

Reservoir Watch July 2019

Reservoir group	May 2019 holding	June 2019 holding	July 2019 holding	Change in June-July period	Minimum historical* July holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	84%	79.1%	82.5%	3.4%	67.3% (2005)
Oxford & GU	76.6%	80.7%	73.0%	-7.7%	53.5% (2011)
GU South	85.7%	88.9%	83.3%	-5.6%	74.9% (2015)
GU North	85.3%	73.7%	64.4%	-9.3%	34.2% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	92.8%	89.8%	80.4%	-9.4%	50.6% (2018)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	79.5%	79.1%	68.0%	-11.1%	28.1% (2010)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	98.3%	95.5%	84.2%	-11.3%	50.8% (2018)
Caldon Canal	89.6%	87.2%	77.5%	-9.7%	60.7% (2011)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	92.1%	100%	90.1%	-9.9%	13.5% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	95.9%	98.6%	96.8%	-1.8%	69% (2005)
Grantham Canal	100%	100%	99.9%	-0.1%	88.5% (2006)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	76.2%	79.6%	77.0%	-2.6%	27% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	92.4%	97.0%	93.7%	-3.3%	67.6% (2010)

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

According to the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, June was generally an unsettled month and, while there were warmer and drier periods, much of the month was notably cold and wet. Heavy rainfalls lead to some notably high peak river flows, although rainfall totals and river flows were not as outstanding as in other recent very wet summers (i.e. 2007 and 2012). Soil moisture deficits have decreased, bringing short-term relief from environmental stress, although the long-term impact of the persistent dryness is still evident in southern and eastern England. Groundwater levels continued to decline in the chalk and while June river flows were typically normal or above, recessions recommenced in late June. Reservoir stocks were moderately above average. Overall, the water resources situation has improved, and the recent rainfall has reduced the water resources pressures this summer. However, July began very dry and current forecast for the next three months suggest a continuation of below normal flows and groundwater levels.

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/2019/6/2019_6_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

Overall and despite the rainfall in June, reservoir stocks in July have decreased across our network.

Only one out of the five southern groups have recorded a positive change in storage: Kennet & Avon, with an increase in holding of 3.4%. The four remaining have registered negative changes, ranging from -2.6% (Birmingham Canal Navigations) to -9.3% (GU North).

All of the northern reservoir groups have registered negative changes in storage, ranging from a decrease of -0.1% (Grantham Canal) to -11.3% (Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal).

At the time of preparing this report, 8 out of our 13 reservoir group holdings are at least 80% full, except for the Birmingham Canal Navigations, Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Caldon Canal, Oxford & Grand Union and GU North. With the main boating season well 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 through the summer. Overnight restrictions to navigation were imposed after Easter on selected lock flights on the Oxford & Grand Union Canals, and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, with the aim of conserving resources and raising awareness of the water resources pressures. These restrictions are under regular review given the wet weather in June, and then the return to dry conditions in early July. Some restrictions have been lifted or adjusted to reflect this, others remain in place.

As always, boaters are advised to subscribe to email notifications of any waterway restrictions or closures at: <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices> further information can be found at: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/managing-our-water/drought> plus there are answers to Frequently Asked Questions here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/managing-our-water/drought/water-management-faqs>

Issued by:

Water Management Team, Canal & River Trust
18 July 2019

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending **Monday 15 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	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 & Knyppersley
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