

Analysis of the Water Balance of the Prumpung River Area (DAS) in Tuban Regency Using the Thornthwaite-Mather Method

Rony Zakariya^{1*}, Andi Patriadi², Esti Wulandari³

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia^{1, 2, 3}

Email: ahmadronyzakariya17@gmail.com¹, andipatriadi@untag-sby.ac.id²,
wulandariesti@untag.ac.id³

Abstract

Water is a vital resource whose availability is increasingly uneven due to climate variability, land-use changes, and rising water demand. This condition leads to water surplus during the rainy season and deficit during the dry season, including in the *Prumpung Watershed*, Tuban Regency. This study aims to *analyze the monthly and annual water balance* and evaluate the relationship between water availability and water demand in the study area. A descriptive quantitative approach was employed using the *Thornthwaite–Mather method*, based on rainfall and air temperature data from 2015 to 2024, combined with domestic and non-domestic water demand data for 2024. The results indicate that *potential evapotranspiration* fluctuates in accordance with air temperature, while *actual evapotranspiration* is influenced by groundwater availability. Groundwater storage increases during the rainy season and decreases during the dry season. The annual water balance reveals a dominance of deficit conditions in most observation years, although surplus occurs during certain periods. The *Prumpung Watershed* is vulnerable to water deficits due to uneven rainfall distribution. Sustainable water resource management strategies, focusing on conservation, are required to maintain a long-term hydrological balance.

Keywords: *Water balance, Prumpung watershed, Thornthwaite-Mather method, water surplus, water deficit.*



INTRODUCTION

Water is a vital resource that plays a crucial role in the sustainability of human life, ecosystems, and various socio-economic activities (Kurniyaningrum & Kurniawan, 2023). However, its availability is uneven across Indonesia, including in the Prumpung River Basin (DAS) in Tuban Regency, East Java. This imbalance is triggered by climate variations, changes in land use, and local soil characteristics, resulting in a water surplus during the rainy season and a water deficit during the dry season (Indarto et al., 2023). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the conversion of vegetative land to agricultural and residential areas, which reduces soil infiltration capacity and increases surface runoff (Ridwansyah et al., 2020).

To quantitatively understand the dynamics of water availability, a water balance analysis approach is required. A water balance is a quantitative calculation that links inputs (rainfall) with outputs (evapotranspiration, runoff, and changes in water storage) in a hydrological system (Permana & Susetyaningsih, 2024). One method widely used for water balance analysis at the watershed level is the Thornthwaite–Mather method, due to its applicability in areas with limited climatological data (Aalimah et al., 2022; Mammoliti et al., 2021). This method relies on rainfall and air temperature data to calculate potential and actual

evapotranspiration and to identify periods of water surplus and deficit (Hendrayana et al., 2021).

Water has become one of the most strategic natural resources in the twenty-first century because it directly determines food security, ecosystem stability, public health, and regional economic resilience. Yet water availability is increasingly threatened by climate variability, prolonged drought, land conversion, and rising sectoral demand (Abdissa & Chuko, 2024). The global situation is becoming more serious, as UNESCO reported that by 2022 roughly half of the world's population experienced severe water scarcity for at least part of the year, while one quarter lived under extremely high water stress. This condition indicates that water management can no longer rely solely on annual averages but must be supported by temporal and spatial analyses capable of identifying periods of surplus and deficit more accurately (Marselina et al., 2024).

The urgency of water-balance-based analysis is further reinforced by the growing frequency of hydrometeorological extremes worldwide. UNESCO's 2024 World Water Development Report notes that, during 2002–2021, droughts affected more than 1.4 billion people and generated around US\$170 billion in economic losses, while floods affected approximately 1.6 billion people and caused losses of US\$832 billion. These figures indicate that the challenge of water resources is not merely the absolute quantity of water but also the instability of its distribution across seasons and years (Pereira et al., 2020). In watershed-based regions, this instability often appears as alternating wet-season surpluses and dry-season deficits, creating pressure on agriculture, domestic water supply, and ecological functions (Wiwoho et al., 2023).

