



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Detroit District



DETROIT DISTRICT
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SEPTEMBER 2020 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior began its seasonal decline from August to September declining about an inch to a level of 602.99 feet. This monthly mean level was 10 inches above its long-term average (LTA) level for September and 3 inches below the record high for the month, which was set last year. The lake experienced above average net basin supply in September, despite below average precipitation. The current forecast projects Lake Superior to continue its seasonal decline over the next 6 months. Water levels are predicted to be 6 to 8 inches below record-high monthly mean levels through March 2021 and 5 to 7 inches below last year's levels. Also, the 6-month forecast projects water levels on Lake Superior to be 7 to 9 inches above their LTA levels.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Lake Michigan-Huron continued its seasonal decline and declined about 3 inches from August to September. The September mean level of 581.82 feet was 3 inches above last September's level, 32 inches above the LTA level, and 2 inches below the record-high September level. Lake Michigan-Huron experienced below average net basin supply during the month, which was likely a result of below average precipitation and above average evaporation. The current forecast indicates that water levels on Lake Michigan-Huron will continue to decline over the next 6 months. Water levels are projected to be 7 to 10 inches below record high levels and 2 to 7 inches below last year's levels through December 2020. January through March, water levels are forecast to be 8 to 9 inches below last year's levels, which are the provisional record high levels for those three months set in 2020. Finally, the lake's level is projected to remain 28 to 31 inches above LTA levels over the next 6 months.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

Lake St. Clair declined about 4 inches from August to September to a level of 577.03 feet. Despite the decline in lake level over the past month, the monthly mean level was a new record high, surpassing the record from last year by 1 inch. The September monthly mean level was also 31 inches above its monthly LTA level. The 6-month forecast projects the lake to continue to decline through February. Water levels are expected to be 8 to 9 inches below record high levels over the next 6 months, while also being 2 to 9 inches below last year's levels. In addition, Lake St. Clair is forecast to be 26 to 30 inches above its LTA levels through March 2021.

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie continued its seasonal decline in September declining about 4 inches to a monthly mean level of 573.59 feet. This level was 2 inches below last year's record high level, but 26 inches above the LTA September level. Precipitation was below average in September, along with likely below average runoff contributed to the net basin supply being well below average this past month. Our latest 6-month forecast projects Lake Erie to continue its seasonal decline into the winter. Water levels are forecast to be 9 to 13 inches below record high levels through January 2021, while also remaining 11 to 13 inches below the provisional record high levels from 2020 in February and March 2021. In addition, water levels are forecast to be 2 to 9 inches below last year's levels from October to January. The lake's water levels are also expected to be 22 to 24 inches above monthly LTA levels over the next 6 months.

LAKE ONTARIO

Lake Ontario is still in its period of seasonal decline and dropped 8 inches from August to September. The monthly mean level for September was 245.57 feet, which was 15 inches below its September 2019 level and 4 inches above the LTA level. Lake Ontario also received well below average net basin supply in September likely due to a combination of below average precipitation and runoff. Over the next 6 months, the lake level is predicted to be 9 to 15 inches below last year's levels and 3 to 11 inches above LTA levels.