



PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST 2018 NATIONAL BOAT COUNT SHOWS LICENCE EVASION AT HISTORIC LOW

The Canal & River Trust's annual national boat count shows that licence evasion on its waterways is at its lowest-ever level, with 96.9% of boats holding up-to-date licences (2017: 96.3%).

Jon Horsfall, interim head of boating at Canal & River Trust, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for our boat licensing customer support team. They are out every day helping boaters with their licence requirements and trying to find ways to work things out when a boater might run into problems. When boaters talk to us about difficulties they may be having, we are nearly always able to come up with a solution to keep them licensed.

"It's important that boats are licensed correctly. Not only does this mean they're insured and hold a boat safety certificate, but it means they're playing their part in contributing to the huge task of keeping our canals and rivers open. The income from boat licensing is crucial – in 2017/18 leisure licences contributed £20.2m, around 10% of total income – and it's important that it's shared fairly by everyone who keeps a boat on our waterways.

"Unfortunately, a small minority continue to enjoy the benefits of boating on the waterways without putting anything back to fund their upkeep. In 2017/18 we had to remove 108 boats from our canals and rivers as they were unlicensed or in breach of our terms and conditions."

The national boat count also paints a picture of the changing numbers of boats across the country. The Trust's waterways in London have seen growth slowing: up 2.4%, compared to growth of over 9% in 2016/17. The North also saw an increase of 2.3%, while other areas remained static.

The survey, completed in March, records boats on waterways across England & Wales and provides a comprehensive snap-shot of licence evasion. The information is used to support the day-to-day work carried out by the Trust.

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Area	Evasion	2017 boat numbers where CRT licences are required	2018 boat numbers where CRT licences are required	Year-on-year % change in boat numbers	2018 all boat numbers (including private marinas etc)
Central East	2.2%	5055	5036	-0.4%	6319
London	5.1%	4001	4098	2.4%	4919
North	3.8%	6628	6781	2.3%	6830
NW&Mids	3.5%	4407	4374	-0.7%	4960
South East	1.5%	6448	6475	0.4%	6741
South West (inc K&A)	3.2%	4138	3961*	-4.3%*	4684
Total	3.1%	30677	30725	0.2%	34453

*River Severn was not checked due to flood conditions (c170 boats).