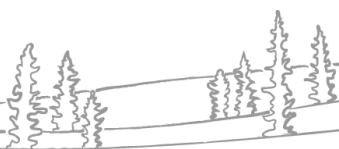


NWT Water Monitoring Spring Break-Up Report

May 28, 2026 at 12:00

Surveillance des eaux aux TNO Rapport sur la débâcle printanière

28 mai 2026 à 12:00



NWT break-up reports will be published routinely as break-up unfolds. These reports will focus on regions with active snowmelt and ice break-up. The geographic focus of the report will shift as conditions change. Additional information about basin conditions can be found in the 2026 Spring Water Outlook, [available here](#). If you have any photos or information about break-up in your community, feel free to reach out to us: nwtwaters@gov.nt.ca.

Current Status:

- The risk of ice-induced flooding for Aklavik – and all NWT communities – has now passed for this season.
- Water levels at Aklavik peaked on May 23 and have been falling steadily since the evening of May 25. They are currently average for this time of year.
 - The ice front on the Peel Channel is now ~50 km downstream of Aklavik.
- On the Middle Channel, as measured north of Horseshoe Bend, water levels peaked on May 26 and have since been falling.
 - The ice front on the Middle Channel of the delta is now downstream of Horseshoe Bend.
- Break-up is progressing through the northern part of the Mackenzie Delta. Water levels are continuing to rise on the Napoiak Channel above Shallow Bay.
- Cabin owners and land users should continue to use caution when traveling throughout the delta.
 - Residual ice will continue to move through the delta.
 - Water levels in the delta will fluctuate as ice continues to break-up.
- **This will be the last break-up report of the season.**
 - Monthly territory-wide reports on current water levels will continue.
 - Additional reports will be issued if conditions necessitate them.

Nous publierons régulièrement des rapports sur la débâcle aux TNO au fur et à mesure de l'évolution de la situation. Ces rapports se concentreront sur les régions où la fonte des neiges et la débâcle sont en cours. Nous changerons de région géographique en fonction de l'évolution de la situation. Vous trouverez des informations complémentaires sur l'état du bassin dans l'Aperçu des eaux printanières 2026, [disponible ici](#). Si vous avez des photos ou des renseignements en lien avec la débâcle dans votre collectivité, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous à l'adresse suivante: nwtwaters@gov.nt.ca.

Situation actuelle:

Nous publierons régulièrement des rapports sur la débâcle aux TNO au fur et à mesure de l'évolution de la situation. Ces rapports se concentreront sur les régions où la fonte des neiges et la débâcle sont en cours. Nous changerons de région géographique en fonction de l'évolution de la situation. Vous trouverez des informations complémentaires sur l'état du bassin dans l'Aperçu des eaux printanières 2026, [disponible ici](#). Si vous avez des photos ou des renseignements en lien avec la débâcle dans votre collectivité, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous à l'adresse suivante : nwtwaters@gov.nt.ca