Indonesia reflects this global problem in a highly complex tropical monsoon setting. Variability in Indonesian monsoon rainfall is strongly influenced by large-scale climate drivers such as ENSO and the Indian Ocean Dipole, with their impacts being especially substantial during the dry season months of June–August (Kurniadi et al., 2021). In practice, this means many Indonesian watersheds face increasing uncertainty in recharge, runoff, and evapotranspiration patterns. Such conditions make watershed-scale water balance studies essential, particularly in areas where seasonal water stress affects local livelihoods and land-use sustainability.

Within this broader context, the Prumpung Watershed in Tuban Regency represents a specific and relevant case. The uploaded manuscript shows that the watershed is characterized by uneven water availability, driven by climate variation, land-use change, and soil characteristics, and that preliminary annual calculations for 2015–2024 indicate a net negative water balance in most observation years. The manuscript also records large annual deficits in several years, including 2023 and 2024, indicating persistent hydrological pressure and vulnerability during longer dry seasons. This local condition demonstrates that the Prumpung Watershed is not only a theoretical hydrological unit but also a practical management area where seasonal imbalance may affect domestic, agricultural, and environmental water needs.

Several previous studies have confirmed that water balance analysis is an effective approach for understanding watershed vulnerability in Indonesia. Indarto et al. examined three major watersheds in Jember, East Java, and showed that land-use change combined with increasing water demand significantly altered watershed water balance conditions. Kurniyaningrum and Kurniawan, in the Upper Bogowonto Watershed, found that climate

change influences water balance and contributes to increasing water criticality. Meanwhile, Aalimah et al. demonstrated in the Cikeruh Sub-watershed that the Thornthwaite–Mather meteorological water balance approach is useful for evaluating regional water carrying capacity and identifying imbalances between availability and demand. Together, these studies show that watershed water balance assessment has become an important analytical route for sustainable water-resource planning in Indonesia.

Methodologically, the Thornthwaite–Mather approach remains attractive because it can be applied in data-limited regions using relatively accessible variables, especially rainfall and temperature (Nugroho et al., 2019; Mammoliti et al., 2021). This is important in many Indonesian watersheds where complete hydrological observation data are not always available. However, previous scholarship also suggests that direct application of the method in tropical regions still requires contextual interpretation (Astuti et al., 2019). Hendrayana et al. reported that the Thornthwaite–Mather method has long been used in Indonesia, but its performance in tropical settings may need adaptation and longer climate records to better represent local hydrological behavior. Therefore, using this method in the Prumpung Watershed is both practical and scientifically relevant, provided the results are interpreted within the local climatic context (Taufiq & Susanto, 2023).

Despite the relevance of previous studies, an important research gap remains. Existing studies have largely focused on other watersheds, broader regional simulations, or water-carrying-capacity assessments, whereas specific long-term monthly and annual water balance analysis for the Prumpung Watershed in Tuban Regency is still limited in the current literature. In addition, many earlier works emphasize either availability or demand, but not both in an integrated local planning framework. The uploaded manuscript indicates that this study not only evaluates monthly and annual water balance during 2015–2024 but also links the results with domestic and non-domestic water needs based on population, livestock, and rice field area data for 2024. This integration makes the study more applicable for local decision-making than a purely descriptive hydrological account.

The urgency of this research is therefore high. A watershed that repeatedly experiences a negative annual balance is exposed to risks of reduced groundwater storage, seasonal water scarcity, agricultural disturbance, and increasing competition among water users (Monir et al., 2024; Gleeson et al., 2016). If such conditions are not quantitatively mapped, local water-resource management may remain reactive rather than anticipatory. For Tuban Regency, where watershed resilience is closely connected to settlement, farming, and land-use dynamics, a robust water balance analysis can provide an early scientific basis for conservation, allocation, and adaptation strategies under climate uncertainty (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus, temporal scope, and analytical integration. First, it specifically addresses the Prumpung Watershed, a local basin that has not been widely discussed in prior indexed studies. Second, it employs a ten-year observation window from 2015 to 2024, allowing interannual fluctuations to be examined rather than relying on short-term snapshots. Third, it combines meteorological water balance estimation with local water-needs calculation, so the findings can move beyond identifying surplus and deficit periods toward evaluating the ability of available water to meet actual regional

demand. In this sense, the study offers a more operational contribution for watershed governance in Tuban Regency.

