

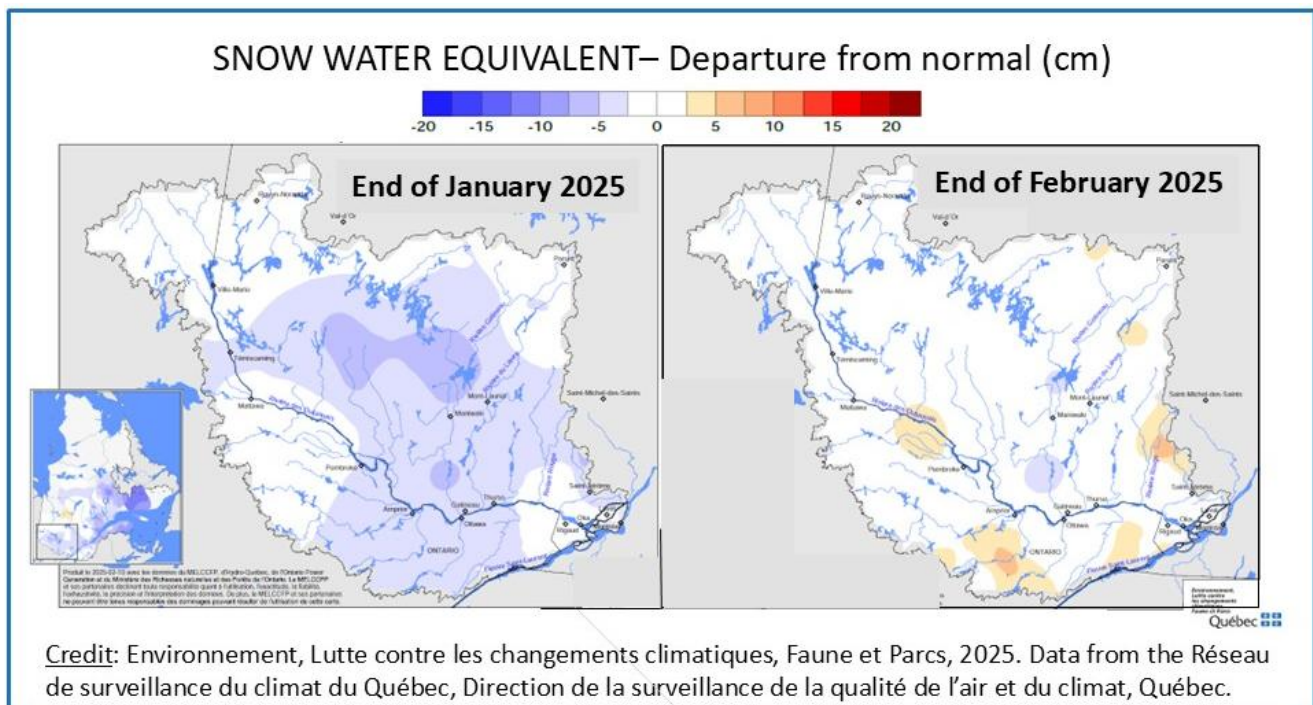


Early Spring Conditions Overview in the Ottawa River Basin

OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Friday March 14, 2025 — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee monitors the Ottawa River basin closely in preparation for the spring freshet. Overall, this winter has been characterized by temperatures close to seasonal values and precipitation near average throughout most of the watershed. This Early Spring Conditions Overview is a summary of current conditions in the Ottawa River basin prior to the onset of the freshet.

