

Reservoir Group	January 2026 Holding	February 2026 Holding	March 2026 Holding	Change in February-March period	Minimum historical* March holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	96.40%	97.70%	94.00%	-3.7%	66.1% (2014)
Oxford & GU	88.90%	98.20%	98.40%	0.2%	49.6% (2012)
GU South	63.80%	87.40%	86.20%	-1.2%	63.8% (2012)
GU North	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.0%	39.1% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	98.20%	97.00%	100.00%	3.0%	89.8% (2025)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	88.40%	94.30%	94.50%	0.2%	71.9% (2025)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	65.10%	71.60%	73.00%	1.4%	42.7% (2022)
Caldon Canal	79.10%	91.20%	94.50%	3.3%	76.8% (2025)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	53.70%	56.80%	61.10%	4.3%	23% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	100.00%	96.80%	97.40%	0.6%	26.2% (2023)
Grantham Canal	99.10%	100.00%	90.60%	-9.4%	89.3% (2026)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	78.40%	84.30%	82.00%	-2.3%	35.7% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	82.60%	95.30%	94.50%	-0.8%	69.8% (2024)

* 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, February was another notably wet month. Rainfall for the UK was above average (123%), but with regional contrasts. Southern and central England were particularly wet, with large areas receiving more than twice the long-term average. Severn Trent region recorded its fifth wettest February since 1890. North-west Britain was a notable exception with rainfall close to or below average. Over the winter period (December-February), the south west region recorded its second wettest winter on record (series from 1890). River flows were predominantly in the normal range to above, with several responsive catchments in south-west England registering record February flows.

Groundwater levels rose across much of the UK, with exceptionally high levels spread across southern England. Soils remained in the normal to above normal range as most COSMOS-UK sites, and Soil Moisture Deficits across the UK recovered.

The UK Hydrological Outlook indicates an increased likelihood of above normal flows across southern and central England through the spring, with normal flows elsewhere. The long-range forecast indicates a slightly wet March, with a strong signal for mild temperatures. Over March-May, the forecast suggests that the next three months are likely to be warm with a normal chance of wet conditions, and a slightly increased chance of average rainfall.

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/2026/2/2026_2_Rainfall_Anomaly_1991-2020.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

Following another wet month, we have seen some increases across most reservoir groups. In a few weeks we will be transitioning into the drawdown stage for our reservoirs for the expected increase in water demand due to increases in boat movements. 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). 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.

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
30 March 2026

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 16th March 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	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