Based on this background, the purpose of the study is to analyze the monthly and annual water balance of the Prumpung Watershed using the Thornthwaite–Mather method and to assess whether available water can support domestic and non-domestic needs in the study area. The main objectives are to calculate potential evapotranspiration, actual evapotranspiration, groundwater storage change, surplus, and deficit, and then interpret these components in relation to local water demand. The expected contribution of the study is twofold: academically, it enriches watershed-based water balance literature in tropical Indonesia; practically, it provides evidence for water conservation planning, groundwater reserve protection, and more sustainable regional water allocation. Ultimately, the benefit of this research is to support better policy and technical decisions for maintaining hydrological balance in the Prumpung Watershed over the long term.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design with a hydrological approach to analyze the water balance of the Prumpung Watershed in Tuban Regency (Sari et al., 2022). The population of the study consisted of all climatological and hydrological data within the watershed area, particularly monthly rainfall and average air temperature data over a 10-year period (2015–2024), as well as supporting data on population, livestock, and agricultural land use for water demand estimation. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on complete and consistent datasets obtained from relevant meteorological and statistical agencies. The primary research instruments included secondary data records, data tabulation sheets, and computational formulas based on the Thornthwaite–Mather method (Nugroho et al., 2019). Data validity was ensured through completeness and consistency testing of rainfall data, while reliability was assessed by cross-checking data sources and verifying temporal consistency across the observation period.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques, involving the systematic retrieval of climatological and socio-economic data from official institutions such as meteorological agencies and regional statistical offices. The research procedure began with data collection and verification, followed by data preprocessing to ensure accuracy and consistency. Subsequently, potential evapotranspiration (ETP) was calculated using the Thornthwaite–Mather formula based on temperature data (Mammoliti et al., 2021). This was followed by the computation of actual evapotranspiration (AE), changes in groundwater storage (ΔS), and the identification of water surplus and deficit conditions. In parallel, water demand was calculated using standard coefficients based on population size, livestock units, and agricultural land area (Fahmi et al., 2024). All data were organized into monthly and annual analytical formats to facilitate interpretation.

The study utilized Microsoft Excel and supporting statistical software for data processing, tabulation, and visualization. Data analysis was conducted through water balance analysis using the Thornthwaite–Mather method, which integrated rainfall input, evapotranspiration output, and groundwater storage dynamics to determine hydrological conditions (Abdissa & Chuko, 2024). The analysis was performed both monthly and annually to capture seasonal variability and interannual fluctuations. Descriptive statistical analysis

was also applied to interpret patterns of water availability and demand. The results were presented in the form of tables, graphs, and comparative interpretations to evaluate whether water availability in the Prumpung Watershed was sufficient to meet regional needs and to identify critical periods of water deficit and surplus for sustainable water resource management (Wiwoho et al., 2023; Astuti et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Potential evapotranspiration (ETP) describes the maximum amount of water loss to the atmosphere if water availability were not a limiting factor. In this study, ETP was calculated using the Thornthwaite–Mather method using average monthly air temperature data (Nugroho et al., 2019). The calculation steps include determining the monthly heat index and the annual heat index, and applying empirical constants to generate ETP values for each month during the analysis period.

Tabel 1. Recapitulation of potential evapotranspiration (ETP) calculations (mm)

| Month | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 01 | 127,909 | 165,763 | 131,307 | 142,060 | 145,359 | 163,904 | 131,391 | 145,931 | 145,619 | 169,285 |
| 02 | 129,383 | 145,577 | 130,141 | 129,253 | 154,056 | 157,855 | 134,092 | 141,517 | 133,129 | 165,942 |
| 03 | 135,188 | 161,393 | 143,113 | 144,211 | 141,778 | 167,633 | 146,141 | 150,471 | 146,725 | 165,278 |
| 04 | 144,237 | 161,043 | 151,204 | 170,222 | 165,417 | 168,233 | 156,123 | 165,506 | 161,244 | 181,817 |
| 05 | 135,188 | 162,686 | 149,599 | 114,663 | 166,142 | 168,386 | 165,034 | 169,306 | 160,583 | 129,692 |
| 06 | 95,015 | 148,382 | 122,731 | 51,713 | 107,477 | 124,785 | 84,441 | 148,111 | 59,389 | 25,506 |
| 07 | 0,00 | 135,118 | 37,206 | 0,00 | 5,588 | 16,375 | 18,677 | 143,596 | 23,761 | 3,458 |
| 08 | 0,00 | 27,037 | 0,595 | 1,667 | 0,592 | 20,974 | 17,690 | 84,160 | 0,056 | 0,871 |
| 09 | 0,00 | 88,288 | 3,441 | 4,866 | 0,00 | 45,4480 | 41,027 | 20,180 | 0,423 | 22,431 |
| 10 | 0,00 | 153,593 | 73,171 | 14,177 | 0,00 | 59,315 | 41,630 | 158,879 | 0,280 | 10,790 |
| 11 | 39,268 | 155,445 | 154,596 | 175,402 | 51,498 | 184,353 | 161,116 | 158,419 | 80,110 | 125,594 |
| 12 | 164,493 | 137,414 | 141,423 | 164,332 | 94,113 | 143,791 | 155,810 | 150,689 | 149,085 | 161,044 |

