

Reservoir Watch October 2021

Reservoir Group	August 2021 holding	September 2021 holding	October 2021 holding	Change in September-October period	Minimum historical* October holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	81.8%	82.1%	82.4%	0.3%	40.4% (1998)
Oxford & GU	63.5%	54.7%***	50.8%	-3.9%	25.0% (2011)
GU South	77.4%	75.4%	72.1%	-3.3%	37.3% (2011)
GU North	69.5%	43.6%	53.1%	9.5%	14.6% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	76.1%**	59.0%	72.5%	13.5%	67.4% (2014)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	58.4%	36.1%	32.8%	-3.3%	24.6% (2003)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	39.9%	34.0%	42.8%	8.8%	17.2% (2003)
Caldon Canal	60.2%	48.9%	56.9%	8.0%	33.6% (2011)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	60.6%**	43.6%	61.5%	17.9%	21.0% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	52.1%	43.3%	41.8%	-1.5%	39.7% (2005)
Grantham Canal	87.8%	81.3%	80.3%	-1.0%	71.8% (2014)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	86.2%	81.1%	84.6%	3.5%	14.7% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	86.7%	83.2%	85.0%	1.8%	51.9% (2001)

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

** Data from week ending Monday 9 August.

*** Some data from week ending Monday 6 September.

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, September was generally dry and warm, seeing only 84% of the monthly average of rainfall and average temperatures of 14.7°C. This made September the fourth consecutive month for below average rainfall across the UK, and the second warmest September since 1910. Much of England and Wales saw average or below average river flows, except for parts of the south-east which saw above average. Groundwater levels continued their seasonal recession yet remained within the normal range or above and were exceptionally high in north-east and south-west England. Following the drier conditions, reservoir stocks fell to below-average for most of the UK, especially in the north-west. As a result, close observation will be required particularly in the north-west with little indication of an upcoming wet Autumn.

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/2021/9/2021_9_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

With the main boating season now almost over, four of the 13 reservoir groups have a holding of above 80%, with none above 90%. This is very typical for the time of year due to the increased canal demands seen throughout the boating season. September was also a fairly dry month with below average rainfall, meaning reservoirs weren't able to refill considerably.

Despite the south experiencing marginally wetter weather than the north, the southern reservoirs experienced the greatest decreases in holding overall, with the Oxford & Grand Union group and the Grand Union South group recording decreases of 3.9% and 3.3%, respectively. Three of the five did experience an increase however, with the Grand Union North group recording an increase of 9.5%.

Northern reservoirs experienced decreases in holdings in three of the five groups, with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal group recording the greatest decrease of 3.3%. This reflects both the drier weather experienced in much of the north of England as well as their supply being used to feed the canals. Five of the nine groups recorded an increase in holding; some of which were substantial, such as the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group and the Lancaster Canal group at 17.9% and 13.5%, respectively. Although Slaithwaite Reservoir (in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group) is continuing to be held down, it has begun refilling for monitoring purposes. This explains in part why this reservoir group has seen such a considerable increase in holding.

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
22 October 2021

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 18 October unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in August and September.

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

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