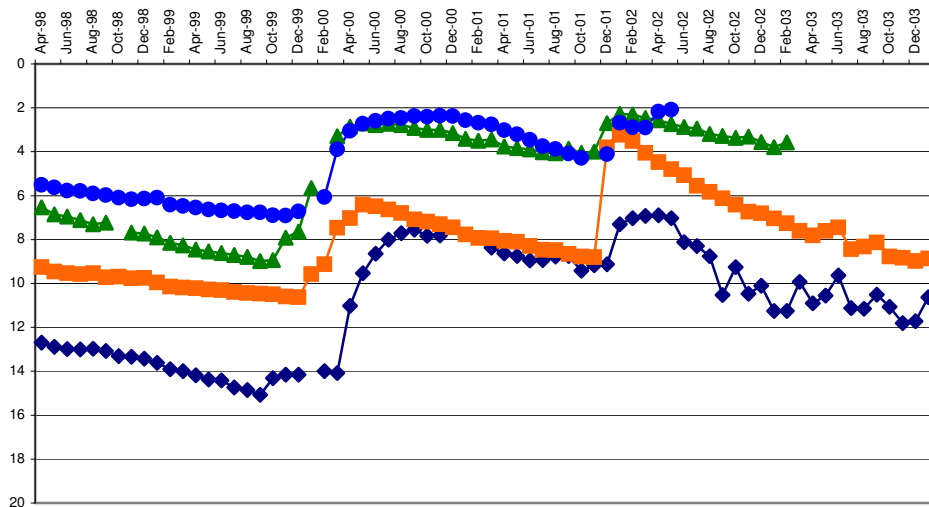




**DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY
LIMPOPO REGION
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**STATUS REPORT ON MONITORING &
GROUNDWATER LEVEL TRENDS
FEBRUARY 2008 – FEBRUARY 2009**



**H VERSTER
APRIL 2009**

**Data collection assisted by:
D A TLEANE
S C MUTHEIWANA
T P SEAKAMELEA
N F POOPEDI**

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1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Groundwater levels

Water level values for 1 February 2008 (corresponding time last year), 1 November 2008 (Start of the past wet season) and 1 February 2009 (Midway through the wet season) were used for comparison in this report. The Stations in the Kruger National Park is done bi-annually and was not visited in February.

- Active stations to visit = 161
- Stations visited and accessed = 153.
- Stations inaccessible due to wet conditions = 6
- Other access problems = 2

Comparison of water levels with the previous quarter: (November 2008 to February 2009)

Stations with data for the whole period available = 145 (90% of stations)

	No of stations	% of stations	Average
Water level down more than 1 m	1	0.7%	
Water level down less than 1m	48	33.1%	-0.19 m
Higher water levels more than 1m	37	25.5%	3.1 m
Higher water levels less than 1m	58	40%	0.44 m
No difference in water level	1	0.7%	
Total	138	100%	0.88m

The above figures reflect the water level behavior from the start to midway of the current rainy season. At this stage of the season indication of recharge should hopefully be evident, the magnitude depending on the amount of rain received, the distribution patterns and the intensities of events. From the figures it is clear that a measure of recharge did reach the aquifers in some places with 65.5 % of stations with data indicating a rise. Of these, 37 stations (25.5%) indicate a rise in excess of 1m while 58 stations (40%) indicate a rise of less than 1m.

A decline in water level is indicated at 49 Stations (33.8%) of which only 1 indicates a decline of more than 1m. The situation at 1 station is unchanged. Overall an average gain of 0.88m was recorded for all stations since the beginning of the wet season.

Comparison of water levels with the corresponding time last year: (February 2008 to February 2009)

Stations with data for the whole period available = 134 (83.2% of stations)

Data for the whole year is available for 134 stations, of these, 102 (76%) indicates lower water levels while 32 (23.8%) indicate higher water levels. The water levels at 3 of the stations with higher water levels represent pumping levels and should be discarded leaving 29 with real rise in water level. That being done, an overall average decline of -0.44m was recorded over the past year.

It can be seen that, although some recharge is indicated for the past quarter, it is thus far generally less than the decline since the last rainy season, resulting in more stations having lower levels than the corresponding time last year.

Water levels in general are still indicating a slow declining trend. For stations with longer-term data this is especially notable since the last major recharge event in 2000-2001 and may partly be ascribed to normal decline after reaching exceptional highs. The trend is continuing for an extended period now despite some varying seasonal recharge. This is interpreted as part of a normal long-term cycle of lesser and major recharge periods. Comparison with long-term data where available indicate that levels are mostly still above the worst recorded. Average levels are at, or even below long-term averages in some drainage's.

48% (77) of active monitoring stations and \pm 90% of stations with long-term data are located in the A6 and A7 drainages. Evaluation of this data indicates that the difference between the maximum and minimum average recorded is 6.2m, in else, the difference between the "best" and "worst" cases on record.

The depth to major water interception would generally be the best indicator of a critical level. This information is unfortunately not available for most of these old stations and therefore the maximum recorded is considered in this case to represent the critical level. This maximum represent the levels at the end of the extended drought throughout the 80^s to the mid 90^s when widespread water shortages were experienced in the Limpopo.

Current average water levels are 3.68m below the minimum, and 2.47m above the maximum recorded. Corresponding behavior by more recent water level trends with that displayed in other drainages where no long-term data exists, support the extrapolation of the long-term to other areas as well. Although the median between "best" and "worst" has been exceeded, the situation is considered not to be one of serious concern. The fact that trends are tending towards the critical should however be noted and monitored.

As noted in previous reports, aquifer management is of utmost importance, especially in the current situation. Trends as discussed above represent the relatively natural conditions as far still possible and will include the influence of the combined abstraction over large areas. Localized conditions may differ greatly depending on various factors with abstraction patterns being the most important. The local effect of abstraction coupled to the regional that is already declining may serve to increase the local rate of decline dramatically, especially as water levels get lower. The importance of monitoring at aquifer level can not be over emphasized. Aquifer monitoring and management is the responsibility of the user or service provider. Adherence to this is of utmost importance to ensure sustainable use.

One area has drawn attention for some time now and again warrant special mentioning. Looking at MAP 4, it can be seen that varying recharge can be noted for the region. What is clearly noticeable is the apparent lack of recharge in the lower reaches of the A9 Drainage. The opposite, namely a concentration of stations with lower water levels is more pronounced. The situation as depicted on MAP 5 highlights this more clearly for virtually the whole of A9 drainage. This area, especially the North eastern part, is relative arid, very densely populated and virtually totally dependent on groundwater. The area in Question falls within the jurisdiction of the Mutale-Masisi and Thoyandou local municipalities.

Monitoring network

Extension of the monitoring network is still ongoing and 4 new stations were equipped with loggers the past month. Progress is slowed by lack of funds for the drilling section. The position of current and planned stations is depicted in **MAP 1**.

9 New stations still have to be registered on the National database. The Kruger Park stations also still have to be registered.

Project monitoring at Matlala and Tshitale is continuing. **MAP 2**

Monitoring of the NGWQMP boreholes continues. **MAP 3**

Field verification of possible boreholes for inclusion in the National Groundwater Quality network has been completed for the areas where government or communal equipped boreholes can be used and 27 sites were visited and verified. Planning of a sampling program to test the suitability of the selected sites was completed the end of December 2008. Field verification of control sampling boreholes was done but sampling was halted due to laboratory problems and a lack of funds.

2) STATUS OF MONITORING NETWORK

The Limpopo Province's Groundwater Level Monitoring Network currently consists of 195 active monitoring stations, including 34 in the KNP (**Map 1**)

153 Stations were visited during February 2009. 8 Stations could not be accessed for various reasons. 12 Additional new stations are currently planned of which 2 are already drilled but not yet equipped. Some network gaps identified will be addressed this year. Problems with access to some sites were solved but some are still a challenge and are receiving attention.

9 Of the newly drilled boreholes still have to be registered on the National database

No progress on the phase 2 upgrading of existing stations due to budget constraints.

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 which is sampled bi-annually. (**Map 3**)

Sampling to verify the suitability of selected sites for extension of the National Groundwater Quality Monitoring network is on hold due to budget constraints and laboratory problems.

3) DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Data was collected during February 2009 with the value for 1 February representing midway of the past rainy season. Comparisons were drawn between 1 February 2008, (Corresponding period the previous year) 1 November 2008 (Beginning of the wet season) and 1 February 2009 (Midway of the past wet season) (**Maps 4 & 5**)

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)

There are now 9 newly equipped stations in this drainage but very limited time series data is available so far. 2 Boreholes are still to be drilled.

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Data for 6 stations is available, 4 of which indicate a slight rise and 2 declining a bit. (**GRAPS 1-2**)

4.2 A5 Drainage Area. (Lephalale River)

There are 8 active stations. A5N0001, as well as 3 additional project boreholes around it, could still not be equipped yet due to access problems.

Very little fluctuation at most stations (**GRAPH 3**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Some recharge at 3 stations with 2 declining (**GRAPH 4**)

February 2008 to February 2009

3 Of the 4 stations with data indicate declining levels the past year (**GRAPHS 5 & 6**)

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

There are 39 monitoring stations in this drainage.

Some recharge since the start of the season but not at all stations. (**GRAPH 7**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Data for 33 stations is available. 12 Stations (36.4%) have lower levels and 21 stations (63.6%) indicate higher water levels. Overall an average rise of 0.92m was recorded for the period. (**GRAPHS 8 & 10**)

February 2008 to February 2009

Data for the whole year is available for 31 stations. 24 Stations (77.4%) indicate lower water levels than February last year and 7 stations (22.6%) indicate a rise in water levels. An overall decline of 0.02m was recorded over the past year (**GRAPH 9 & 10**)

Current average water levels are slightly above the long-term average values and 2.39m higher than the maximum average recorded, (**GRAPH 11**)

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

There are 38 monitoring stations in this drainage.

Trends compare well with that of the A6 drainage with little noticeable recharge evident since the start of the wet season. (**GRAPH 12**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Data is available for 37 stations of which 26 stations (70.3%) indicate higher water levels, while 11 stations (29.7%) indicate lower water levels. Overall a rise of 1.1m was recorded over this period (**GRAPHS 13&15**).

February 2008 to February 2009

Data is available for 34 stations, 21 (61.8%) Indicate lower water levels, average -0.55m. 13 Stations (38.2%) indicate higher water levels, average 0.7m. Overall a decline of -0.07m was recorded for the period (**GRAPHS 14&15**).

Current average water levels are lower than the long-term average but 2.5m above the lowest average recorded (**GRAPH 16**).

4.5 A8 Drainage Area ((Nwanedzi, Nzhelele Rivers)

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

Very little fluctuation in water levels the past year (**GRAPH 17**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

9 Stations with data, 1 station indicates a declining water level and 8 rising levels, average 0.42m (**GRAPHS 18 & 20**).

February 2008 to February 2009

6 Stations indicate lower water levels, average -0.46m, and 3 higher water levels (**GRAPHS 19 & 20**).

An overall average decline of -0.27m was recorded over the past year (**GRAPH 20**)

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.

Only 1 station indicates a considerable rise in water level (**GRAPH 21**).

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Data is available for all 18 stations of which 10 indicate lower water levels; average -0.33m with 8 indicating higher water levels. If the value for A9N0009 is discarded, the average rise is 0.34m (**GRAPHS 22&24**).

February 2008 to February 2009

17 Stations (94.4%) indicate lower water levels, average -1.46m and 1 station indicate a higher water level (**GRAPHS 23&24**).

Overall an average decline of 0.85m 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.

The same general slow decline over the past year (**GRAPH 25**).

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

Data is available for all 14 stations and 6 stations indicate lower water levels, average -0.2m, 8 stations indicate higher water levels, average 0.57m (**GRAPHS 26&28**)

February 2008 to February 2009

All 14 Stations indicate lower water levels, average -0.61m (**GRAPHS 27&28**)

5.3 B9 Drainage Area. (Shingwidzi, Mphongolo Rivers)

4 Stations in this drainage

No real recharge evident so far (**GRAPH 29**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

2 Rising water levels and 2 declining (**GRAPHS 30 & 32**).

February 2008 to February 2009

All stations have lower water levels than the corresponding time last year, average -0.77m (**GRAPHS 31 & 32**)

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.

Considerable rise in water levels except at B3N0022 (**GRAPH 33**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

2 Stations indicate higher levels and 1 lower (**GRAPH 34**)

February 2008 to February 2009

All Stations indicate higher water levels (**GRAPH 35**)

Despite the rising water levels at B3N0001 and B3N0012, the current water levels are still far below long-term average and is a reason for concern for some years now (**GRAPH 36**)

6.2 B5 Drainage Area. (Olifants, Nkumpi Rivers)

7 Stations are monitored in this drainage.

As in other drainages, very slight rise at some stations (**GRAPH 37**)

Comparison with previous levels:

November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

All 7 Stations indicate higher water levels. B5N0055 reflects direct pumping effects of a new production borehole and was not used in averaging. The average rise at the other 6 stations is 0.78m. (GRAPHS 38 & 39)

February 2008 to February 2009

5 Stations indicate a decline with 2 indicating rising water levels (GRAPHS 39 & 40)

Current average water levels are above the lowest average recorded (GRAPH 40)

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

8 Stations are monitored in this drainage.

Trends is similar to that of the other drainages (GRAPH 42)

Comparison with previous levels:

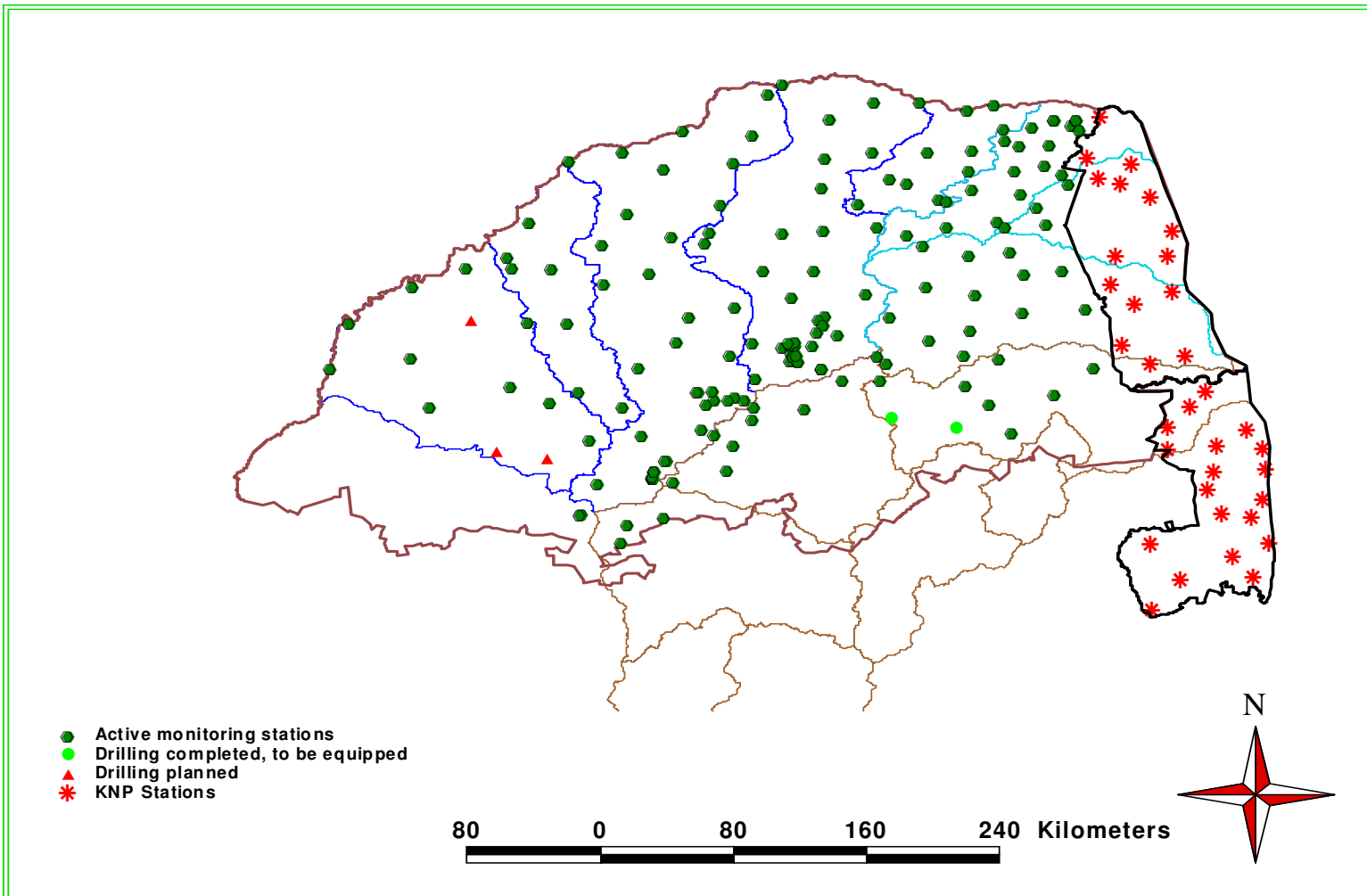
November 2008 to February 2009 (beginning to midway of the wet season)

2 stations indicate lower water levels; and 5 higher, average 0.47m (GRAPHS 43 & 45)

February 2008 to February 2009

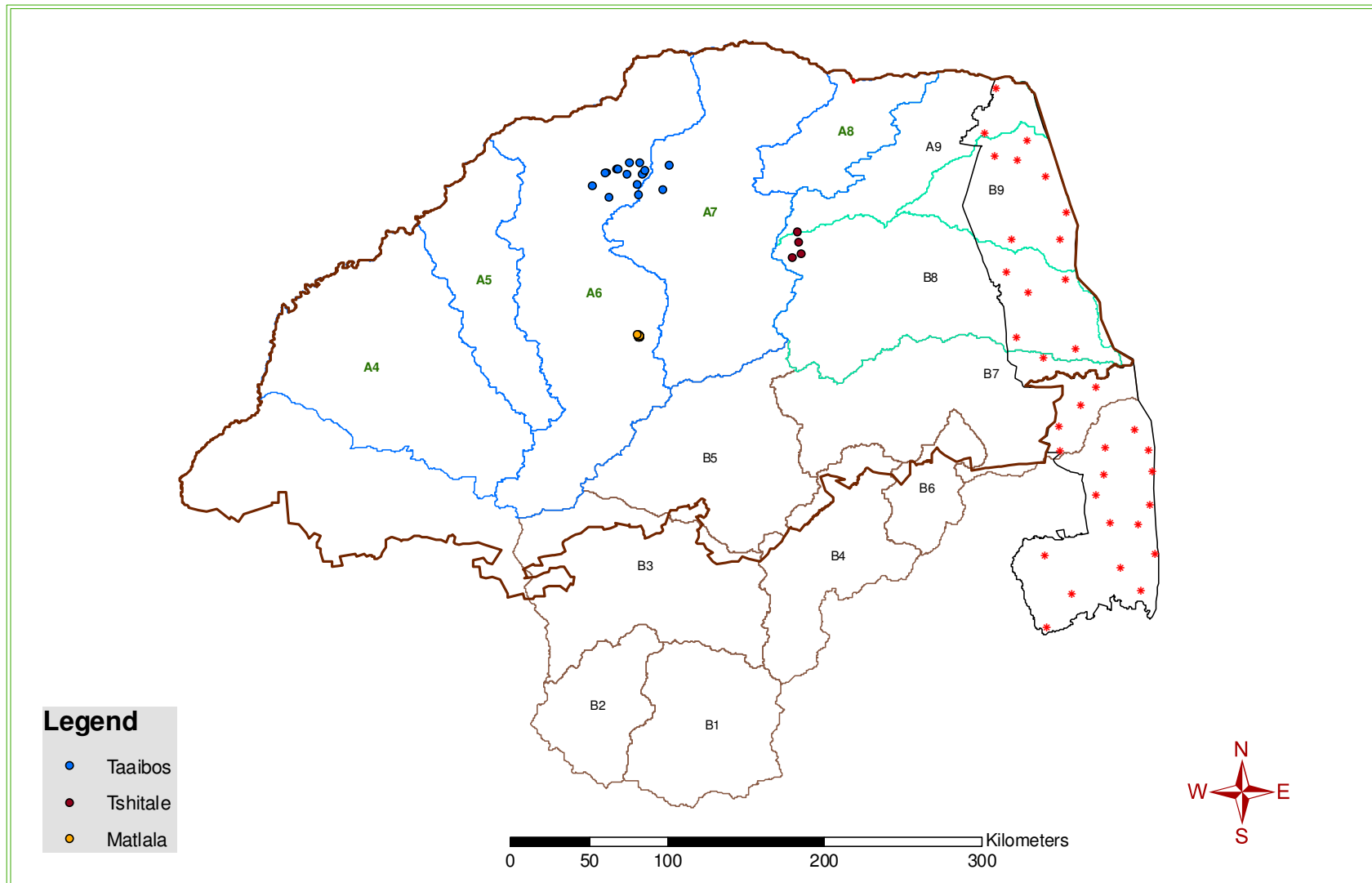
7 Stations indicate lower water levels; average -0.94m and 1 higher (GRAPHS 44 & 45).

Limpopo Groundwater Monitoring Positions of active and planned stations



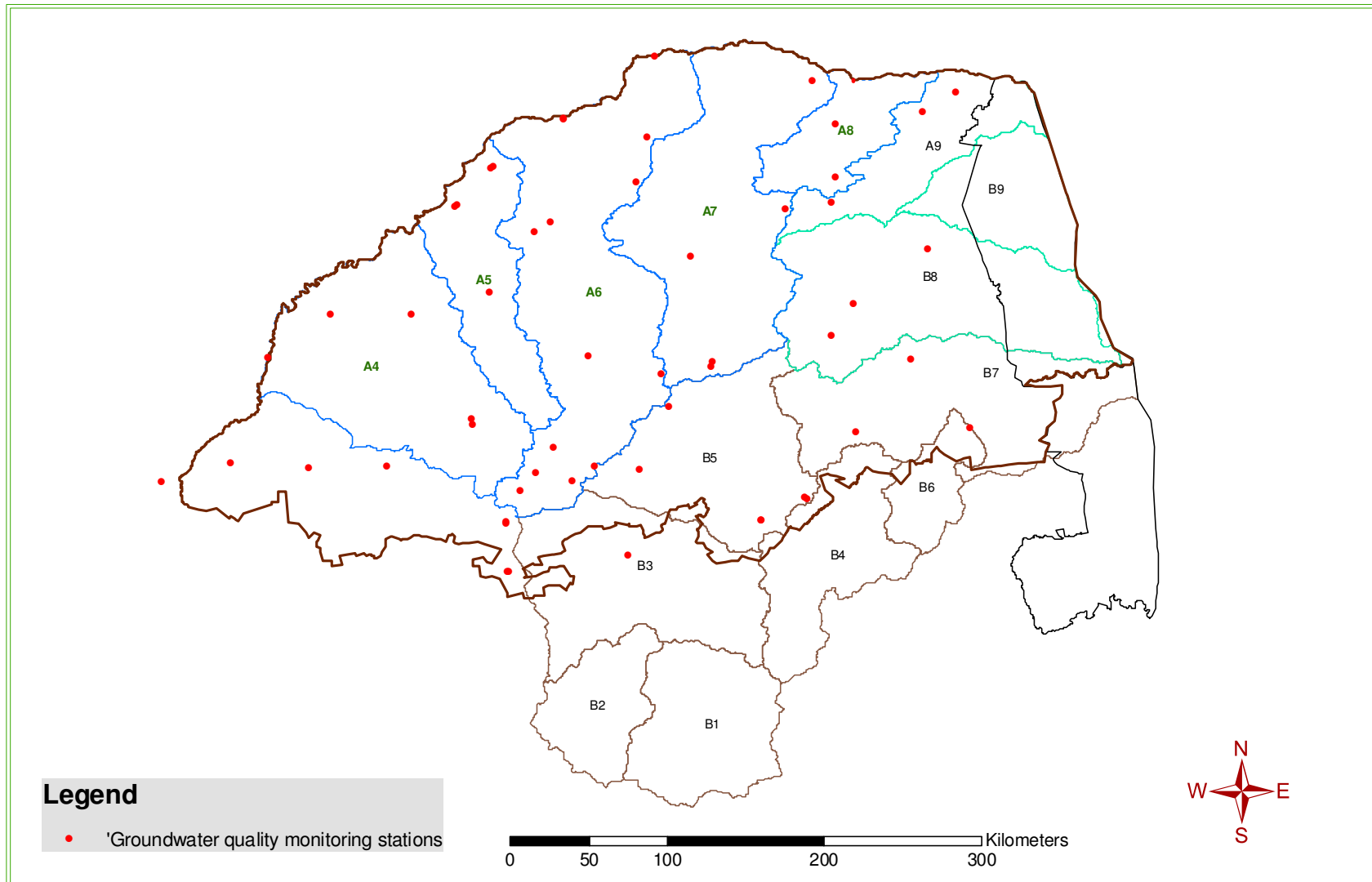
MAP 1

Limpopo Groundwater Monitoring: Positions of project monitoring stations



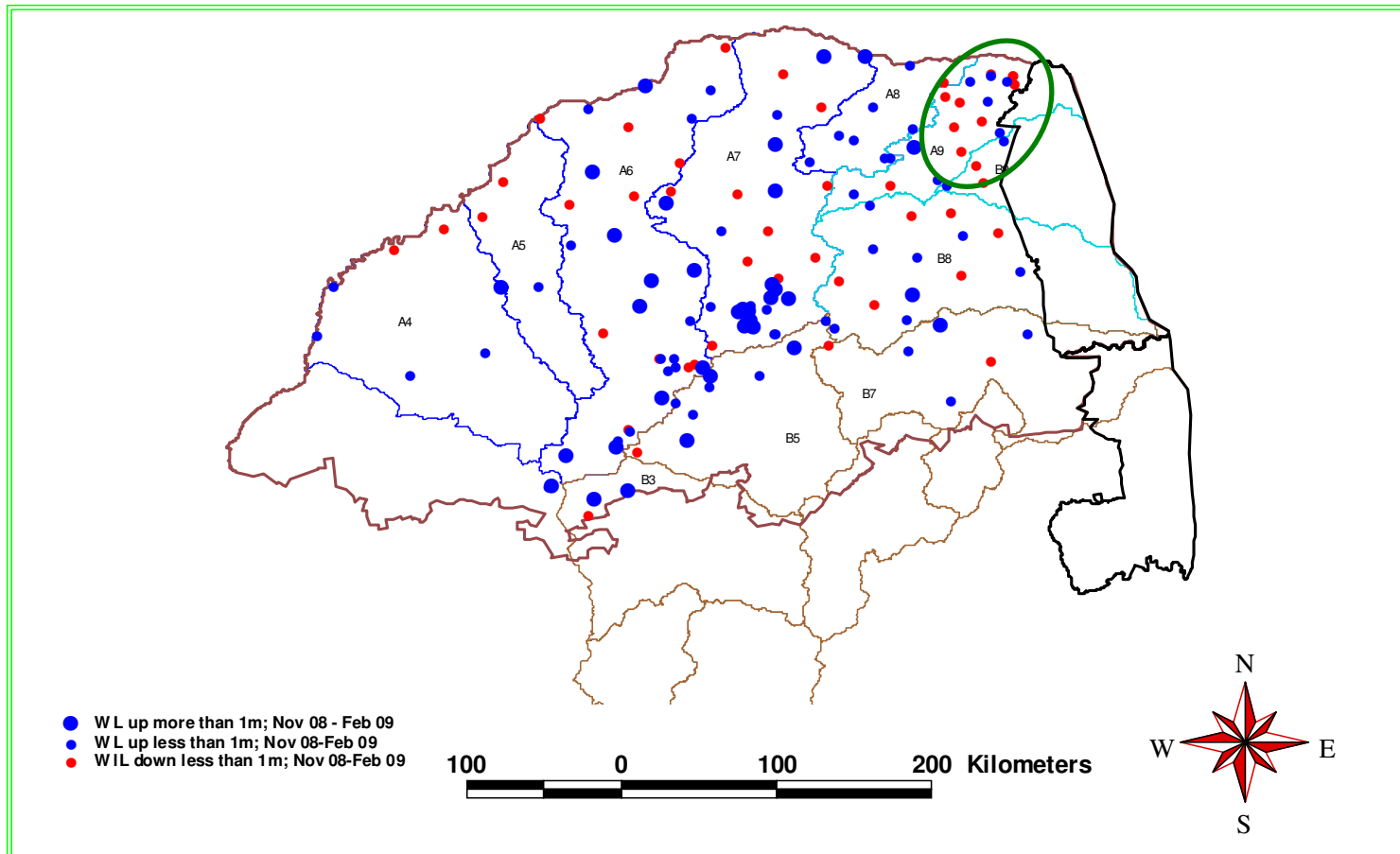
MAP 2

Limpopo Groundwater Monitoring: Positions of groundwater quality monitoring stations



