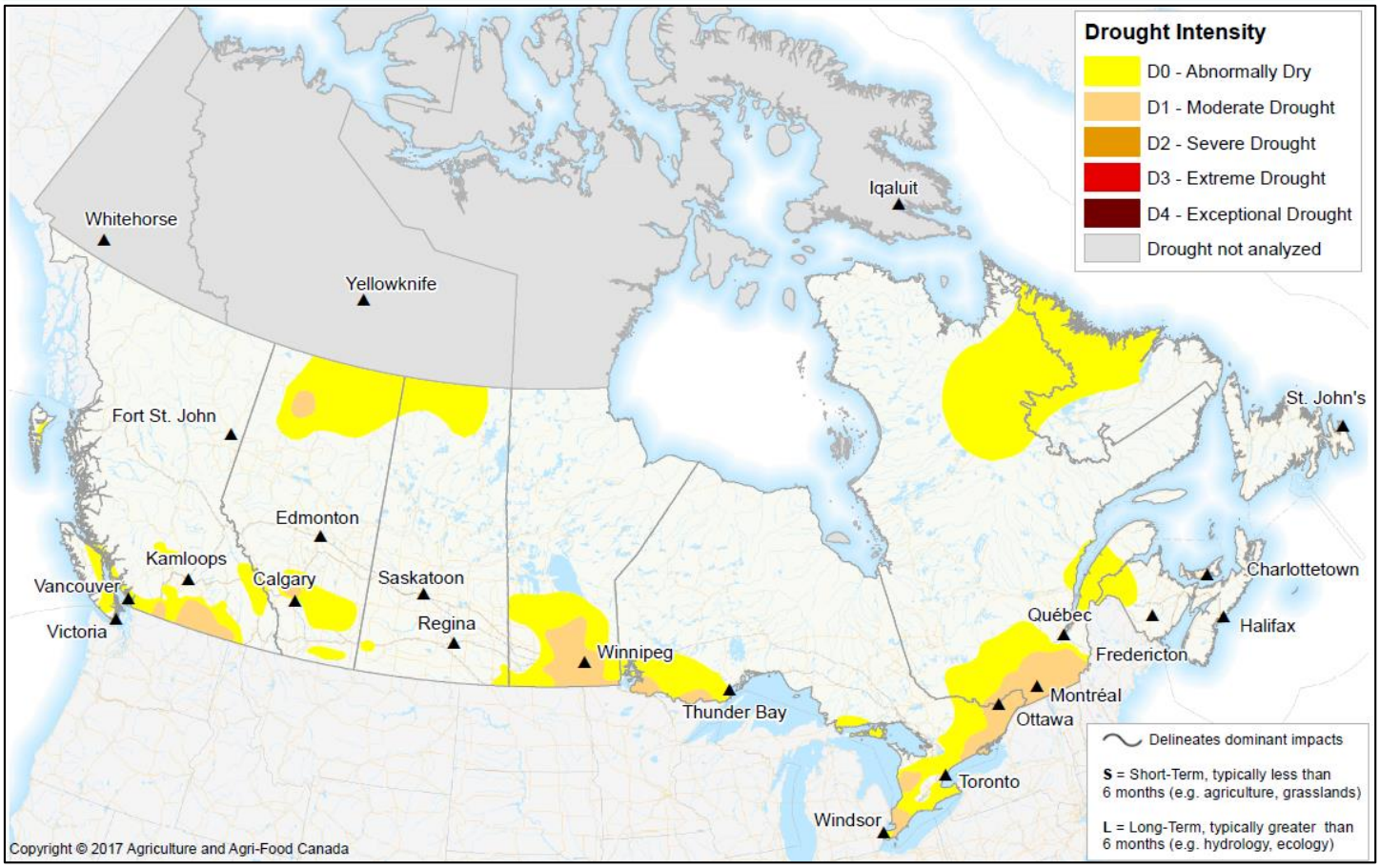
Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of April 30, 2015



Canada transitioned from winter to spring in April. Above-average temperatures in Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) facilitated an early transition, while below-average temperatures in Eastern Canada (Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces) delayed the transition. In general, precipitation across the country was below-normal, with the exception of northeastern Alberta, central Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces. Record high temperatures were set on the Prairies; and record lows were set in Atlantic Canada. Soil moisture on the Prairies has been depleted by regular high wind events. Across the country, dry conditions have mostly expanded and intensified. However, at this point, there are no major areas of concern. Spring temperatures and precipitation will determine how the season progresses.

Pacific Region (BC)

Warmer-than-normal temperatures in British Columbia in spring facilitated early snow melt and resulted in reduced snow pack accumulation in the Rockies. This, coupled with below-average precipitation over the past few months, resulted in drier-than-normal conditions in the province and caused a northward and eastward expansion of drought. Abnormally Dry (D0) or Moderate Drought (D1) conditions were present in southeastern and southcentral British Columbia, including Vancouver Island. The majority of precipitation fell as rain rather than snow in March and April; therefore, water supply concerns emerged, as snow packs were generally low to extremely low.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

The Canadian Prairies experienced heavy isolated snowfall events in April. Northern Alberta received one snowfall event which helped to alleviate the persistently dry conditions in the region, as did southcentral Saskatchewan. However, the D0 conditions in the northern Prairies expanded eastward and the D1 pocket shifted further north, both due to a lack of spring precipitation and above-average winter and spring temperatures. The Alberta foothills were dry for the past few months and below-average spring precipitation intensified the drought conditions along the foothills. A D1 patch also emerged across much of southern Alberta, where the majority of irrigated agriculture in the province takes place. Low reservoir levels, as a result of below-average runoff, are also becoming more of a concern as the growing season progresses. Some spring precipitation is necessary to recharge water supplies and help germinate crops. Extending from the southern United States, the area of D0 and D1 conditions expanded northward in southern Manitoba. Similar to Winter 2014-15, this area continued to receive 40 to 85 percent of average precipitation. Soil moisture recharge was low in this part of the province due to the lack of precipitation. Above-average precipitation is forecasted for May, and if realized, will be beneficial for the region.

Central Region (ON, QC)

In central Canada, the Windsor-Quebec City corridor continued to be dry. Colder-than-normal winter and early spring temperatures, along with persistent below-average precipitation over the past year, contributed to the expansion of D0 and D1 regions in southeastern Ontario and southwestern Quebec. Even though the region received isolated precipitation events, these did not alleviate the longer-term drought conditions and their impacts on soil moisture and water supplies. Conditions also continue to remain dry in northern Quebec, where the D0 area expanded northeastward into Labrador, between the bottom edge of Torngat Mountains National Park and Highway 500.

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