

# LEVEL *news*



Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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## ***An Update on Current and Forecasted Conditions***

The water levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron remain well below average, while those of Lakes Erie and Ontario are above average for this time of year.

Lake Superior's water level is now the lowest it has been at this time of year since the record lows of the mid-1920s. Its level has been consistently below average since 1998 and is currently just two centimetres above its period-of-record low for this time of year. This is due to the relatively dry weather conditions that have prevailed over the Lake Superior basin for several years. The water supplies (the net effect of precipitation, runoff and evaporation) to the Lake

Superior basin have been consistently below average since February of this year and set a new record low for the month of August. These dry weather conditions were also reflected in the severe forest fire season that persisted well into the fall in Northwestern Ontario this year. Lake Superior levels are forecasted to continue to decline during December and remain below average for the next several months.

Lakes Michigan-Huron's level is also below average, and has been below average since 1999 – almost as long as that of Lake Superior. However, the basin of Lakes Michigan-Huron has received more rainfall this fall than the Lake

Superior basin, so the Lakes Michigan-Huron level is still about 30 cm above its record low for this time of year. Lakes Michigan-Huron levels are also expected to continue to decline during December and remain below average for the foreseeable future.

Lake Erie's level has been close to average for the past several months. Even though the flows from Lake Huron through the St. Clair-Detroit River system into Lake Erie have been below average for several months, weather systems passing over Lake Erie have brought more than average rainfall to the Erie basin this summer and fall, which accounts for its near-**(continued on next page)**

### Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	October 2006 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning of November 2006 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2005)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2005)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	40 cm below	25 cm below	43 cm below	28 cm below
Michigan-Huron	48 cm below	1 cm below	46 cm below	2 cm above
St. Clair	14 cm below	4 cm above	5 cm below	17 cm above
Erie	4 cm above	9 cm above	10 cm above	18 cm above
Ontario	13 cm above	14 cm above	24 cm above	23 cm above

average lake level. There is a good chance that water levels on Lake Erie will fall below average in the next few months.

Lake Ontario's basin has also received rainfall well above average for the past couple of months, causing its level to be above average. Its level is expected to gradually fall to near-average conditions by mid-winter.

The low levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron and the above-average levels of Lakes Erie and Ontario reflect the precipitation received in their basins during the past few months. In the past three months, Lake Superior has received only 65% of its average precipitation, while the basins of Lakes Michigan-Huron, Erie and Ontario have received 108%, 131% and 124% of their averages, respectively.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Ralph Moulton, Manager  
Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Water Level  
Information Office  
P.O. Box 5050  
Burlington, ON L7R 4A6  
Tel. (905) 336-4580  
FAX: (905) 336-8901  
E-mail: [water.levels@ec.gc.ca](mailto:water.levels@ec.gc.ca)  
<http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/greatlakes/>

David Fay  
Great Lakes-St. Lawrence  
Regulation Office  
111 Water Street East  
Cornwall, ON K6H 6S2  
Tel. (613) 938-5725

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Editor, Chuck Southam

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## **October Precipitation over the Great Lakes**

**As a percentage of the long-term October average:**

<b>Great Lakes Basin</b>	<b>148%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>200%</b>
<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>(including Lake St. Clair)</b>	
<b>Lakes Michigan-Huron</b>	<b>161%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>188%</b>

**NOTE: These figures are preliminary**

## **Ice Season**

With the cold weather upon us and surface water temperatures dropping, can ice be far behind?

Environment Canada monitors ice conditions in five regions: the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the East Coast and the Arctic. If you would like to track ice conditions, please visit the Canadian Ice Service Web site at: <http://ice-glaces.ec.gc.ca/>.

At the Ice Service Web site, you will find a daily ice hazard bulletin and ice charts showing ice concentrations and stages of development. Be sure to click on the "Ice Codes" button at the top of the page to learn more about the Egg Code and the colour codes used on the ice charts. The Egg Code may look complicated, but once you become familiar with its organization you will be able to gain a great deal of useful information about ice conditions in a short period of time.

## **October Outflows from the Great Lakes**

**As a percentage of the long-term October average:**

<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>104%</b>
<b>Lake Huron</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>108%</b>

**NOTE: These figures are preliminary**