Situation actuelle

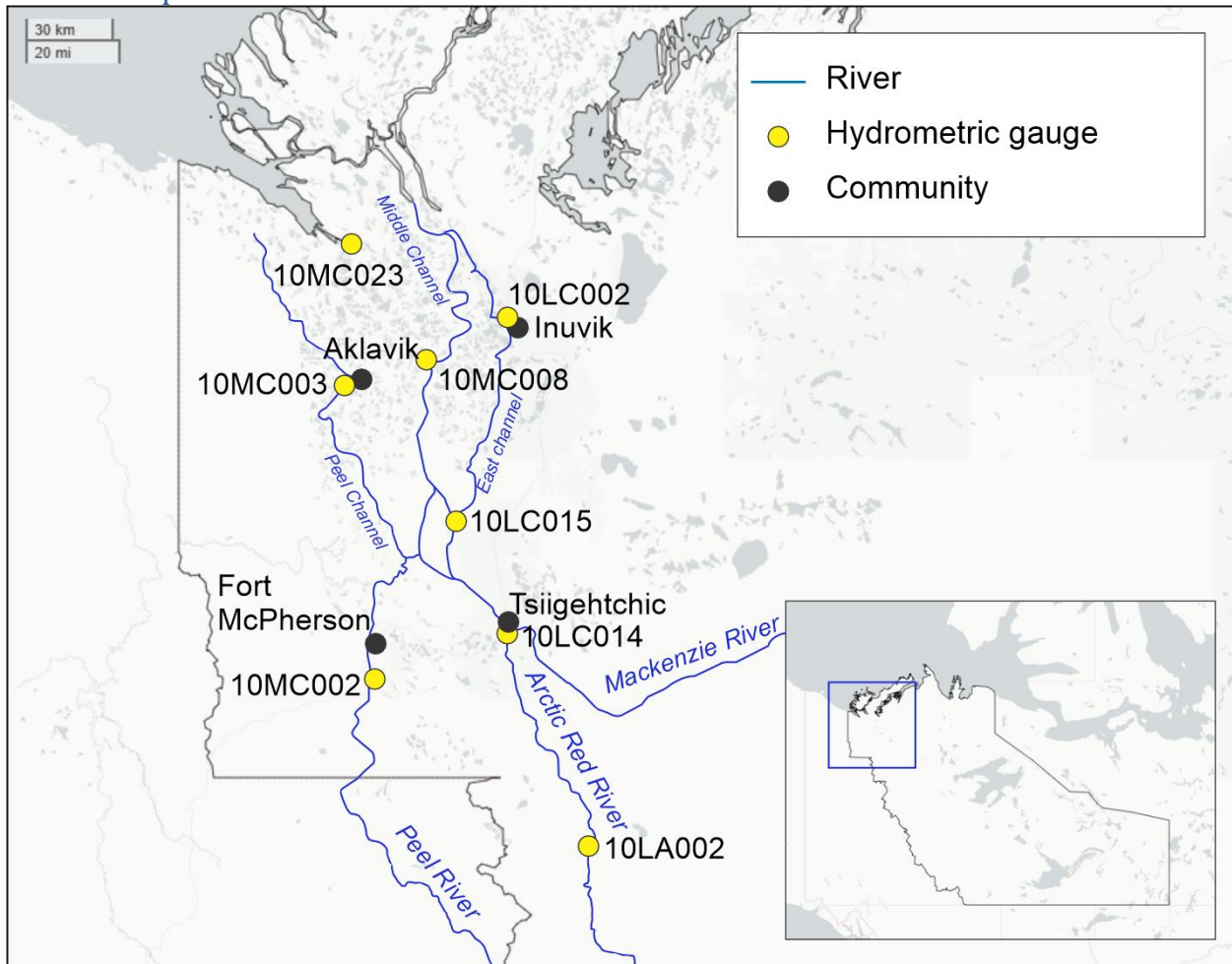
- Il n'y a maintenant plus de risques d'inondations attribuables à la glace pour Aklavik ainsi que pour toutes les collectivités des TNO cette saison.
- Le niveau de l'eau à la hauteur d'Aklavik a atteint un sommet le 23 mai, mais est en baisse constante depuis le soir du 25 mai. Il se situe actuellement dans la moyenne pour cette période de l'année.
 - Le front glaciaire sur le chenal Peel se situe maintenant à environ 50 km en aval d'Aklavik.
- Sur le chenal Middle, selon les mesures prises au nord de Horseshoe Bend, le niveau de l'eau a atteint son maximum le 26 mai et est à la baisse depuis.
 - Le front glaciaire sur le chenal Middle du delta se trouve maintenant en aval de Horseshoe Bend.
- La débâcle progresse dans la partie nord du delta du Mackenzie. Le niveau de l'eau continue de monter sur le chenal Napoiak, en amont de la baie Shallow.
- Les propriétaires de chalets et les utilisateurs des terres sont priés de redoubler de prudence lors de leurs déplacements dans la région du delta.
 - Des morceaux de glace continueront de se déplacer dans le delta.
 - Le niveau de l'eau dans le delta variera au fur et à mesure que la débâcle progressera.
- **Il s'agit du dernier rapport sur la débâcle de la saison.**
 - Les rapports mensuels sur les niveaux d'eau actuels aux TNO continueront d'être publiés.
 - D'autres rapports seront publiés si les circonstances l'exigent.

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Hydrometric Data:

Station Map:

