

Hot, dry summer: Dutch government declares water shortage

August 3 2022



As the Dutch capital baked in the heat, municipal workers sprayed water on bridges over the city's canals to prevent metal in the constructions expanding which can jam them shut blocking boat traffic, in Amsterdam, Tuesday, July 19, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong

The Dutch government declared a national water shortage Wednesday

caused by the hot, dry summer that is parching much of Europe, and formed a national team to draw up measures to manage supplies, while asking the public to also chip in with savings.

"The [water shortage](#) is already having a [negative effect](#) on shipping and agriculture in particular," said Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management Mark Harbers.

He urged people "to think carefully about whether they should wash their car or completely fill their inflatable swimming pool. The Netherlands is a water country, but our water is precious here too."

Very little rain has fallen in the Netherlands over the summer, and dry conditions further north and east in Europe mean less water is streaming into the country in rivers.

The government said that drinking water supplies are not threatened and said new measures are not yet necessary, but could be "in coming weeks."

Water authorities in parts of the country already have put restrictions on farmers spraying crops with water, and several small ferries crossing rivers have been forced out of service because of low water levels. The [drought conditions](#) also are hindering freight-carrying barges that ply the country's rivers.

Amid soaring temperatures last month, authorities in Amsterdam were forced to spray water on mechanical bridges to stop them expanding and jamming shut.

The Netherlands is the latest country to feel the effects of the dry conditions. The European Union's executive warned last month that the continent is facing one of its toughest years when it comes to natural

disasters like droughts and wildfires because of increasing climate change.

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Citation: Hot, dry summer: Dutch government declares water shortage (2022, August 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-08-hot-summer-dutch-declares-shortage.html>

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