

Conwy Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

Last updated 2015

Introduction

A water abstraction licence is required to remove more than 20 cubic metres (4,400 gallons) of water per day from a river or stream, reservoir, lake or pond, canal or spring.

We use Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) to assess how much water is available for abstraction, and where. The strategies aim to meet the water needs of the environment and to allow water users to sustainably exploit any surplus.

In 2014 we completed the second round of CAMS licensing strategies. The updated strategies use an improved method and which meets the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive by applying a better understanding of how much water the environment needs.

General Policy

All water abstraction licences will be determined in accordance with statutory requirements, national and local policy. Licence applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but some general principles apply to all:

- We will apply time limits to all new and varied licences (other than those requesting reductions in water volumes, or minor changes with no environmental impact)
- In this catchment new licences will generally be issued with a time limit to 31 March 2028
- Existing time-limited licences will be renewed as long as three tests are passed: the water is still required, it is used efficiently, and the abstraction is environmentally sustainable;
- We have a duty to issue licences which do not adversely impact on the environment, or on people who abstract water already
- We monitor and enforce compliance with the licences we issue and have an inspection programme to ensure this.

Rivers

Table 1 and map 1 show where water is likely to be available for abstraction in the main river catchments of the Conwy Valley. The areas outside the main catchments have not been assessed in detail, however it is quite likely some water is available there. We will assess applications in these areas on their individual merits.

Catchment	Is more water available?
Lower Conwy	Yes
Middle Conwy	Yes
Machno	Yes
Lledr	Yes
Llugwy	Yes, with restrictions above Capel Curig
Ddu	No
Porth Llwyd	No
Dulyn	No
Roe	No

Table 1 Water availability

The volume of water available for licensing varies from catchment to catchment. We can advise you approximately how much, but a licence does not guarantee that the water will always be there, or that the water quality will be suitable. We may also have to place special conditions on a licence to protect local features such as wildlife or conservation sites.

The Ddu, Porth-Llwyd, Dulyn and Roe catchments are all affected by the Dolgarrog hydroelectric power scheme. Very large volumes of water are already abstracted, and we could not consider licensing any more. We are currently investigating whether the mitigation measures associated with this scheme could be enhanced.

Even where there is no water available, it may be possible to "trade" water with an existing abstractor to allow you to abstract. In most cases this will require us to issue a new abstraction licence or change an existing one.

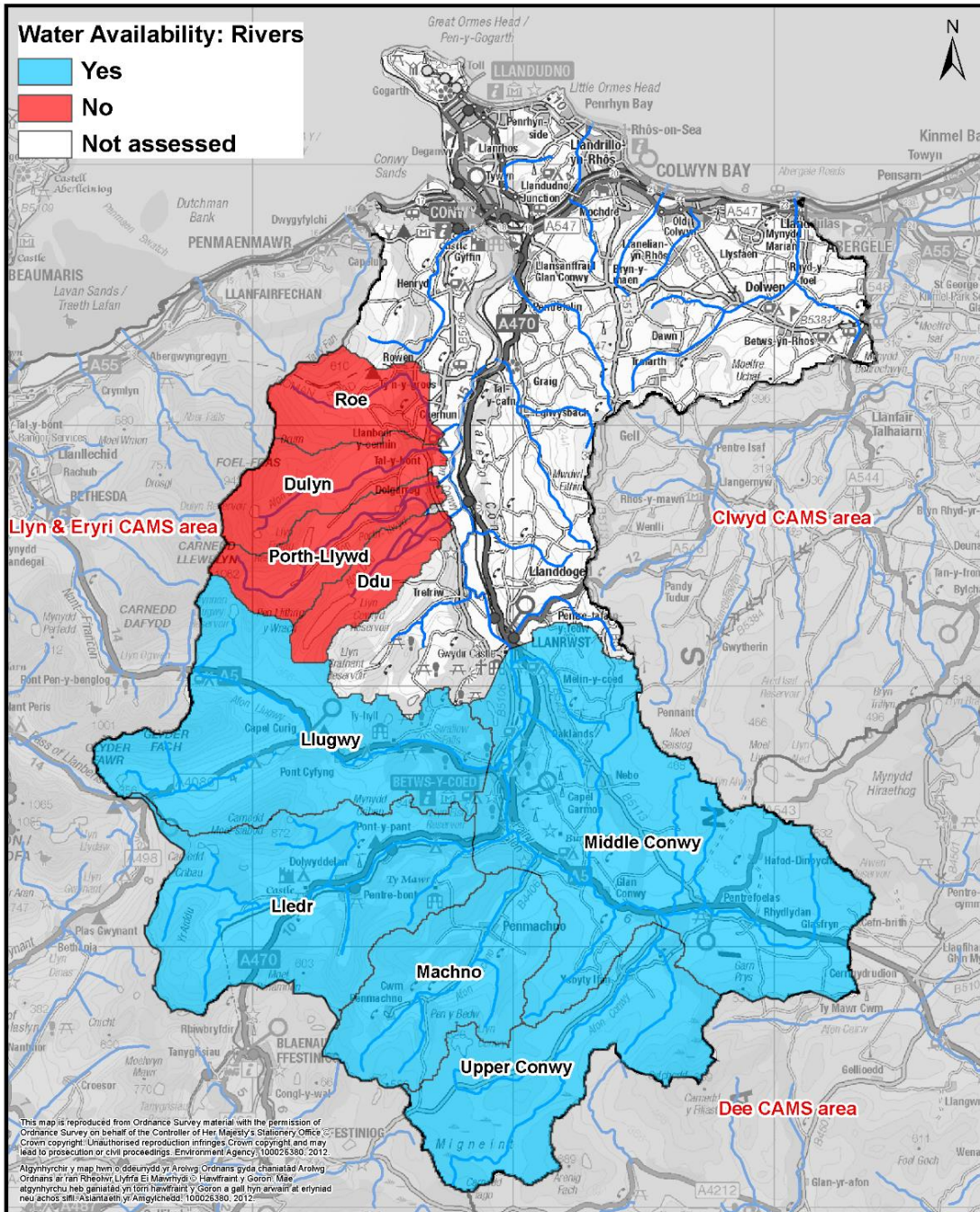
Groundwater

If an abstraction from groundwater (water stored in rocks) in the Conwy catchment is likely to reduce the flow in a nearby river, a licence is required. In this case, water availability is the same as for the corresponding river catchment. If there is no likely effect on river flows, a licence is not required, even for more than 20 cubic metres per day. This exemption is likely to be removed in the future, but the exact timetable has yet to be determined. We will update this strategy when it is.

Non-consumptive abstraction

If an abstraction returns 100% of the water abstracted back to the same catchment it is known as "non-consumptive". Common non-consumptive uses of water include hydroelectric power generation, fish farms and ground source heat pumps. Because all the water is returned, the environmental impact is localised and there is no overall change in water availability. Consequently we may be able to consider licensing new non-consumptive abstractions where we would not license other water uses.

River water availability



Map 1 Water availability

We have produced strategies for all of the main water catchments in Wales. If the location you are interested in is not covered in this document, please consult one of the other strategies.

Whatever type of abstraction you are considering, it's a good idea to contact us at an early stage using our customer service number (0300 065 3000) so we can advise you on your particular circumstances.