

Reservoir Group	February 2026 Holding	March 2026 Holding	April 2026 Holding	Change in March-April period	Minimum historical* April holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	97.70%	94.00%	100.00%	6.0%	59.1% (2012)
Oxford & GU	98.20%	98.40%	96.10%	-2.3%	58.2% (2012)
GU South	87.40%	86.20%	80.60%	-5.6%	61.8% (2012)
GU North	100.00%	100.00%	94.90%	-5.1%	44.3% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	97.00%	100.00%	98.40%	-1.6%	85.4% (2025)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	94.30%	94.50%	94.30%	-0.2%	57.5% (2025)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	71.60%	73.00%	70.10%	-2.9%	43.9% (2022)
Caldon Canal	91.20%	94.50%	92.10%	-2.4%	67.7% (2025)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	56.80%	61.10%	46.60%	-14.5%	46.6% (2026)
Chesterfield Canal	96.80%	97.40%	97.10%	-0.3%	27.5% (2023)
Grantham Canal	100.00%	90.60%	99.90%	9.3%	91.8% (2025)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	84.30%	82.00%	79.20%	-2.8%	39% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	95.30%	94.50%	92.00%	-2.5%	76% (2002)

* 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, March was overall a mild month, with changeable conditions consisting of unsettled spells and drier interludes in early and mid-month. UK rainfall was average (102%), with a strong regional contrast. North West England region recorded >130% of average with some areas receiving over 1.5 times of average. Totals were below average elsewhere, with less than half the average in central southern England. Rainfall totals since the start of the year (January-March) was the fourth wettest for the Severn Trent, Wessex, and South West England regions (all in a series from 1890). Over longer accumulations, the winter half year (October-March) was the sixth wettest for England as a whole (both in a series from 1890). River flows were in the normal range to above in northwestern areas with some groundwater-dominated catchments in central southern England remaining notably high. Elsewhere, flows were generally in the normal range, with some rivers above normal in south Wales and southwest England.

Groundwater levels generally decreased or remained stable during March, reflecting relatively drier conditions, but high to exceptionally high levels dominate across England. Soils began to dry across central and southern England, with small soil moisture deficits developing in some areas. The UK Hydrological Outlook indicates normal to above normal flows in southern England over the next three months. Over April-June, the forecast indicates an increase chance of warm temperatures, but rainfall is likely to be near-average.

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/2026/3/2026_3_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

We've have now transitioned into the drawdown phase of our reservoirs for the boating season. We have started to see decreases in holdings across most of our reservoir groups, although due to the unsettled conditions over the last month, these decreases have been minimal. 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, later in 2026 (although initially only a phased refill, will be carried out as our engineers need to monitor the reservoir dam carefully as the water levels increase). 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 these works on water supplies for the canal network, given the potential impacts on boating customers.

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
24 April 2026

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 13th April unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in February and March.

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	Startopsend, 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