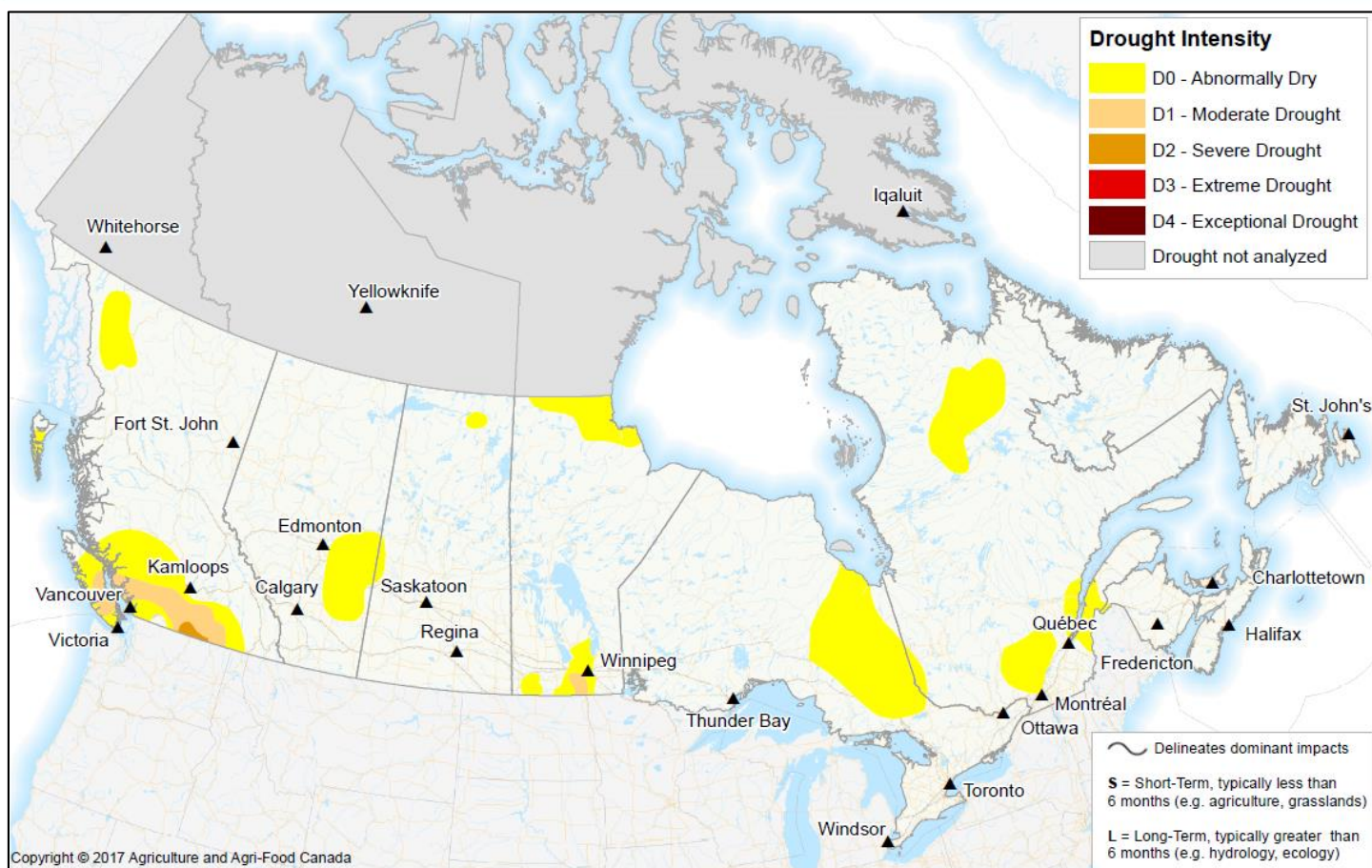


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of February 28, 2014



With the exception of southern British Columbia and the Atlantic region, February saw below-average precipitation across much of Canada, with central Alberta and southern Manitoba experiencing especially dry weather. February was also an exceptionally cold month across the country, with British Columbia, the Prairie region, and northwestern Ontario experiencing temperatures 6-10 degrees Celsius below-normal. The cold temperatures have increased the depth of frost and will reduce infiltration of spring melt and reduce the potential for soil moisture recharge in many regions. Drought conditions worsened in the southern interior of British Columbia but were relatively stable elsewhere. Much of the precipitation across Canada fell as snow, and therefore has not resulted in immediate improvements to soil moisture or water supplies.

Pacific Region (BC)

The drought conditions in southern British Columbia became more severe in February, with Moderate (D1) and Severe (D2) drought developing in the southern Okanagan Valley. This is due to a winter season precipitation deficit in the area and low stream flows, compounded by frozen soil that has prevented soil moisture recharge. The southwest area also remained dry, with D1 drought surrounded by a large area of Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions. The snowpack in southwest British Columbia was the driest it has been since 2005, at 25 to 50 percent below average. This indicates that there will be below-normal spring runoff, potentially leading to increasingly dry conditions. An area in the northwest portion of the province continued to receive below normal precipitation and resulted in an Abnormally Dry classification.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Across the Prairie region, drought conditions remained much the same from January. Central Alberta remained Abnormally Dry, with dryness now stretching north of the North Saskatchewan River. A large area between Edmonton and Calgary received more than 40 per cent less precipitation than normal. Interestingly, the snowpack in western Alberta is estimated to contain more than 200mm water equivalent; an amount so high that it only occurs once every 50 years on average. This snow pack will result in increased stream flow and water availability during spring runoff. However, in the eastern part of the province, the snowpack is below-normal. Warm, dry winds have swept across the southern portion of Alberta in the past few months, melting snow and exposing soil. With the soil exposed, extreme low temperatures as dried the soil further. Soil moisture in east and central Alberta is very low, with an area east of Edmonton experiencing low levels only seen once every 50 years on average. In Saskatchewan, the dry conditions in the north improved significantly. The D0 conditions in northern Manitoba improved as well, but it remained dry in the southern and Interlake areas of the province due to a lack of precipitation and little snow cover.

Central Region (ON, QC)

The Central region saw an increase of Abnormally Dry conditions. In Ontario, D0 conditions in the north stretched down into the northern agricultural areas, while in Quebec, D0 conditions developed west of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Quebec. These areas of Ontario and Quebec received well below-average precipitation during February. The Atlantic region received above-average precipitation in February and remained free of any drought conditions.

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