



## Low Flow Conditions in the Ottawa River Basin

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**OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Friday October 17, 2025** — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee provides integrated management of the principal reservoirs in the Ottawa River basin throughout the year and is closely monitoring the current low flow conditions on the Ottawa River. This summary provides an overview of the current low flow conditions in the Ottawa River basin and the management of water in the principal reservoirs.

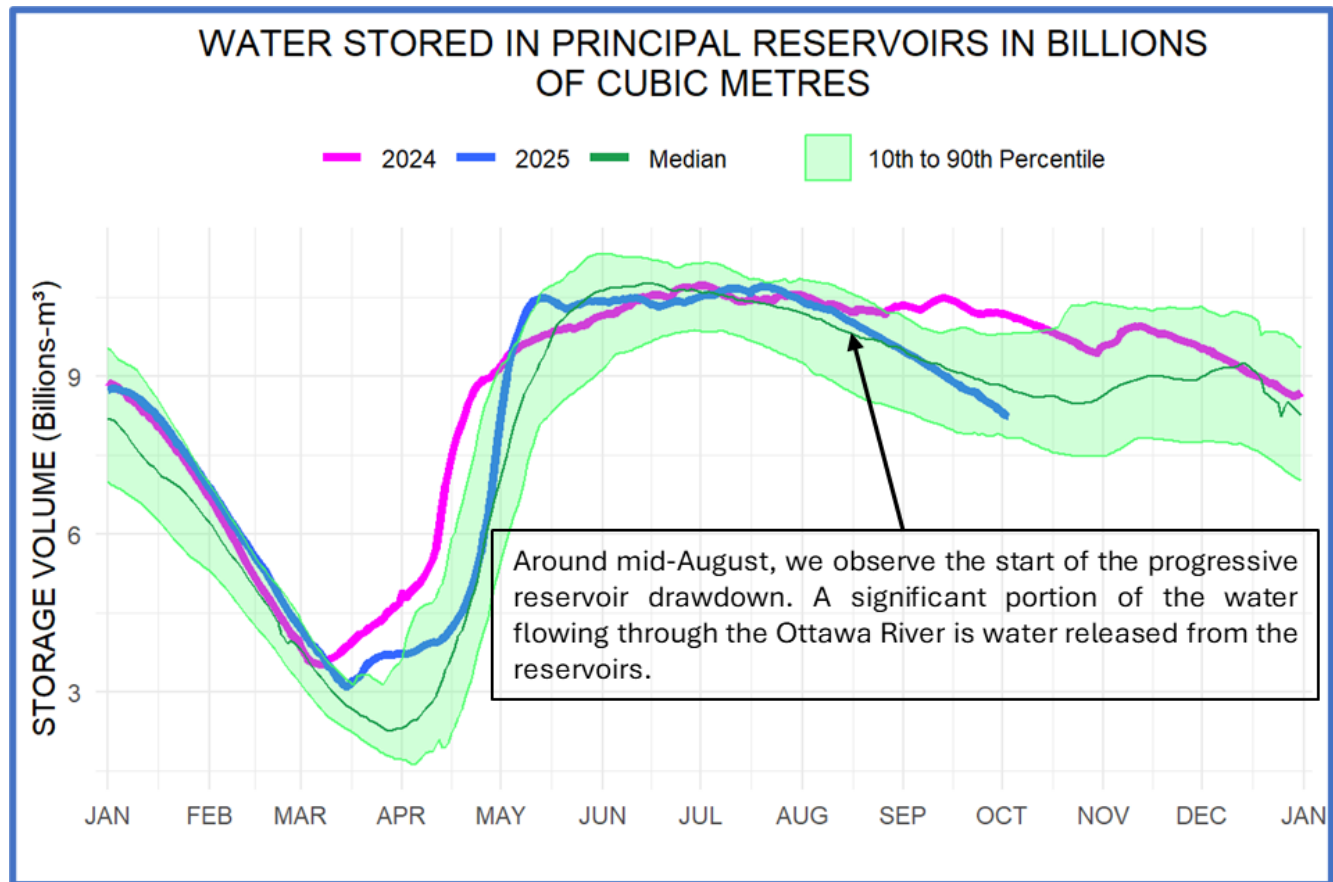
### Low Water Conditions:

- This year's spring freshet, which was characterized by one of the largest volumes in the past 30 years, was followed by several rainfall events that occurred between mid-June and mid-July. These conditions resulted in water levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River being above normal at the beginning of summer.
- However, this situation did not last very long. Starting in mid-July, the watershed received precipitation amounts well below normal. From July 1 to October 9, 2025, the precipitation deficit grew across the entire watershed, ranging between ~110 and ~170 mm less rainfall than normal depending on the location (see figure below). This prolonged deficit caused a progressive decrease in flow conditions along the main stem of the Ottawa River, leading to flows and water levels falling below normal values starting in late August and early September depending on locations.
- River reaches where water levels are not directly influenced by a downstream hydraulic structure, such as Lake Deschenes (Britannia Beach/Aylmer) and the Pembroke area, are particularly at risk of experiencing low levels during very dry conditions. In early October, water levels approached the historical minimum values observed in 2005 at some locations for the same period, with values close to 110.9 m at Pembroke compared to 110.76 m in 2005, and 57.56 m at Lake Deschenes (Britannia) compared to 57.44 m in 2005. These low levels are not unprecedented and are similar to river conditions experienced in 2021.

**Total Precipitation July 1st to October 15, 2025 – Departure from normal (mm)****Reservoir Regulation Strategy:**

- Following this year's spring freshet and the rainfall events that occurred between mid-June and mid-July, most reservoirs reached a level close to the median level for that time of year. The quantity of water stored in the principal reservoirs was also within the normal range at the beginning of the summer season (see figure below). These conditions allowed the season to begin with adequate reserves to meet summer needs.
- Since mid-August, due to the persistent low flow conditions, water has been released cautiously from the main reservoirs in order to preserve beneficial water uses throughout the watershed for the longest possible period. The regulation strategy takes into consideration the needs of all users, whether they are located on reservoir shores or downstream along the watercourses. Several weeks without significant precipitation have considerably reduced natural inflows in sub-basins. As such, flows released from principal reservoirs were also reduced close to historical minimum values. With outflows surpassing inflows, this situation has resulted in a progressive drawdown of water stored since mid-August for most of the main reservoirs. Consequently, released flows from reservoirs have been limited while mitigating drought conditions on the main stem of the Ottawa River. The figure below, showing the evolution of water stored in the main reservoirs, illustrates the significant contribution of the reservoirs to the Ottawa River flows since mid-August in response to low flow conditions.

**Viewing current conditions:** To find out about water levels in your area and how they compare with normal conditions, visit the '[Current Conditions](#)' webpage and click on the map marker closest to where you live. In the pop-up box, click on 'Graph View and Advanced Data'. You can also view conditions on principal reservoirs by clicking on '[Reservoirs only](#)' above the interactive map.



#### Longer-term Overview:

- It is typical for flows and levels to increase in the fall following an increase in runoff primarily induced by weather systems that affect the watershed towards the end of October and early November and a decrease in temperatures. The evolution of flows and subsequently water levels in the coming weeks will strongly depend on upcoming weather conditions. Without significant precipitation, water levels in the reservoirs and flows along the main stem of the Ottawa River are expected to remain below seasonal normals.

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee will continue to monitor basin conditions and report conditions to residents on its website [ottawariver.ca](http://ottawariver.ca).