

Reservoir Watch March 2022

Reservoir Group	January 2022 holding	February 2022 holding	March 2022 holding	Change in February-March period	Minimum historical* March holding (Year)
Kennet & Avon Canal	88.0%	86.0%	90.0%	4.0%	87.8% (2012)
Oxford & GU	94.5%	95.8%	99.6%	3.8%	48.3% (2012)
GU South	76.4%	85.1%	84.6%	-0.5%	60.6% (2012)
GU North	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	38.4% (2012)
Lancaster Canal	72.5%	72.5%	72.5%	0.0%	99.1% (2022)
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	81.9%	82.8%	81.7%	-1.1%	85.0% (2009)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals	44.1%	44.5%	44.1%	-0.4%	44.1% (2022)
Caldon Canal	77.3%	84.7%	90.6%	5.9%	85.6% (2019)
Huddersfield Narrow Canal	74.0%	66.4%	72.7%	6.3%	30.1% (2014)
Chesterfield Canal	59.3%	60.4%	62.8%	2.4%	51.8% (2021)
Grantham Canal	93.0%	92.6%	92.7%	0.1%	89.6% (2012)
Birmingham Canal Navigations	97.3%	98.5%	100.0%	1.5%	33.8% (2012)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	87.8%	87.5%	87.8%	0.3%	73.5% (2011)

** for the purposes of this analysis, historical holdings cover 1998-2021 reservoir holding data, inclusive.*

General Conditions

According to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, weather this February was notably turbulent and included three named storms within the third week. Rainfall totals were above average for most of the UK, particularly in northern and western areas. Correspondingly, river flows were above normal for the time of year, particularly in central and northern England. Groundwater levels rose at most sites across the UK, notably in carboniferous limestone. In addition, reservoir levels mostly increased, and stocks were above average at a national scale. Saturated catchments imply an increased sensitivity to rainfall; however, this is likely to quickly subside as a dry spring is forecasted.

The Met Office rainfall anomaly graphs and maps can be viewed at:

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/anomalygraphs/2021/2021_Rainfall_Anomaly_1981-2010.gif

The Trust's Water Resources

As a result of the above average rainfall seen across much of the UK, nine out of the 13 reservoir groups have a holding above 80%, with five above 90%. In the south, three out of the five groups had an increase in holding, the largest being the Kennet and Avon Canal which increased by 4.0% followed by the Oxford and GU (3.8%) and Birmingham Canal Navigations (1.5%). The GU South was the only southern group to decrease in holding by a minimal -0.5%.

Five out of eight northern reservoir groups registered an increase in holding; the Huddersfield Narrow Canal had the largest increase in holding of 6.3% followed by 5.9% in the Caldon canal, 2.4% in the Chesterfield canal, 0.3% in Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union and 0.1% Grantham Canal. The Lancaster Canal group remained the same at 72.5%. Two northern reservoir groups recorded a decrease in holding. The Leeds and Liverpool canal had the largest decrease in holding (-1.1%) followed by the Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals (-0.4%). The Peak Forest & Macclesfield Canals have remained at its lowest historical holding due to engineering works at Bosley and Toddbrook reservoirs which limit the potential for refill. Engineering works at Bosley are now complete and the refill is currently being optimised.

As always, the Water Management Team will continue to monitor all reservoir holdings during the coming months 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
29 March 2022

Reservoir data presented is from the week ending Monday 14 March unless stated, along with data from the nearest comparable date in January and February.

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