



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Water Supply Conditions Vary by Basin Location

In September, water supplies to the basins of lakes Superior and Michigan–Huron were below average for the second consecutive month, while local supplies to the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie basins were above average.

Although outflows from Lake Superior were below average in September, the below-average supplies it received caused the water level of Lake Superior to decline by 3 cm this September,

compared to its average September decline of 1 cm. Similarly, the level of Lakes Michigan–Huron declined by 9 cm this past month, which is 3 cm more than its average 6 cm September decline.

The above-average water supply received by Lake Erie during September helped stall its seasonal decline. Lake Erie’s level declined by only 2 cm during September, which is much less than its average decline of 9 cm for

the month. For Lake Ontario the above-average supplies it received during September were more than offset by its above-average outflows during the month. As a result, Lake Ontario’s level fell by 16 cm last month, compared to its average September decline of 13 cm.

As indicated by the beginning-of-October differences provided in the water level information table, the levels of **(continued on next page)**

Great Lakes Water Level Information				
Lake	September 2011 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-October 2011 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2010)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2010)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	31 cm below	1 cm above	30 cm below	1 cm below
Michigan–Huron	38 cm below	3 cm below	37 cm below	4 cm below
St. Clair	Same	16 cm above	6 cm above	14 cm above
Erie	14 cm above	28 cm above	19 cm above	31 cm above
Ontario	2 cm above	4 cm above	2 cm above	6 cm above

lakes Superior and Michigan–Huron remain below their respective averages for the 1918–2010 period of record. In comparison, the levels of lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario are above their averages. The level of Lake Superior began October just 1 cm lower than it was at the same time last year, while the level of Lakes Michigan–Huron was 4 cm lower than it was one year ago. The levels of the other lakes began October higher than they were a year ago. Since 1918, there have been only five years with a lower beginning-of-October level on Lake Superior. Lakes Michigan–Huron’s beginning-of-October level has been lower than this

year’s 20 times since 1918. In contrast, the Lake Erie level at the beginning of October has only been higher 26 times since 1918.

water’s edge during a storm. Otherwise, there is a risk of being swept into the lake by a storm-generated wave.

Six-Month Forecast

With average water supply conditions, the levels of each of the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair are expected to fall during October as they continue their annual seasonal declines.

For a graphical representation of recent and forecasted water levels on each of the Great Lakes and on Lake St. Clair, compared to their 1918–2010 period-of-record monthly average and the extreme levels, please refer to the September 2011 edition of the Canadian Hydrographic Service’s monthly water levels bulletin, found at:

www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal_e.html

Storm Season Reminder

Autumn often brings storms that pack high winds to the Great Lakes region. Watching large waves crash against the shore can be an awe-inspiring sight, but it is important to stand well back from the

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September Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	112%	Lake Erie	188%
Lake Superior	88%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lakes Michigan–Huron	107%	Lake Ontario	107%

September Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	71%	Lake Erie	101%
Lake Huron	90%	Lake Ontario	107%

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

NOTE: These figures are preliminary.