

Reservoir Group	May 2021 holding	June 2021 holding	July 2021 holding	Change in June-July period	Minimum historical* July holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	93.0%	88.3%	93.4%	5.1%	55.3% (2011)
Oxford & GU	90.9%	85.9%	80.6%	-5.3%	56.9% (2011)
GU South	89.1%	84.4%	85.7%	1.3%	76.3% (2015)
GU North	100.0%	100.0%	90.3%	-9.7%	39.2% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	96.0%	96.2%	89.2%	-7.0%	57.4% (2018)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	79.4%	79.3%	64.3%	-15.0%	33.2% (2010)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	62.0%	62.3%	54.3%	-8.0%	54.3% (2021)
Caldon Canal	85.6%	80.9%	73.1%	-7.8%	63.9% (2008)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	71.3%**	56.2%	61.3%	5.1%	14.2% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	65.1%	62.6%	62.6%	0.0%	45.6% (2020)
Grantham Canal	95.1%	89.9%	91.6%	1.7%	90.9% (2006)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	94.4%	93.0%	90.8%	-2.2%	28.2% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	90.8%**	90.1%	88.6%	-1.5%	70.4% (2010)

* 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, June was generally a settled month however the south-east of England in particular saw heavy rainfall and occasional thunderstorms. Despite rainfall for the UK being around two-thirds of average, the contrast between wet weather in the south-east and drier conditions in the north and west was dramatic. As a result, river flows were correspondingly above and below normal, respectively. Elsewhere flows were generally in the normal range. Soil moisture deficits reflected June's rainfall distribution, with wetter than average soils in the south-east of England, and drier than average elsewhere in the majority of regions. Groundwater levels were generally in the normal range or above but continued to fall as the usual seasonal recession continued. Reservoir stocks in parts of northern Britain fell, ending the month below average. Given the current outlook for the summer months favouring dry conditions alongside the current water resources situation, vigilance will be required.

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/anomacts/2021/6/2021_6_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

With the main boating season underway, eight of the 13 reservoir groups have a holding of above 80%, with four of these above 90%.

The wetter conditions experienced in the south throughout June are visible in the increase in holdings of the Kennet & Avon Canal group and the Grand Union South group, of 5.1% and 1.3%, respectively. The three remaining reservoir groups in the south did however report a decrease in holdings. The Oxford and Grand Union group saw a large decrease of -5.3%, 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.

The drier weather experienced in the north throughout June has had an impact on the reservoir holdings, with five of the eight groups experiencing a decrease. Additionally, as the boating season is well underway, reservoirs are in the drawdown stage with their supply being used to feed canals. The Leeds & Liverpool Canal group recorded the highest decrease in holding of -15%, followed by the Peak Forest & Macclesfield group at -8.0%. It is pleasing to see an increase in holding of 5.1% in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group despite Slaithwaite reservoir still being held down for engineering reasons. 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.

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
23 July 2021

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 12 July 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	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