

Reservoir Watch March 2020

Reservoir group	January 2020 holding	February 2020 holding	March 2020 holding	Change in Feb-March period	Minimum historical* March holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	85.5%	86.3%	90.1%	3.8%	56.0% (2012)
Oxford & GU	98.4%	99.5%	96.9%	-2.6%	47.8% (2012)
GU South	83.0%	92.4%	87.3%	-5.1%	63.8% (2012)
GU North	100%	100%	100%	0.0%	41.2% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	98.9%	100%	100%	0.0%	99.2% (1998)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	88.6%	89.8%	89.7%	-0.1%	83.1% (2009)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	73.0%	74.3%	73.2%	-1.1%	86.6% (2004)
Caldon Canal	78.0%	91.1%	98.3%	7.2%	84.9% (2014)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	100%	100%	100%	0.0%	22.4% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	63.3%	90.9%	72.0%	-18.9%	80.2% (2016)
Grantham Canal	99.5%	98.9%	98.8%	-0.1%	90.5% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	97.5%	98.9%	99.0%	0.1%	36.0% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	99.0%	99.4%	99.1%	-0.3%	73.4% (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, February was exceptional in terms of hydrology, where we experienced three named storms ('Ciara', 'Dennis' and 'Jorge'), causing record-breaking river flows resulting in extensive, prolonged and severe flooding. It was the fourth wettest month on record for the UK (in a series dating back to 1910), with upland areas in northern and central England, and Wales experiencing the highest rainfall anomalies of more than 350% of the long-term average. In addition, February saw new peak flow, daily mean and monthly mean maxima set on numerous rivers throughout England and Wales. The extent, duration and magnitude of England's high flows contributed to the highest recorded monthly mean outflow on record for any month (in a series dating back to 1961). The February storms caused various impacts around England and Wales including 3,000 properties flooding, hundreds of houses losing power, and widespread travel disruption. On 16 February, a new record was set for the most live Flood Warnings and Alerts in England for a single day (in a record from 2006). Due to February's high rainfall, groundwater levels continued to increase in all but two index sites, with over half of the sites being

exceptionally high at the end of the month. There is still a risk of surface and groundwater flooding, from further rain on fully saturated soils, and damaging flows in large catchments into March.

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

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomacts/2020/2/2020_2_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

Only 2 of our 13 reservoir groups have a holding below 80%. This includes the Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal Group due to the continued draw down of Toddbrook Reservoir for repair works to the auxiliary spillway. In addition to the Chesterfield Canal group, as a result of engineering works.

In the north, the Caldon Reservoir Group recorded the highest positive change in storage with 7.2%, resulting in a nearly full holding (98.3%). In the South, reservoir groups are recording fairly stable holdings, with the exception of the GU South which has seen a decrease of 5.1% due for engineering reasons. It is pleasing to see that the Kennet & Avon continues to refill from last month, recording positive change in storage of 3.8%, resulting in a holding now above 90%.

As the winter season nears a close, 9 out of our reservoir groups are at least 90% full, which bodes well for the upcoming boating season. The Trust is unsure how the effects of the Government guidance and the public response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) situation will impact on boating. Our specific guidance is available here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/safety-on-our-waterways/coronavirus>

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
24 March 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending **Monday 16 March** unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in January and February.

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

