

# LEVEL *news*



Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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## ***Low Water Level Conditions Continue, But All Lakes Appear to Have Started their Annual Seasonal Rise***

After experiencing seasonal declines as much as twice their average amounts this past fall and winter, it appears that the Great Lakes are into their annual seasonal rise for 2003.

After remaining fairly stable during the first half of the month, daily levels on lakes Erie and Ontario increased 14 and 25 cm, respectively, during the last half of March. These increases were large enough to cause the monthly mean water levels on these two lakes to increase about 5 cm from February to March. Although monthly

levels declined from February to March on lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron and St. Clair upward trends in their daily water levels during the last week of March suggest they have also started their annual seasonal rise.

As indicated in the water level information table, levels on all lakes remain well below their long-term average and lower than they were at the same time last year. Although still several centimetres above their period-of-record low levels, the monthly mean levels recorded this year on lakes

Michigan-Huron, Erie and Ontario during February and March were the lowest they have been since 1965.

### **Water Level Outlook**

Water levels are expected to continue to rise throughout the Great Lakes system during April. Unless very wet conditions are experienced over the next six months, water levels on each of the Great Lakes, except Lake Ontario, are expected to remain well below average and lower than they were during 2002. Water levels will likely be similar to, or **(continued on next page)**

**Great Lakes Water Level Information**

Lake	March Monthly Mean Level		Beginning of April Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	22 cm below	8 cm below	19 cm below	3 cm below
Michigan-Huron	61 cm below	26 cm below	59 cm below	23 cm below
St. Clair	38 cm below	27 cm below	33 cm below	18 cm below
Erie	28 cm below	24 cm below	26 cm below	22 cm below
Ontario	32 cm below	44 cm below	21 cm below	29 cm below



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possibly lower than, those experienced during 2001, a time when low lake levels affected recreational boating interests. No new record lows are expected on the lakes at this time, however, near-record low levels on lakes Michigan-Huron and St. Clair are possible if dry conditions persist. If wet conditions return to the basin, Lake Ontario could recover to near average levels sometime this summer.

Be sure to check the Monthly Water Levels Bulletin each month for the latest 6-month water level forecast for each lake.

## Ice Boom Removal Delayed past April 1

Ice cover conditions on the eastern end of Lake Erie and the amount of ice below Niagara Falls delayed the

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## March Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term March average:

Great Lakes Basin	78%	Lake Erie	71%
Lake Superior	61%	(including Lake St. Clair)	
Lakes Michigan-Huron	83%	Lake Ontario	92%

**NOTE:** These figures are preliminary

removal of the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom beyond April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Representatives of the International Niagara Board of Control will continue to monitor the ice conditions to determine when boom opening can commence. A media advisory will be issued by the Board to inform the public when this year's boom opening begins.

## LEVELnews also available on the Internet

An electronic version of LEVELnews is posted on the Internet around the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> of each month. You can read the LEVELnews text directly on your computer's screen or you can open, view and print an Adobe Portable Document Format (or PDF) version. When printed, the PDF version has virtually the same look and feel as the one distributed by mail.

Current and past editions of LEVELnews can be found at:

<http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/level-news/intro-e.html>

Once you've read LEVELnews, be sure to review to the latest Monthly Water Level Bulletin. The Bulletin can be accessed by using its link provided on the LEVELnews website or going to:

[http://chswwww.bur.dfo.ca/danp/wlgraphs\\_e.html](http://chswwww.bur.dfo.ca/danp/wlgraphs_e.html)

## March Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term March average:

Lake Superior	88%	Lake Erie	91%
Lake Huron	89%	Lake Ontario	82%

**NOTE:** These figures are preliminary