

Reservoir Group	March 2026 Holding	April 2026 Holding	May 2026 Holding	Change in April-May period	Minimum historical* May holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	94.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.0%	48% (2014)
Oxford & GU	98.40%	96.10%	85.90%	-10.2%	74.5% (2011)
GU South	86.20%	80.60%	81.90%	1.3%	68.6% (2025)
GU North	100.00%	94.90%	69.20%	-25.7%	64.2% (2025)
Lancaster Canal	100.00%	98.40%	83.30%	-15.1%	68.4% (2025)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	94.50%	94.30%	76.90%	-17.4%	66.3% (2022)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	73.00%	70.10%	61.20%	-8.9%	36.7% (2025)
Caldon Canal	94.50%	92.10%	81.30%	-10.8%	55.1% (2025)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	61.10%	46.60%	37.10%	-9.5%	37.1% (2026)
Chesterfield Canal	97.40%	97.10%	96.60%	-0.5%	30.5% (2024)
Grantham Canal	90.60%	99.90%	97.10%	-2.8%	91.8% (2025)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	82.00%	79.20%	72.70%	-6.5%	35.5% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	94.50%	92.00%	85.80%	-6.2%	73% (2011)

\* 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, April was a characteristically changeable month. The UK registered 77% of average April rainfall but England received only 38%, and parts of south and east were significantly drier. England and Wales both registered their sixth warmest Aprils on record, in a series from 1884, although April 2025 was warmer. River flows also receded, with below normal April flows in many southern and eastern catchments.

Groundwater levels generally continue to decline during April, but levels remained in the normal range across most of the Chalk aquifer and mostly normal or above normal elsewhere. Soil moisture levels declined everywhere in the dry and warm conditions in late April; they typically remained normal or above normal at CCOSMOS-UK stations in the north and west. Levels declined steeply in south-east England and were exceptionally low at month-end, with substantial soil moisture deficits.

The UK hydrological outlook states that near average rainfall is most likely to happen in the next month. However, over the next three months, the forecast indicates a higher-than-normal chance of a hot May-July with near-average rainfall most likely, although a wet 3-month period is more probable than dry.

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/2026/4/2026\\_4\\_Rainfall\\_Anomaly\\_1991-2020.gif](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2026/4/2026_4_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif)

## The Trust's Water Resources

As we are now a few weeks into the main boating season, we have now started to see the decreases across most of our reservoir group holdings due to the reduced rainfall and the increased demands on our network. Some of our reservoir group holdings are 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. A phased refill has commenced in recent weeks, and our engineers are monitoring 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  
29 May 2026

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 18 May unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in March and April.

## 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