

Reservoir Group	December 2025 Holding	January 2026 Holding	February 2026 Holding	Change in January-February period	Minimum historical* February holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	90.40%	96.40%	97.70%	1.3%	74% (2013)
Oxford & GU	74.40%	88.90%	98.20%	9.3%	42% (2012)
GU South	53.20%	63.80%	87.40%	23.6%	54.2% (2012)
GU North	90.60%	100.00%	100.00%	0.0%	30.5% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	100%	98.20%	97.00%	-1.2%	92.2% (2025)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	92.30%	88.40%	94.30%	5.9%	78.6% (2025)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	61.60%	65.10%	71.60%	6.5%	48.9% (2022)
Caldon Canal	81.40%	79.10%	91.20%	12.1%	80.7% (2019)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	44.10%	53.70%	56.80%	3.1%	23.6% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	92.70%	100.00%	96.80%	-3.2%	23.9% (2023)
Grantham Canal	96.80%	99.10%	100.00%	0.9%	86.3% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	76.20%	78.40%	84.30%	5.9%	29.4% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	70.10%	82.60%	95.30%	12.7%	57.7% (2024)

* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2026 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, January was unsettled, bringing in wind, rain and snow. January rainfall was 117% of average for the UK. Totals were above average across central and southern England but below average elsewhere. It was one of the top five wettest for Wales and the South West region of England (all in series from 1890). River flows were in the normal range to below normal for northwest and southeast England. In contrast, flows were notably high at some rivers in southern England.

Groundwater levels rose across much of the UK, reflecting sustained recharge following the wet conditions of recent months. Soil moisture levels recovered, with most COSMOS-UK sites recording normal to above normal levels. The latest hydrological outlook for February is for above normal to notably high river flows across southern England. Elsewhere, river flows and groundwater

levels in the normal range are most likely. Over the next here months, the forecast indicates rainfall in the normal range is likely with chances of a wet February-April close to normal.

The Met Office rainfall anomaly graphs and maps can be viewed at:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/uk-temperature-rainfall-and-sunshine-anomaly-graphs>

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2026/1/2026_1_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

Following a wet January, we have seen increases across all but two reservoir groups across the country. Some of our reservoir group holdings are still lower than normal, this is because some reservoirs within a group are still having engineering works taking place that require the reservoir level to be maintained at less than full capacity (i.e. held down). Examples of this include Toddbrook Reservoir (Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal group) which is still kept at -12m below Top Water Level following the spillway incident in summer 2019, and it will remain at this level until the £multi-million project to construct a new spillway is completed, hopefully later in 2026. Several of the reservoirs in the Leeds & Liverpool and Huddersfield Narrow Canal group are also being held down for investigation or engineering works. The Trusts Reservoir, Project Management and Water Management teams liaise closely to manage the implications of all of these works on water supplies for the canal network, given the potential impacts on boating customers. The lack of reservoir refill is not yet a cause of significant concern and all waterways have reopened to navigation following drought closures. Canal demands are also typically very modest through winter period, and many parts of the network have a “stoppages” taking place, involving planned winter engineering works.

As always, the Water Management Team will continue to monitor all reservoir holdings during the coming months and work closely with operational staff to ensure water resources are deployed efficiently to maximise refill where possible. Given the changing situation, boaters are strongly advised to subscribe to email notifications of any waterway restrictions or closures at: [Notices and stoppages | Canal & River Trust](#)

Issued by:

Water Management Team, Canal & River Trust
26 February 2026

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 16th February unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in December and January.

Annex 1 – Canal & River Trust reservoir groups

Group name	Reservoirs within group
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Kennet & Avon Canal	Crofton [<i>principally a spring-fed reservoir, and its yield is therefore greater than the storage volume indicates</i>]
Oxford & GU	Boddington, Wormleighton, Clattercote, Naseby, Sulby, Welford, Drayton & Daventry
GU South	Startopend, Wilstone, Marsworth & Tringford
GU North	Saddington
Lancaster Canal	Killington
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	Rishton, Barrowford, Upper & Lower Foulridge, Slipper Hill, Whitemoor & Winterburn
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	Sutton, Bosley, Toddbrook & Combs
Caldon Canal	Rudyard, Stanley & Knypersley
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	Sparth, Slaithwaite & Diggle
Chesterfield Canal	Harthill & Pebley
Grantham Canal	Knipton & Denton
Birmingham Canal Navigations	Windmill Pool, Terry's Pool, Engine Pool, Cofton, Upper Bittell, Rotton Park & Chasewater
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	Belvide, Gailey Upper, Gailey Lower & Calf Heath