

Reservoir Watch April 2020

Reservoir group	February 2020 holding	March 2020 holding	April 2020 holding	Change in March-April period	Minimum historical* April holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	86.3%	90.1%	87.9%	-2.2%	71.9% (2012)
Oxford & GU	99.5%	96.9%	96.9%	0.0%	56.2% (2012)
GU South	92.4%	87.3%	88.7%	1.4%	61.8% (2012)
GU North	100%	100%	100%	0.0%	46.7% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	100%	100%	96.5%	-3.5%	95.4% (2013)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	89.8%	89.7%	79.0%	-10.7%	73.5% (2009)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal	74.3%	73.2%	68.7%	-4.5%	77.0% (2003)
Caldon Canal	91.1%	98.3%	85.7%	-12.6%	80.8% (2013)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	100%	100%	71.7%	-28.3%	66.5% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	90.9%	72.0%	55.2%	-16.8%	78.2% (2009)
Grantham Canal	98.9%	98.8%	98.0%	-0.8%	95.6% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	98.9%	99.0%	98.1%	-0.9%	39.4% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	99.4%	99.1%	96.1%	-3.0%	76.0% (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, March was a typical spring month, starting off with unsettled wet spells throughout the first half, leading to drier conditions in the second half. March's average temperatures were typical, with total rainfalls being near-average or below (particularly in the east). Although it was a quiet month for meteorological events, there were above average river flows at the beginning of the month, and notable peak flows in some catchments, due to the continued hydrological response from February's exceptionally wet weather. As a result, further impacts were seen during early March from the floodplain inundations in late February with more moderate property damage occurring. However, as March's weather became more settled and drier, the risk of further flooding reduced with soils rapidly drying and steep declines in responsive rivers. Although groundwater levels began decreasing in over half the index boreholes by the end of March – some boreholes experienced an increase in level– notable or exceptionally high levels for March remained widespread. Overall, the water resources situation remains healthy with March's groundwater level and flows being above average. However, with the continued intensification of soil moisture deficits and recessions in river flows into early April, along with current weather forecasts of drier conditions, it is important to keep monitoring the situation, especially with the increased evapotranspiration rates throughout Spring.

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/2020/3/2020_3_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

With the main boating season underway, 8 of our 13 reservoir groups have a holding above 80%.

The recent drier and settled weather conditions in the second half of March and throughout April seem to be most apparent in the north, with the reservoir groups experiencing various decreases, including the Caldon Canal group which saw a decrease of 12.6% due to the use of reservoirs feeding the canal. The decreases in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group (-28.3%), Chesterfield Canal group (-16.8%) and the Leeds & Liverpool group (-10.7%) were also due to engineering works. The Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canal Group recorded a decrease (-4.5%) due to the commencement of feeding water from Combs and Bosley reservoirs.

In the South, reservoir groups recorded fairly stable holdings, with the GU North and Oxford & GU remaining at or close to full holdings (100% and 96.9% respectively), in addition to the refill in the GU South group increasing its holding to 88.7%.

As always, the Water Management Team will continue to track all reservoir holdings and work closely with bankside staff to ensure water resources are deployed efficiently.

Due to the current Coronavirus crisis (Covid-19) and Government advice, we ask boaters to only move your boat if it's essential (not for leisure purposes) and minimise your use of the towpath. If you are not currently occupying your boat the Government guidance is that you **must not** visit it (this means no short trips or breaks on your boat at this time).

Our specific guidance is available here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/safety-on-our-waterways/coronavirus>

To read more on our response to the Coronavirus crisis, please see our [Coronavirus & Boating FAQs](#).

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
20 April 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending **Monday 13 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