

# Discover CANADA'S WATERSHEDS



The Mackenzie, Canada's longest river, has the largest drainage basin, draining 10 per cent of the country's area.

Rivers such as the Skeena, Fraser and Columbia have a relatively high flow rate because the Pacific drainage area has a large amount of precipitation.

Many dams have been constructed on the Columbia River system in Canada and the United States, mainly for hydroelectric power production and flood-control purposes.

The effects of glaciers on the surficial soils of the prairies have resulted in "closed" watersheds. These are drainage areas with no flow or river outlet to an ocean or to adjacent watersheds.

Canada's largest ocean drainage system flows into the Arctic and Atlantic oceans through Hudson Bay. This vast area once formed the lands of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The large rivers in Eastern Canada draining off the plateaus of the rugged Canadian Shield are ideal for producing hydroelectric power.

The St. Lawrence River has the highest average flow of any river in Canada — about 10,000 cubic metres of water per second at its mouth.

Canada and the United States share the very flat Red River Basin, as well as the river's occasional disastrous floods.

The vast storage provided by the five Great Lakes in the St. Lawrence River drainage system results in a relatively constant rate of flow for this river throughout the year.

## Canada's Watersheds

### Ocean watersheds

- Arctic Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean
- Gulf of Mexico
- Hudson Bay
- Pacific Ocean
- Closed watersheds  
A closed watershed has no outlet to the ocean or to adjacent watersheds.
- Glaciers and icefields



### Abbreviations used on this map

Abbreviation	Term	Example
E.	East or Eastern	E. Central Vancouver Island
NE	North-east(ern)	NE Vancouver Island
NW	North-west(ern)	NW Monashee
S.	South(ern)	S. and E. White Bay
SW	South-west(ern)	SW Georgian Bay
Alta.	Alberta	Upper Red Deer (Alta.)
Man.	Manitoba	Moosa (Man.)
N.B.	New Brunswick	N.B.
N.L.	Newfoundland and Labrador	Upper Churchill (N.L.)
N.S.	Nova Scotia	N.S.
Ont.	Ontario	Vermilion (Ont.)
P.E.I.	Prince Edward Island	Western P.E.I.
Sask.	Saskatchewan	Upper Churchill (Sask.)

Map scale 1 : 5 000 000  
 One centimetre equals 50 kilometres  
 Kilometres 0 50 100 150 200  
 Map projection: Vertical Near-Side Perspective, centred at 45°00' N, 90°00' W, altitude 12 500 000 metres

More detailed information on Canada's watersheds can be found on the following websites:  
 The Atlas of Canada: [atlas.gc.ca](http://atlas.gc.ca)  
 Canadian Wildlife Federation: [www.cwf-fcf.org](http://www.cwf-fcf.org)  
 Environment Canada: [www.ec.gc.ca/water](http://www.ec.gc.ca/water)  
 Réseau — Building Canadian Water Connections: [www.environmentandresources.gc.ca/reseau](http://www.environmentandresources.gc.ca/reseau)

