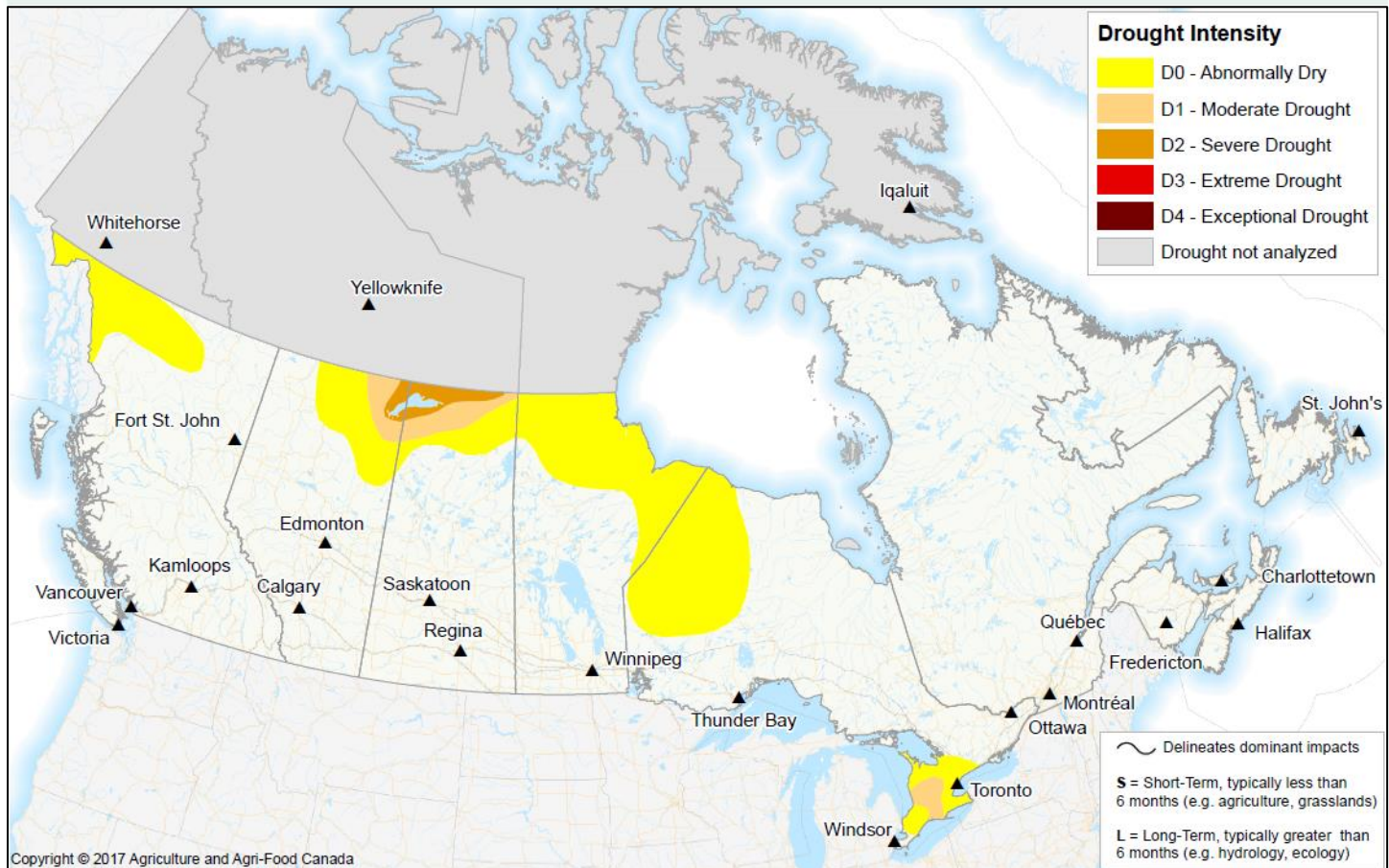


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of July 31, 2011



Throughout July, drought conditions continued in the Northern Boreal region of western Canada, and intensified greatly in eastern Canada. In northern Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, the dry conditions kept forest fires raging. While record low rainfall combined with weeks of above normal temperatures hastened the onset of drought conditions in southern Ontario. For many locations in southern Ontario, the average daily high was reported above 30°C. July also marked the first time since 2003, when Canada began contributing to the North American Drought Monitor, that no drought was represented throughout any of the agricultural area in Western Canada.

Southern Ontario received record low rainfall accompanied stifling heat; resulting in significant heat and drought stress. Due to above normal spring precipitation, many agricultural crops developed shallow roots which were significantly impacted by dry, hot conditions. For corn the



excessive heat and lack of moisture could potentially reduce yields 5-10 per cent, while grains and forages were wilting ahead of harvest. A number of local Conservation Authorities issued low water advisories in July, which instituted water use restrictions for rural and urban users.. Some areas recorded less than 30% of normal rainfall in July; a shortfall of 60 mm (2.4 in) in what is typically the wettest month of the year for the region. As a result, a good portion of the area was classified D1 (Moderate Drought).

Drought continued to grip the Northern Boreal region of Western Canada. Although the extent was slightly reduced due to recent rainfall over the past month, the most significant area around Lake Athabasca continued to be classified D2 (Severe Drought), due to high fire danger and low seasonal precipitation values since April 1 of 40-60% of normal or less. Surrounding the Lake Athabasca region, the D1 classification stretching from northeast Alberta to northwest Manitoba was reduced slightly. The D0 classification was also pushed further north, but extended further into northern Ontario where forest fires took hold. 27. Fire bans were put in place over the northern Ontario regions. Over the course of July, the amount of area burned, 540,000 ha (ac), had surpassed the 10 year average of 60,000 ha (ac) by July

In contrast to the emerging drought in southern Ontario, a number of regions improved over the past month. Most notably, all drought designations were taken out of the Peace River region of northwest Alberta, which marked the first time in nearly three years that this had occurred. Annual crops are faring well this year, while forages and pasture continue to improve thanks to higher than normal rainfall. Since April 1, an additional 75 mm (3 in) or more has fallen throughout the region.

Other changes since last month include removal of the D0 classification from the Cariboo region of the central-interior of British Columbia. Normal rainfall and above average runoff from melting high elevation snow packs brought lake and river levels back to normal. In northwest Ontario the D0 classification around Thunder Bay was also removed.