Source: Analysis results, 2025

The obtained ETP values indicate seasonal variations that follow changes in air temperature. Periods with higher air temperatures produce higher ETP values, while months with lower temperatures tend to decrease. This pattern indicates that air temperature is a dominant factor in determining the potential evapotranspiration in the Prumpung watershed (Abdissa & Chuko, 2024; Pereira et al., 2020).

To determine the amount of water evapotranspired, the analysis is then continued with the calculation of actual evapotranspiration (AE). The AE value represents actual conditions in the field because it is directly influenced by soil water availability and does not always equal the ETP value.

Actual evapotranspiration (AE) is calculated as part of the water balance, considering rainfall, groundwater reserves, and potential evapotranspiration (Mammoliti et al., 2021). When groundwater reserves are sufficient, the AE value will approach the ETP value, while when water is scarce, the AE value will be lower due to limited water availability.

Table 2. Summary of actual evapotranspiration (AE) (mm)

| Month | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 01 | 127,90 9 | 165,76 3 | 131,30 7 | 142,06 0 | 145,35 9 | 163,90 4 | 131,39 1 | 145,93 1 | 145,61 9 | 169,28 5 |
| 02 | 129,38 3 | 145,57 7 | 130,14 1 | 129,25 3 | 154,05 6 | 157,85 5 | 134,09 2 | 141,51 7 | 133,12 9 | 165,94 2 |
| 03 | 135,18 8 | 161,39 3 | 143,11 3 | 144,21 1 | 141,77 8 | 167,63 3 | 146,14 1 | 150,47 1 | 146,72 5 | 165,27 8 |
| 04 | 144,23 7 | 161,04 3 | 151,20 4 | 170,22 2 | 165,41 7 | 168,23 3 | 156,12 3 | 165,50 6 | 161,24 4 | 181,81 7 |
| 05 | 135,18 8 | 162,68 6 | 149,59 9 | 114,66 3 | 166,14 2 | 168,38 6 | 165,03 4 | 169,30 6 | 160,58 3 | 129,69 2 |
| 06 | 95,015 | 148,38 2 | 122,73 1 | 51,713 | 107,47 7 | 124,78 5 | 84,441 | 148,11 1 | 59,389 | 25,506 |
| 07 | 0,00 | 135,11 8 | 37,206 | 0,00 | 5,588 | 16,375 | 18,677 | 143,59 6 | 23,761 | 3,458 |
| 08 | 0,00 | 27,037 | 0,595 | 1,667 | 0,592 | 20,974 | 17,690 | 84,160 | 0,056 | 0,871 |
| 09 | 0,00 | 88,288 | 3,441 | 4,866 | 0,00 | 45,448 0 | 41,027 | 20,180 | 0,423 | 22,431 |
| 10 | 0,00 | 153,59 3 | 73,171 | 14,177 | 0,00 | 59,315 | 41,630 | 158,87 9 | 0,280 | 10,790 |
| 11 | 39,268 | 155,44 5 | 154,59 6 | 175,40 2 | 51,498 | 184,35 3 | 161,11 6 | 158,41 9 | 80,110 | 125,59 4 |
| 12 | 164,49 3 | 137,41 4 | 141,42 3 | 164,33 2 | 94,113 | 143,79 1 | 155,81 0 | 150,68 9 | 149,08 5 | 161,04 4 |

Source: Analysis results, 2025

The calculation results show that the AE value during the rainy season is relatively high and close to the ETP value. Conversely, during the dry season, the AE value decreases due to limited groundwater reserves. This condition confirms that actual evapotranspiration in the Prumpung watershed is strongly influenced by the availability of groundwater as the main source of evapotranspiration (Gleeson et al., 2016). The large difference between ETP and AE subsequently affects changes in groundwater reserves (Pereira et al., 2020). Therefore, the analysis continues with an evaluation of groundwater storage dynamics to understand the process of replenishment and depletion of water reserves throughout the year.