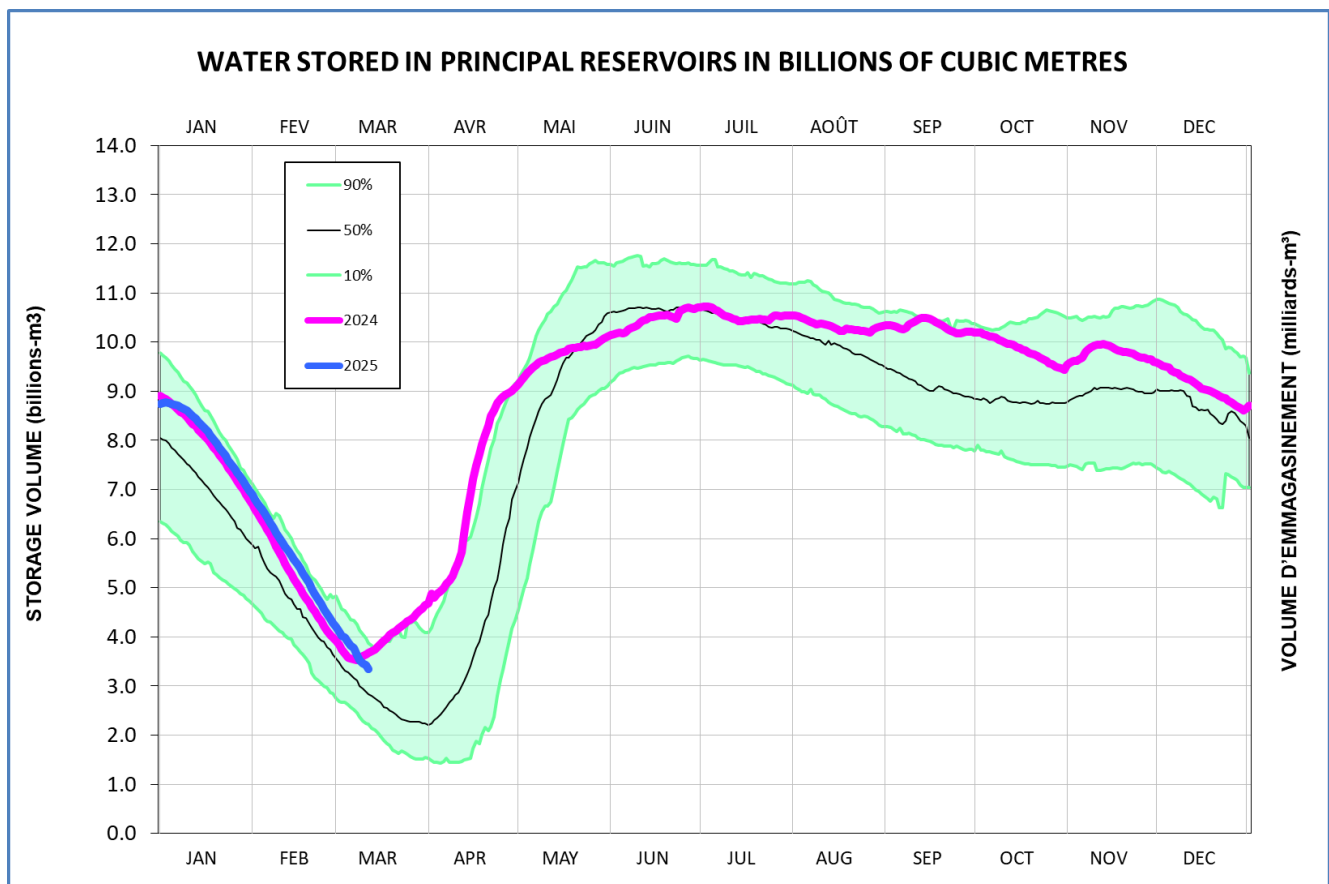
Current Snowpack Conditions:

- The snow cover started to form in early December, but a significant portion melted due to warm spells later in the month. January was marked by temperatures close to or below seasonal norms. Total precipitation for the month of January was generally below normal across the watershed, despite a significant precipitation event during the third week of January. This led to an end-of-January snow water content (that is the quantity of water held in the snowpack) that was generally below average in most locations (left figure below).
- February brought above average snowfall, particularly during the second and last week of the month, accompanied by close to seasonal temperatures, which considerably impacted the snow cover. As can be seen on the map on the right below, the snow water equivalent approached average values in most of the basin at the end of February. Warm spells accompanied by rain occurred toward the end of February, without significant loss in the water equivalent accumulated during the month.



Reservoir Regulation Strategy / Current Level and Flow Conditions:

- Water levels and flows on the main stem of the Ottawa River, from Lake Temiskaming to the Montreal region, were close to or slightly above seasonal norms at the end of February. The mild temperatures combined with rain during the first week of March helped maintain flows slightly above seasonal averages.
- By mid-March, the drawdown of the main reservoirs located in the northern part of the Ottawa River watershed was progressing normally, as shown in the figure below. This operation will continue generally over the next two weeks to ensure adequate storage capacity in anticipation of the onset of the spring freshet.



Longer-term Overview:

- As of March 14, the amount of water in the snow cover is close to average throughout the watershed. The weather experienced over the past two weeks, with average temperatures around zero (mostly positive during the day and negative in the night), is conducive to moderate melting of the snow. This weather pattern could last for a few more weeks, assuming close to normal temperatures and precipitations. Spring freshet may begin in the tributaries located in southern part of the basin (for example the Rideau and South Nation rivers) over the coming week, with rain forecasted over the weekend. However, the effect of this temporary thaw on the Ottawa River remains uncertain.

- It is too early to predict the magnitude and timing of the peak in the main stem of the Ottawa River. At this time, there are no indicators of concern. However, the possibility of significant flooding cannot be excluded at this early stage of spring, as weather conditions, such as snowfall and heavy rain, in the coming weeks will influence the intensity of the freshet. These conditions are often known only a few days before they occur.

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee will continue to monitor basin conditions and report conditions to residents on its website ottawariver.ca .

Ottawa River Regulating Committee