

Reservoir Group	December 2024 Holding	January 2025 Holding	February 2025 Holding	Change in January-February period	Minimum historical* February holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	99.90%	99.90%	99.90%	0.0%	74% (2013)
Oxford & GU	99.40%	98.20%	98.20%	0.0%	42% (2012)
GU South	74.60%	79.90%	73.90%	-6.0%	54.2% (2012)
GU North	99.90%	99.90%	99.90%	0.0%	30.5% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	93.10%	96.00%	92.20%	-3.8%	92.2% (2025)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	66.60%	83.80%	78.60%	-5.2%	78.6% (2025)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	61.90%	70.60%	69.10%	-1.5%	48.9% (2022)
Caldon Canal	72.90%	81.90%	83.90%	2.0%	80.7% (2019)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	62.80%	60.90%	72.60%	11.7%	23.6% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	55.10%	86.00%	100.00%	14.0%	23.9% (2023)
Grantham Canal	92.60%	91.80%	92.60%	0.8%	86.3% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	92.40%	98.20%	99.60%	1.4%	29.4% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	93.80%	97.30%	94.40%	-2.9%	57.7% (2024)

* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2024 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, January featured a dry period mid-month surrounded by unsettled conditions at the start and the end of the month. Storm Éowyn, the strongest windstorm to affect the UK in a decade, contributed to these unsettled conditions. The total rainfall for the UK was below average (79%), with England recording above average rainfall (112%). The winter so far (December-January) has seen >150% of average rainfall for parts of northern England. River flows were above normal in England and Wales. In central and southern England, January mean flows were above normal to notably high and many rivers recorded more than 130% of their January average.

Soil moisture levels at COSMOS-UK sites were much higher in southern England than sites in the north but most sites were within their normal range. Groundwater levels across the UK were generally normal to above normal, although exceptionally high conditions were present across multiple aquifers.

The current Outlook suggests continued normal to above normal flows in southern England and normal to above normal flows and groundwater levels in the north and west over the next three months, maintaining an elevated risk of flooding.

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/2025/1/2025_1_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

Some of our reservoir groups have not reached greater holdings, despite the wet conditions, this is due to a few reasons the primary reason is that some reservoirs within a group have 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. For the Chesterfield Reservoir group, Harthill Reservoir is refilling following a period of drawdown for construction of the new spillway. Several of the reservoirs in the Leeds & Liverpool and Huddersfield Narrow Canal group are being held down for investigation or engineering works, leading to the former group being at the lowest holding for this month, for the period of record which began in 1998 for this report. 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.

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.

Boaters are advised to subscribe to email notifications of any waterway restrictions or closures at: <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices>.

Issued by:

Water Management Team, Canal & River Trust
27 February 2025

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 17th February unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in January and February.

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