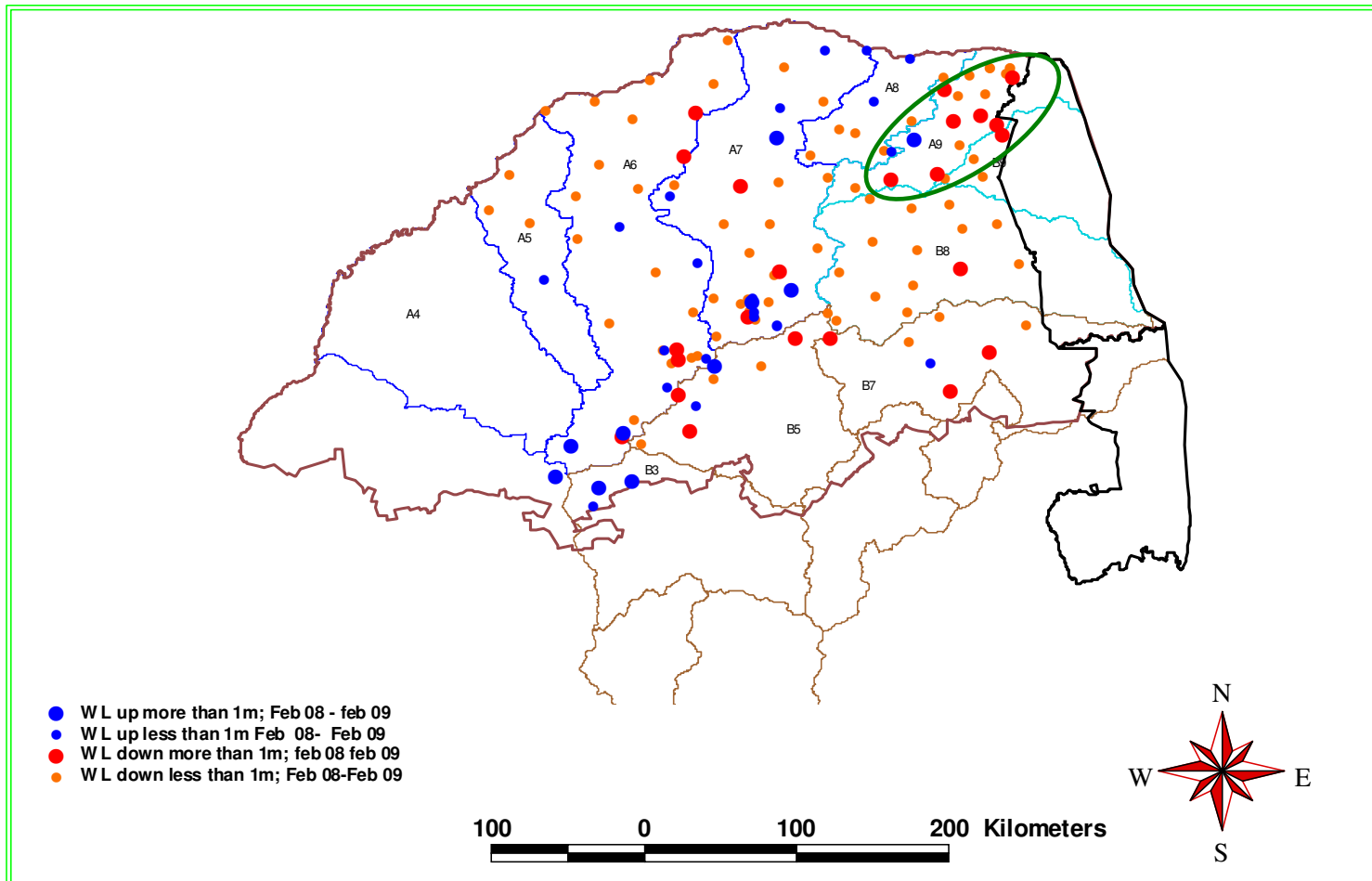
MAP 3

Limpopo Groundwater Monitoring Difference in water levels; November 2008 to February 2009



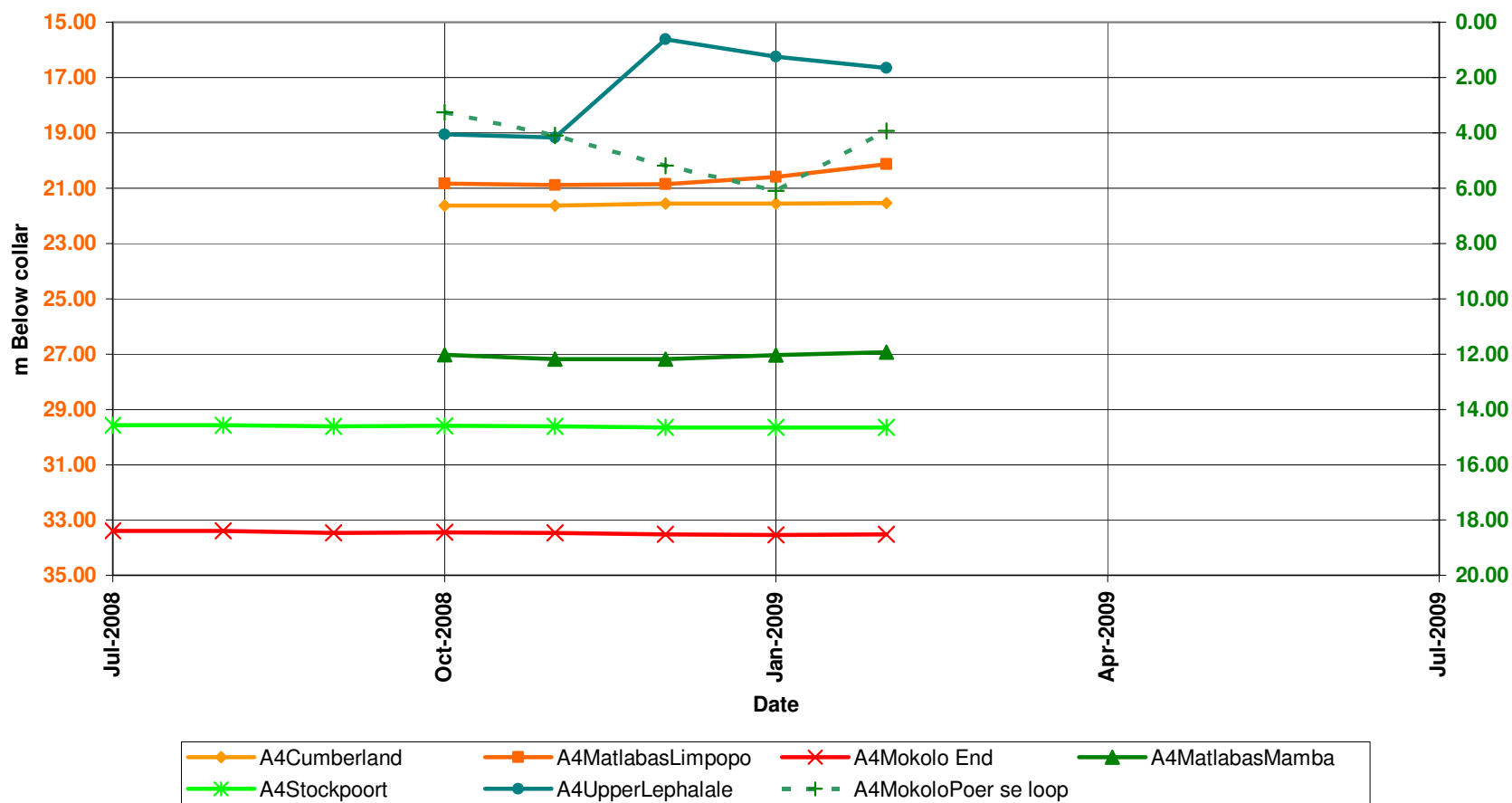
MAP 4

**Limpopo Groundwater Monitoring
Difference in water levels
February 08 to February 09**



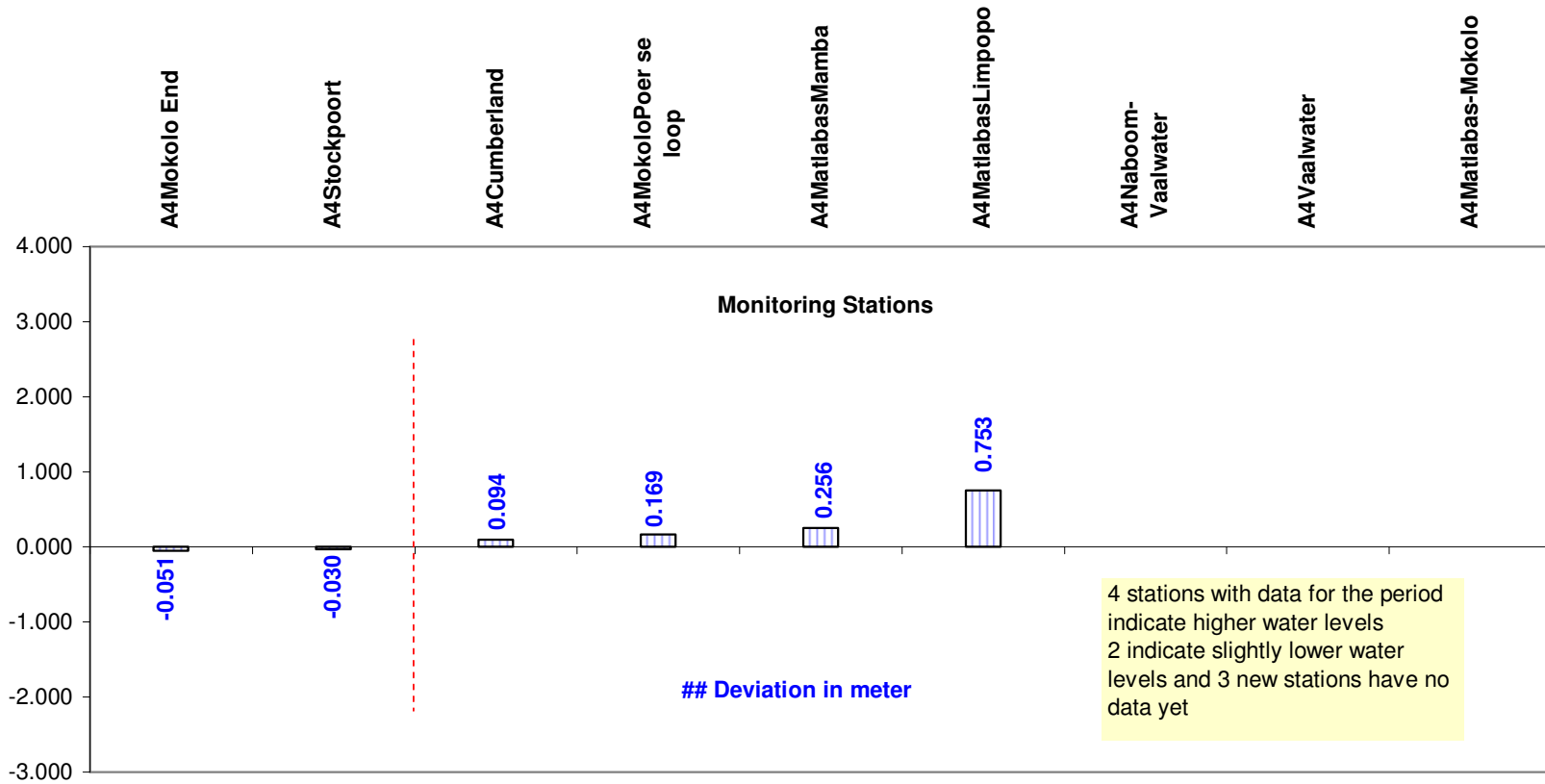
MAP 5

Water level trend of some stations in A4 drainage:
1 July 2008 to 1 February 2009



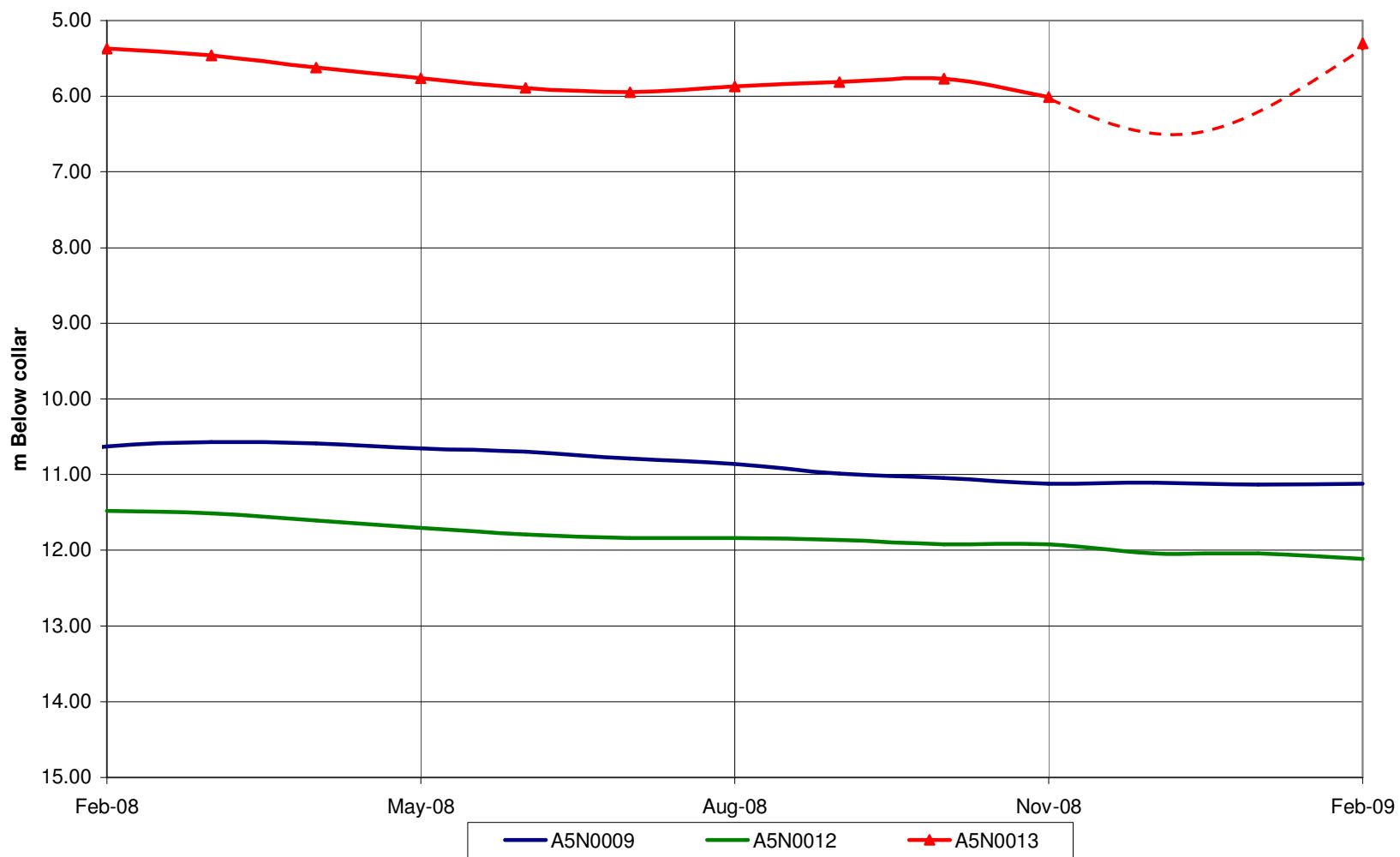
GRAPH 1

A4 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



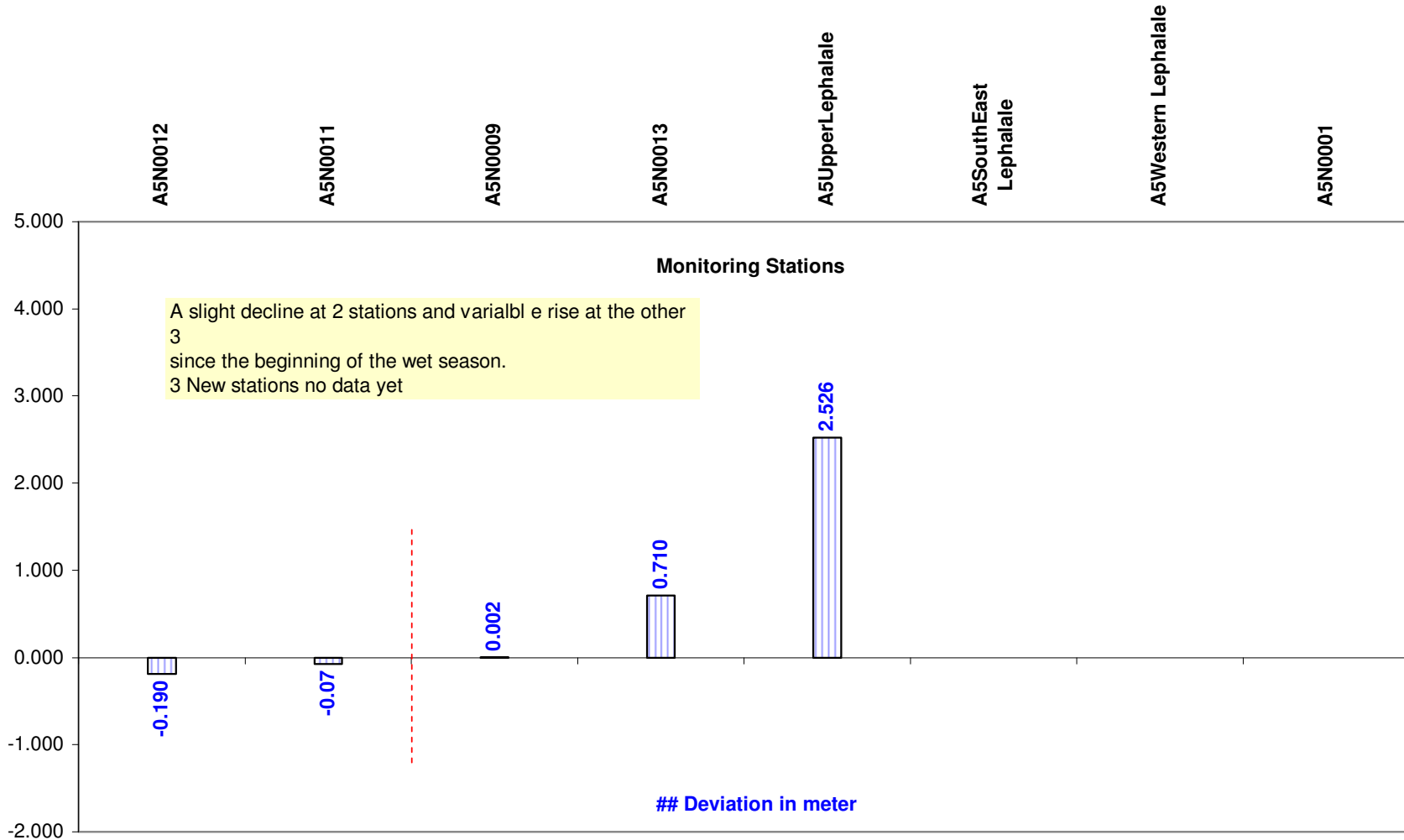
GRAPH 2

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A5 drainage: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



