



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

High February Water Supplies In All Lakes

All of the Great Lakes received relatively high water supplies during February, which kept levels above average and higher than those seen a year ago.

- The monthly mean water level of Lake Superior was 23 cm above its period-of-record (1918–2014) average in February and 2 cm higher than February 2015.
- Lake Michigan–Huron’s mean level in February was 29 cm above average and 6 cm higher than last year’s February level.
- Lake Erie’s mean monthly level was 28 cm above average, and 24 cm higher than February 2015.
- Lake Ontario was 21 cm above its February average level and 31 cm higher than last year.
- St. Lawrence River levels near Montreal rose above average during the month.

Lake Superior continued its seasonal decline in February, falling 4 cm, compared to the average (1918–2014) fall of 5 cm. Lake Michigan–Huron rose 2 cm in February, when on average its level remains stable. Lake Erie rose 9 cm in February, significantly higher than its average monthly rise of 3 cm. Lake Ontario rose 20 cm through February, a rise considerably larger than the 3 cm average, due to relatively high inflows from Lake Erie and

(continued on next page)

Great Lakes Water Level Information				
Lake	February 2016 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-March 2016 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2014)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2014)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	23 cm above	2 cm above	24 cm above	5 cm above
Michigan–Huron	29 cm above	6 cm above	29 cm above	7 cm above
St. Clair	39 cm above	43 cm above	45 cm above	52 cm above
Erie	28 cm above	24 cm above	33 cm above	38 cm above
Ontario	21 cm above	31 cm above	30 cm above	50 cm above

wet conditions in the basin. This was the second highest rise during February recorded on Lake Ontario since 1918.

Beginning-of-March Lake Levels

Beginning-of-March levels of all the Great Lakes were above average (1918–2014) and above those seen last year. Lake Superior's beginning-of-March level was 24 cm above average, 5 cm above last year's and the highest it has been in March since 1997. Lake Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-March level was 29 cm above average,

7 cm higher than last year and the highest it has been since 1998. Lake Erie was 33 cm above average at the beginning of March and 38 cm higher than this time last year. Lake Ontario's level began March at 30 cm above average and 50 cm higher than this time last year.

Ice Conditions on Lakes

The beginning of March saw the weekly ice coverage of the Great Lakes at 10%, which is significantly lower than the average ice cover of 39% for this period. Ice cover has been below average for the entire winter with the maximum weekly ice cover of 28% occurring during the week of February 12. This winter has been a relatively light winter for ice compared to the last two winters, when annual maximum ice cover of 92.5% was seen in 2014 and 86.8% in 2015. More information on Great Lakes ice conditions can be found on the Canadian Ice Service web site at ice-glaces.ec.gc.ca.

Water Level Forecast

Relative to their beginning-of-March levels, and assuming average water supply conditions, all of the Great Lakes are expected to continue their seasonal rises during March, except for Lake Superior, which is expected to continue its seasonal decline. All lakes are forecasted to remain above average through the spring. For a graphical representation of recent and forecasted water levels on the Great Lakes refer to the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin at tides-marees.gc.ca/C&A/bulletin-eng.html.

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February Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	101%	Lake Erie	101%
Lake Superior	80%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lake Michigan–Huron	95%	Lake Ontario	146%

February Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	126%	Lake Erie	115%
Lake Michigan–Huron	122%	Lake Ontario	109%

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