



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Below-Average Water Supplies in May to All Lakes Except Superior

Last month's water supplies to each of the basins in the Great Lakes were below average, with the exception of Lake Superior. That was a bit above average.

- Lake Superior: The slightly above-average supplies to Lake Superior, along with below-average water outflows from the lake in May, resulted in the lake's level rising by 13 cm last month. On average, Lake Superior's level rises by 10 cm in May.

- Lakes Michigan–Huron: The level of Lakes Michigan–Huron rose by 3 cm this past month, whereas its average May rise is 8 cm. Although the lake's outflow was below average, that was not low enough to make up for the combined effect of below-average local supplies and below-average inflows from Lake Superior.

- Lake Erie: The average Lake Erie rise in May is 5 cm, but this year its level fell by

2 cm. This May decline was due to a combination of well-below-average local basin supplies, below-average inflows from the Detroit River, and the lake's near-average outflow during the month.

- Lake Ontario: Lake Ontario's level began June at the same level as at the beginning of May. On average, the level of Lake Ontario increases by 8 cm in May, with the lake's water supplies **(continued on next page)**

Great Lakes Water Level Information				
Lake	May 2012 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-June 2012 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2011)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2011)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	30 cm below	2 cm above	27 cm below	4 cm above
Michigan–Huron	43 cm below	5 cm below	46 cm below	13 cm below
St. Clair	14 cm below	17 cm below	15 cm below	26 cm below
Erie	3 cm below	19 cm below	6 cm below	34 cm below
Ontario	10 cm below	31 cm below	15 cm below	48 cm below

typically exceeding its outflow. However, during this May, the lake's below-average supplies were only equal to the outflow.

Current Conditions

As indicated in the water levels information table, the levels of the Great Lakes are all below their respective 1918–2011 long-term averages for the beginning of June. The level of Lake Superior remains higher than it was a year ago, while levels of the other Great Lakes are all lower than they were a year ago. There have been just seven years since 1918 when Lake Superior began June with a lower level. In that same time period, Lakes Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-June level has been lower than this year's level only

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13 times. The levels at the beginning of June for lakes Erie and Ontario are closer to the middle of their historic ranges.

Water Level Forecast

Relative to the beginning of June, and assuming average water supply conditions, the level of Lake Superior is expected to rise this month, while the levels of the remaining lakes are not expected to rise or fall appreciably in June.

For a graphical representation of recent and forecasted water levels on each of the Great Lakes and on Lake St. Clair, compared to their 1918–2011 period-of-record monthly averages and extreme levels, please refer to the May 2012 edition of the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin at: www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal_e.html

Be Up to Date When You Set Out

Whether you are a recreational boater or a ship's captain, knowledge about marine weather and water level conditions is important to you.

Marine Weather

You can find the information you need on current and forecasted weather, wind and wave conditions for the Great Lakes on Environment Canada's weather website at: www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca

Water Levels

Real-time water levels on the Great Lakes, their connecting channels and the upper St. Lawrence River are available by telephone from a network of gauging stations operated by the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS).

Please visit the CHS website at www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/voice_e.html for a list of recorded water level gauging stations and their telephone numbers.

May Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	93%	Lake Erie	47%
Lake Superior	162%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lakes Michigan–Huron	74%	Lake Ontario	68%

May Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	75%	Lake Erie	96%
Lakes Michigan–Huron	91%	Lake Ontario	98%

*As a percentage of the long-term May average.

NOTE: These figures are preliminary.