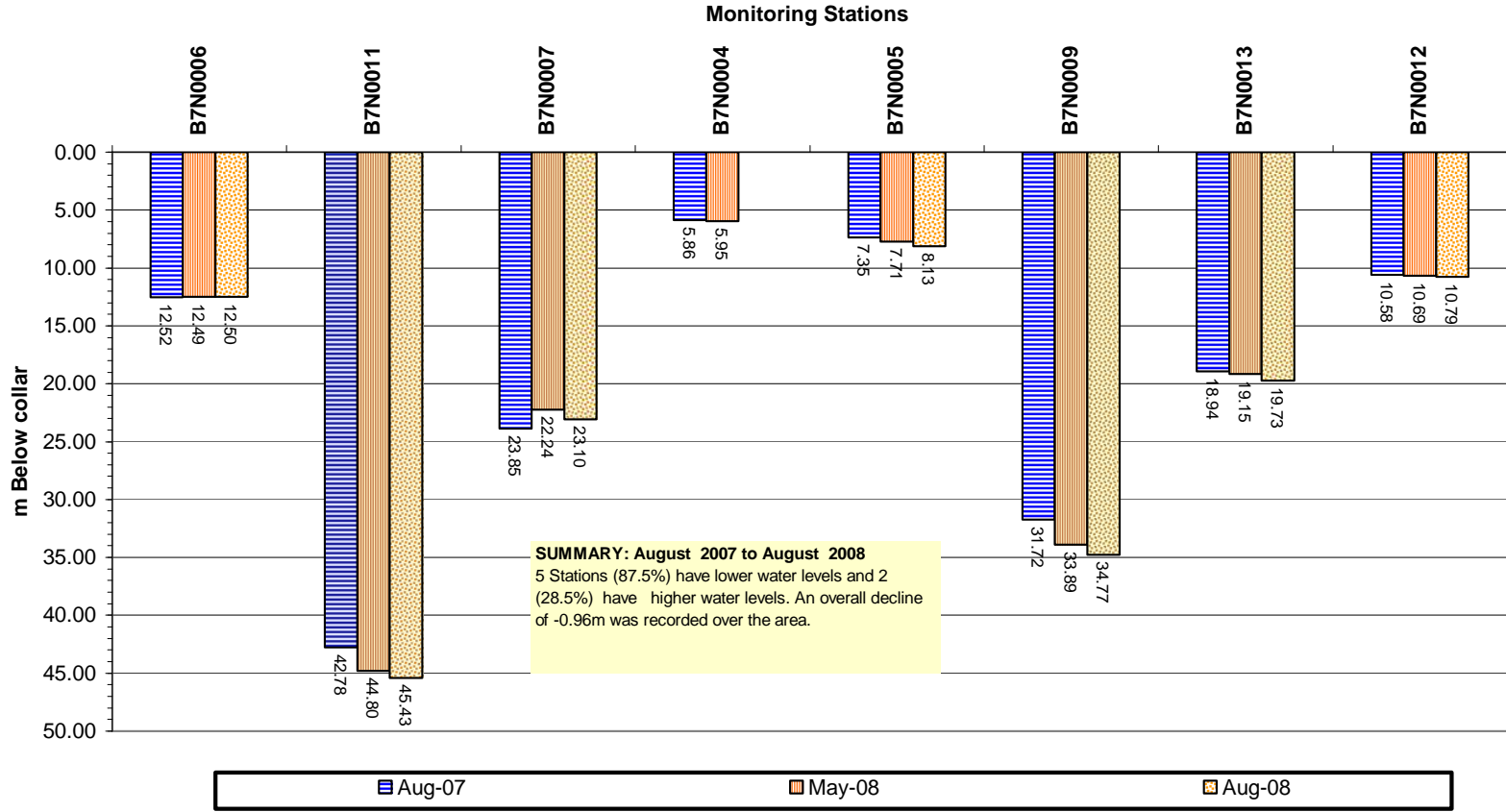
GRAPH 41

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008



GRAPH 42

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water levels: 1 August 2007,
1 May 2008 and 1 August 2008



GRAPH 43