

Reservoir Watch December 2025

Reservoir Group	October 2025 Holding	November 2025 Holding	December 2025 Holding	Change in November-December period	Minimum historical* December holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	71.60%	74.50%	90.40%	15.9%	48.5% (2012)
Oxford & GU	24.40%	38.70%	74.40%	35.7%	23.8% (2011)
GU South	49.10%	48.50%	53.20%	4.7%	33.2% (2011)
GU North	26.10%	41.30%	90.60%	49.3%	19.6% (2003)
Lancaster Canal	96.30%	98.20%	100%	1.8%	97.1% (2016)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	61.90%	80.10%	92.30%	12.2%	56.6% (2003)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	25.60%	46.40%	61.60%	15.2%	54.6% (2010)
Caldon Canal	36.80%	56.10%	81.40%	25.3%	46.2% (2003)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	50.90%	69.70%	44.10%	-25.6%	17.2% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	35.50%	58.40%	92.70%	34.3%	44.9% (2020)
Grantham Canal	88.90%	93.00%	96.80%	3.8%	78.9% (2011)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	60.10%	68.80%	76.20%	7.4%	16.2% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	58.30%	63.80%	70.10%	6.3%	55.7% (2001)

* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2025 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, November was the wettest month of 2025 so far, with 131% of average for the UK overall. This month was a transformative month as some areas quickly transitioned from drought status to flood risk areas. The period September-November was very wet for large parts of England and Wales (which saw its wettest autumn since 2000, and ninth wettest since 1890). River flows were above normal across norther England. In Wales, notably or exceptionally high November flows were widespread. Contrastingly, November flows across south east England were in the normal range and remained below normal in some eastern catchments.

There was further recovery in soil moisture, with most sites showing normal levels. Soil moisture deficits reduced sharply to near-average late-November levels. Groundwater levels were low in eastern and southern areas, but recharge has commenced in some areas, and the November rainfall will take some time to have an impact.

Entering winter, it's a mixed bag with flood warnings in place in some areas as well as drought restrictions in others, which is the result of the spatial variation in the autumn rainfall. Winter rainfall will be the determining factor in dictating the water resources outlook for 2026. The latest Hydrological Outlook indicates normal to below normal flows and groundwater levels.

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/2025/11/2025_11_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

We are now in our refill stage of our reservoirs and following a wet November, we have seen some significant increases in holdings across some of our reservoir groups. Despite the recent rainfall, some of our reservoir group holdings are still low and have decreased over the last month, 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 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
18 December 2025

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 15th December unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in November and December.

Annex 1 – Canal & River Trust reservoir groups

Group name	Reservoirs within group
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