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LEVELnews

Great Lakes — St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Dry May Slows Seasonal Rise Of Lakes

All of the Great Lakes basins saw very dry conditions in May resulting in a significant reduction in the seasonal water level rise in all the Great Lakes. Even with the dry conditions, all of the lakes, except for Lake Superior, began June with water levels above last year's and May monthly average levels for all the lakes were above their long-term May averages.

- The monthly mean water level of Lake Superior was 15 cm above its period-of-record (1918–2015) average in May and 2 cm lower than May 2015.
- Lake Michigan–Huron's mean level in May was 35 cm above average and 23 cm higher than last year's May level.
- Lake Erie's mean monthly level was 35 cm above average and 34 cm higher than May 2015.
- Lake Ontario was 8 cm above its May average and 28 cm higher than last year.
- The dry conditions from the Great Lakes extended into the St. Lawrence River basin where the levels near Montreal fell below average by the end of May.

All of the lake level changes were below their average rises during May. Lake Superior rose only 3 cm, when on average (1918–2015) it rises 10 cm. Lake Michigan–Huron also only rose 3 cm in May, considerably less than the average rise of 8 cm. Lake Erie also fell well short of its average 6 cm rise

Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	May 2016 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-June 2016 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2015)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2015)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	15 cm above	2 cm below	13 cm above	6 cm below
Michigan–Huron	35 cm above	23 cm above	33 cm above	19 cm above
St. Clair	38 cm above	28 cm above	37 cm above	11 cm above
Erie	35 cm above	34 cm above	33 cm above	21 cm above
Ontario	8 cm above	28 cm above	1 cm below	17 cm above

Canada

with only a 1 cm rise in May. Lake Ontario fell 8 cm in May, when on average it rises 8 cm.This is the fifth largest May decline seen for Lake Ontario, attributed mainly to the dry conditions, but also due to increased discharge at the lake outlet that removed approximately 4 cm of water stored for St. Lawrence River spring flood control. More information on the regulation of Lake Ontario outflow can be found on the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control web site at: ijc.org/en_/islrbc/Regulating_Lake_Ontario-St._Lawrence_River and the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ISLRBC.

Beginning-of-June Lake Levels

Beginning-of-month levels of all the Great Lakes moved closer to average values (1918–2015) compared to the previous month. Lake Superior's beginning-of-June level was 13 cm above average and 6 cm below last year's. Lake Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-June level was 33 cm above average, 19 cm higher than last year and the highest it has been since 1998. Lake Erie was 33 cm above average at the beginning of June, 21 cm higher than this time last year and the highest they have been since 1998. Lake Ontario's level at the start of June was 1 cm below average and 17 cm higher than this time last year.

Be Aware of Rip Currents on Great Lakes

Rip currents can occur in the Great Lakes whenever waves push water toward the shore. Breaking waves create a buildup of water along the shoreline that at some point needs to flow back toward the lake. Rip currents can develop where there is a low point in the lake bottom just off shore, such as a sand bar or rock reef, which funnels the water back toward the lake. Rip currents can be dangerous as they can pull even strong swimmers out into deep water; however, contrary to common belief, rip currents do not have an undertow and will not pull swimmers underwater. Understanding rip currents and the conditions that cause them to form can help make it possible to avoid them altogether or for strong swimmers to safely exit them. To help make your summer activities around the Great Lakes safe and enjoyable we suggest you see further information on Great Lakes rip currents at the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Great Lakes Rip Currents web site at: www.weather.gov/cle/great_lakes_rip_currents.

Summer Level Outlook

Relative to their beginning-of-month levels, and assuming average water supply conditions, Lakes Superior and Michigan–Huron are expected to continue their seasonal rises during June, while Lakes Erie and Ontario are expected to stay at the same level. 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.

May Precipitation over the Great Lakes*

Great Lakes Basin	**67%**	**Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)**	**64%**
Lake Superior	**68%**		
Lake Michigan–Huron	**68%**	**Lake Ontario**	**61%**

May Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	**115%**	**Lake Erie**	**114%**
Lake Michigan–Huron	**110%**	**Lake Ontario**	**115%**

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

Real-Time Water Levels

The Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS) operates a network of announcing gauges at its stations on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The following stations can be accessed by telephone at the number listed:

Lake Superior	Thunder Bay	(807) 344-3141
	Rossport	(807) 824-2250
	Michipicoten	(705) 856-0077
	Gros Cap	(705) 779-2052
St. Marys River	above the lock	(705) 949-2066
	below the lock	(705) 254-7989
North Channel	Thessalon	(705) 842-2215
	Little Current	(705) 368-3695
Georgian Bay	Parry Sound	(705) 746-6544
	Midland	(705) 526-6413
	Collingwood	(705) 445-8737
Lake Huron	Tobermory	(519) 596-2085
	Goderich	(519) 524-8058
St. Clair River	Point Edward	(519) 344-0263
	Port Lambton	(519) 677-4092
Lake St. Clair	Belle River	(519) 728-2882
Detroit River	Amherstburg	(519) 736-4357
Lake Erie	Bar Point	(519) 736-7488
	Kingsville	(519) 733-4417
	Erieau	(519) 676-1915
	Port Stanley	(519) 782-3866
	Port Dover	(519) 583-2259
	Port Colborne	(905) 835-2501
Lake Ontario	Port Weller	(905) 646-9568
	Burlington	(905) 544-5610
	Toronto	(416) 868-6026
	Cobourg	(905) 372-6214
	Kingston	(613) 544-9264
St. Lawrence River	Brockville	(613) 345-0095
	Iroquois above lock	(613) 652-4426
	Iroquois below lock	(613) 652-4839
	Morrisburg	(613) 543-3361
	Cornwall	(613) 930-9373
	Summerstown	(613) 931-2089

Please contact the CHS office in Burlington (905) 336-4844 (during office hours 08:00 to 16:00) or by e-mail **CATCWL@dfo-mpo.gc.ca** to report any problems.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Derrick Beach (Editor)
Boundary Water Issues
National Hydrological Services
Meteorological Service Canada
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Burlington ON L7S 1A1
Tel.: 905-336-4714
Email:
ec.levelnews-infoniveau.ec@canada.ca

Rob Caldwell
Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Regulation Office
Meteorological Service Canada
Environment and Climate Change Canada
111 Water Street East
Cornwall ON K6H 6S2
Tel.: 613-938-5864

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