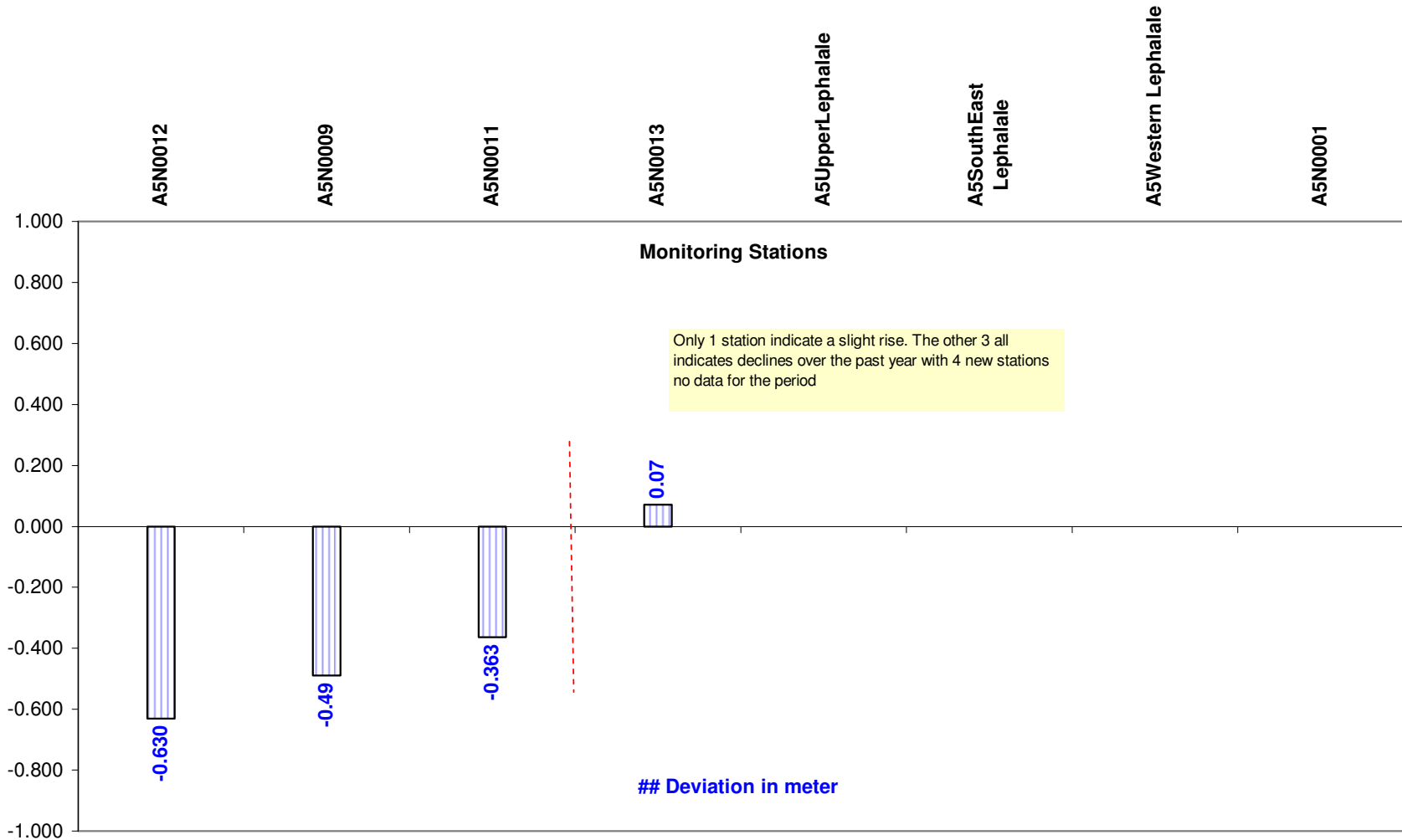
GRAPH 3

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



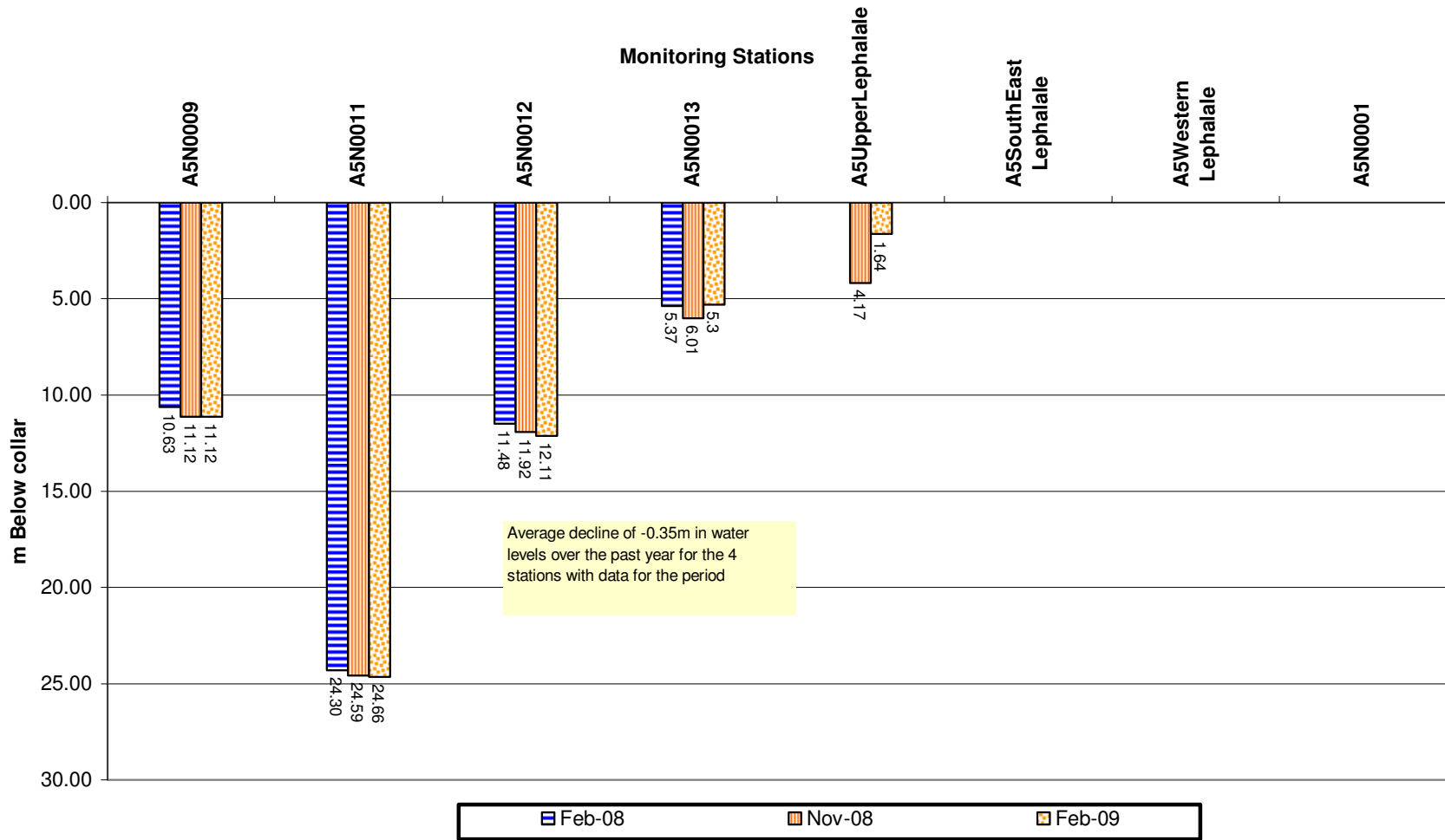
GRAPH 4

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



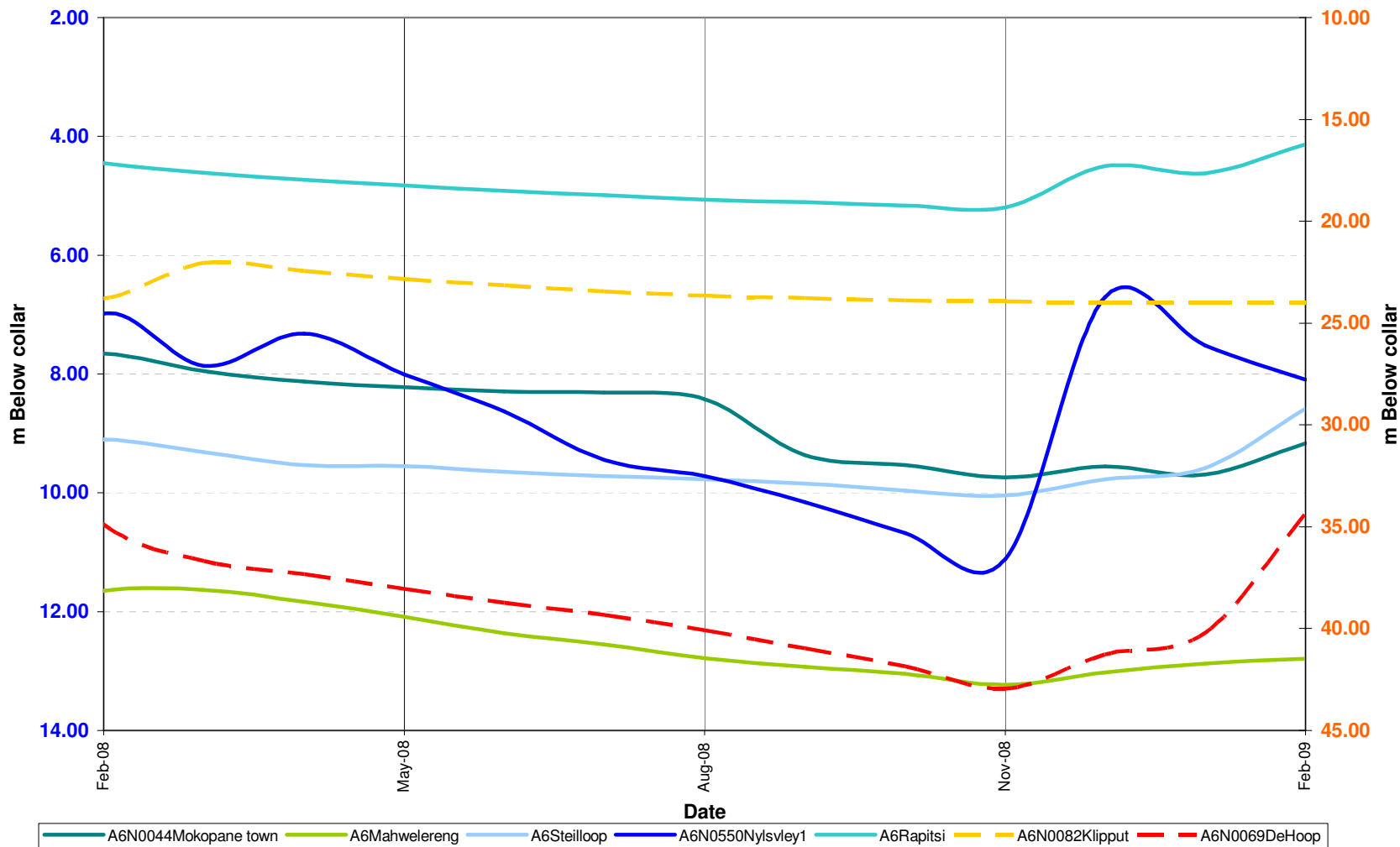
GRAPH 5

A5 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths : 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



GRAPH 6

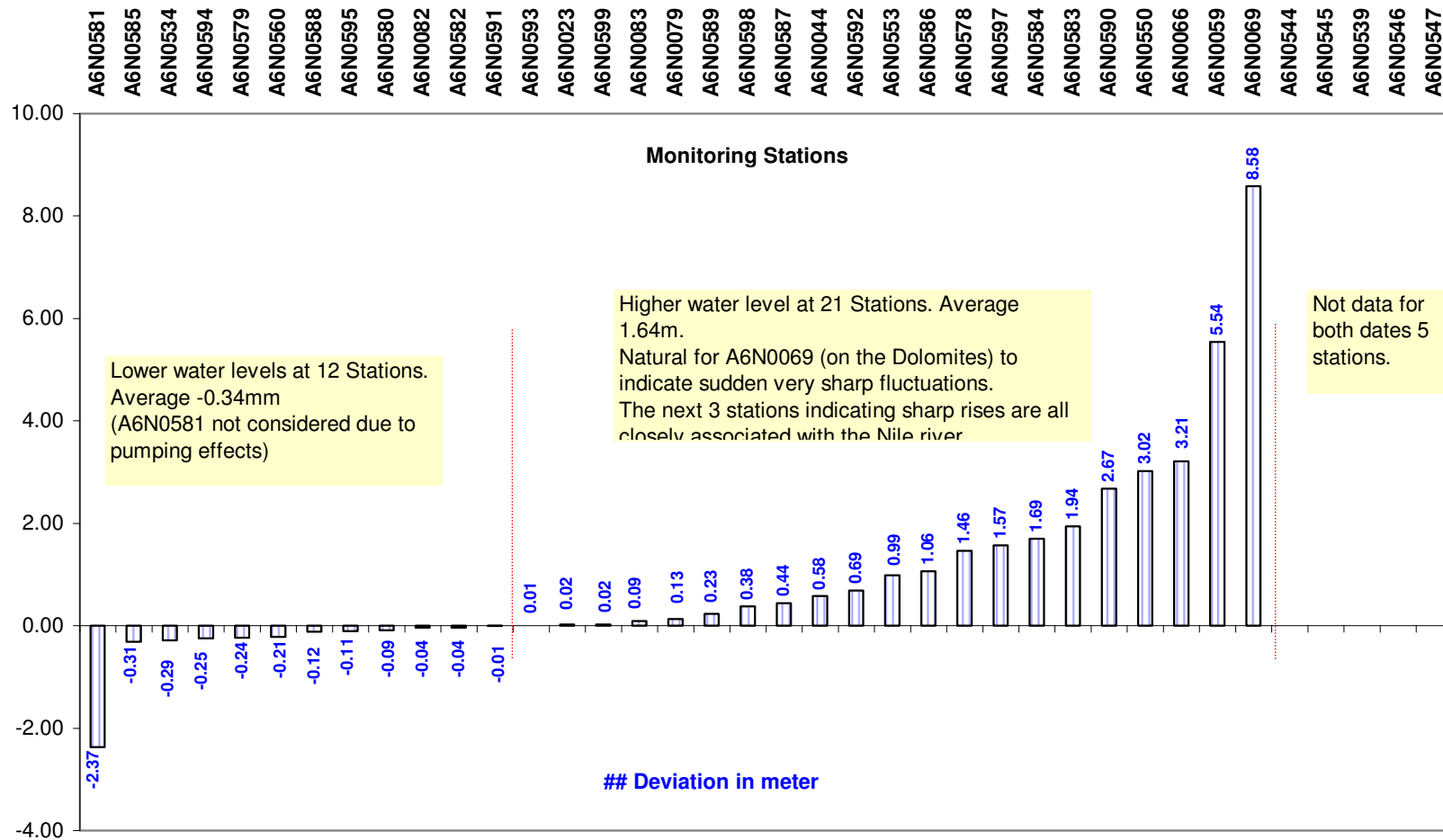
Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A6 drainage: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 7

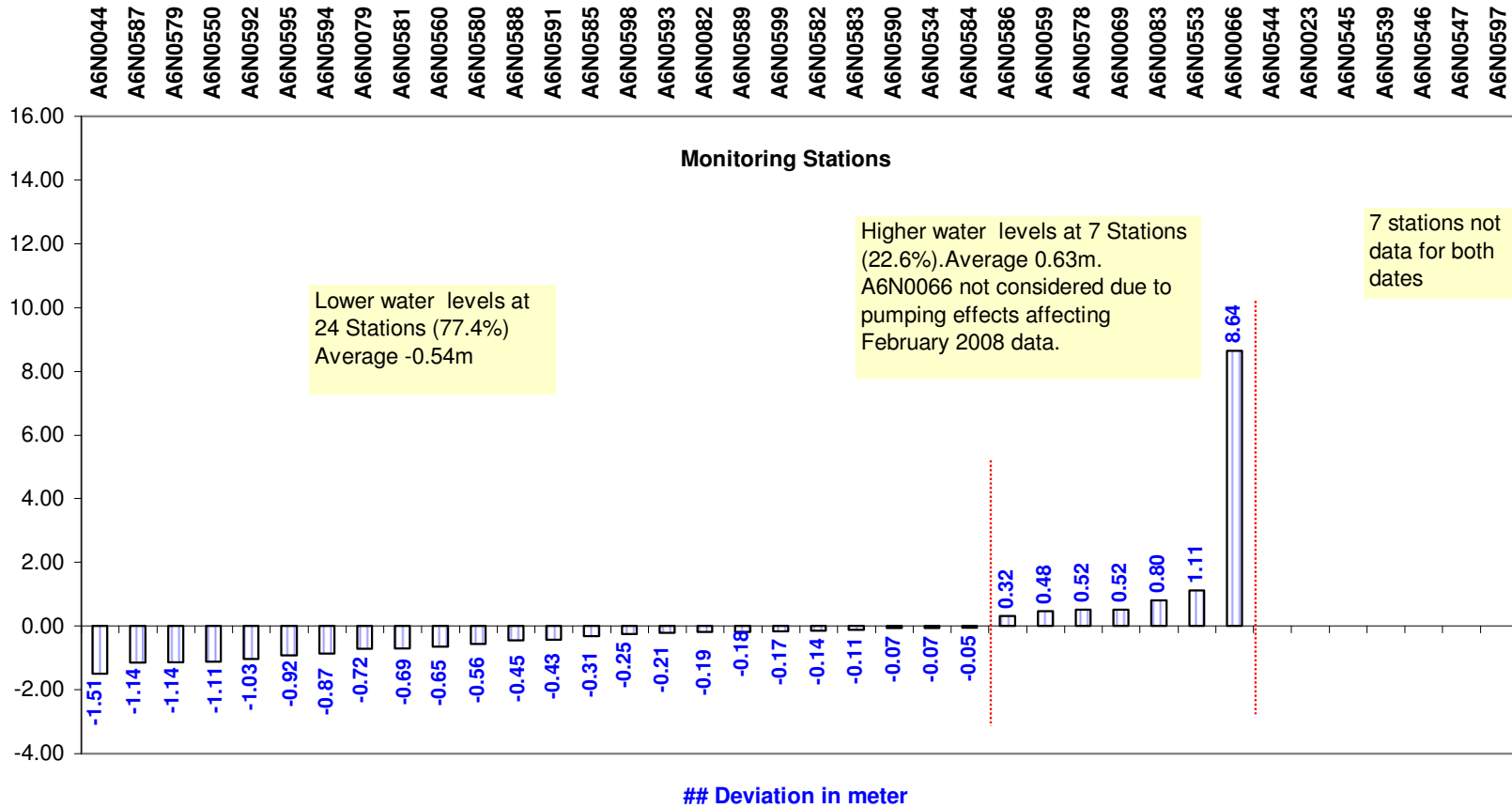
A6 DRAINAGE AREA

Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 8

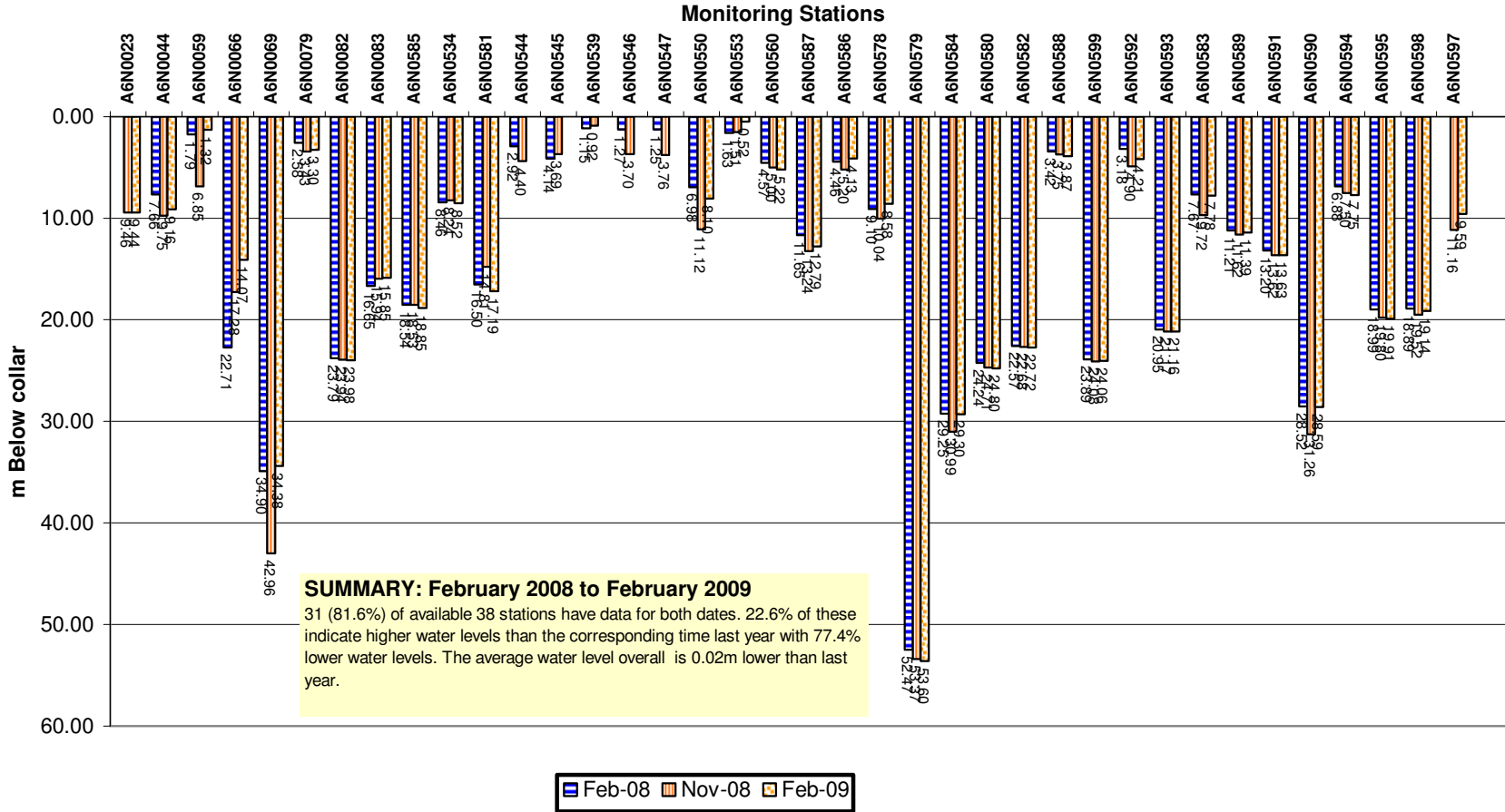
A6 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 9

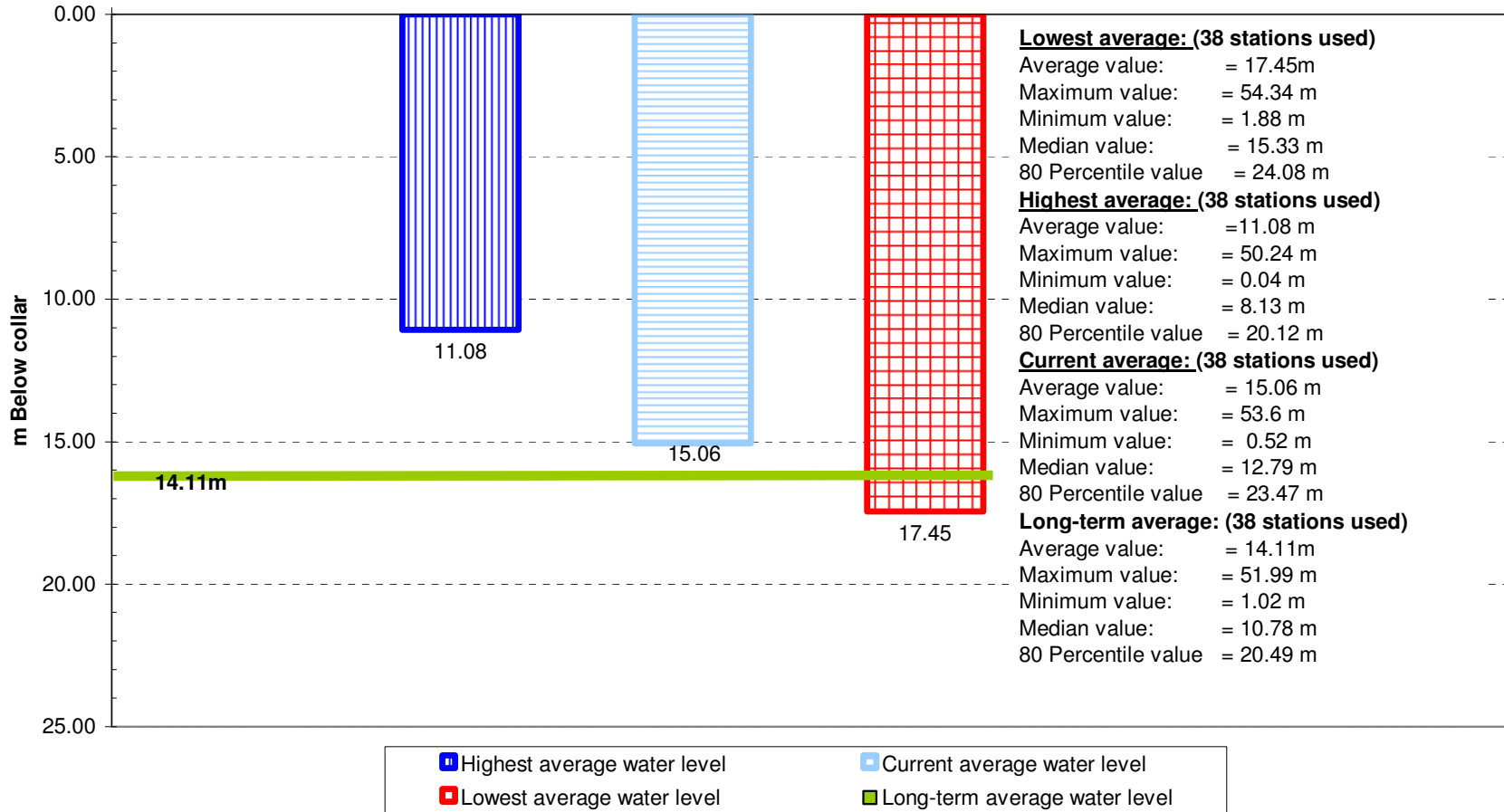
A6 DRAINAGE AREA

Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008, 1 November 2008, and 1 February 2009



