

Reservoir Watch August 2020

Reservoir Group	June 2020 holding	July 2020 holding	August 2020 holding	Change in July - August period	Minimum historical* August holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	95.3%	87.8%	81.7%	-6.1%	25.5% (2004)
Oxford & GU	85.9%	83.8%	67.0%	-16.8%	34.7% (2011)
GU South	87.8%	85.2%	75.3%	-9.9%	57.0% (2011)
GU North	76.8%	80.4%	64.4%	-16.0%	24.5% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	66.0%	98.8%	99.1%	0.3%	35.4% (2018)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	54.6%	79.1%	72.0%	-7.1%	23.7% (2010)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	53.5%	58.2%	44.3%	-13.9%	33.4% (2018)
Caldon Canal	66.0%	68.7%	56.0%	-12.7%	45.6% (2018)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	70.7%	100%	77.7%	-22.3%	33.6% (2011)
Chesterfield Canal	55.7%	47.1%	37.4%	-9.7%	37.4% (2020)
Grantham Canal	97.3%	98.8%	96.8%	-2.0%	76.9% (2006)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	89.6%	89.8%	80.6%	-9.2%	20.1% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	82.7%	74.3%	64.6%	-9.7%	56.0% (2010)

* for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2020 reservoir holding data, inclusive.

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, July was mainly cool and cloudy with notable hot spells leading to the third highest UK temperature of 37.8°C for any month. The rainfall was above average, predominately in the northern and western parts of Britain, with below average rainfall experienced in the South. This rainfall distribution was reflected in the soil moisture and river flows returning to above average in the North and West whilst the South and East remained drier with normal to below normal river flows. Groundwater levels have begun to fall with many now in the normal to below normal range. With higher temperatures and localised rainfall into early August, there is a risk of localised water resource pressure remaining for the South and East.

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

The Trust's Water Resources

Four out of 13 groups now have a holding above 80%, the recent rainfall has allowed refill to occur at several reservoirs.

In the North, seven out of the eight reservoir groups recorded a decrease in holding. The largest decrease was recorded by the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group (22.3%), followed by the Peak Forest & Macclesfield group decreasing by 13.9%. These were due to the prolonged dry period experienced at the beginning of August.

In the South, all five reservoir groups recorded a decrease in holding, which is typical for this period of the year, reflecting higher canal demands. The largest decrease was recorded by the Oxford & GU group (16.8%), followed by the GU North group decreasing by 16%. Within the Oxford & GU overnight lockage restrictions are in place on the South Oxford Summit. Since the easing of lockdown this section of canal has been exceptionally busy. With Boddington, the largest reservoir feeding into the summit now at 54% capacity, measures have been introduced to manage water demands to maintain navigable levels in the summit pound.

As always, the Water Management Team will continue to monitor all reservoir holdings and work closely with operational staff to ensure water resources are deployed efficiently throughout the summer months.

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 August 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 17 August unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in June and July.

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	Startopend, 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