

# PRESS RELEASE

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## BOOM IN BOATING AS RESTRICTIONS LIFT

Inland waterways see use exceed pre-pandemic levels

The Canal & River Trust, the waterways and wellbeing charity which looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales, is seeing boats returning to the water in fleets as restrictions lift and the sun shines. With school holidays starting, it could be a record-breaking summer for boating.

Boats cruising the canals pass through locks when they need to go up or downhill, filling and emptying the lock with water. These ‘lockages’ are monitored by the Trust as an essential part of its water resources management to understand the changing patterns in use across the waterways.

Comparing the weekly lockages in 2019, 2020 and 2021 for the three busiest lock sites in each of the charity’s six regions indicates that the numbers of boats out cruising have recovered and in some regions are higher than before the pandemic.

The data compares the latest figures from mid-July which covers the final week of Step 3 of the UK Government’s coronavirus roadmap and shows a 5% increase in average lockage counts compared to 2019 and an 11% increase compared to 2020 when boaters were able to take advantage of the reopening after the first national lockdown.

Matthew Symonds, national boating manager at Canal & River Trust, said: “It is said that boating is the fastest way to slow down, and it is clear to see that boaters are keen to get back out on the water cruising after a year that has seen them moored up for months at a time, or unable to take their hireboat holidays. The four-mile an hour maximum speed gives people the perfect opportunity to unwind, take in the changing landscape, spot wildlife, and let the stress of the past year float away.”

“With recent research showing that regularly spending time out on the water has a beneficial effect on mental wellbeing, it’s heartening to see boaters exploring the canals once again. As we head into the summer holidays, this could be a record-breaking year for boating on our inland waterways.”

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#### Notes to Editors

**Measuring the economic, social and wellbeing value associated with inland and coastal boating: Simetrica-Jacobs 2021.**

This study was commissioned by British Marine and the Canal & River Trust to demonstrate the economic value of inland & coastal boating in the UK and provides a preliminary exploration of the wider social value. See here for more information:

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/44090-spending-time-on-the-water-can-be-a-perfect-prescription-to-improve-health-and-wellbeing.pdf](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/44090-spending-time-on-the-water-can-be-a-perfect-prescription-to-improve-health-and-wellbeing.pdf)

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to transform their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

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