



LEVELnews

Great Lakes — St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron Close to Their Record Lows

Water levels fell on each of the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair during September with the levels of lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron falling much more than average. As a result, levels on both these lakes are close to their 1918–2011 period-of-record lows for this time of year.

- Lake Superior's level fell by 11 cm during September, more than five times its 1918–2011 period-of-record average September decline of 2 cm. The lake began October 8 cm

higher than its period-of-record low beginning-of-October level set in 2007.

- Lakes Michigan–Huron's level fell by 15 cm during September, two and one-half times its average decline of 6 cm. Lakes Michigan–Huron began October just 3 cm higher than its period-of-record low beginning-of-October level set in 1964.
- Lake St. Clair's level fell by 11 cm last month, 4 cm more than its average decline of 7 cm.

- Lake Erie's level fell by 9 cm during August, just under its average September decline of 10 cm.

- Lake Ontario's level fell by 14 cm during September, an amount equal to its average decline for the month.

As indicated in the water level information table provided here, the current water levels of the Great Lakes are all below their respective 1918–2011 period-of-record averages. At the beginning of **(continued on next page)**

Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	September 2012 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-October 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	33 cm below	3 cm below	38 cm below	9 cm below
Michigan–Huron	65 cm below	27 cm below	70 cm below	33 cm below
St. Clair	33 cm below	33 cm below	34 cm below	40 cm below
Erie	21 cm below	35 cm below	21 cm below	40 cm below
Ontario	24 cm below	26 cm below	28 cm below	30 cm below

October, the levels of all the Great Lakes were all significantly lower than they were a year ago.

There has been only one year (2007) with a lower beginning-of-October level on Lake Superior. Similarly, the beginning-of-October level on Lakes Michigan-Huron (which includes Georgian Bay) has also only been lower than this year's once since 1918 (in 1964). The levels on lakes Erie and Ontario are closer to the middle of their ranges, having been lower 29 and 13 times, respectively, at the beginning of October since 1918. Nonetheless, the last time Lake Ontario was this low at this time of year was in 1964.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Well below average outflows from the Ottawa River basin coupled with below-average flows from Lake Ontario caused the water level of the St. Lawrence River at Montreal to set a new record low monthly level for the third consecutive month. The harbour's September level was 98 cm below the average for the month and 2 cm lower than the previous 1967–2011 period-of-record low for the month of September set in 2007.

Water Level Forecast

The latest 6-month forecast of the probable range of water levels on each of the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair indicates that the levels on each of the lakes will likely remain below average throughout the current forecast period and possibly into next spring. If dry conditions persist, the levels of lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron could start setting new record monthly lows in October. Levels will fall close to, but remain above the period-of-record monthly lows levels on the remaining lakes. The most probable supplies forecast

indicates that Montreal Harbour's monthly mean level is expected to rise slightly in October.

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

September Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	77%	Lake Erie	119%
Lake Superior	46%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lakes Michigan–Huron	75%	Lake Ontario	117%

September Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	80%	Lake Erie	90%
Lakes Michigan–Huron	87%	Lake Ontario	92%

*As a percentage of the long-term September Average.
NOTE: These figures are preliminary.