

Record number of French regions face water restrictions

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Only a handful of "departments" around France are exempt from the restrictions, including the Paris area, the government's drought website shows.

A record 90 out of 96 mainland French regions face water restrictions due to an ongoing drought, official figures showed on Tuesday, as

scorching temperatures and low rainfall cause supply shortages in many areas.

Only a handful of "departments" around the country are exempt from the restrictions, including the Paris area, the government's drought website Propluvia shows.

A colour-coded map indicates that the most severe measures—including a ban on irrigation for farmland—are in place in the northwest in the Loire river basin, as well as the southeast around the Rhone.

Areas in the southwest around the Tarn and Lot rivers are also in the highest red category, while even the normally verdant Alps are suffering from severe aridity.

"We have a record number of departments with restrictions," the environment ministry said in a statement.

France experienced its third-driest spring on [record](#) this year after 2011 and 1976, according to the [national weather service](#), with rainfall 45 percent below average levels.

Two severe heatwaves in May and latterly in July—when temperatures soared above 40 Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)—have further reduced [water levels](#) while searing farmland and forests.

Two huge blazes near Bordeaux in southwest France over the last fortnight have destroyed more than 20,000 hectares of tinder-dry forest and required around 2,000 firefighters to bring them under control.

Local authorities are restricting access to many [wooded areas](#) as a precaution, including the Calanques National Park along the Mediterranean coast near Marseille which is popular with tourists.

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