

Reservoir Watch June 2025

| Reservoir Group | April 2025 Holding | May 2025 Holding | June 2025 Holding | Change in May-June period | Minimum historical* June holding (Year) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Kennet & Avon Canal | 99.90% | 99.90% | 100.00% | 0.1% | 46.1% (2013) |
| Oxford & GU | 94.20% | 85.00% | 64.20% | -20.8% | 62.7% (2011) |
| GU South | 74.00% | 67.90% | 66.10% | -1.8% | 66.1% (2025) |
| GU North | 89.80% | 86.40% | 31.10% | -55.3% | 31.1% (2025) |
| Lancaster Canal | 85.40% | 72.90% | 78.30% | 5.4% | 66% (2020) |
| Leeds & Liverpool Canal | 57.50% | 39.00% | 40.90% | 1.9% | 40.9% (2025) |
| Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals | 53.30% | 40.20% | 26.90% | -13.3% | 26.9% (2025) |
| Caldon Canal | 67.70% | 57.60% | 48.60% | -9.0% | 48.6% (2025) |
| Huddersfield Narrow Canal | 79.60% | 78.30% | 70.50% | -7.8% | 20% (2013) |
| Chesterfield Canal | 100.00% | 92.10% | 79.80% | -12.3% | 25.2% (2023) |
| Grantham Canal | 91.80% | 91.80% | 91.20% | -0.6% | 91.2% (2025) |
| Birmingham Canal Navigations | 94.50% | 90.20% | 83.90% | -6.3% | 31.8% (2011) |
| Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union | 88.40% | 85.70% | 82.00% | -3.7% | 73.7% (2011) |

* 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, May was characterised as sunny, warm and dry. It was the fifth warmest May in a record from 1884 with the mean temperature 1.3°C above the long-term average. Rainfall was 72% of the average for the UK, with England (57%) and Wales (59%) experiencing much lower totals. The south was particularly dry with 38% of the average. For the spring period (March-May) rainfall deficits were significant. It was the fourth driest spring for the UK and the second driest for England (after 1893). Across the UK, rivers receded significantly throughout May, this was a continuation of the recessions that occurred in early spring. Average river flows for spring were the lowest on record across northern and western Britain.

Groundwater levels for May were in the normal range or below normal across the southern and eastern areas but exceptionally low in some northern and western boreholes. The warm and dry conditions resulted in more drying of soils, this has resulted in more than half of the COSMOS-UK sites recording their lowest average soil moisture levels for May (in records from 2013 or later).

The last Hydrological Outlook indicates that below normal or lower river flows and groundwater levels are most likely to occur over the coming months. Despite this, there is high uncertainty in seasonal forecasts at this time of year.

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/2025/5/2025_5_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

We are currently in the main period of the boating season, this means we are drawing down our reservoirs. The decreases in our reservoir group holdings can be attributed to the increased usage of our reservoir stocks as well as the especially dry weather conditions that have occurred over the past few months. Currently, six reservoir groups are currently at their lowest historical holding (data since 1998). The main reason that reservoir holdings are low 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. 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 of the year, 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. The prolonged dry weather in recent months is very notable in its severity at such an early point in the year and has led to the Trust reluctantly imposing restrictions and some canal closures to prolong the available resources. Boaters are 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
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Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 16th June unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in May and June.

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 |