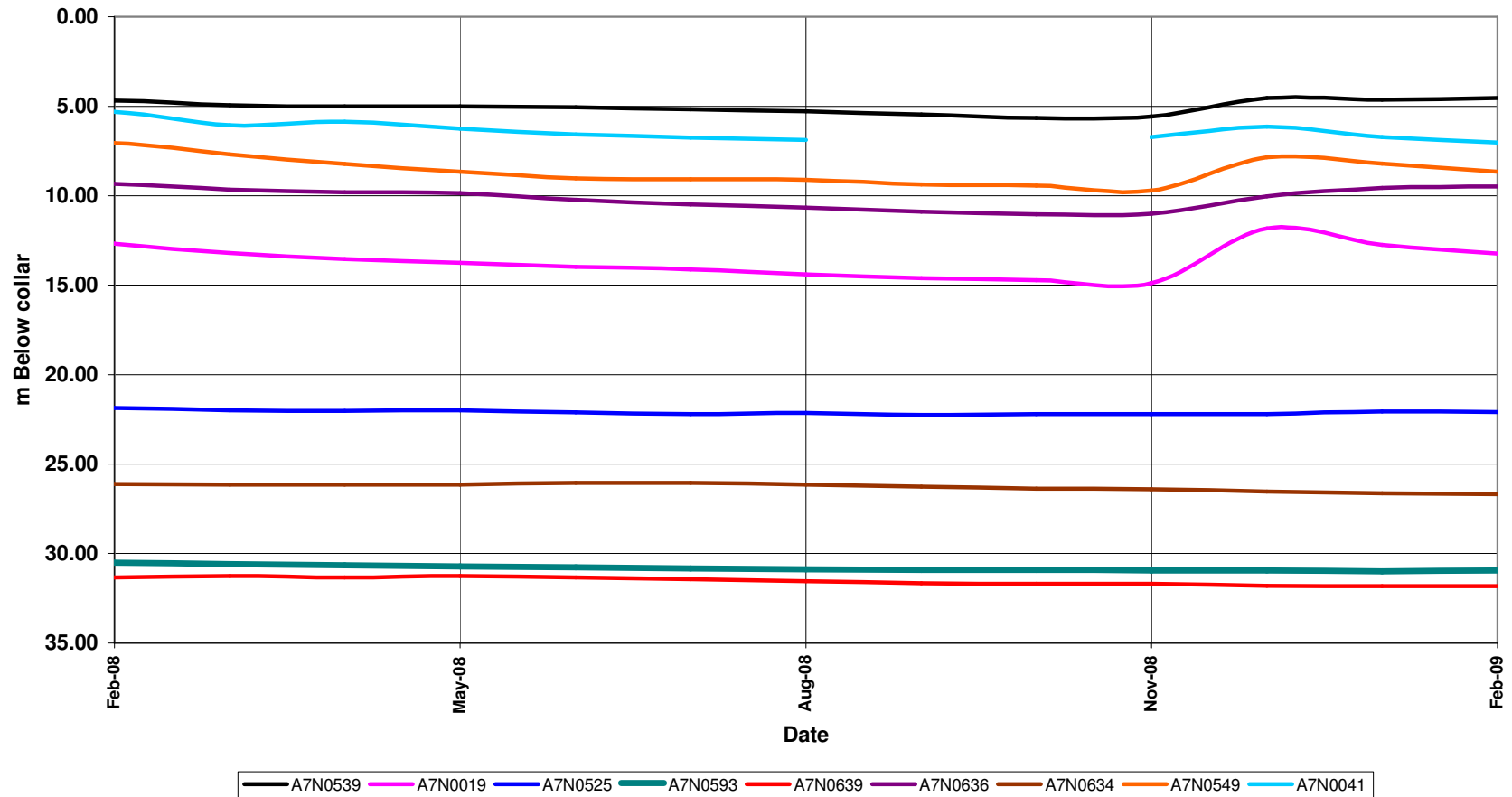
GRAPH 10

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



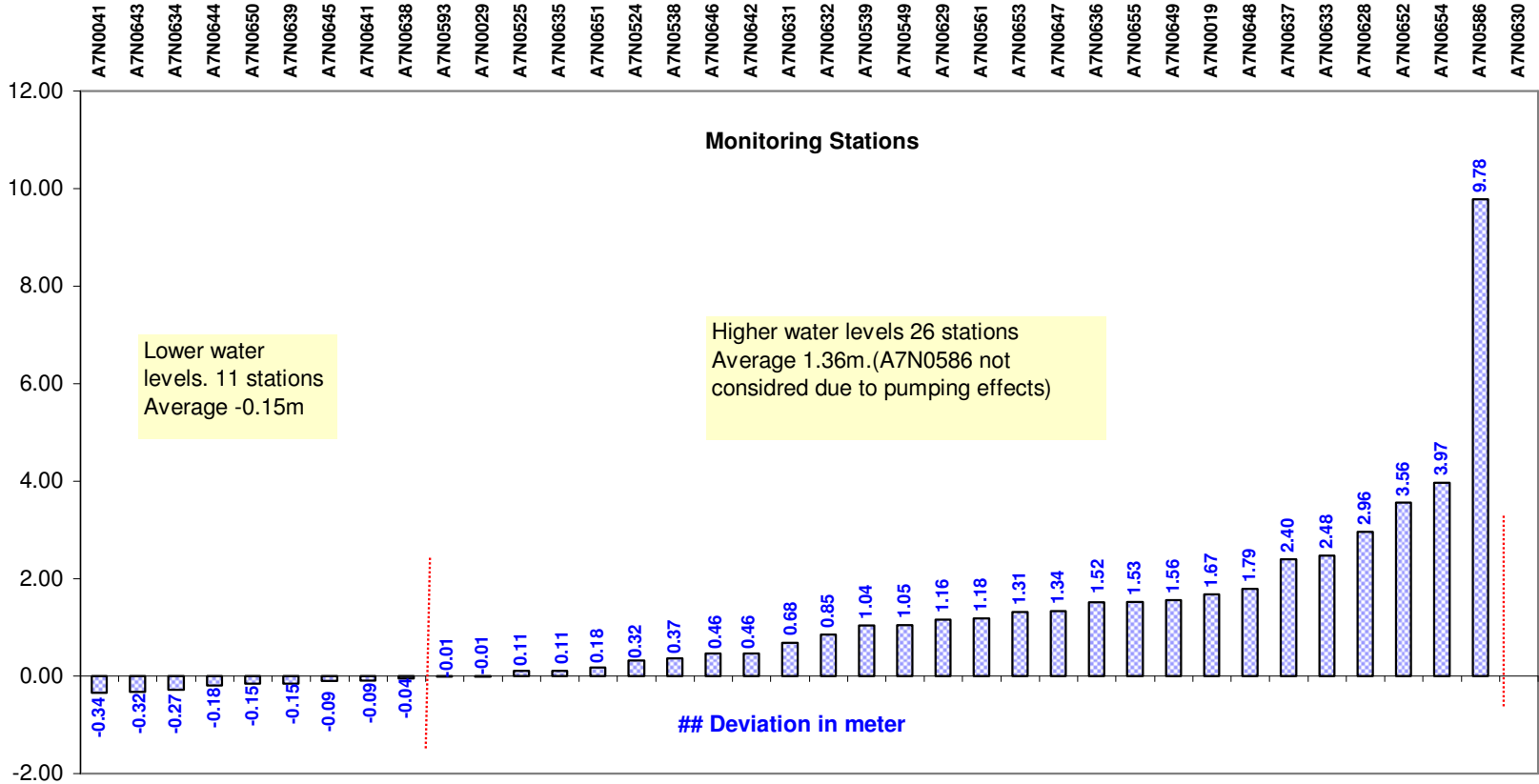
GRAPH 11

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A7 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 12

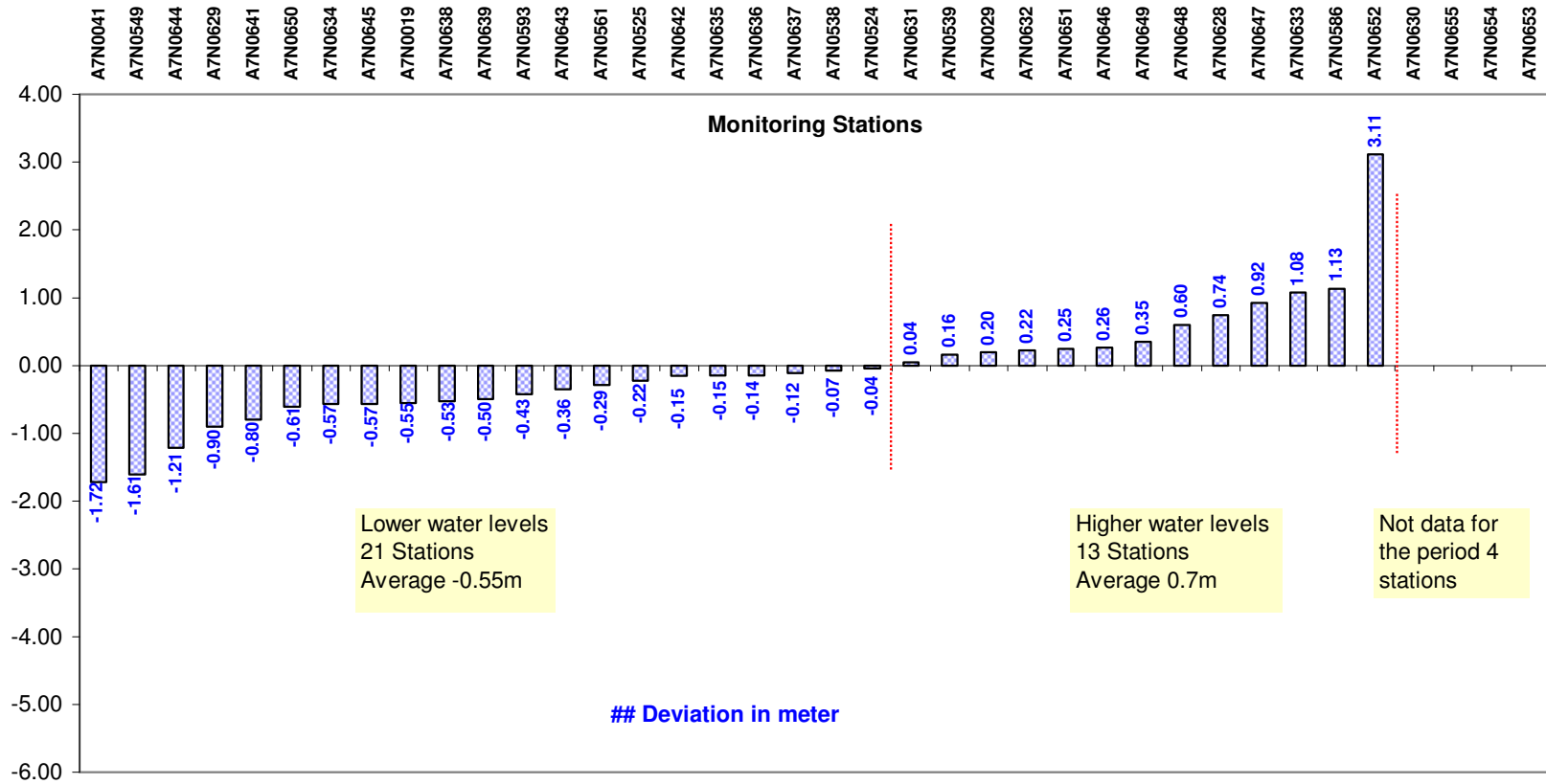
A7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water level depths: 1 November 2008
to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 13

A7 DRAINAGE AREA

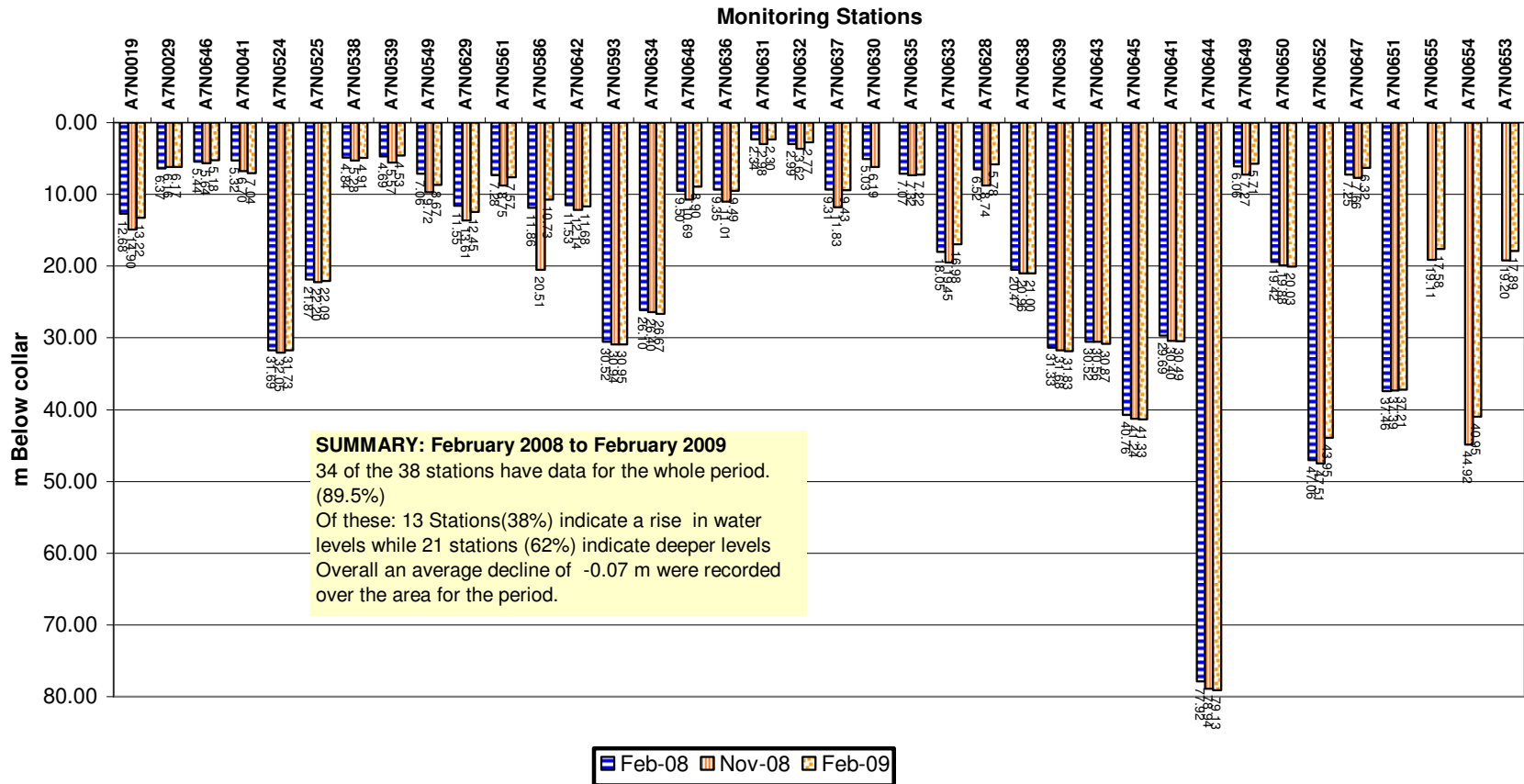
Deviation of water level depths: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 14

A7 DRAINAGE AREA

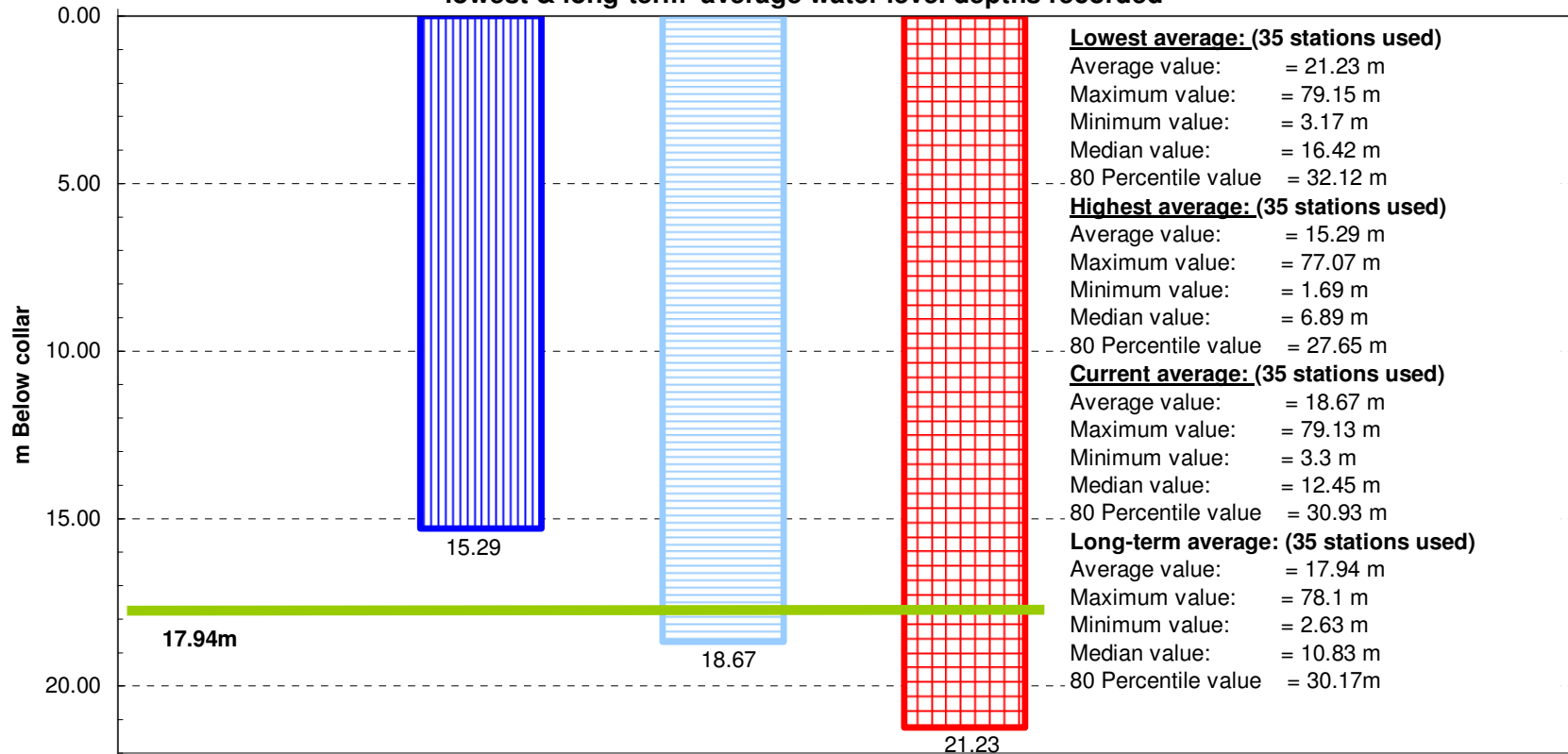
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008, 1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



GRAPH 15

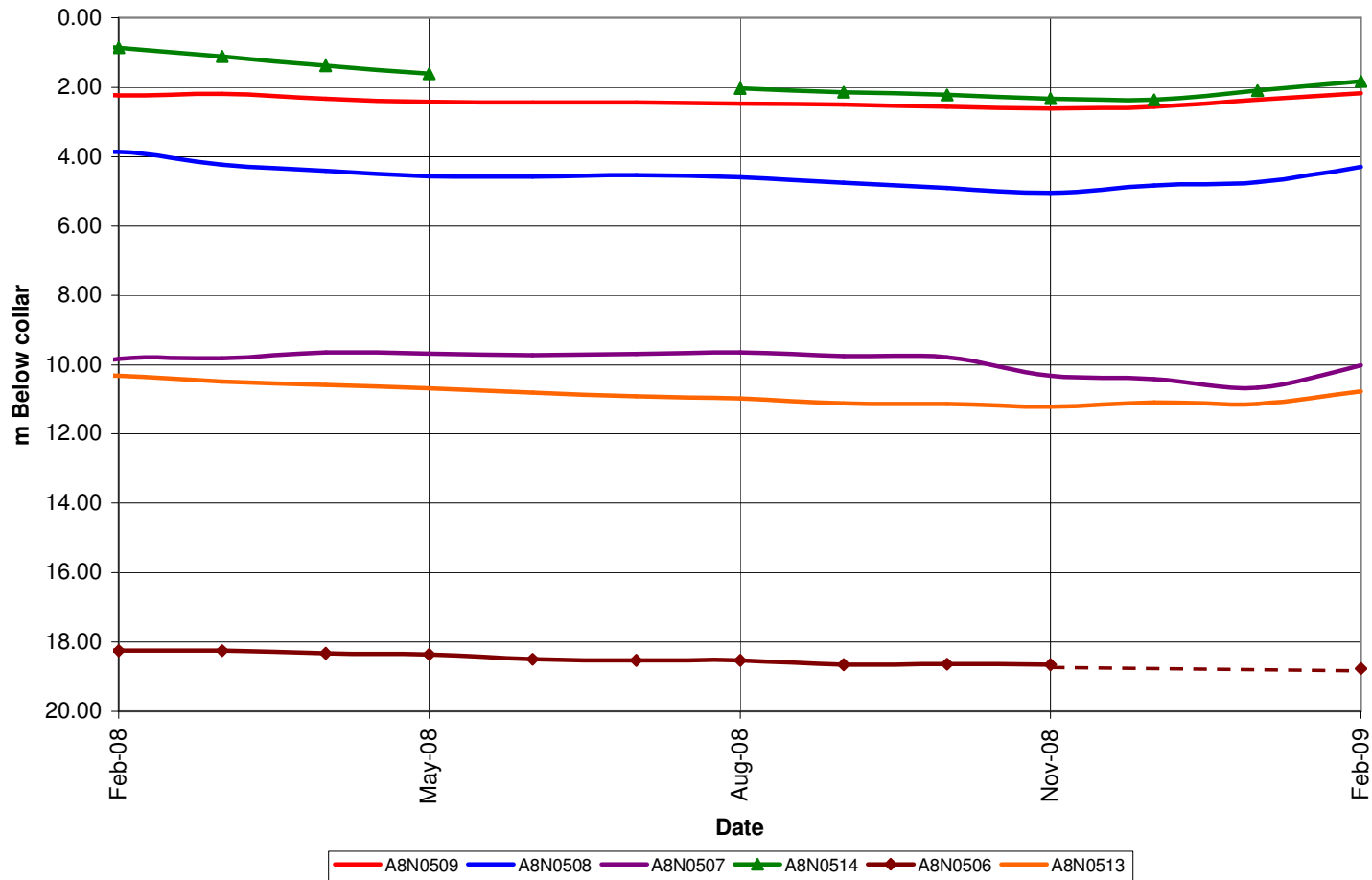
A7 DRAINAGE AREA

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



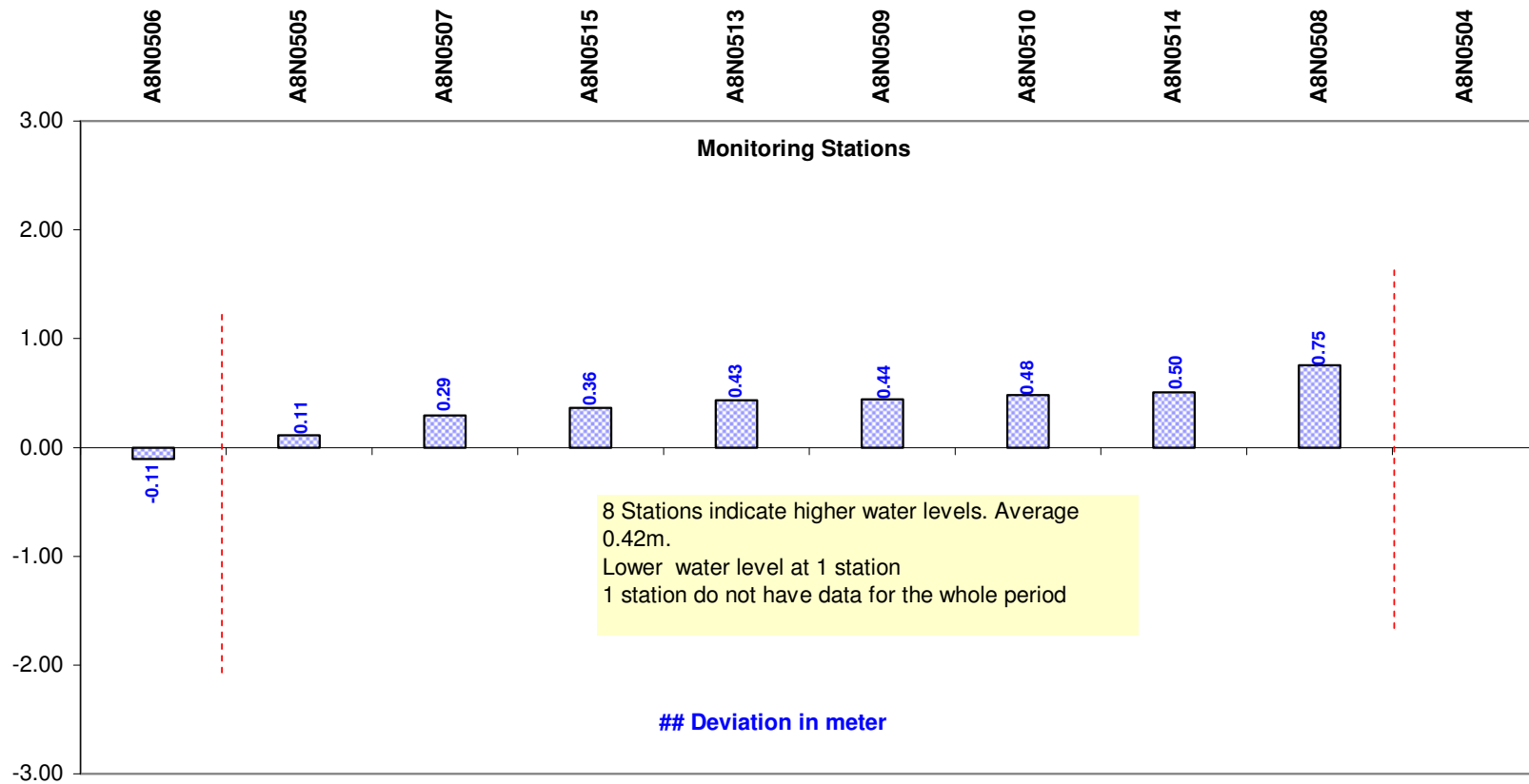
GRAPH 16

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A8 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



