



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

May 2013 Sees Large Rise in Lake Superior's Level

Relatively wet conditions were experienced in the northern part of the Great Lakes basin during May, especially on Lake Superior, where significant snowmelt coupled with above-average precipitation resulted in a rapid rise in water levels. A different story played out in the southern-most parts of the basin, where conditions were relatively dry, particularly on Lake Erie. Downstream of the Great Lakes, Montreal Harbour levels were below average for most of the month,

but rose sharply near the end of May, finishing the month above average.

- Water supplies to Lake Superior were the second highest recorded in the month of May since 1918. This, along with below-average outflows, resulted in Lake Superior's level rising by 24 cm during May, 15 cm more than the lake's 1918–2012 period of record average rise of 9 cm, and the lake's second largest May rise on record (the largest being 27 cm in May of 1950).

- After an extremely wet April, Lake Michigan–Huron experienced relatively wet conditions again in May, rising 13 cm, 5 cm more than its average May rise of 8 cm.

- In contrast to the uppermost lakes, relatively dry conditions caused Lake Erie to remain at about the same level from the beginning to the end of the month, while on average the level of Lake Erie has risen by 5 cm during the month of May **(continued on next page)**

Great Lakes Water Level Information				
Lake	May 2013 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-June 2013 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2012)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2012)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	25 cm below	5 cm above	18 cm below	8 cm above
Michigan–Huron	55 cm below	12 cm below	50 cm below	3 cm below
St. Clair	28 cm below	14 cm below	22 cm below	9 cm below
Erie	20 cm below	17 cm below	20 cm below	14 cm below
Ontario	13 cm below	3 cm below	11 cm below	4 cm above

over the 1918–2012 period of record.

- On Lake Ontario, below-average outflows helped offset below-average water supplies, and this saw the lake rise 9 cm, slightly more than its average May rise of 8 cm.
- The monthly mean level at Montreal Harbour was 17 cm below average, but 79 cm higher than May's level last year. Daily water levels at Montreal Harbour fell during the first three weeks of May as spring outflows from the Ottawa River subsided. Precipitation late in the month saw levels rebound, rising sharply near the end of May.

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Water Level Forecast

Relative to their beginning-of-June levels and assuming average water supply conditions, all of the lakes are expected to continue their typical seasonal rise in June. Assuming average water supplies, forecasts indicate that Montreal Harbour's monthly mean level in June is expected to fall, as is typical for this time of year, but remain above chart datum.

For a graphical representation of recent and forecasted water levels on each of the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair and Montreal Harbour compared to their respective period-of-record monthly averages and extreme levels please refer to the May 2013 edition of the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin at: www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/bulletin_e.html

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 voice-announcing water level gauging stations and their telephone numbers.

May Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	115%	Lake Erie	77%
Lake Superior	157%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lake Michigan–Huron	110%	Lake Ontario	91%

May Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	75%	Lake Erie	93%
Lake Michigan–Huron	90%	Lake Ontario	87%

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