



LEVELnews

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Above-average water supplies in September

Water supplies to all the Great Lakes were above average for all the Great Lakes for September based on preliminary estimates. Despite the above-average water supplies the level of Lake Ontario was below average for the first time since the beginning of January 2017 while all the other Great Lake levels remained well above average. September monthly mean levels ranged from 1 cm below to 49 cm above their period-of-record monthly averages (1918–2017), and

beginning-of-October levels ranged from 4 cm below to 50 cm above their period-of-record averages. The beginning-of-October levels for the lakes ranged from 30 cm below to 8 cm above those seen a year ago. The water levels in the lower St. Lawrence River were near or above average due to continued above average outflow from Lake Ontario and varied outflow from the Ottawa River.

September monthly levels

All the Great Lakes, except

Lake Ontario, had above average monthly mean water levels in September. Lake Erie continued to be well above average, and the highest above average of the Great Lakes, while Lake Ontario fell below its average monthly mean water level for the first time since December 2016. Lake Superior was 16 cm above its period-of-record (1918–2017) September monthly mean water level and 10 cm below its value in September 2017. Lake Michigan–Huron’s monthly mean level in September was

Great Lakes Water Level Information				
Lake	September 2018 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-October 2018 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918–2017)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918–2017)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	16 cm above	10 cm below	17 cm above	11 cm below
Michigan–Huron	43 cm above	1 cm above	41 cm above	Same
St. Clair	53 cm above	4 cm above	56 cm above	5 cm above
Erie	49 cm above	8 cm above	50 cm above	8 cm above
Ontario	1 cm below	35 cm below	4 cm below	30 cm below

43 cm above average and 1 cm higher than last September's level. Lake Erie's monthly mean level was 49 cm above average and 8 cm above the level of the previous September. Lake Erie's level was the 5th highest September mean level on record and the highest it has been for the month since 1997. Lake Ontario's September monthly mean level was 1 cm below average and 35 cm lower than September 2017.

Lake level changes

Above average outflows from all of the lakes offset wet supplies to varying degrees in each of the lakes,

resulting in varied water level changes over the month of September. Lake Superior levels rose 4 cm through September, when on average (1918–2017) it falls 1 cm, as above-average outflows could not offset above-average water supplies. Lake Michigan–Huron's above-average water supplies were more than offset by the above-average outflows for the month, resulting in its level falling 8 cm over September when on average it falls by 6 cm. Lake Erie's level fell only half its average, falling 5 cm when its average fall is 10 cm during the month. Above-average water supplies to Lake Ontario continued to be offset by above-average outflows resulting in its level falling 19 cm, 5 cm more than its average fall of 14 cm.

Beginning-of-October lake levels

All the Great Lakes beginning-of-October levels were above average, except for Lake Ontario, but only Lake Erie was above its

level when compared to the same time last year. Lake Superior's beginning-of-October level was 17 cm above average (1918–2017), but 11 cm below the level at the same time in 2017. Lake Michigan–Huron's beginning-of-October level was 41 cm above average and the same level as last year. Lake Erie was 50 cm above average at the beginning of October, 8 cm higher than the same time last year and the highest it has been since 1997. Lake Ontario's level at the start of October was 4 cm below average and 30 cm lower than the water levels last year. At the beginning of October, all of the lakes were at least 44 cm above their chart datum level.

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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September Precipitation over the Great Lakes^{1,2}

Great Lakes Basin	89%	Lake Erie	87%
Lake Superior	100%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lake Michigan–Huron	83%	Lake Ontario	86%

September Outflows from the Great Lakes¹

Lake Superior	112%	Lake Erie	114%
Lake Michigan–Huron	111%	Lake Ontario	114%

¹ As a percentage of the long-term September average.

² US Army Corps of Engineers

NOTE: These figures are preliminary.