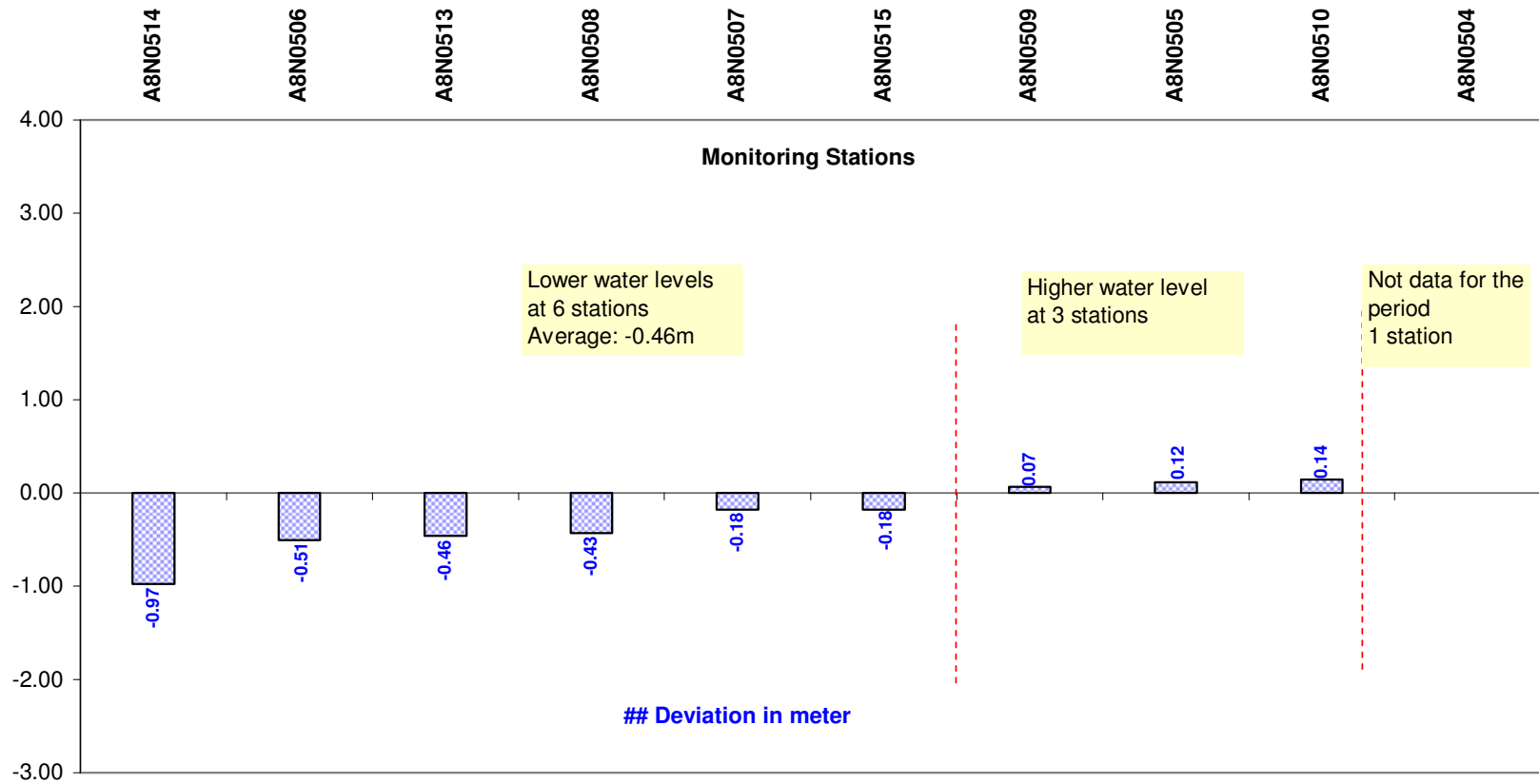
GRAPH 17

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water level depths: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



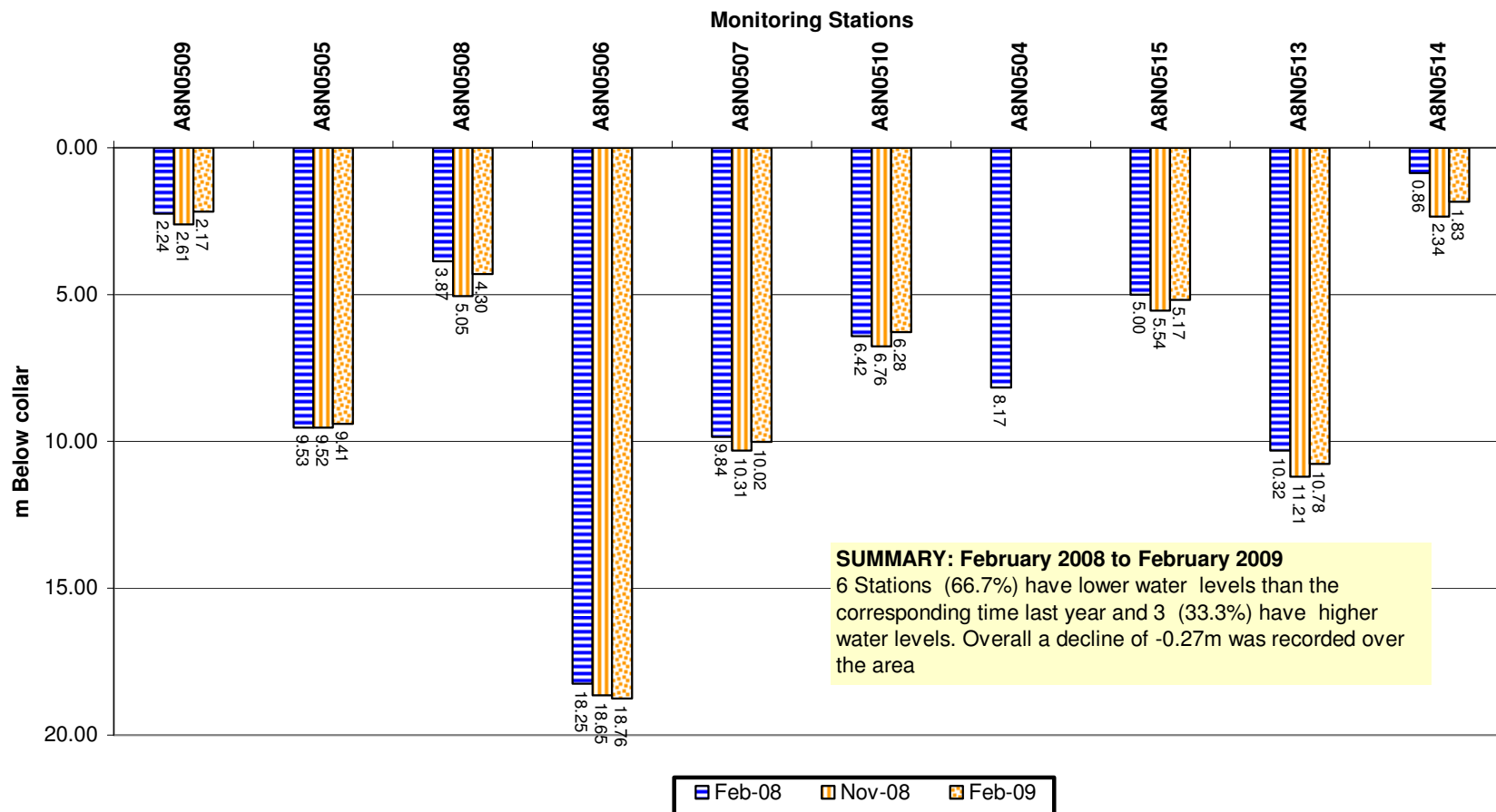
GRAPH 18

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



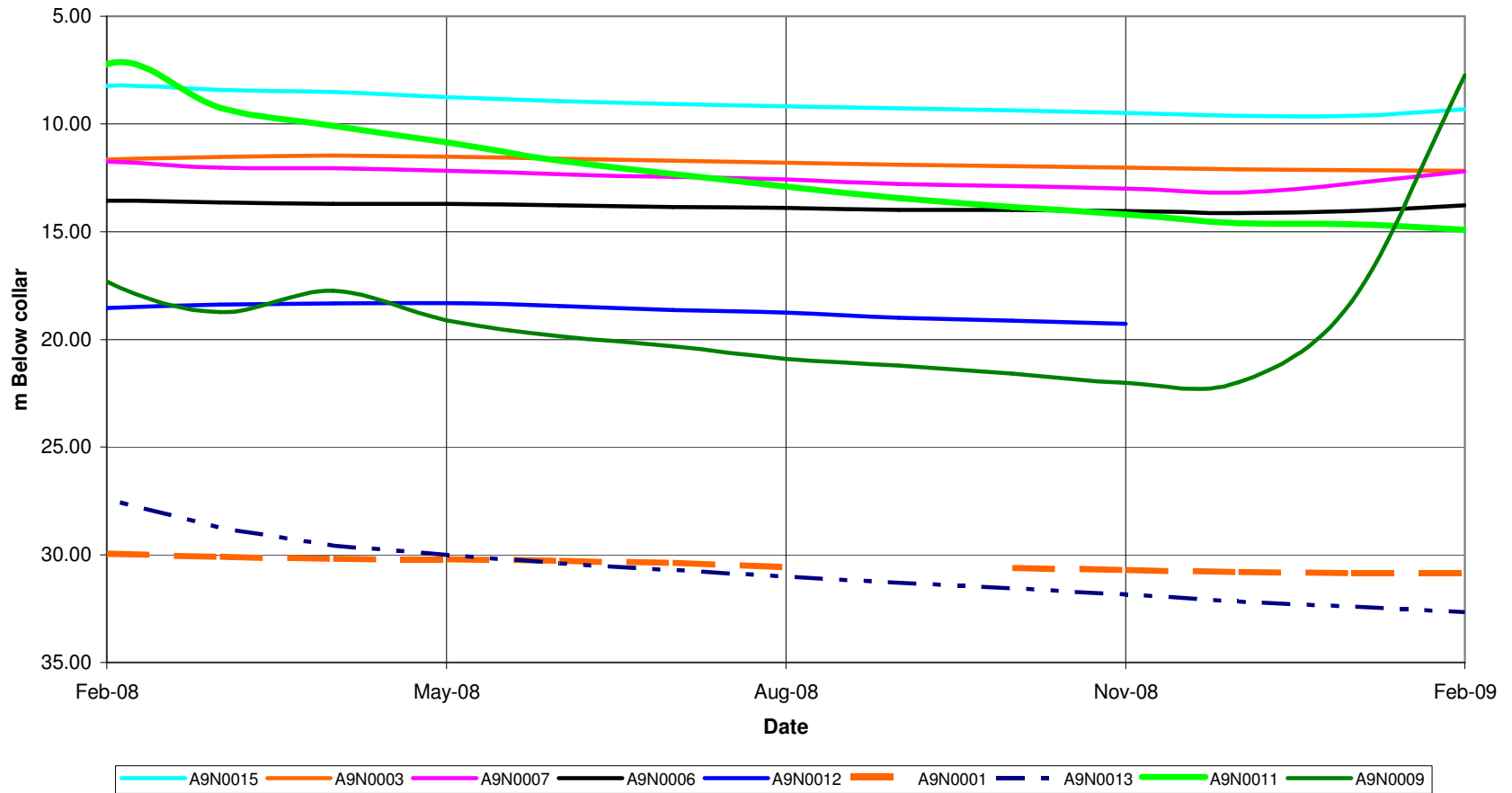
GRAPH 19

A8 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



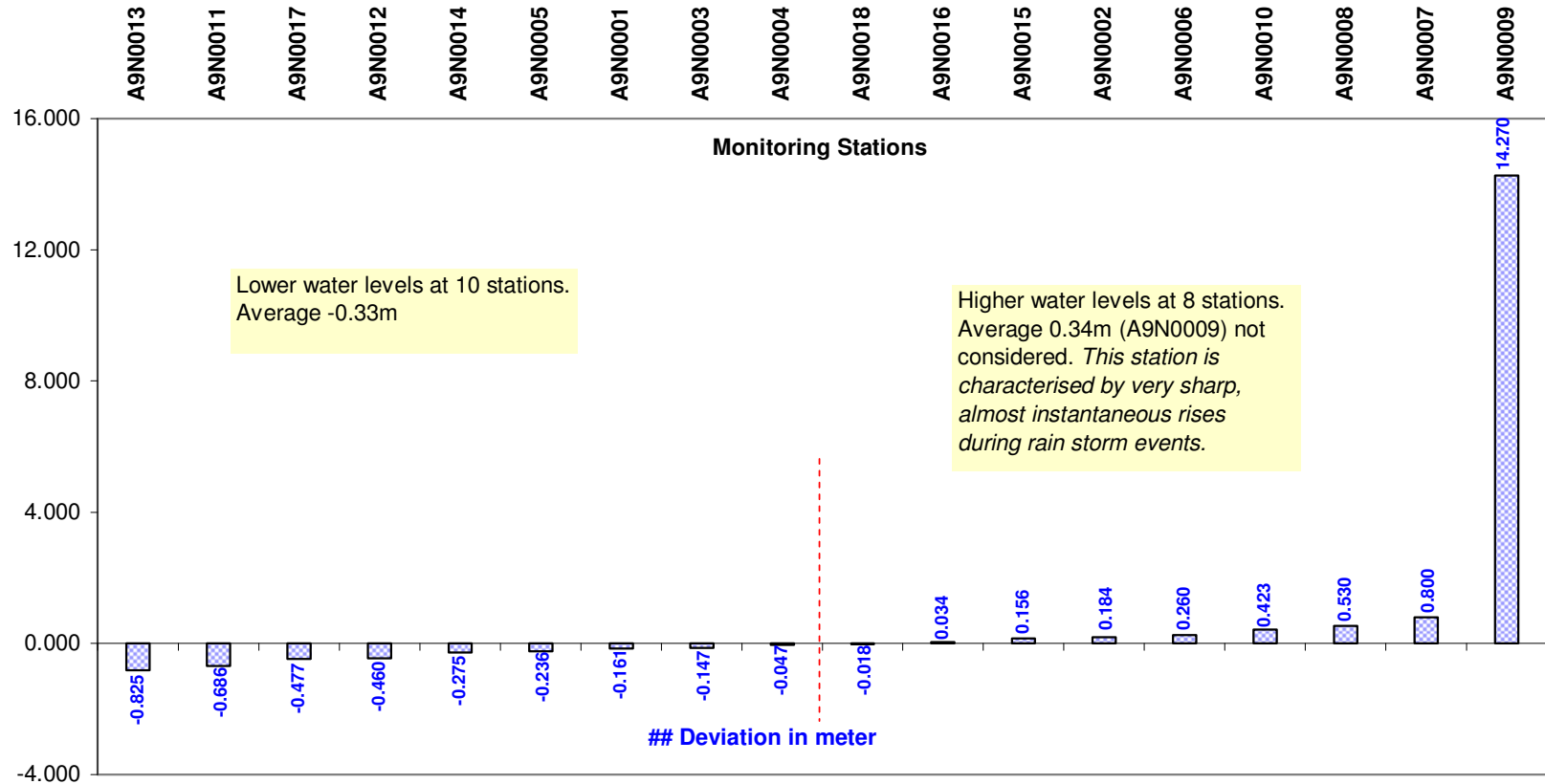
GRAPH 20

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in A9 drainage :
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



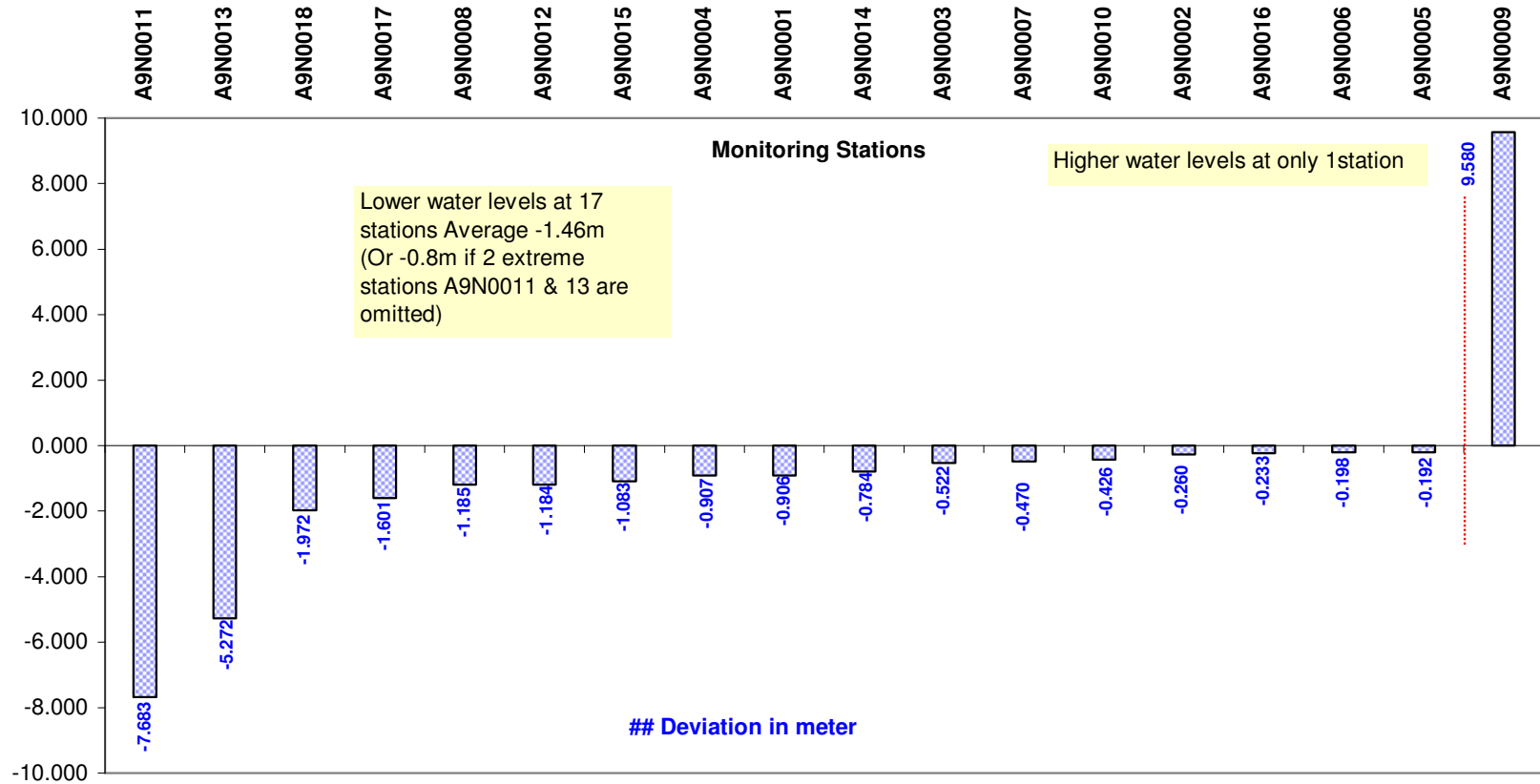
GRAPH 21

A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 22

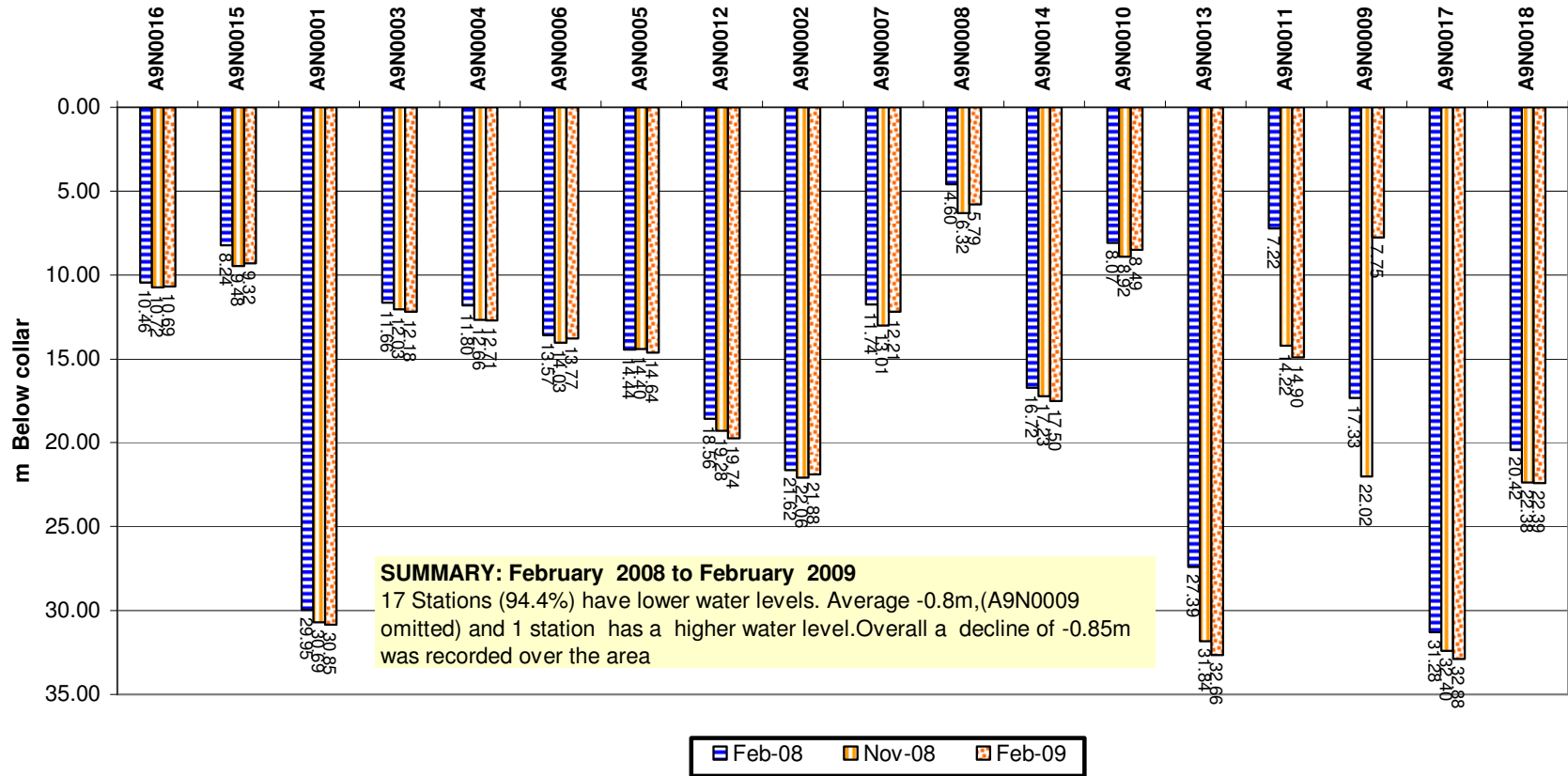
A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 23

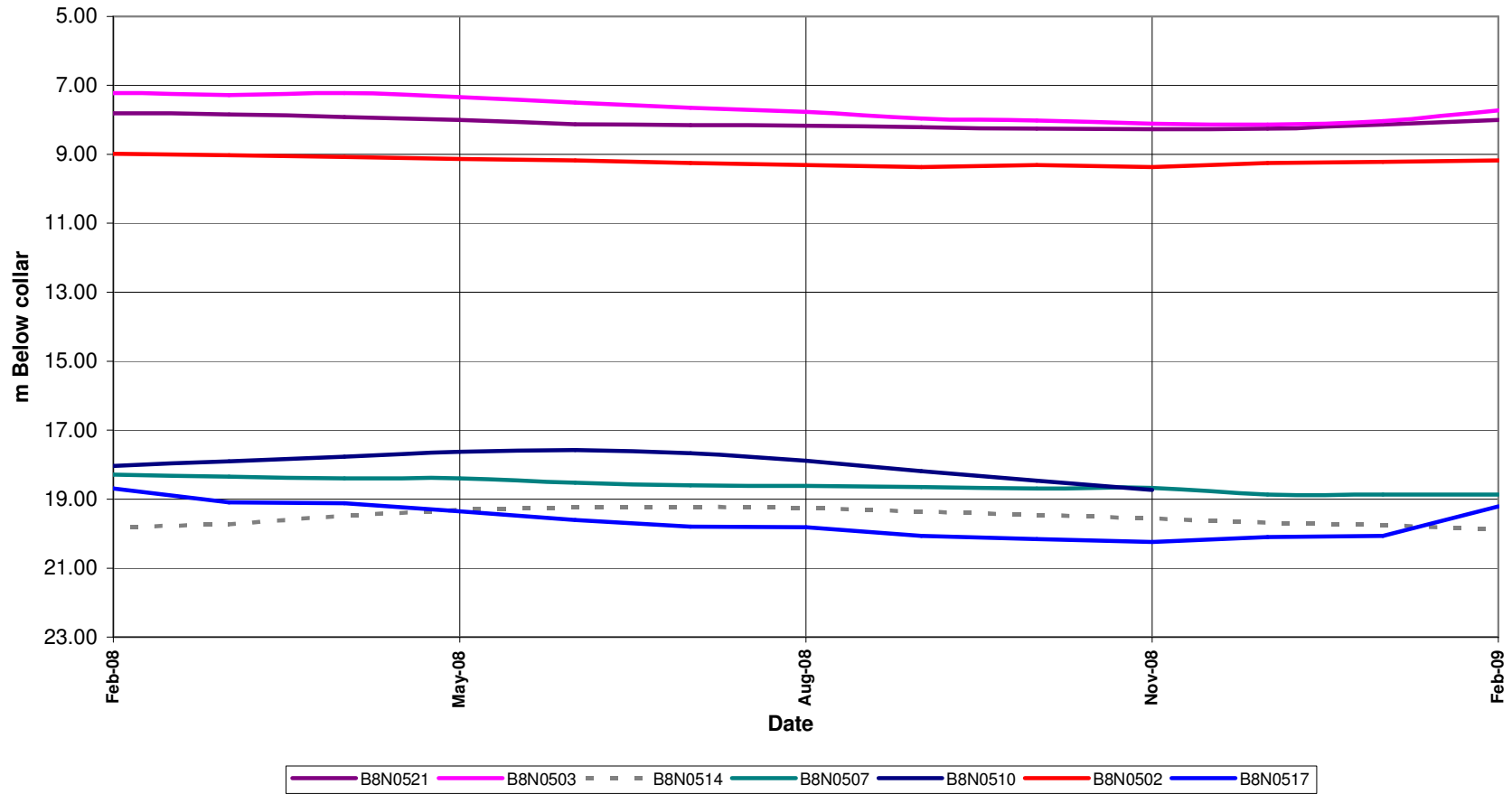
A9 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009

