



PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST 2017 NATIONAL BOAT COUNT SHOWS LICENCE EVASION DOWN Boat numbers in London continue to rise

The Canal & River Trust's annual national boat count shows that licence evasion on its waterways has reduced by 0.7% overall in the past year to 3.7%, with 96.3% of boats holding up-to-date licences. This is the eighth year the rate has stayed below 5%.

The survey, completed in March, identifies 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.

Jon Horsfall, interim head of boating at Canal & River Trust, said: "Boaters' licence fees contribute in helping us to carry out the huge task of keeping our canals and rivers open. It's important that everyone plays their part and we are delighted that the evasion rate has reduced again this year. Our boat licence customer support team has done a fantastic job working with boaters to make sure they are licensed correctly.

"Unfortunately, a small minority continue to enjoy the benefits of boating on the waterways without putting anything back to fund their upkeep. In 2016/17 we had to remove 101 boats from our canals and rivers as they were unlicensed or in breach of our terms and conditions. There's also an important safety aspect: if a boat isn't licensed we can't know that it's safe, which could be a risk for both the boat owner and other boaters."

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 an increase of 339 boats – an increase of over 9% – with numbers in the central East, the South West and the South East regions also rising. Boat numbers in the North, North Wales and Midlands have seen a slight drop.

Jon continued: "The popularity of the boating lifestyle in London remains high. Congestion aside it also puts a lot of pressure on the Capital's 200-year old waterways: the facilities are seeing more use than ever before. It's a challenge to meet the demands of this soaring growth but we are

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working with boaters, other stakeholders and canal users to develop a strategy that will help identify ways to address some of the challenges that it presents. We want the Capital’s waterways to work for all the boaters who know and love them.”

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Notes to editors

Area	Evasion	2016 boat numbers where CRT licences are required	2017 boat numbers where CRT licences are required	Year-on-year % change in boat numbers	2017 all boat numbers (including private marinas etc)
Central East	2.5%	4876	5055	3.7%	6280
London	5.5%	3662	4001	9.3%	4786
North	5.0%	6679	6628	-0.8%	6698
NW&Mids	3.6%	4421	4407	-0.3%	4935
South East	1.4%	6304	6448	2.3%	6618
South West (inc K&A)	4.9%	4016	4138	3.0%	4806
Total	3.7%	29958	30677	2.4%	34123