



# LEVELnews

## Great Lakes — St. Lawrence River Water Levels

### Low Water Levels Conditions Being Experienced Basin-Wide

Generally hot and dry weather resulted in below average water supplies to each of the Great Lakes during August. As a result, water levels fell on each of the lakes during August - including Lake Superior, which on average has risen by 1 cm during the month.

- Lake Superior's level fell by 5 cm during August.
- The level of Lakes Michigan-Huron fell by 10 cm this past month, while on average it declined by 4 cm

in August over the 1918–2011 period of record used for Great Lakes' water level comparison purposes.

- Lake St. Clair's level also fell by 10 cm last month, compared to its average August decline of 6 cm.
- Lake Erie fell by 9 cm during August, just 1 cm more than average.
- Lake Ontario's level fell by 18 cm, compared to an average decline of 14 cm in August.

The levels of the Great Lakes are all below their respective 1918–2011 averages for the beginning of September, and lower than they were a year ago. There have been only five years with a lower beginning-of-September level on Lake Superior since 1918. Similarly, Lakes Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-September level has been lower only three times since 1918. The levels at the beginning of September for lakes Erie and Ontario are  
**(continued on next page)**

### Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	August 2012 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-September 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	26 cm below	1 cm below	29 cm below	1 cm below
Michigan–Huron	59 cm below	27 cm below	61 cm below	27 cm below
St. Clair	30 cm below	31 cm below	30 cm below	32 cm below
Erie	21 cm below	34 cm below	22 cm below	33 cm below
Ontario	23 cm below	29 cm below	28 cm below	32 cm below

closer to the middle of their ranges, but it's been some time since these levels have been this low. The last time Lake Erie was 9 cm lower at the beginning of September was in 2001; however, the last time that Lake Ontario was as low as it is now at this time of year was in 1964.

Record low outflows from the Ottawa River basin, coupled with below-average flows from Lake Ontario due to falling supplies and levels, caused the water level of the St. Lawrence River at Montreal to set a record low monthly level for the second consecutive month. The harbour's August level was 112 cm below the average for

the month. This is 99 cm lower than the monthly mean level of August 2011, and 4 cm lower than the previous 1967–2011 period-of-record low for the month set in 2001.

### Water Level Forecast

The level of Lake Superior is expected to remain about the same in September relative to its beginning-of-September level, and assuming average water supply conditions, Levels of the other Great Lakes are all expected to decline. The most probable supplies forecast indicates that Montreal Harbour's monthly mean level in September will be about the same as it was in August.

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 August 2012 edition of the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin at:

**[www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal\\_e.html](http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal_e.html)**

### July's Edition

Due to unforeseen circumstances the July edition of LEVELnews was not published and posted on the Web as usual in July. An abbreviated version of the July edition will be posted soon to give LEVELnews readers a summary of the water level changes that occurred in June and provide an unbroken series of the usual water level, precipitation and outflow tables.

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### August Precipitation over the Great Lakes\*

<b>Great Lakes Basin</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>(including Lake St. Clair)</b>	
<b>Lakes Michigan–Huron</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>68%</b>

### August Outflows from the Great Lakes\*

<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Lakes Michigan–Huron</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>89%</b>

**\*As a percentage of the long-term August Average.**

**NOTE: These figures are preliminary.**