Monitoring Stations



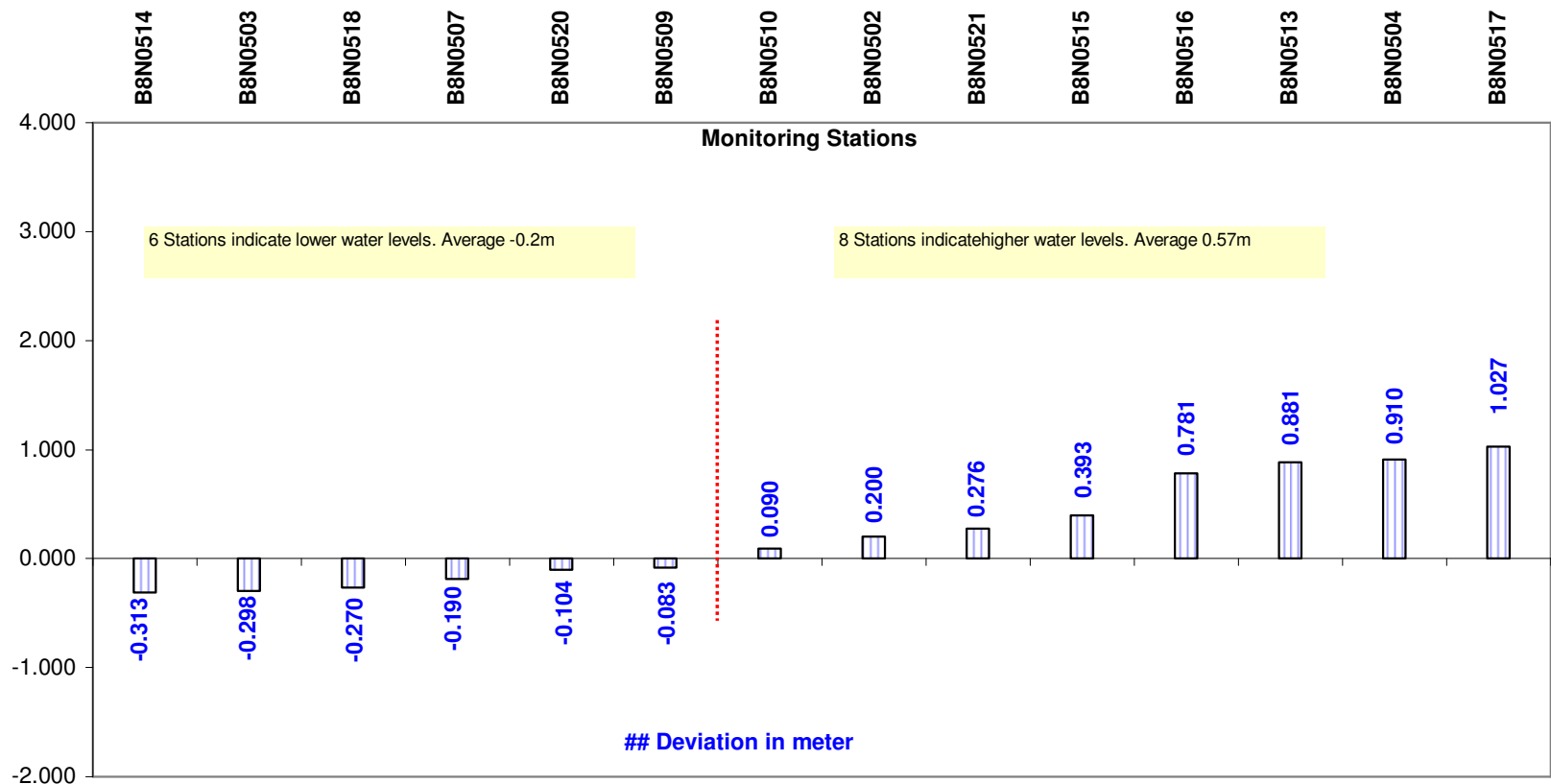
GRAPH 24

Comparison of water level trends at some stations in B8 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



