

Information

Recorded monthly mean water levels in this bulletin are derived from a representative network of water level gages on each lake (see cover map). Providers of these data are the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Ocean Service, and Integrated Science Data Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. The Detroit District, Corps of Engineers and Environment and Climate Change Canada derive historic and projected lake levels under the auspices of the Coordinating Committee on Great Lakes Basic Hydraulic and Hydrologic Data.

This bulletin is produced monthly as a public service. The Corps also, on a weekly basis publishes online the *Great Lakes, Connecting Channels and St. Lawrence River Water Levels and Depths*, which provides a forecast of depths in the connecting rivers between the Great Lakes and the International Section of the St. Lawrence River. This *Monthly Bulletin of the Lake Levels for the Great Lakes* may be obtained free of charge by writing to the address shown on the front cover, by calling (313) 226-6441 or emailing hhpm@usace.army.mil. Notices of change of address should include the name of the publication. This information is available on the internet at <http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/GreatLakesInformation.aspx>.

Great Lakes Basin Hydrology May 2020

Preliminary estimates indicate that precipitation for the Great Lakes basin was slightly below average in May, as it was in April. For the individual lake basins, precipitation was below average on Lakes Superior and Ontario by approximately 50% and 30%, respectively, while precipitation received by Lakes Michigan-Huron and Erie was more than 10% above average. Water supplies to the lakes mirrored precipitation in May. Both Lakes Superior and Ontario experienced below average water supplies, but water supplies were above average for Lakes Michigan-Huron and Erie. Although water supply was below average for two of the Great Lakes, outflows remained significantly above average in May due to the high water level conditions. According to preliminary estimates, outflows through the St. Clair River, Detroit River, and the Niagara River were above record-highs for the month of May.

For the month of May, as for April, new record high monthly mean water levels were set on Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, and Erie. These levels surpassed their previous records by 4, 4, and 1 inches, respectively, which were set in 1986 on Lake Michigan-Huron, and last year on Lakes St. Clair and Erie. All of the lakes experienced a rise in water levels from April to May. Lake Superior rose an inch from April to May, while Lakes Michigan-Huron and St. Clair both rose 3 inches. Lakes Erie and Ontario also climbed 1 and 2 inches, respectively, from April to May.

PRECIPITATION (INCHES)								
BASIN	May				12-Month Comparison			
	2020	Average (1900-2017)	Diff.	% of Average	Last 12 months	Average (1900-2017)	Diff.	% of Average
Superior	1.42	2.80	-1.38	51	27.19	30.59	-3.40	89
Michigan-Huron	3.39	3.03	0.36	112	32.97	32.52	0.45	101
Erie	3.85	3.39	0.46	114	35.07	35.55	-0.48	99
Ontario	2.17	3.11	-0.94	70	33.57	35.83	-2.26	94
Great Lakes	2.78	3.03	-0.25	92	31.72	32.76	-1.04	97

LAKE	May WATER SUPPLIES ¹ (cfs)		May OUTFLOW ² (cfs)	
	2020	Average (1900-2008)	2020	Average ³ (1900-2008)
Superior	130,000	182,000	81,000	75,000
Michigan-Huron	338,000	251,000	258,000	189,000
Erie	50,000	48,000	280,000	216,000
Ontario	47,000	60,000	342,000	260,000

Notes: Values (excluding averages) are based on preliminary computations; cfs denotes cubic feet per second.

¹ Net basin supply is the net result of precipitation falling on the lake, runoff from precipitation falling on the land which flows to the lake, and evaporation from the lake. Negative net basin supply denotes evaporation exceeded runoff and precipitation. The net total supply can be found by adding the net basin supply and the outflow from the upstream lake.

² Does not include diversions.

³ Lake Ontario average water supplies and average outflows are based on period of record 1900-2005