



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Wet conditions across Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River

Very high precipitation across the Great Lakes basin resulted in above average level changes for all the lakes through May. Rain through the month of May resulted in Lake Ontario setting new record high levels. The basin wide rainfall events at the beginning of May also resulted in record high flows in the Ottawa River and flooding in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Similarly, the remaining lakes rose to levels that have not been seen at the beginning of June since at least

1998. Due to the wet spring conditions, all of the lakes are expected to stay well above average for the rest of the summer.

Record high levels were seen in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in May. Ottawa River flows peaked on May 8, hitting a record high daily mean flow of 8,862 m³/s, and then began to decline. By May 12 the daily water level in Lake Ontario had risen to 75.82 m, equaling the highest recorded daily value for the lake in the

period of record (1918-2016). Lake Ontario's daily average level continued to rise reaching 75.88 m on May 29, 6 cm higher than the record high set at the beginning of June 1952. In response to rising levels on Lake Ontario and falling flow rates from the Ottawa River, the outflow from Lake Ontario was increased to a high of 10,200 m³/s beginning May 24, as high as the weekly maximum flow ever recorded since 1918. As a result of drier conditions and the increases in outflow,

Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	May 2017 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-June 2017 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2016)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2016)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	20 cm above	6 cm above	22 cm above	9 cm above
Michigan–Huron	32 cm above	2 cm below	34 cm above	2 cm above
St. Clair	49 cm above	11 cm above	50 cm above	13 cm above
Erie	52 cm above	17 cm above	54 cm above	21 cm above
Ontario	79 cm above	71 cm above	82 cm above	83 cm above

at:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/default.asp?lang=En&n=79962112-1> provides a source for web sites on Great Lakes levels. The [United States Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes Water Levels website](http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/Great-Lakes-Information/Great-Lakes-Water-Levels/Current-Conditions/) at: <http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/Great-Lakes-Information/Great-Lakes-Water-Levels/Current-Conditions/> provides the daily average levels for each of the Great Lakes. Click on “The Great Lakes Water Levels Report for the Current Month” for the most recent daily average water levels. The daily average water level is an average

taken from a number of gauges across each lake and is a good indicator of the overall lake level change when it is changing relatively rapidly due to the high precipitation recently experienced. Hourly lake levels from individual gauge sites can be found at the [Government of Canada Great Lakes Water Level Gauging Stations website](http://tides.gc.ca/eng/find/region/6) at: <http://tides.gc.ca/eng/find/region/6>. These levels are useful for determining real-time water levels at a given site, however it should be noted that they are subject to local, temporary effects on water levels such as wind and waves.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Derrick Beach (Editor)
Boundary Water Issues
National Hydrological Services
Meteorological Service Canada
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Burlington ON L7S 1A1
Tel.: 905-336-4714
Email:

ec.levelnews-infoniveau.ec@canada.ca

Rob Caldwell
Great Lakes–St. Lawrence
Regulation Office
Meteorological Service Canada
Environment and Climate Change Canada
111 Water Street East
Cornwall ON K6H 6S2
Tel.: 613-938-5864

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact Environment and Climate Change Canada's Public Inquiries Centre at 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800 or email to ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca.

Photos: © Environment Canada – 2011

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2017

ISSN 1925-5713

Aussi disponible en français

Water levels forecast

Relative to their beginning-of-June levels and assuming average water supplies, lakes Superior and Michigan–Huron are predicted to rise while lakes Erie and Ontario are predicted to fall during June. For a graphical representation of recent and forecasted water levels on the Great Lakes, refer to the [Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin](http://tides-marees.gc.ca/C&A/bulletin-eng.html) at: tides-marees.gc.ca/C&A/bulletin-eng.html.