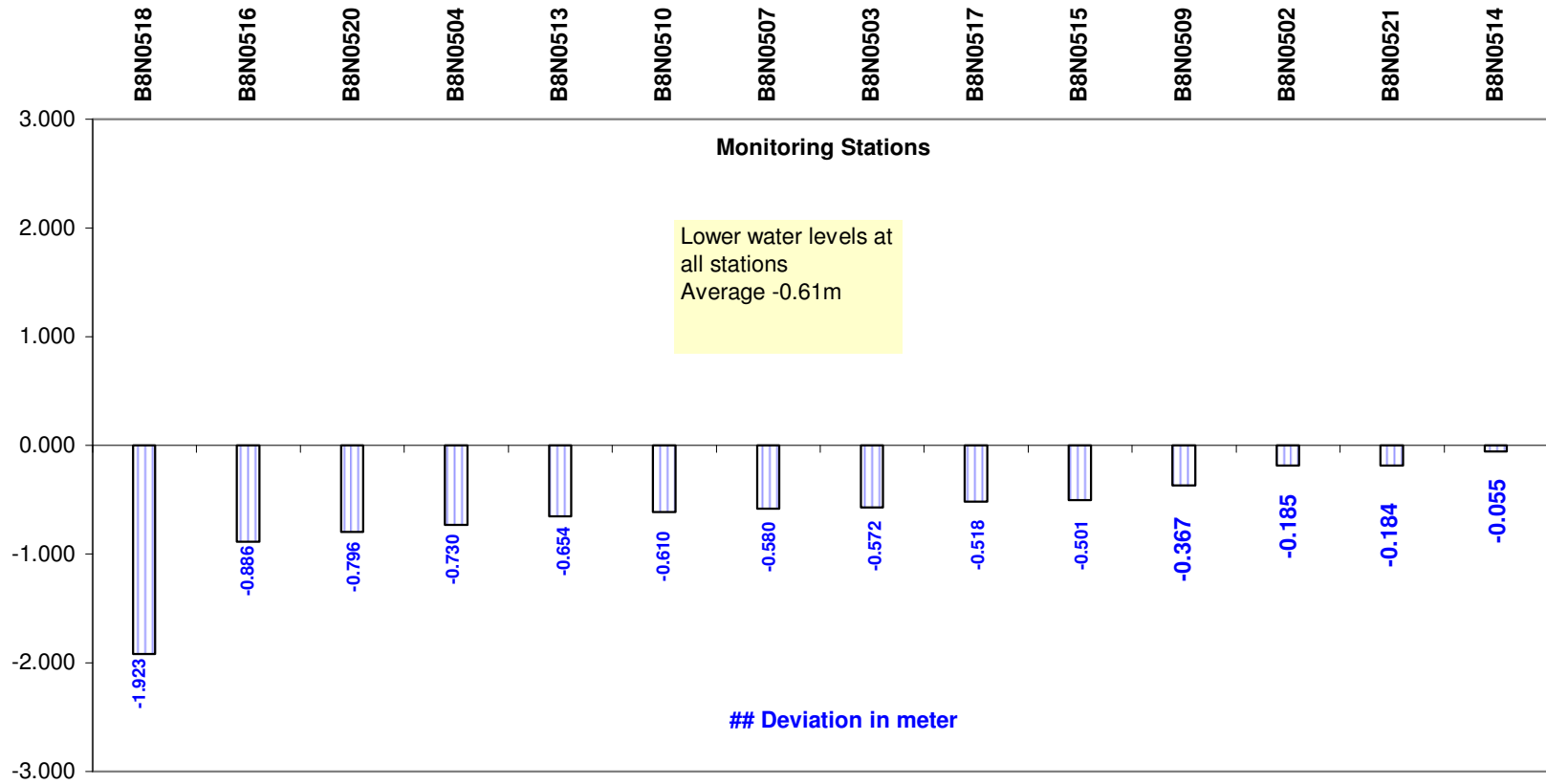
GRAPH 25

B8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



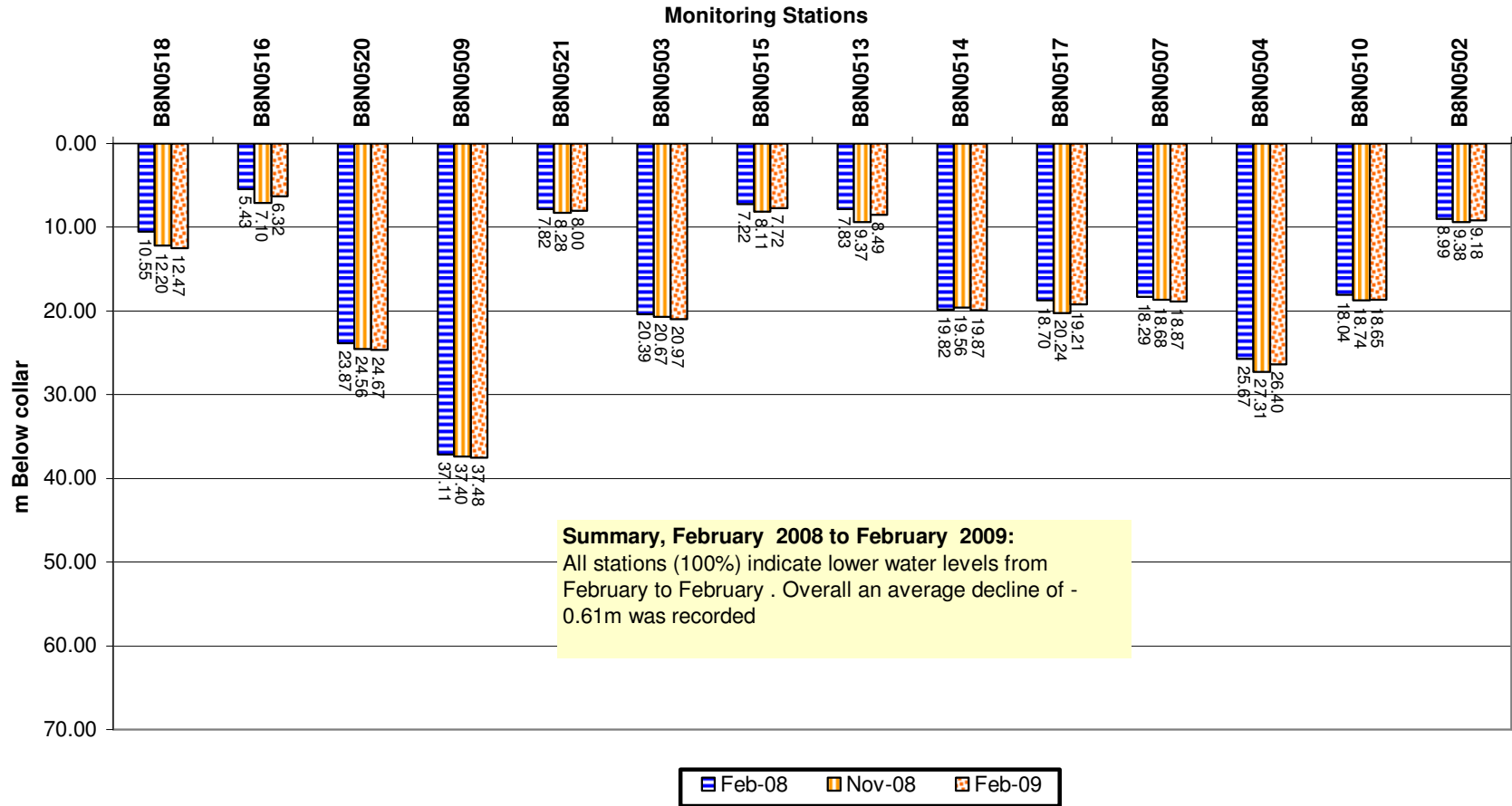
GRAPH 26

B8 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



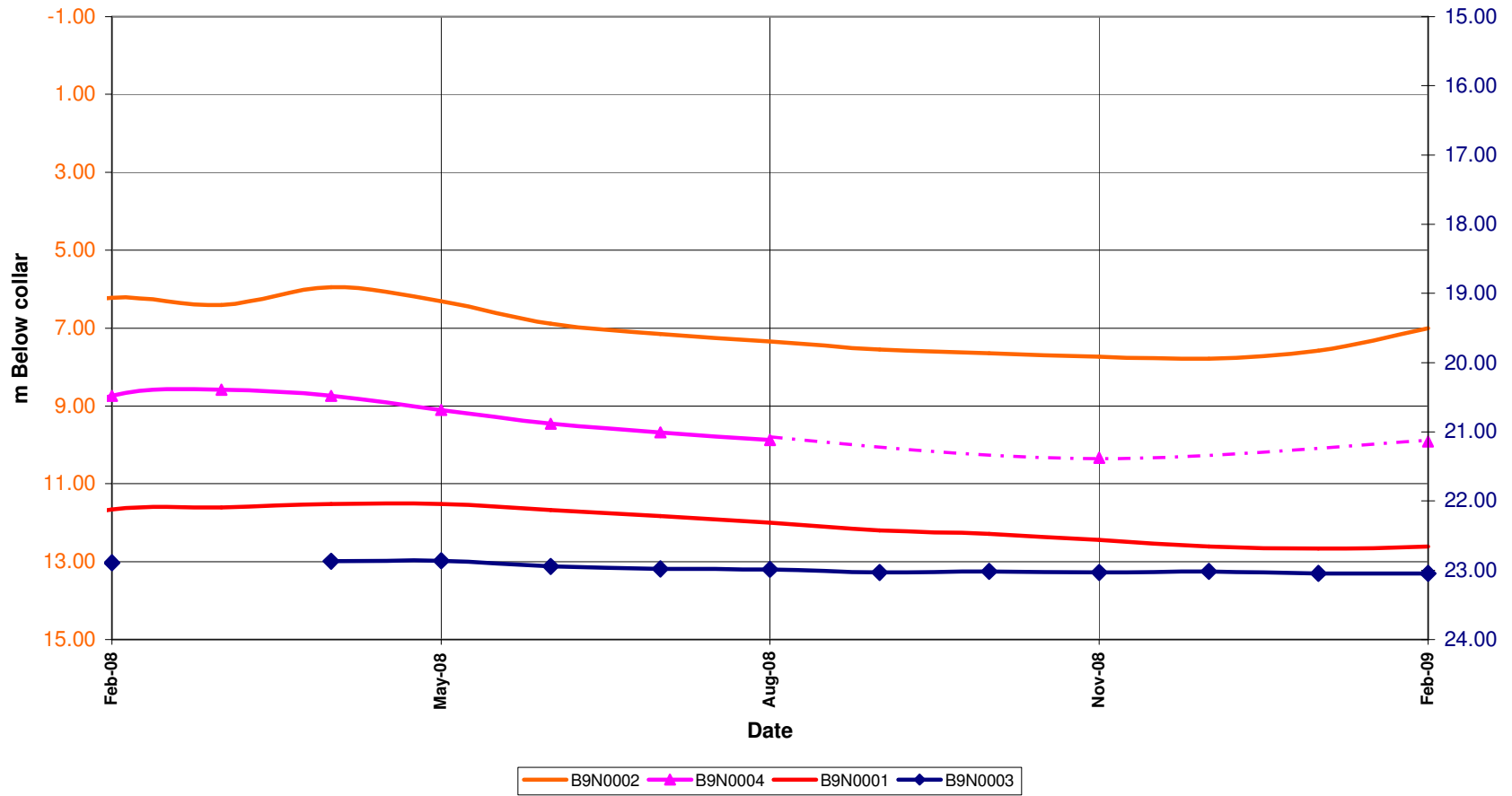
GRAPH 27

B8 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



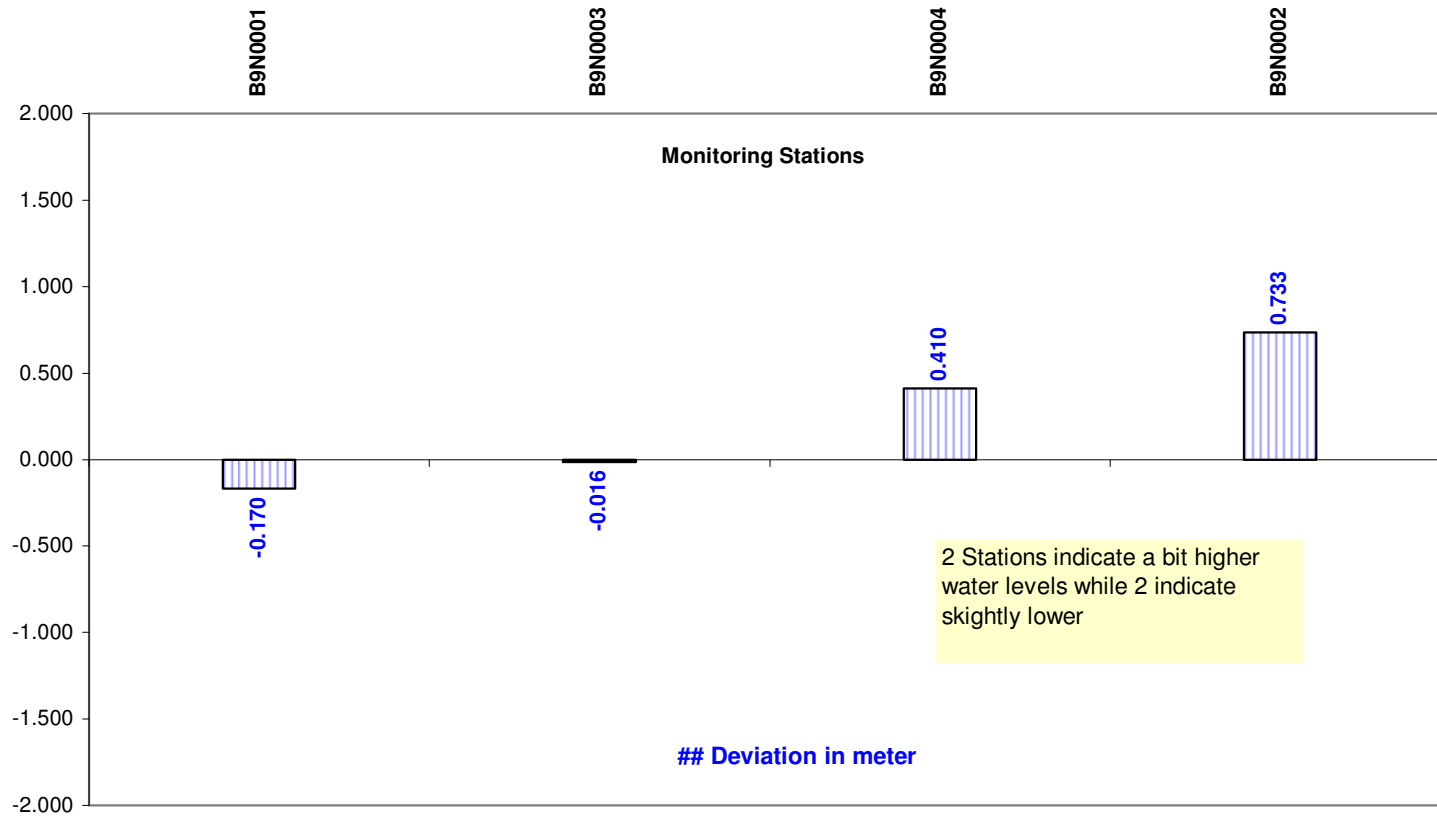
GRAPH 28

**Comparison of water level trends of stations in B9 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009**



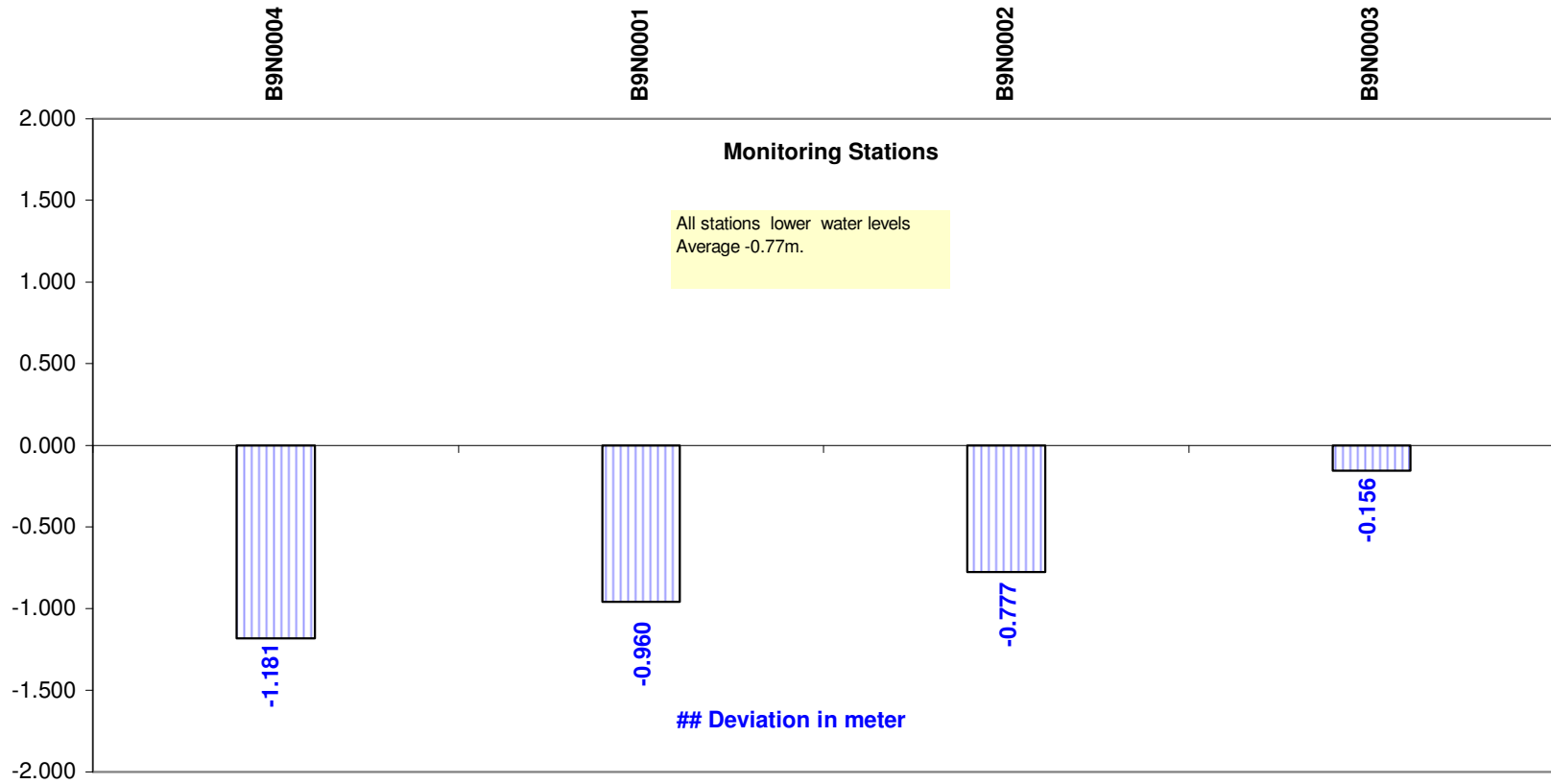
GRAPH 29

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



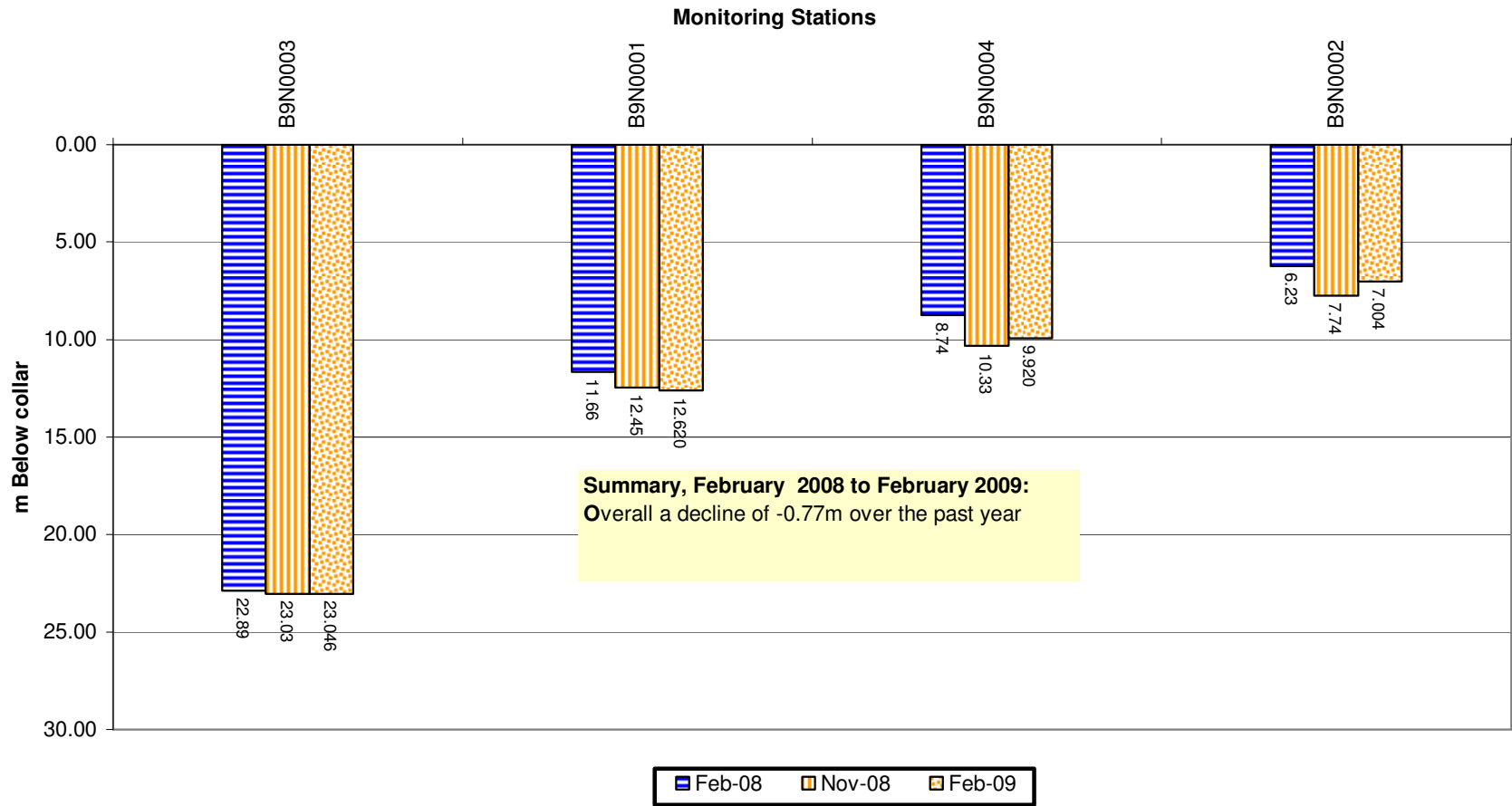
GRAPH 30

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



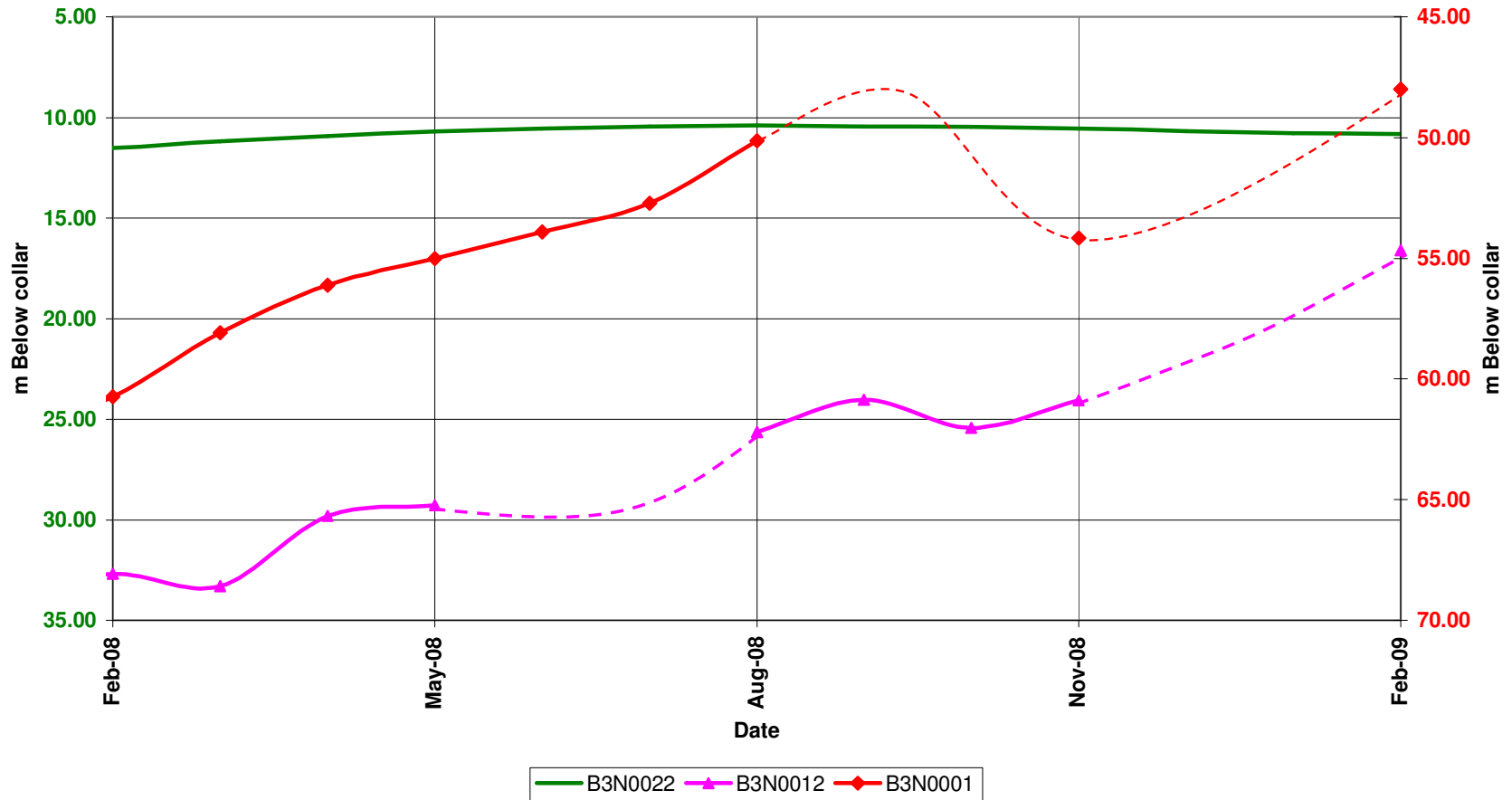
GRAPH 31

B9 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



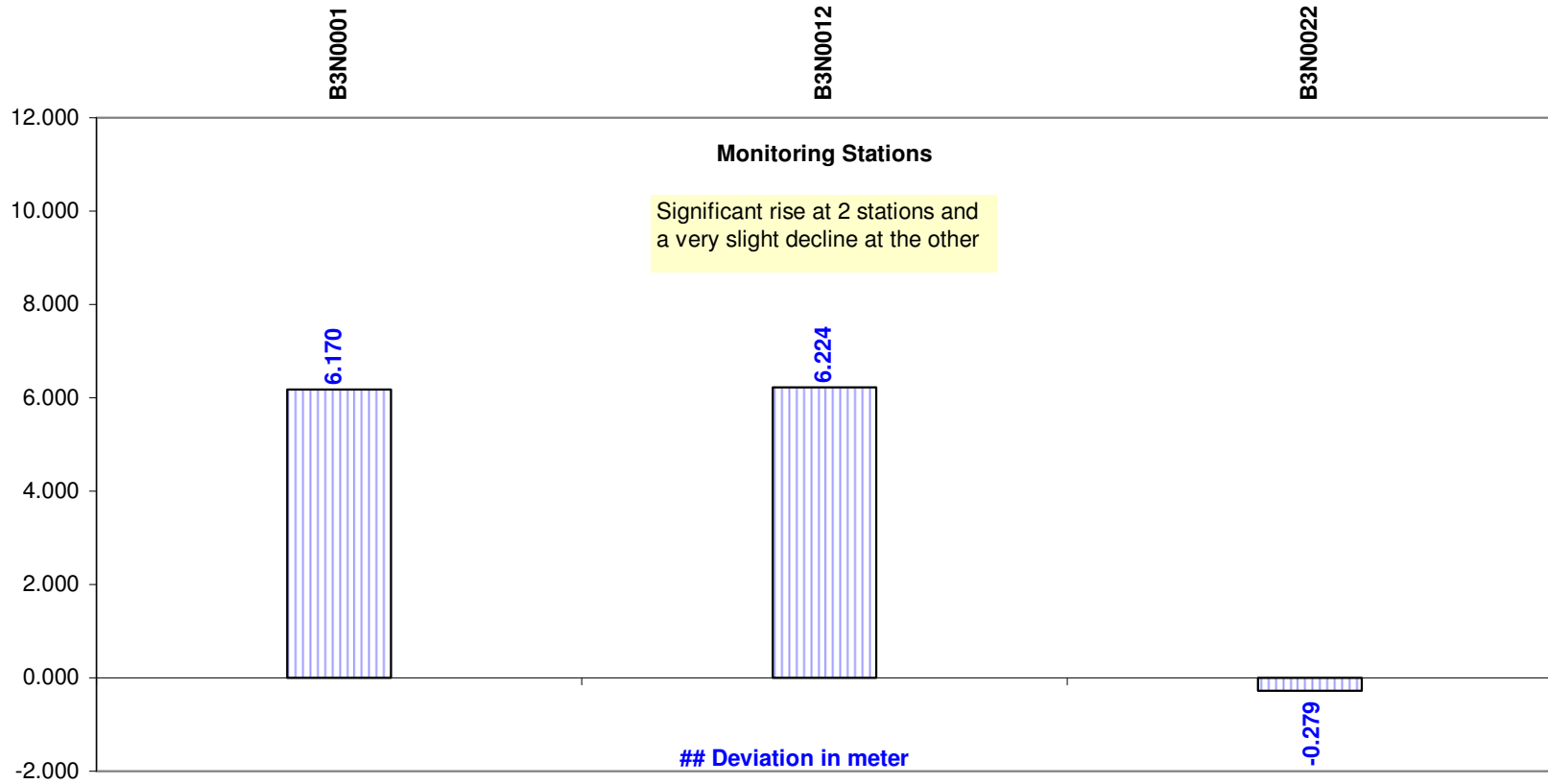
GRAPH 32

Comparison of water level trends at stations in B3 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



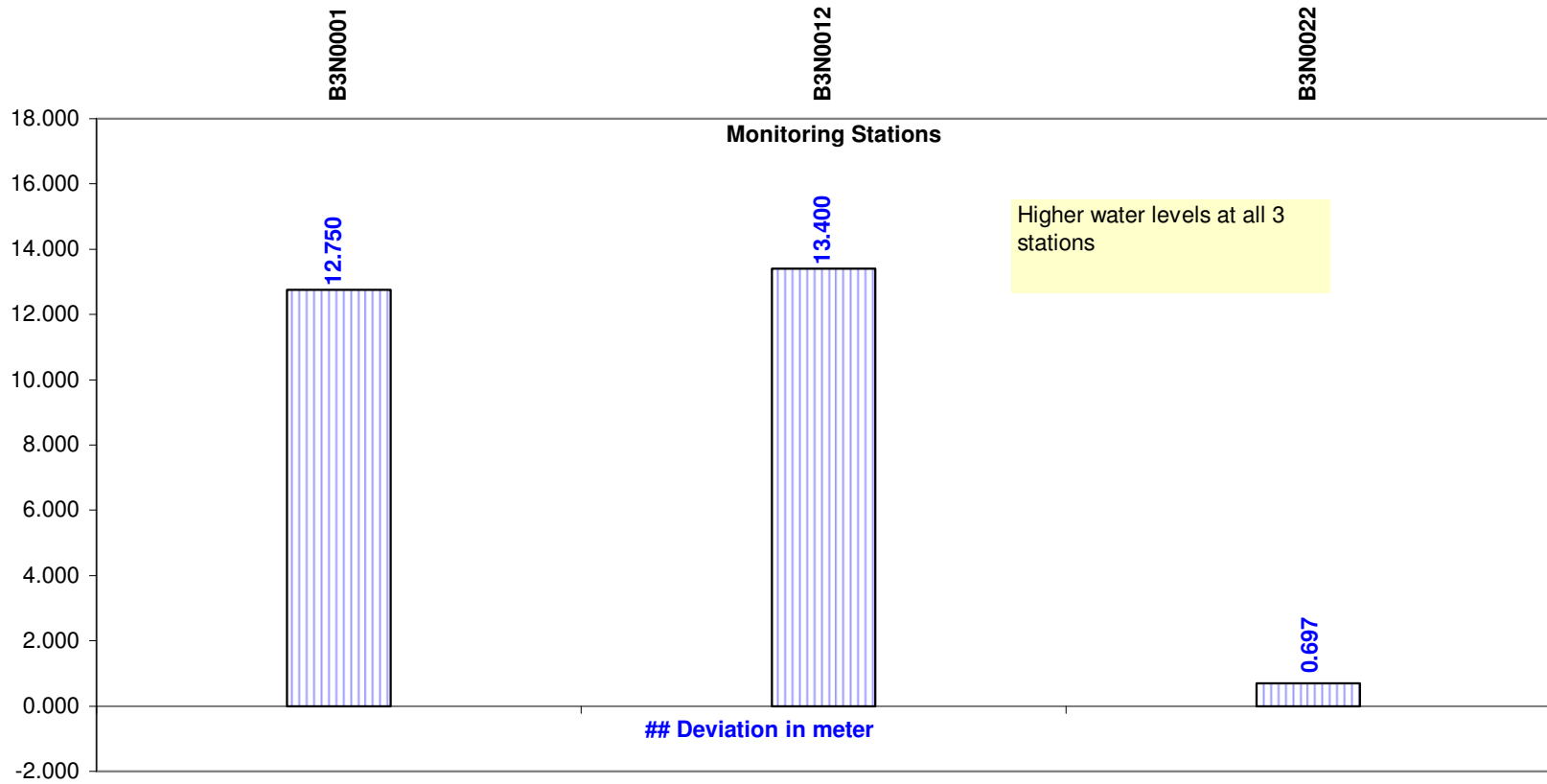
GRAPH 33

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



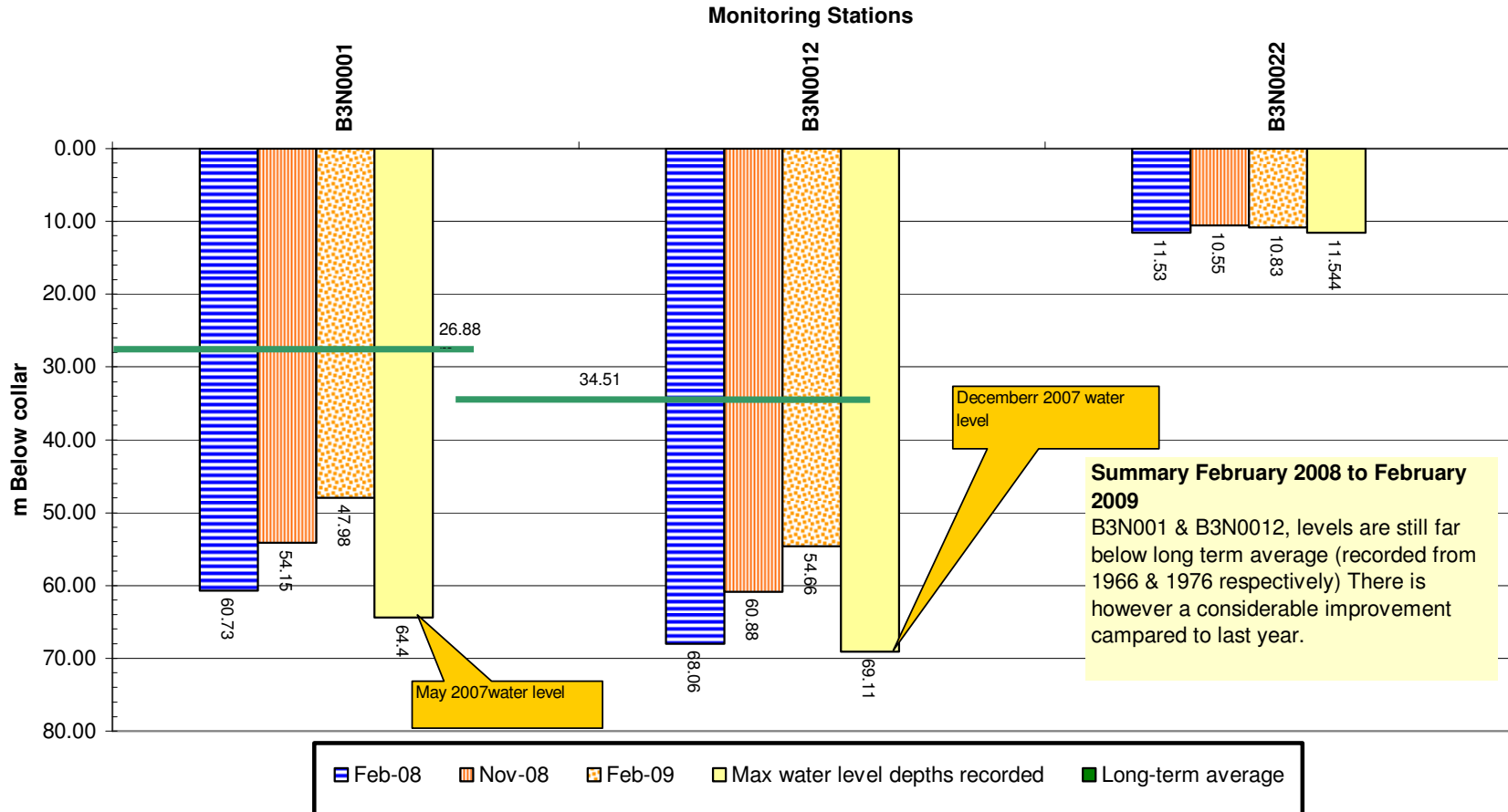
GRAPH 34

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



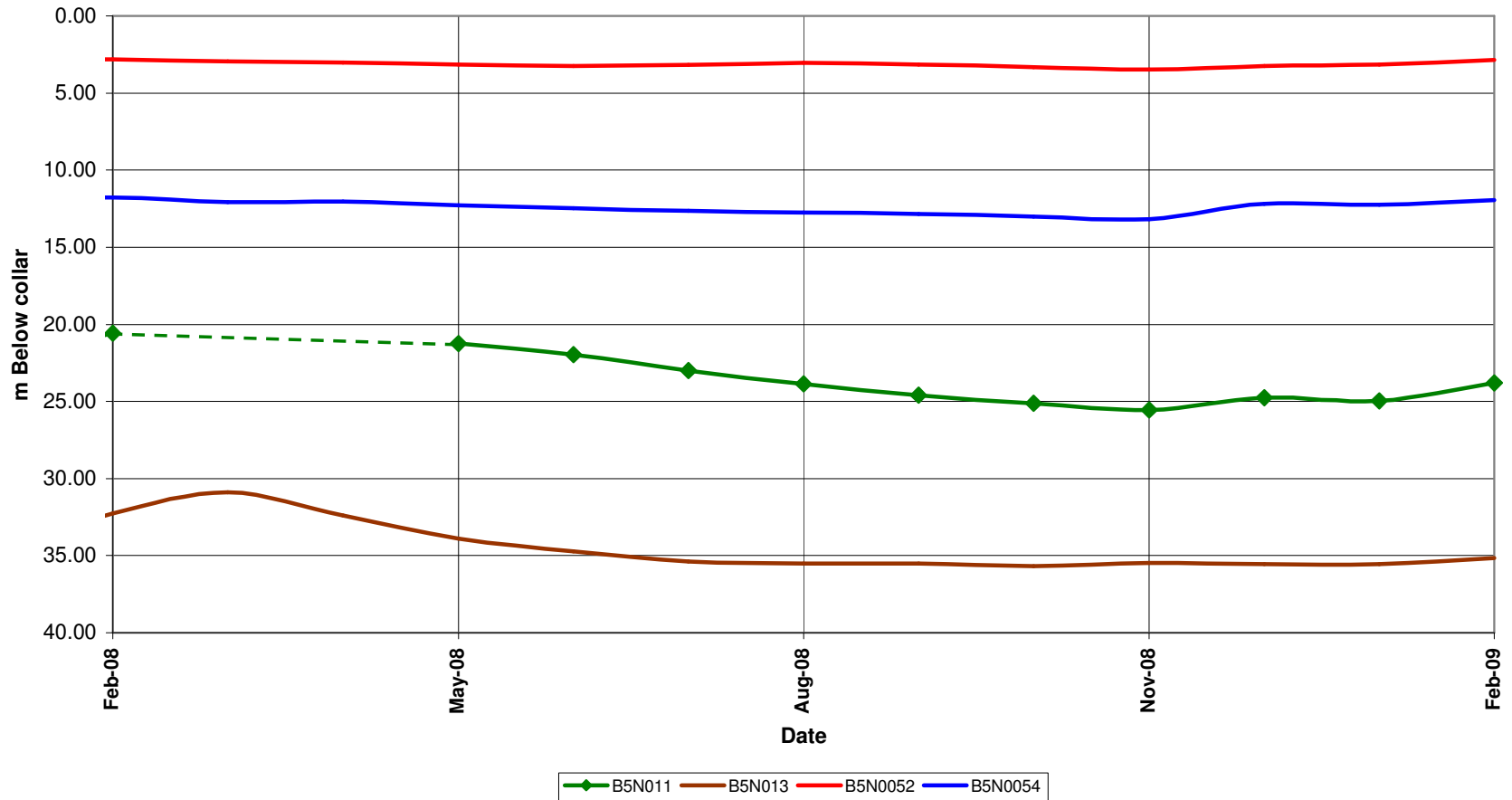
GRAPH 35

B3 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008
1 November 2008, 1 February 2009 and maximum depths recorded



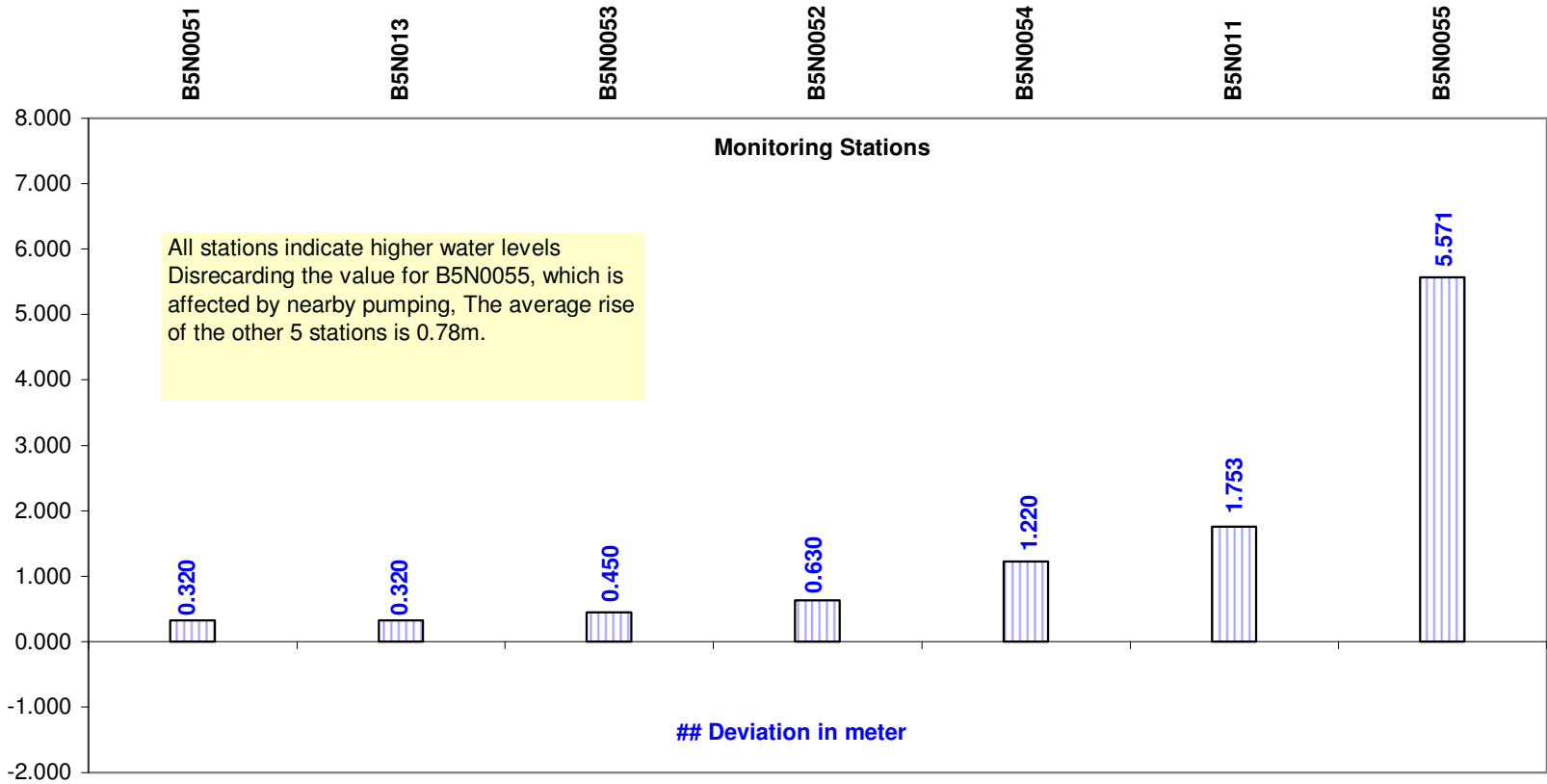
GRAPH 36

Comparison of water level trends at stations in B5 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



