WORLD WATER DAY 2022 Groundwater in Scotland



There is more groundwater in Scotland than in all the rivers and lochs, but it's hidden out of sight beneath our feet.



The volume and quality of groundwater depends on the geology and glacial history at that location. In its natural state, Scottish groundwater is generally of excellent quality but it is vulnerable to pollution from intensive agriculture and industrial activity.



Bedrock flow type and aquifer productivity

Significantly intergranular flow; very high productivity

rgranular and fracture flow; ery high productivity

Significantly intergranular flow;

ntergranular and fracture flow;

Intergranular and fracture flow; moderate productivity

Intergranular and fracture flow; low productivity



Groundwater provides more than a third of flow to Scottish rivers.

Groundwater baseflow keeps streams and rivers flowing in summer and helps maintain many precious ecosystems. It provides a reliable water supply to many rural towns as well as supporting most private water supplies. Groundwater also sustains the bottled water and whisky industries

Fracture flow; low productivity

Fracture flow; very low productivity

The distribution of groundwater depends on the geological and glacial history. BGS develops maps of the distribution and nature of Scottish aquifers, groundwater vulnerability and water chemistry. © UKRI 2022.

and is relied upon for irrigation by many farmers.

Springs, like this one at Inchnadamph, are also fed by groundwater. © UKRI 2022.



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