

## Reservoir Watch June 2021

| Reservoir Group                   | April 2021 holding | May 2021 holding | June 2021 holding | Change in May-June period | Minimum historical* June holding (Year) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Kennet & Avon Canal               | 92.4%              | 93.0%            | 88.3%             | -4.7%                     | 77.6% (2013)                            |
| Oxford & GU                       | 91.3%              | 90.9%            | 85.9%             | -5.0%                     | 76.4% (2011)                            |
| GU South                          | 86.7%              | 89.1%            | 84.4%             | -4.7%                     | 73.6% (2012)                            |
| GU North                          | 100.0%             | 100.0%           | 100.0%            | 0.0%                      | 75.4% (2011)                            |
| Lancaster Canal                   | 97.4%              | 96.0%            | 96.2%             | 0.2%                      | 70.5% (2020)                            |
| Leeds & Liverpool Canal           | 82.1%              | 79.4%            | 79.3%             | -0.1%                     | 52.8% (2010)                            |
| Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals | 61.4%              | 62.0%            | 62.3%             | 0.3%                      | 62.0% (2021)                            |
| Caldon Canal                      | 85.4%              | 85.6%            | 80.9%             | -4.7%                     | 77.2% (2013)                            |
| Huddersfield Narrow Canal         | 60.6%              | 71.3%**          | 56.2%             | -15.1%                    | 73.3% (2020)                            |
| Chesterfield Canal                | 57.2%              | 65.1%            | 62.6%             | -2.5%                     | 52.8% (2020)                            |
| Grantham Canal                    | 93.3%              | 95.1%            | 89.9%             | -5.2%                     | 89.9% (2021)                            |
| Birmingham Canal Navigations      | 92.7%              | 94.4%            | 93.0%             | -1.4%                     | 33.2% (2011)                            |
| Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union  | 92.7%              | 90.8%**          | 90.1%             | -0.7%                     | 72.3% (2011)                            |

\* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2021 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

\*\* Data from week ending Monday 10 May.

### General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, we saw the coldest April-May period in England since 1951. The high rainfall experienced in May marked a sharp transition from the very arid April, with Wales seeing its wettest May since 1910 and the total May rainfall for the UK at 177% of average. Across much of the UK river flows were above average, and exceptionally so in Wales. Groundwater levels in index boreholes continued to recede despite the high rainfall and accompanying reduction in soil moisture deficits, which were below average by month-end except in the south. Reservoir stocks remained close to average with notable recoveries in the south-west of England and in Yorkshire. As we enter the summer months, the water resources situation is generally favourable. June began with a dry spell; however this hasn't affected longer-term deficiencies. The Met Office rainfall anomaly graphs and maps can be viewed at: [https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomalygraphs/2021/2021\\_Rainfall\\_Anomaly\\_1981-2010.gif](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomalygraphs/2021/2021_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif)

## The Trust's Water Resources

With the main boating season underway, nine of the 13 reservoir groups have a holding of above 80%, with four of these above 90%. One is at 100% holding.

In the south, four out of the five reservoir groups have recorded a decrease in holding, with only the Grand Union North reservoir group remaining the same at 100.0% holding. The Oxford and Grand Union group saw the largest decrease of -5.0%, which is due in part to continued works in the interest of safety being undertaken at Sulby reservoir, impacting on the neighbouring Welford reservoir, and causing both to be drawn down to facilitate the works.

It is clear that despite the wet weather throughout May, the dry spell experienced at the start of June is already impacting reservoir holdings, with six out of eight reservoir groups in the north experiencing a decrease in holding. As the boating season has commenced with the relaxation of Covid-19 lockdown measures, reservoirs have entered the drawdown stage with their supply being used to feed the canals, with the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group recording the largest decrease in holding of -15.1% (due in part to Slaithwaite reservoir being held down for engineering reasons), followed by the Grantham Canal recording -5.2%. The Chesterfield Canal group remains at its lowest historical holding due to ongoing engineering works at Harthill, also affecting Pebley, which requires both reservoirs to be held down. Only the Lancaster Canal group and the Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal group recorded increases in holding, of 0.2% and 0.3%, respectively.

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  
24 June 2021

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 14 June unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in April and May.

### Annex 1 – Canal & River Trust reservoir groups

| Group name                                  | Reservoirs within group   |
|---|---|
| <b>Kennet &amp; Avon Canal</b>              | Crofton [ <i>principally a spring-fed reservoir, and its yield is therefore greater than the storage volume indicates</i> ] |
| <b>Oxford &amp; GU</b>                      | Boddington, Wormleighton, Clattercote, Naseby, Sulby, Welford, Drayton & Daventry   |
| <b>GU South</b>                             | Startopsend, Wilstone, Marsworth & Tringford  |
| <b>GU North</b>                             | Saddington  |
| <b>Lancaster Canal</b>                      | Killington  |
| <b>Leeds &amp; Liverpool Canal</b>          | Rishton, Barrowford, Upper & Lower Foulridge, Slipper Hill, Whitemoor & Winterburn  |
| <b>Peak Forest &amp; Macclesfield Canal</b> | Sutton, Bosley, Toddbrook & Combs   |
| <b>Caldon Canal</b>                         | Rudyard, Stanley & Knypersley   |
| <b>Huddersfield Narrow Canal</b>            | Sparth, Slaithwaite & Diggle  |
| <b>Chesterfield Canal</b>                   | Harthill & Pebley   |
| <b>Grantham Canal</b>                       | Knipton & Denton  |
| <b>Birmingham Canal Navigations</b>         | Windmill Pool, Terry's Pool, Engine Pool, Cofton, Upper Bittell, Rotton Park & Chasewater                                   |

