

Reservoir Watch November 2020

Reservoir Group	September 2020 holding	October 2020 holding	November 2020 holding	Change in October-November period	Minimum historical* November holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	83.0%	81.6%	92.8%	11.2%	46.4% (2011)
Oxford & GU	64.5%	82.1%	83.8%	1.7%	20.5% (2011)
GU South	75.3%	77.1%	76.3%	-0.8%	32.3% (2011)
GU North	67.1%	72.6%	96.2%	23.6%	13.9% (2003)
Lancaster Canal	99.3%	97.7%	100.0%	2.3%	61.8% (2009)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	87.6%	87.9%	90.2%	2.3%	16.9% (2003)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	53.4%	60.1%	61.1%	1.0%	24.6% (2003)
Caldon Canal	69.2%	80.8%	79.4%	-1.4%	29.0% (2003)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	97.8%	99.1%	56.5%	-42.6%	32.6% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	39.9%	45.5%	45.1%	-0.4%	45.1% (2020)
Grantham Canal	98.0%**	97.2%	97.0%	-0.2%	73.2% (2014)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	81.0%	81.5%	85.4%	3.9%	15.2% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	57.2%	62.7%***	66.7%	4.0%	53.5% (2009)

* 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, October was an exceptionally wet month. It was the fifth wettest October for the UK (in a series from 1862), with 3rd October recording the wettest day for the UK, in a series from 1891. Despite the significant rainfall, flooding events were limited due to the drier soils in established previous months, allowing the rainfall to be infiltrated and stored within the soils. As a result, Soil Moisture Deficits (SMDs) decreased across England, with groundwater levels rising to normal or above normal ranges. Generally, reservoir stocks across England & Wales are slightly above average, resulting in a healthy water resources situation. However, with soils reaching their saturation points, there is an increasing risk of fluvial flooding as we head into the winter months.

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/2020/10/2020_10_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

Seven out of 13 reservoir groups now have a holding above 80%, with five of those above 90%, due to October's significant rainfall allowing several reservoirs to continue refilling.

Although all of England received significant rainfall throughout October, southern England recorded notably higher than average rainfall. This is reflected in the southern reservoir groups registering the largest increases in holding, where the GU North group recorded an increase of 23.6%, followed by the Kennet & Avon Canal group recording an increase of 11.2%. The only southern reservoir group to record a decrease in holding was the Grand Union South, which saw a modest reduction of -0.8%.

In the north, four out of the eight reservoir groups registered an increase in holding (albeit modest in comparison to the south) ranging from 1.0% in the Peak Forest & Macclesfield group to 4.0% in the Staffordshire & Worcestershire, Shropshire Union group. The other four northern groups saw a decrease in holding, three of these were minor, ranging from -0.2% to -1.4%. The largest decrease was -42.6%, recorded in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal group due to winter engineering works taking place within the group.

As always, the Water Management Team will continue to monitor all reservoir holdings during the coming months (particularly those that have shown little recovery) 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
03 December 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 16 November unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in September and October.

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

