

## Reservoir Watch August 2021

Reservoir Group	June 2021 holding	July 2021 holding	August 2021 holding	Change in July-August period	Minimum historical* August holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	88.3%	93.4%	81.8%	-11.6%	43.4% (2004)
Oxford & GU	85.9%	80.6%	63.5%	-17.1%	40.3% (2011)
GU South	84.4%	85.7%	77.4%	-8.3%	60.2% (2011)
GU North	100.0%	90.3%	69.5%	-20.8%	24.8% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	96.2%	89.2%	76.1%**	-13.1%	30.0% (2018)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	79.3%	64.3%	58.4%	-5.9%	23.4% (2010)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	62.3%	54.3%	39.9%	-14.4%	36.7% (2018)
Caldon Canal	80.9%	73.1%	60.2%	-12.9%	48.9% (2018)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	56.2%	61.3%	60.6%**	-0.7%	36.0% (2018)
Chesterfield Canal	62.6%	62.6%	52.1%	-10.5%	37.5% (2020)
Grantham Canal	89.9%	91.6%	87.8%	-3.8%	82.1% (2006)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	93.0%	90.8%	86.2%	-4.6%	22.0% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	90.1%	88.6%	<b>86.7%</b>	-1.9%	58.2% (2010)

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

\*\* Data from week ending Monday 9 August.

### General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, July brought very changeable conditions with heavy rain and showers ending the otherwise settled and warm month; the fifth warmest July for the UK since 1884. Temperatures throughout the settled period were unusually high, so much so that the Met Office issued its first amber heat warning with temperatures regularly exceeding 30°C, especially in western areas. Despite July rainfall totals being near average for the UK, there was a clear contrast with most northern and western areas recording considerably drier conditions than the rest of the country. As a result, southern and central England recorded above normal river flows whereby Wales and northern England saw below normal flows. Soils were generally drier than average except for in southern and northeast England. Seasonal groundwater recessions continued

yet levels remained in the normal to above normal range, and reservoir stocks fell to below average for July. Continued caution is required in areas dependent on surface water supplies.

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)

[https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2021/7/2021\\_7\\_Rainfall\\_Anomaly\\_1981-2010.gif](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2021/7/2021_7_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif)

## The Trust's Water Resources

With the main boating season at its peak, only four of the 13 reservoir groups have a holding of above 80%, with none above 90%. This is typical for the time of year, reflecting increased canal demands.

The drier, warm conditions experienced across much of the country throughout July and the start of August are very apparent, with all 13 reservoir groups recording a decrease in holding from July to August. In the south, the Grand Union North and Oxford & Grand Union groups saw the largest decrease in holdings, of -20.8% and -17.1%, respectively. The decreased holding of the Oxford & Grand Union is however 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.

Northern reservoirs saw similar large decreases in holding due to the drier weather experienced. Additionally, as the boating season is well underway, reservoirs are in the drawdown stage with their supply being used to feed canals. The Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal group recorded the highest decrease in holding of -14.4%, followed by the Lancaster Canal group at -13.1%. 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  
27 August 2021

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 16 August unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in June and August.

### 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

<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
<b>Staffs &amp; Worcs, Shropshire Union</b>	Belvide, Gailey Upper, Gailey Lower & Calf Heath