

Reservoir Watch February 2020

Reservoir group	December 2019 holding	January 2020 holding	February 2020 holding	Change in Jan-Feb period	Minimum historical* Feb holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	94.6%	85.5%	86.3%	0.8%	68.7% (2012)
Oxford & GU	91.4%	98.4%	99.5%	1.1%	40.5% (2012)
GU South	63.5%	83.0%	92.4%	9.4%	54.2% (2012)
GU North	100%	100%	100%	0.0%	32.2% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	100%	98.9%	100%	1.1%	95.7% (2017)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	86.9%	88.6%	89.8%	1.2%	82.2% (2006)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	67.6%	73.0%	74.3%	1.3%	69.7% (1999)
Caldon Canal	85.4%	78.0%	91.1%	13.1%	80.5% (2019)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	100%	100%	100%	0.0%	22.9% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	70.1%	63.3%	90.9%	27.6%	71.3% (2006)
Grantham Canal	99.3%	99.5%	98.9%	-0.6%	86.3% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	96.3%	97.5%	98.9%	1.4%	29.7% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	99.2%	99.0%	99.4%	0.4%	67.4% (2002)

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

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, January was a generally mild month, with intervals of wintry and windy weather during the middle and end of the month. It was the UK's sixth warmest January since 1884, with much of the UK recording temperatures more than 1.5°C above average. Rainfall was below average for most regions except from in parts of central and eastern England, where it was above average. River flows across England and Wales were generally in the normal range, with some catchments in southern and eastern England recording above average flows. Soil moisture deficits within England and Wales were near-zero with soils being generally wetter than average, except from regions in eastern England where soils remained drier than average. Groundwater levels across the UK ranged from normal to notably high, with levels in the responsive areas of chalk falling after a relatively dry January, whilst other groundwater areas increased due to a delayed response to the late 2019 rainfall. The outlook for water resources remains healthy. There is, however, an enhanced risk of flooding due to early February storms and forecasts for further unsettled weather and saturated soils.

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

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomalygraphs/2020/2020_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

As a result of the precipitation, from storms Ciara and Dennis, across most of the country during the first half of February, only 1 of our 13 reservoir groups has a holding below 80%. This is the Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal group due to the continued draw down of Toddbrook Reservoir for repair works to the auxiliary spillway.

All reservoir groups in the south recorded positive changes in storage, with the most noteworthy being registered by the Grand Union South group (9.4%), which reflects the groundwater influence to the reservoir refill. In the north, most reservoir groups recorded positive changes in storage with the Chesterfield group recording the highest of 27.6%.

As the winter season nears a close, 10 out of our reservoir groups are at least 90% full, which bodes well for the upcoming boating season. Although, further replenishment would still be welcome for the Kennet & Avon group, to solidify our water resources position.

We will continue to track all reservoir holdings and their subsequent recovery over the coming months. 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
27 February 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending **Monday 17 February** unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in December and January.

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