Warm water, winds affect Lake Superior

November 4 2007

U.S. researchers say warmer water and higher wind speeds have contributed to Lake Superior's near record low-water levels.

In the last 25 years, water temperatures on the lake have risen twice as fast as air temperatures, while wind speeds have increased by 30 percent, researcher Jay Austin, of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, told a Great Lakes conference Friday in Toronto.

Lakes Huron and Michigan, just inches above record lows, have been experiencing the same phenomenon, the Detroit Free Press reported Saturday.

"What we are finding is completely counter-intuitive," Austin said. "You would expect that a bigger lake like (Superior) would react more slowly to global warming."

But just the opposite is happening, he said, probably because Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake, has so much more surface area to absorb heat. Lake Superior has warmed about 3 degrees Celsius since 1900, mostly in recent decades, Austin said.

Copyright 2007 by United Press International

Citation: Warm water, winds affect Lake Superior (2007, November 4) retrieved 18 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2007-11-affect-lake-superior.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.