



Swimming with Ice Cubes United States

The ice season on the Great Lakes was longer in 2013–14 than anything in the satellite records to date or in anyone’s memory. For nearly seven months, ice was afloat somewhere on the Great Lakes. In an average year, the lakes are ice-free by late April or early May—even as air temperatures onshore approached 27° Celsius (80° Fahrenheit) on some days. In 2014, the last ice melted in mid-June.

On May 23, 2014—the start of Memorial Day weekend (and unofficial start of summer in the United States)—Landsat 8 captured this image of ice in Lake Superior near Chequamegon Bay, Wisconsin. Satellite imagery of ice is one of many tools that government agencies use to manage shipping on the Great Lakes.