

Reservoir Watch December 2020

Reservoir Group	October 2020 holding	November 2020 holding	December 2020 holding	Change in November-December period	Minimum historical* December holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	81.6%	92.8%	87.7%	-5.1%	54.2% (2011)
Oxford & GU	82.1%	83.8%	98.8%	15.0%	23.0% (2011)
GU South	77.1%	76.3%	86.1%	9.8%	33.2% (2011)
GU North	72.6%	96.2%	100.0%	3.8%	20.7% (2003)
Lancaster Canal	97.7%	100.0%	98.8%	-1.2%	97.1% (2016)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	87.9%	90.2%	89.7%	-0.5%	54.5% (2003)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	60.1%	61.1%	67.4%	6.3%	55.9% (2010)
Caldon Canal	80.8%	79.4%	78.3%	-1.1%	46.1% (2003)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	99.1%	56.5%	82.3%	25.8%	16.7% (2013)
Chesterfield Canal	45.5%	45.1%	46.7%	1.6%	46.7% (2020)
Grantham Canal	97.2%	97.0%	100.0%	3.0%	78.9% (2011)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	81.5%	85.4%	90.0%	4.6%	15.2% (2011)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	62.7%***	66.7%	76.5%	9.8%	55.7% (2001)

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

*** Data from 12th October

General Conditions

According to the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, November was a mild month with it being the fifth warmest for the UK. Rainfall for the UK was below average overall, except from in the north-west where it was above average. This was reflected in the monthly river flows, where most of the UK saw generally normal or above normal flows, except from north-western catchments where flows were notably high. With the recharge season underway, groundwater levels have continued to increase, with the majority being in the normal or above normal range. Some exceptionally high levels have also been recorded. Even though November's rainfall was below average overall, current forecasts suggest a healthy water resources situation 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

The Trust's Water Resources

Despite the below average rainfall across most of the UK, nine out of 13 reservoir groups now have a holding above 80%, with five of these above 90%.

In the south, four out of the five reservoir groups saw an increase in holding, the largest being the Oxford & Grand Union Group increasing by 15.0%. The only southern reservoir group to see a decrease in holding was the Kennet & Avon Group, made up of the single reservoir Crofton, which decreased by -5.1%.

In the north, five out of the eight reservoir groups registered an increase in holding, ranging from 1.6% in the Chesterfield group to 25.8% in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Group. Although Chesterfield recorded a modest increase, it is at its lowest historical holding due to ongoing engineering works. It is pleasing to see the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Group refilling above 80% of its total holding over the last month, after the completion of some of the engineering works within the group. The other three northern reservoir groups recorded minimal decreases in holdings, ranging from -0.5% in the Leeds & Liverpool Group to -1.2% in the Lancaster Group. Although, all three of these group holdings are currently above 78% as we enter the winter months.

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
22 December 2020

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 18 December unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in October and November.

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