

PRESS RELEASE

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Boat numbers on London's canals soar, charity confirms as it carries out improvements to help boaters

As figures are published revealing that **the number of boats on London's canals have** reached a new record high, the charity that cares for 100 miles of waterways across the region has announced a programme of improvements to help keep up with demand.

The Canal & River Trust – which looks after waterways including the Regent's Canal, Grand Union Canal and River Lee - has this week confirmed that boat numbers have increased 84% since 2012, from 2,326 to 4,274 in 2019. **The figures come from the Trust's** annual boat count, which also shows that boats without a home mooring in the capital have risen 246%, from 638 in 2012 to 2208 this year.

The Trust invests millions of pounds each year to ensure growing numbers of people can continue to live on, work on or visit the waterways in London. To further meet the demand of the rising boat numbers the Trust is also spending over £67,000 this spring and summer to make improvements, such as increasing the number of mooring spaces, water points and bin facilities.

In 2018, due to the unprecedented popularity of boating, the Trust published its London Mooring Strategy, following consultation with boaters, boating groups and local authorities, amongst others. It outlines a range of ongoing initiatives to help manage the increasing demand for mooring spaces, improving facilities, and fairly balancing the needs of everyone who uses the capital's waters.

Ros Daniels, Canal & River Trust regional director, says: "The canals in London are pretty amazing places. We used to say they were a hidden treasure in the capital, but now that's less and less the case, with increasing numbers of people discovering them. More people and more boats does put increased pressure on existing facilities and space, so it's important that we keep adapting to make sure that everyone can enjoy and benefit

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from the waterways. For example, we've made tens of thousands of pounds of improvements in the last few months alone which have been designed to make the experience of living on or visiting the waterways just a little bit easier. This is alongside the money we generate and invest to make sure the canals are open and continue to improve.

“The canals are a great part of London life, like linear parks weaving through the city. They're an antidote to the busy city, a great place to slow down and relax. Boating is such a brilliant way of life, but we always remind people to do their research before considering a life afloat. It's hard work, almost like having a part time job, with plenty of hidden costs. Our advice is to only buy a boat if you're ready to embrace the lifestyle.”

For more information about the Canal & River Trust, including the 2,000 miles of waterways it cares for nationwide and how you can volunteer with or donate to the charity, visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

The full London Mooring Strategy, with a detailed breakdown of the improvements, can be found at canalrivertrust.org.uk/londonmooringstrategy

Ends

Notes to editors

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Boat numbers on our waters have increased 84% since 2012:

	Total boats in London
Mar 2012	2326
Mar 2013	2581
Mar 2014	2964
Mar 2015	3255
Mar 2016	3662
Mar-2017	4001
Mar-2018	4098
Mar-2019	4274

Boats without home moorings have increased by 246%:

Year	Total
2012	638

2013	769
2014	1031
2015	1225
2016	1615
2017	1880
2018	2050
2019	2208

Physical improvements being made by the Trust this year include:

- Almost half a kilometre of new mooring rings to increase mooring options, including at:
 - Yiewsley (outside Tesco) 225m to improve towpath mooring in grass verge
 - Limehouse Cut – 150m in hard surface to provide new mooring
 - Sweetwater (Lee navigation) – 75m new mooring in hard surface for visitor mooring (of which 45m for pre-bookable mooring)
- New/improved canal-side bin stores at
 - Feildes Weir (River Lee)
 - Stonebridge (River Lee)
- New water points to enable boaters to fill up their water tanks
 - Atlip Road (Grand Union)
 - **Sturt's Lock (Regent's Canal)**
 - Bow Lock (River Lee)
 - Paddington (re-location of previous tap with better pressure)
- **New elsan point for boaters to empty waste from their boat at Sturt's Lock (Regent's Canal)**

End of all