

Reservoir Watch October 2020

Reservoir Group	August 2020 holding	September 2020 holding	October 2020 holding	Change in September-October period	Minimum historical* October holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	81.7%	83.0%	81.6%	-1.4%	43.3% (1998)
Oxford & GU	67.0%	64.5%	82.1%	17.6%	20.5% (2011)
GU South	75.3%	75.3%	77.1%	1.8%	36.3% (2011)
GU North	64.4%	67.1%	72.6%	5.5%	14.6% (2011)
Lancaster Canal	99.1%	99.3%	97.7%	-1.6%	61.5% (2009)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	72.0%	87.6%	87.9%	0.3%	24.6% (2003)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	44.3%	53.4%	60.1%	6.7%	18.6% (2003)
Caldon Canal	56.0%	69.2%	80.8%	11.6%	31.9% (2003)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	77.7%	97.8%	99.1%	1.3%	23.9% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	37.4%	39.9%	45.5%	5.6%	41.7% (2005)
Grantham Canal	96.8%	98.0%**	97.2%	-0.8%	72.4% (2014)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	80.6%	81.0%	81.5%	0.5%	14.2% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	64.6%	57.2%	62.7%***	5.5%	51.9% (2001)

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

**Data from Friday 1st September

*** Data from 12th October

General Conditions

According to the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, September was a typical autumnal month with cool and unsettled conditions, although during Mid-September there were warmer and more settled conditions. The rainfall was relatively below average across the UK, with southern England recording less than half of average. Consequently, soil moisture deficits (SMDs) increased nationally overall, due to the drier than average soils, except from some western areas where soils remained wetter than average. Across most of the UK, river flows were within the normal range. Groundwater levels have generally continued to decrease, with chalk aquifer sites remaining in the normal or below normal range, whilst other aquifer sites are in the normal or above normal range. Although September was drier than average nationally, Storm Alex at the beginning of October brought considerable rainfall. The rainfall from Storm Alex and the above average rainfall throughout the summer months means that the water resources situation remains healthy for the winter half-year.

The situation for south-east England in 2021 will depend on the timing of the start of the groundwater recharge season.

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/2020/9/2020_9_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

Within the last month we have seen 10 out of our 13 reservoir groups recording an increase in holding, resulting in eight of the reservoir groups having a holding above 80%, with three of those exceeding 90%.

With the significant rainfall from Storm Alex at the beginning of October, several of our reservoir groups have recorded notable increases in holding. In the south, the Oxford and Grand Union group recorded the largest increase of all 13 reservoir groups, with an increase of 17.6%. Whilst in the north, the Leeds & Liverpool group recorded 11.6%, the second largest increase of all 13 groups and the largest in the north.

All three reservoir groups which recorded a decrease in holding were minimal, with the largest decrease being -1.6% in the Lancaster group.

Although most reservoir groups have recorded a positive change in holding within the last month, the Peak Forest & Macclesfield and the Chesterfield Canal groups are currently registering low holdings due to ongoing engineering works. Engineering works within the Staffordshire & Worcestershire, Shropshire Union Canal group have recently been completed, therefore we expect to see it refilling over the winter months, improving its current holding of 62.7% ready for the beginning of the 2021 boating season.

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.

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 October 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 19 October unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in August and September.

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