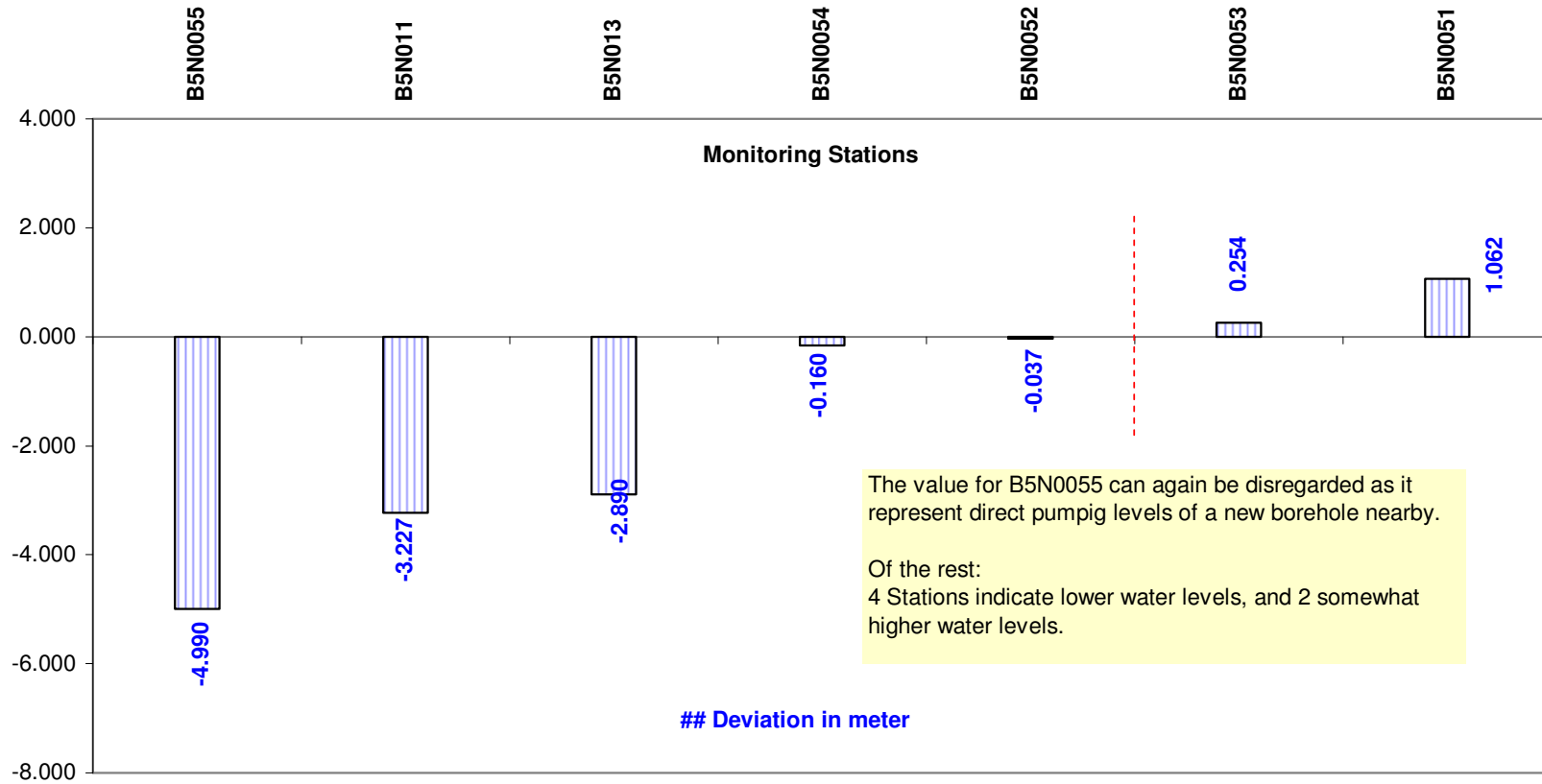
GRAPH 37

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



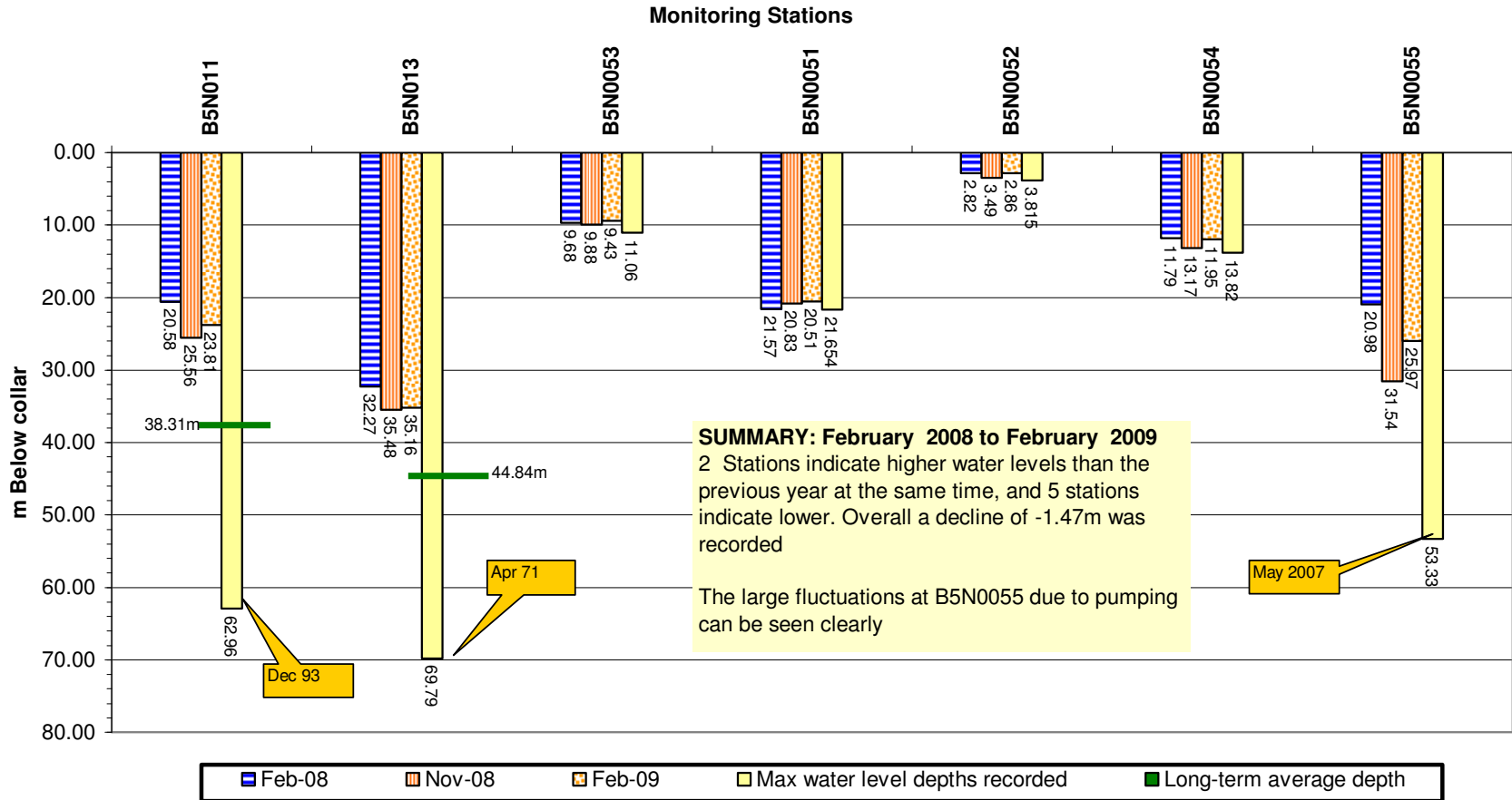
GRAPH 38

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



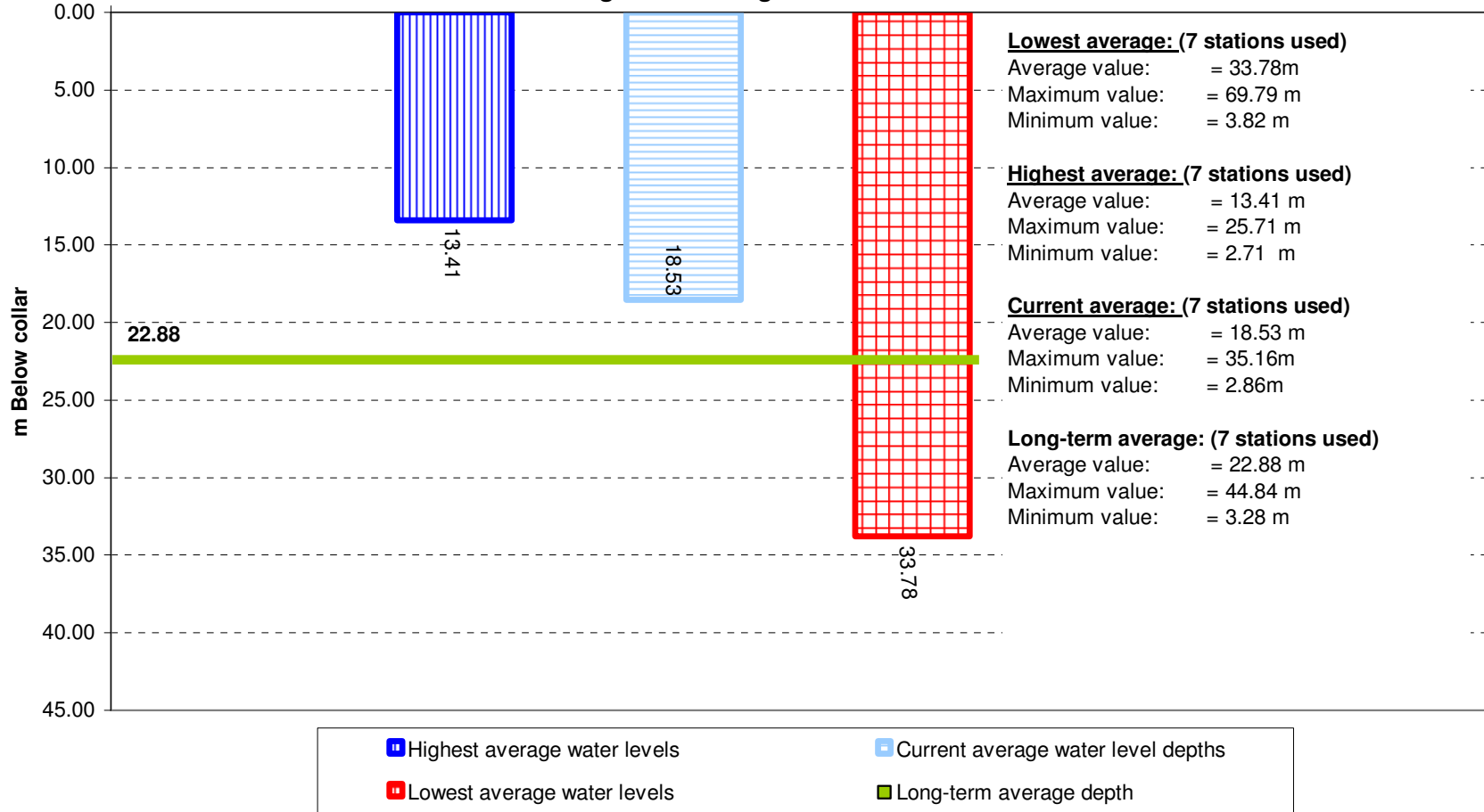
GRAPH 39

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water level depths: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 , 1 February 2009 and maximum depths recorded



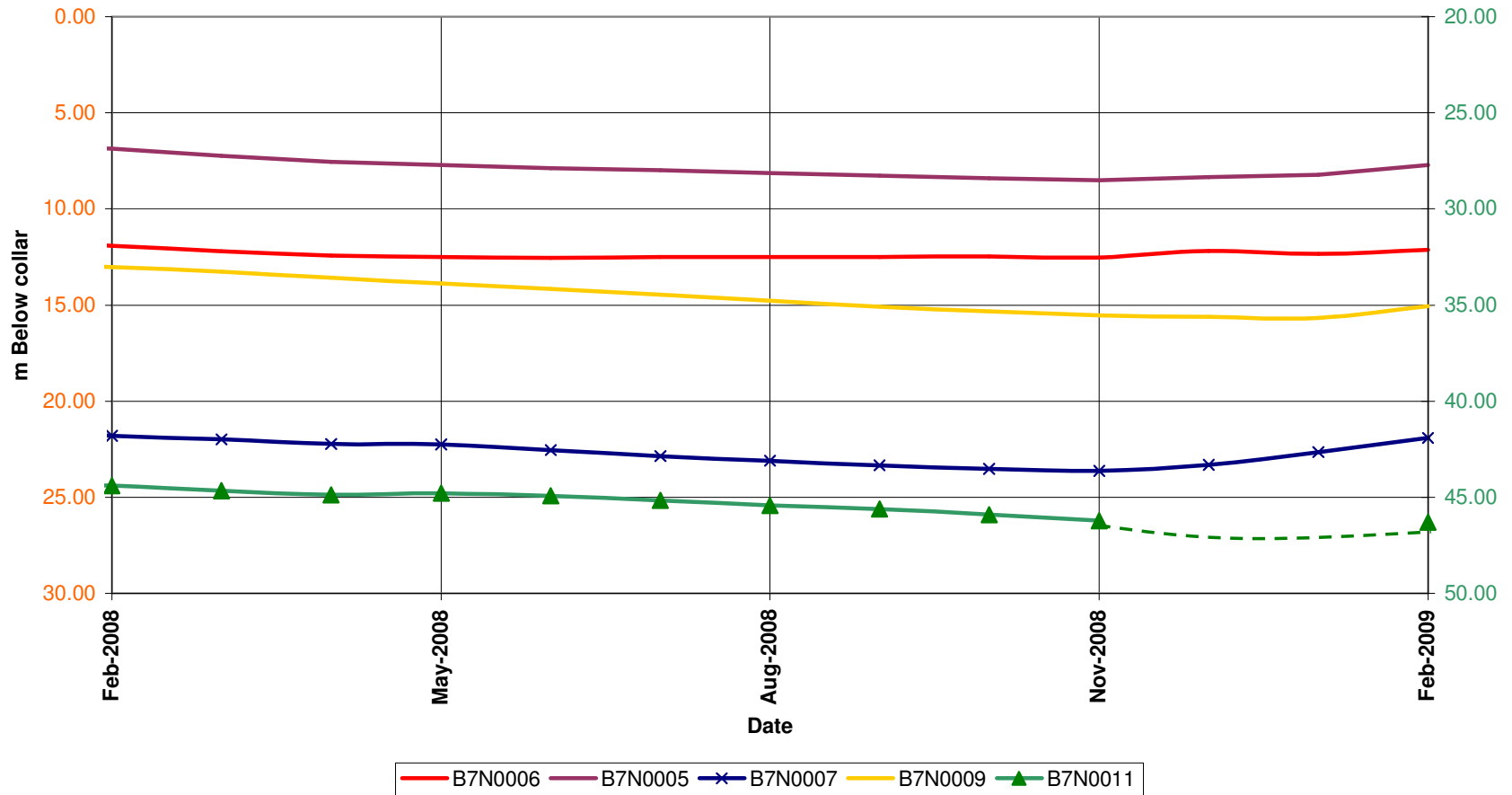
GRAPH 40

B5 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison of average current water level with highest, lowest & long-term average water levels recorded



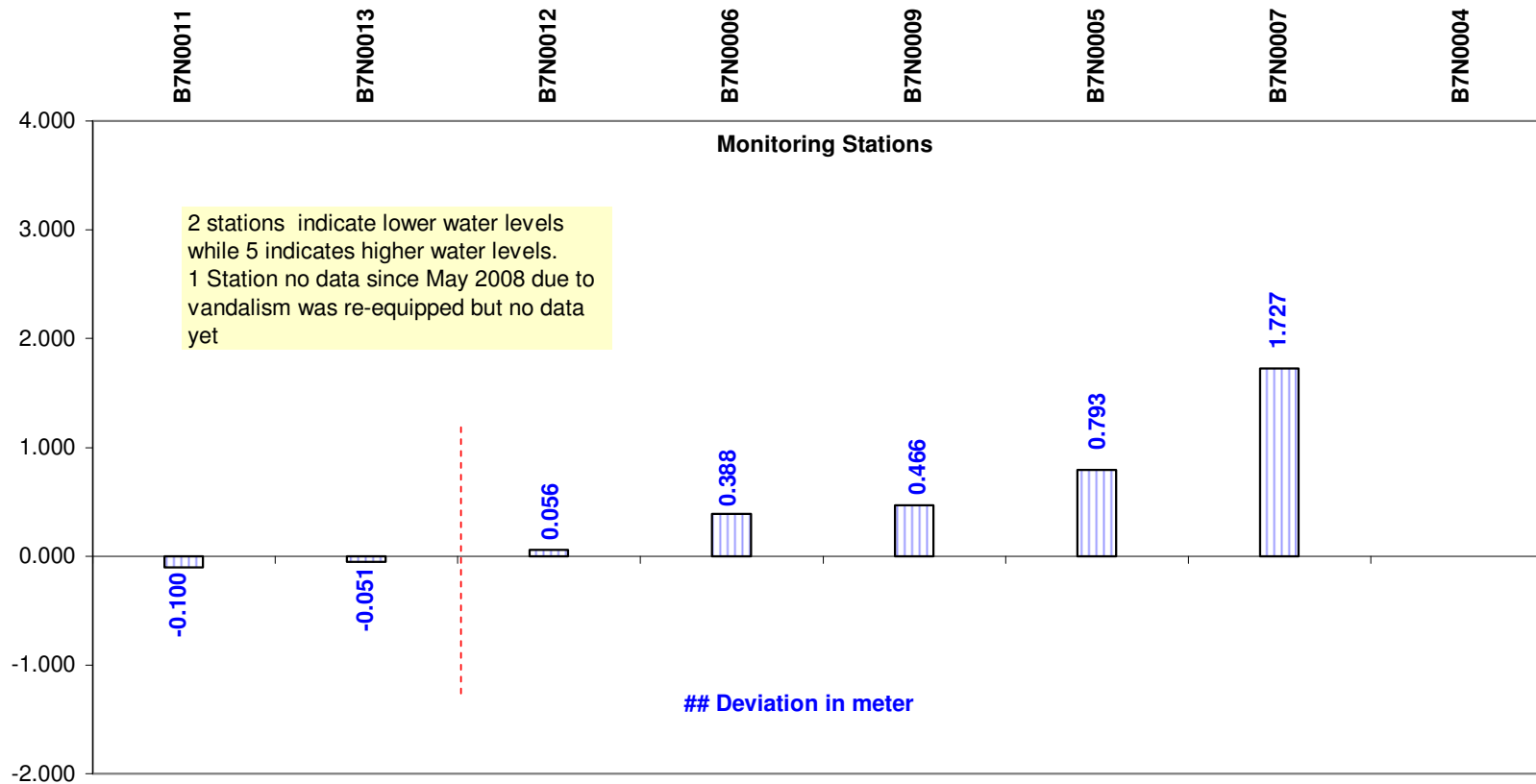
GRAPH 41

**Water level trend of some stations in B7 drainage:
1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009**



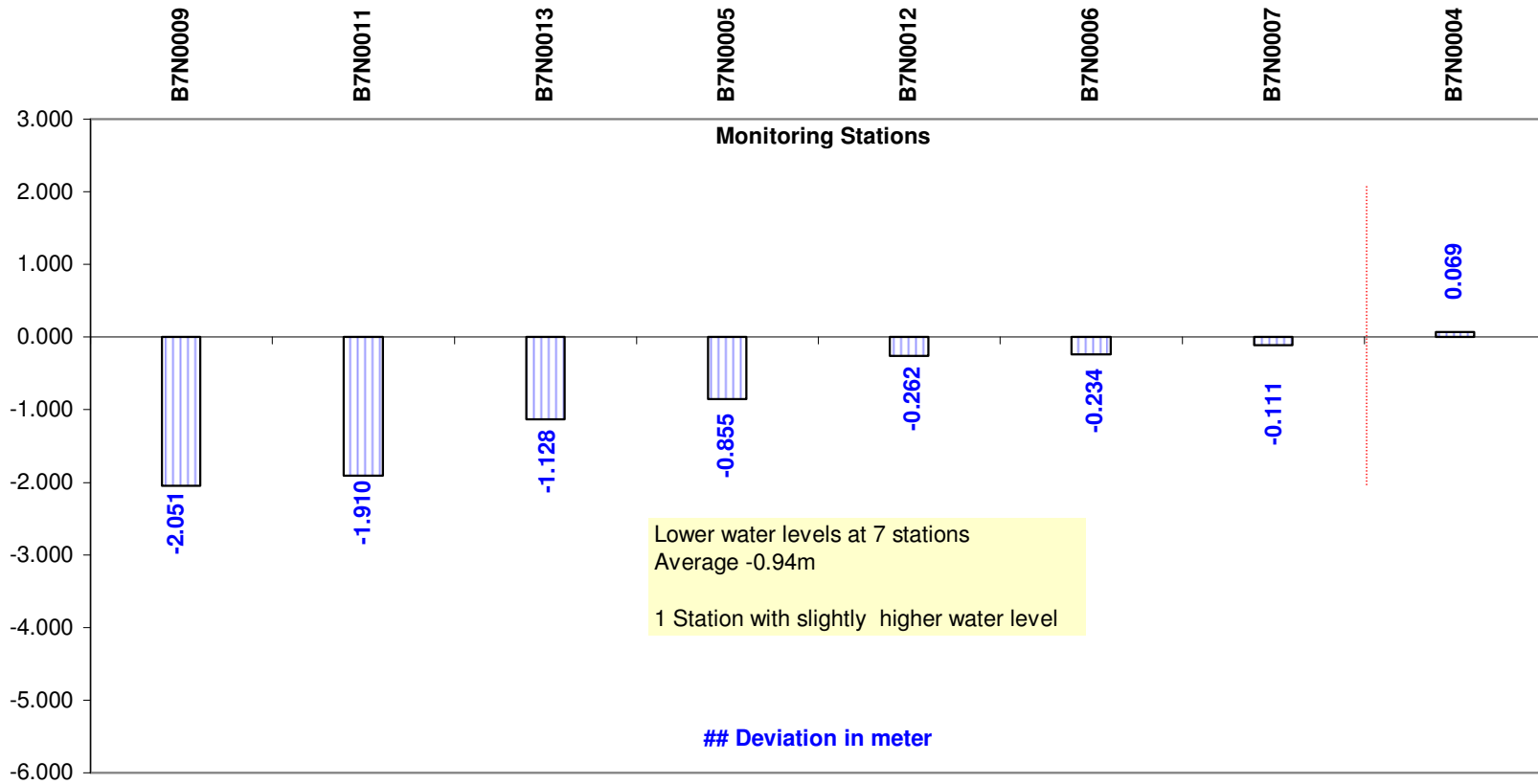
GRAPH 42

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 November 2008 to 1 February 2009



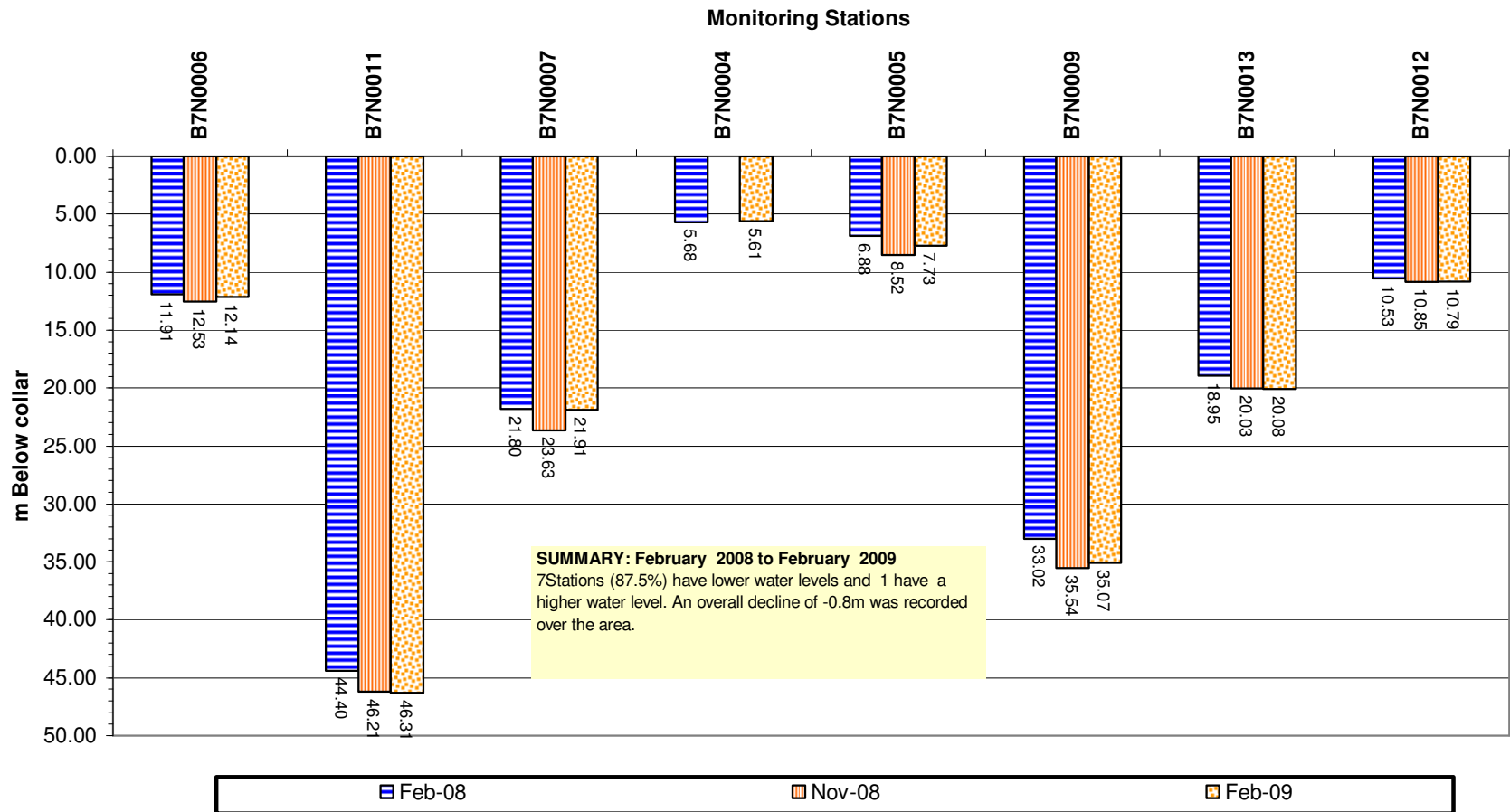
GRAPH 43

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Deviation of water levels: 1 February 2008 to 1 February 2009



GRAPH 44

B7 DRAINAGE AREA
Comparison between water levels: 1 February 2008,
1 November 2008 and 1 February 2009



GRAPH 45