

Data Set: Physical Characteristics of the Great Lakes

Source: <http://coastwatch.glerl.noaa.gov/statistic/physical.html>

	Lakes					Totals
	Superior	Michigan	Huron	Erie	Ontario	
Elevation^a (metres)	183	176	176	173	74	
Length (kilometres)	563	494	332	388	311	
Breadth (kilometres)	257	190	245	92	85	
Average Depth^a (metres)	147	85	59	19	86	
Maximum Depth^a (metres)	406	282	229	64	244	
Volume^a (km ³)	12,100	4,920	3,540	484	1,640	22,684
Water Area (km ²)	82,100	57,800	59,600	25,700	18,960	244,160
Land Drainage Area^b (km ²)	127,700	118,000	134,100	78,000	64,030	521,830
Total Area (km ²)	209,800	175,800	193,700	103,700	82,990	765,990
Shoreline Length^c (kilometres)	4,385	2,633	6,157	1,402	1,146	17,017 ^d
Retention Time (years)	191	99	22	2.6	6	
Outlet:	St. Marys River	Straits of Mackinac	St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River	Niagara River/Welland Canal	St. Lawrence River	

About the Data

a = Measured at Low Water Datum.

b = Land Drainage Area for Lake Huron includes St. Marys River, connecting Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

c = Includes islands.

d = These totals are greater than the sum of the shoreline length for the lakes because they include the connecting channels (excluding the St. Lawrence River).

Lake Erie Data: Includes the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River system. This area is also known as the Huron-Erie Corridor (connecting Lake Huron with Lake Erie).

Lake Ontario Data: Includes the Niagara River.

Retention time: The average amount of time that a drop of water spends in a lake.

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Credit: Great Lakes Water Data Sets for Teachers were developed using data from the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory by Ann Marshall, 2008, Eastern Michigan University.

Source: Great Lakes Lessons, Teaching with Great Lakes Data, Michigan Sea Grant, see: www.greatlakeslessons.com

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