

Reservoir group	Feb 2019 holding	March 2019 holding	April 2019 holding	Change in Mar-Apr period	Minimum historical* Apr holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	88.8%	92.2%	86.1%	-6.1%	67.3% (2012)
Oxford & GU	65.2%	76.1%	80.6%	4.5%	57.3% (2012)
GU South	70.7%	82.3%	88.3%	6%	61.9% (2012)
GU North	59.4%	74.8%	87.1%	12.3%	48.2% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	100%	100%	96.4%	-3.6%	91.4% (2017)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	95.2%	99.7%	88.8%	-10.9%	68.7% (2009)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	94.0%	95.9%	94.3%	-1.6%	73.5% (2003)
Caldon Canal	80.2%	85.8%	87.4%	1.6%	80% (2013)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	100%	100.0%	86.5%	-13.5%	73.8% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	84.2%	89.1%	94.7%	5.6%	69.2% (2009)
Grantham Canal	100%	100%	100%	0%	97.8% (2006)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	73.0%	76.0%	76.9%	0.9%	38.4% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	99.1%	99.1%	93.2%	-5.9%	75.9% (2011)

* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2019 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

According to the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, March was a month of contrast with unsettled weather dominating the first two weeks whilst the latter part was notably dry with settled conditions. Rainfall for the UK in March was notably above average, exceptionally so in Wales and north-west England. Starting the month at or below average, river flows quickly rose in response to unsettled conditions. From the 18th, recessions began across the UK, leading to most catchments ending the month with below average flows. Although Soil Moisture Deficits recovered in response to the rain, groundwater levels were below normal in central and eastern England.

Whilst water resource concerns have been alleviated to some extent by rainfall in March and early April, these low groundwater levels highlight the need for additional rainfall to alleviate potential water resource pressure later in 2019. However, increasing evaporation rates will limit the effectiveness of rainfall and potential for recharge, suggesting below normal groundwater levels are likely to persist through the summer in the south-east.

The Met Office rainfall anomaly graphs and maps can be viewed at:

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomalygraphs/2019/2019_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2019/3/2019_3_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

Although the Easter period typically denotes the onset of increased boating (and thus reservoir drawdown to meet greater canal water demands), 7 out of our 13 reservoir holdings have experienced an increase in their holdings or remained full.

Almost all southern groups recorded positive changes in storage (ranging from 0.9% to 12.3%), with the most remarkable increase being registered by the GU North group. The exception was the Kennet & Avon group which experienced a decrease of -6.1%.

In contrast, 5 of the northern reservoir groups have registered negative changes, ranging from -1.6% to -13.5%, Peak Forest & Macclesfield group and Huddersfield Narrow Canal, respectively. The remaining 3 northern reservoir holdings experienced some refill (from 1.6% to 5.6%) or stayed full.

12 out of our 13 reservoir group holdings are at least 80% full, except for the BCN with a holding of 76.9%. With the main boating season now underway, the prospects for water supply across the network will be affected by the typical weather and demand factors. The Water Management team will work closely with bankside staff to ensure that water resources are deployed efficiently in the lead up to summer.

As always, 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
25 April 2019

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending **Monday 22 April** unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in February and March.

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