

# LEVEL *news*



Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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## ***Lake Superior Expected to Begin its Seasonal Rise during April***

Daily water levels increased on Lakes Michigan-Huron, Erie and Ontario during March, as each of these Great Lakes continued their annual seasonal rise. Lake Superior is expect to begin its seasonal rise during April.

Daily water levels remained fairly stable on Lake Superior during March. As a result, it began April at the same level as it was at the beginning of March, suggesting that its 2008-09 seasonal decline has ended. Daily water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron, Erie and Ontario increased 8, 19 and 12 cm, respectively, during March as each of these lakes continued their seasonal climb.

Water levels on each of the Great Lakes, including Lake Superior, are expected to increase during April.

### **Summer Daydreaming (already)**

Spring may be just a few weeks old, but people are already starting to wonder what water levels will be like this summer on the Great Lakes. It's a question that is asked quite often at this time of year, but one that can't be answered with any degree of confidence at this point in time. We can, however, look at the Monthly Water Levels Bulletin prepared by the Canadian Hydrographic Service for an idea of what

we might see over the next six months.

The March 2008 edition of the Bulletin, found at: [http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal\\_e.html](http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal_e.html) contains the water levels forecast for April through September 2009. Because it isn't possible to accurately forecast water supply conditions in advance, a probable range of future levels is provided in the Bulletin for each of the Great Lakes.

Right now, it looks like below-average water levels conditions will continue on lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron throughout the summer. If water levels on **(continued on next page)**

## **Great Lakes Water Level Information**

Lake	March 2009 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning of April 2009 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2008)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2008)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	15 cm below	12 cm above	14 cm below	14 cm above
Michigan-Huron	22 cm below	31 cm above	19 cm below	34 cm above
St. Clair	15 cm above	17 cm above	9 cm above	17 cm above
Erie	24 cm above	5 cm above	23 cm above	3 cm above
Ontario	24 cm above	5 cm above	22 cm above	2 cm above

Lake Superior experience a near-average seasonal rise this spring, they will be about the same this summer as they

were last year. However, as the forecast band indicates, there is almost an equal chance that levels will be higher or lower than they were last year. If the lake receives very high supplies due to wet weather, its level could be close to average by the summer. On the other hand, if very dry conditions are experienced, Lake Superior's level could be about 25 cm below average throughout the summer. If levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron experience a near-average seasonal rise this spring, summer levels will be a bit higher this year than they were last year. If Lakes Michigan-Huron receives very high supplies, levels could also be close to average this summer. However, if dry conditions persist over the

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## **March Precipitation over the Great Lakes**

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

<b>Great Lakes Basin</b>	<b>111%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>148%</b>
<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>(including Lake St. Clair)</b>	
<b>Lakes Michigan-Huron</b>	<b>106%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NOTE: These figures are preliminary**

next few months, levels could be 35 to 40 cm below average throughout the summer.

Based on the current six-month forecast, it looks like there is a better than equal likelihood that water levels on Lake Erie will remain above average at least until July. There is almost an equal chance of Lake Erie levels being above or below average in August and September.

The latest six-month forecast for Lake Ontario looks similar to that of Lake Erie, except in Lake Ontario's case it looks like there is a good chance that levels will remain above average until August, and there is almost an equal chance of it being above or below average in September.

Although water levels are likely to fall somewhere within the probable ranges provided, what actually happens will depend on the water supply conditions over the next few months. Be sure to check the Canadian Hydrographic Service Web site for the latest six-month forecast at the beginning of each month.

## **March Outflows from the Great Lakes**

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

<b>Lake Superior</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>Lake Erie</b>	<b>112%</b>
<b>Lake Huron</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>Lake Ontario</b>	<b>115%</b>

**NOTE: These figures are preliminary**