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LEVELnews

Great Lakes — St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Wet Conditions Continue For All Lakes In February

For a second month all of the Great Lakes experienced wet supplies due mainly to above average precipitation and some snowmelt. As a result, all of the lakes remained above their average levels for this time of the year and all gained water relative to their average rates of change over the month. The ice cover remained below average through February; however, due to relatively warm air temperatures, evaporation rates likely were average to below average for this time of year.

- The monthly mean water level of Lake Superior was 17 cm above its period-of-record (1918–2015) average in February, but 6 cm lower than January 2016.
- Lake Michigan–Huron's mean level in February was 21 cm above average and 8 cm lower than last February's level.
- Lake Erie's mean monthly level was 41 cm above average and 13 cm above its level the previous February.
- Lake Ontario was 22 cm above its February average and the same level as last year.
- Montreal Harbour levels were below average for most of February. However, average flows from the Ottawa River during the first three weeks, along with outflow from Lake Ontario being gradually increased, saw levels at Montreal Harbour edge toward average up to a pronounced rise above average on February 26 due to a significant snowmelt event, which included thunderstorms and rainfall. Levels continued to rise up to

Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	February 2017 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-March 2017 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	17 cm above	6 cm below	20 cm above	4 cm below
Michigan–Huron	21 cm above	8 cm below	23 cm above	6 cm below
St. Clair	44 cm above	5 cm above	47 cm above	2 cm above
Erie	41 cm above	13 cm above	41 cm above	10 cm above
Ontario	22 cm above	Same	31 cm above	1 cm above

Canada

the end of the month.

The wet conditions, due mainly to above-average precipitation, were seen on the level changes of all the Great Lakes through February. Lake Superior had the same level at the beginning and end of February, mainly due to significant precipitation near the end of February, reversing the average decline seen in the first part of the month. The late month precipitation made this February the fifth wettest on record (1918–2015) in a month that on average sees Superior's lake levels decline by 5 cm through the month. Lake Michigan–Huron's level rose 2 cm through February, when on average its level stays the same. Lake Erie also rose more than its average amount of 3 cm with a rise of 4 cm over the month. Lake Ontario had a rise of 19 cm, the third largest February rise on record, and considerably more than the average 3 cm rise, due to wet basin supplies and greater than average inflow from Lake Erie.

Beginning-of-March Lake Levels

All the lakes had above average beginning-of-March levels. Lake Superior's beginning-of-March level was 20 cm above average (1918–2015), but 4 cm lower than the level at the same time last year. Lake Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-March level was 23 cm above average but 6 cm lower than last year. Lake Erie was 41 cm above average at the beginning of March and 10 cm higher than this time last year. Lake Ontario's level at the start of March was 31 cm above average and 1 cm above this time last year. At the beginning of February, all of the lakes were at least 24 cm above their chart datum level.

Lake Level Outlook

Relative to their beginning-of-month levels and assuming average water supply conditions, Lake Superior is predicted to continue its seasonal decline through the month of March, while the other Great Lakes are predicted to rise. 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	**118%**	**Lake Erie**	**102%**
Lake Superior	**132%**	**(including Lake St. Clair)**	
Lake Michigan–Huron	**122%**	**Lake Ontario**	**102%**

February Outflows from the Great Lakes*

Lake Superior	**125%**	**Lake Erie**	**120%**
Lake Michigan–Huron	**123%**	**Lake Ontario**	**107%**

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