Changes in groundwater reserves (ΔS) are calculated from the difference in groundwater storage between months, which is a direct response to the balance between rainfall and evapotranspiration. If rainfall exceeds actual evapotranspiration, the excess water will be used to replenish groundwater reserves. Conversely, if rainfall is lower, groundwater reserves will decrease to meet evapotranspiration needs (Monir et al., 2024; Jasechko & Perrone, 2021).

Table 3. Summary of calculations of changes in groundwater reserves (ΔS)

| Month | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 01 | 0,000 | -26,499 | 118,742 | 81,492 | 93,622 | -21,079 | 116,615 | 62,237 | 175,000 | -17,619 |
| 02 | -10,297 | 117,347 | 85,838 | 24,616 | 0,000 | 57,547 | 0,000 | 20,015 | 0,000 | 128,073 |
| 03 | -68,940 | -57,236 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,404 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 31,109 |
| 04 | 79,238 | -28,304 | -47,968 | -77,744 | 0,000 | 138,128 | -45,562 | -39,866 | 0,000 | -31,657 |
| 05 | -91,097 | -45,926 | -66,302 | -97,256 | -68,645 | -51,355 | -129,438 | 18,682 | -127,138 | -109,907 |
| 06 | -83,903 | 78,011 | -60,729 | 0,000 | -106,355 | -123,645 | 0,000 | -35,531 | -47,862 | 0,000 |
| 07 | 0,000 | -78,011 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | -74,634 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 08 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | -43,651 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 09 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 10 | 0,000 | 51,689 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 141,359 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 11 | 0,000 | -4,844 | 106,108 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 67,674 | 82,252 | 33,641 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 12 | 40,618 | -29,580 | 68,892 | 81,378 | 0,000 | 58,385 | 92,748 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 162,884 |

Source: Analysis results, 2025

The calculations show that increases in groundwater reserves predominantly occur during the rainy season, while decreases occur primarily during the dry season. This pattern reflects the role of groundwater reserves as temporary storage, maintaining water balance during periods of limited rainfall. These changes in groundwater reserves have direct implications for the overall water surplus and deficit conditions. To obtain a more comprehensive picture of the water balance, further analysis focused on compiling the annual water balance for the Prumpung Watershed.

The annual water balance is compiled by accumulating all monthly water balance components, including evapotranspiration, changes in groundwater reserves, and the magnitude of water surpluses and deficits. This annual approach is used to identify trends in water surpluses and deficits within a hydrological year.

Table 4. Annual water balance of the Prumpung watershed

| Month | ETP | AE | ΔS | Surplus | Deficit | Net balance |
|-------|----------|----------|------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| 2015 | 1935,967 | 970,681 | 734,99 | 208,823 | 965,286 | -756,463 |
| 2016 | 1841,645 | 1641,739 | 459,55 | 247,047 | 199,906 | 47,141 |
| 2017 | 1832,12 | 1238,527 | 908,03 | 509,314 | 593,593 | -84,279 |
| 2018 | 1919,965 | 1112,566 | 679,02 | 251,584 | 807,399 | -555,815 |
| 2019 | 1910,867 | 1032,02 | 806,35 | 721,705 | 878,847 | -157,142 |
| 2020 | 1953,191 | 1421,052 | 544,64 | 330,106 | 532,139 | -202,033 |
| 2021 | 1883,282 | 1253,172 | 911,69 | 565,817 | 630,110 | -64,293 |
| 2022 | 1847,84 | 1636,765 | 1447,23 | 659,576 | 211,075 | 448,501 |
| 2023 | 1955,126 | 1060,404 | 747,86 | 317,837 | 894,722 | -576,885 |
| 2024 | 2104,697 | 1161,708 | 507,19 | 322,066 | 942,989 | -620,923 |

Source: Analysis results, 2025

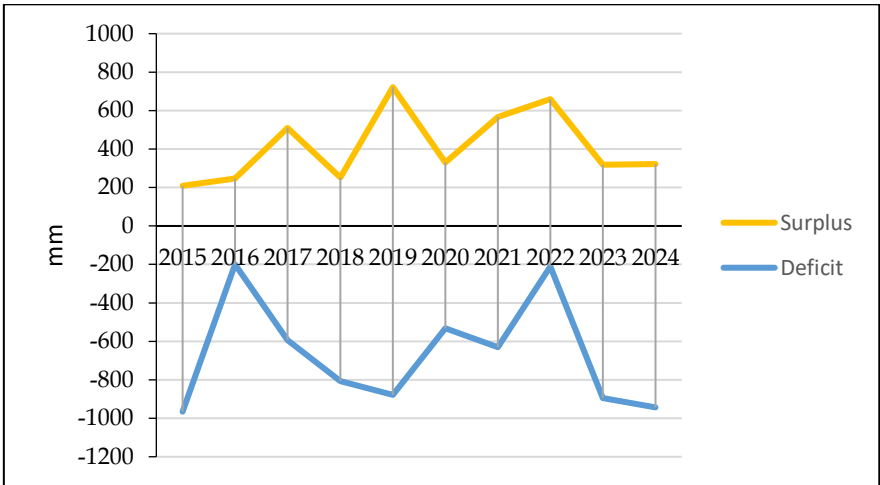


Figure 1. Graph of annual surplus and deficit 2015-2024

The annual water balance results in Table 4 indicate that the Prumpung Watershed experiences fluctuations in water surpluses and deficits influenced by interannual climate

variability. This fluctuation pattern is also clearly illustrated in the annual water balance graph, which shows differences in hydrological conditions from one year to the next. Years with significant water surpluses, such as 2016 (+47,141 mm) and 2022 (+448,501 mm), are generally characterized by high rainfall and relatively even rainfall distribution throughout the year (Taufiq & Susanto, 2023). Conversely, years with large water deficits, such as 2023 (–576,885 mm) and 2024 (–620,923 mm), are associated with longer and more intense dry seasons (Kurniadi et al., 2021). Overall, both the calculation results and the graphical visualization show that the net water balance of the Prumpung Watershed tends to be negative in most of the observation years, indicating the dominance of deficit conditions and the presence of hydrological pressure on the watershed system.

CONCLUSION

Water balance analysis in the Prumpung River Basin (DAS) using the Thornthwaite–Mather method shows that water balance conditions are largely determined by the interaction between rainfall, evapotranspiration, and groundwater reserves. Fluctuating potential evapotranspiration values throughout the year reflect the influence of air temperature as the primary controlling factor for potential water loss to the atmosphere. As air temperature increases, potential evapotranspiration also increases, ultimately increasing the likelihood of groundwater reserves decreasing if not offset by adequate rainfall. Actual evapotranspiration reflects the actual response of a hydrological system to water availability. During periods of high rainfall, actual evapotranspiration approaches potential values because groundwater reserves are relatively full. Conversely, during the dry season, actual evapotranspiration is limited due to decreased groundwater reserves. This explains why, in certain periods, the difference between potential and actual evapotranspiration can be quite large, indicating the hydrological system’s limitations in maintaining evapotranspiration when water supplies are reduced (Abdissa & Chuko, 2024). Positive changes in groundwater reserves during the rainy season and negative changes during the dry season indicate a natural cycle of replenishment and depletion of water reserves (Jasechko & Perrone, 2021). The decline in groundwater reserves during the dry season indicates that groundwater serves as the primary source of water balance support when rainfall is insufficient. This condition contributed to the emergence of annual water deficits in several observation years, although in certain periods, water surpluses were still recorded due to high rainfall. The dominance of annual deficits indicates that the uneven distribution of rainfall throughout the year is a major factor influencing the imbalance in the Prumpung watershed (Marselina et al., 2024). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the annual water balance of the Prumpung Watershed is still vulnerable to climate variations, particularly during the long dry season. As a recommendation, these water balance results should be used as a basis for further studies on improving the function of groundwater reserves, particularly in the context of conservation of catchment areas (Suparyogi et al., 2020; Rahmawati et al., 2023), so that the natural water balance of the Prumpung Watershed can be maintained optimally in the long term.

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