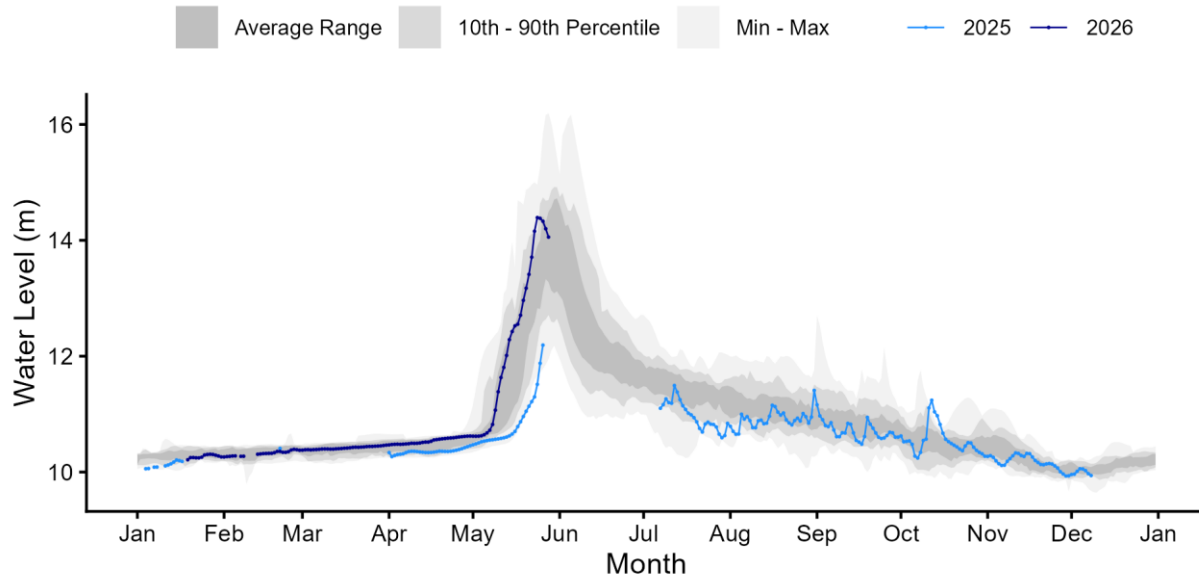


Above – Map of Hydrometric Stations and nearby communities for the plots included in this section.

Mackenzie River (Peel Channel) above Aklavik [10MC003]

MACKENZIE RIVER (PEEL CHANNEL) ABOVE AKLAVIK (10MC003)

Record Length: 37 years | Period of Record: 1982-1986; 1991-2019; 2024-2026

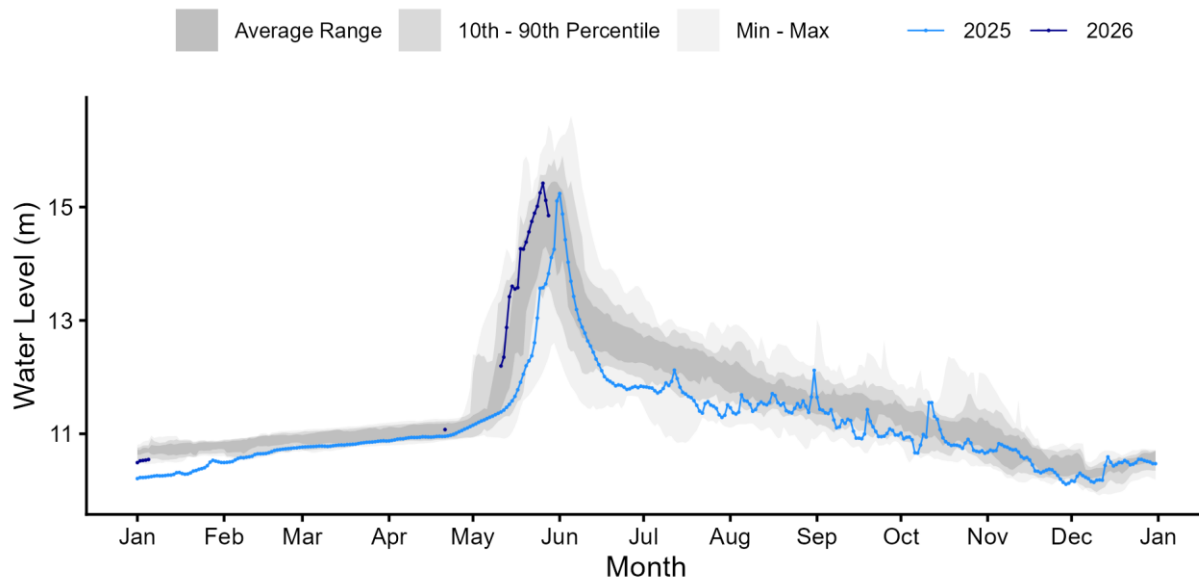


Above - Water level data for Mackenzie River (Peel Channel) above Aklavik [10MC003]. Daily average levels for the previous year also are shown here.

Mackenzie River (Middle Channel) below Raymond Channel [10MC008]

MACKENZIE RIVER (MIDDLE CHANNEL) BELOW RAYMOND CHANNEL (10

Record Length: 36 years | Period of Record: 1982-1986; 1991-2018; 2024-2026

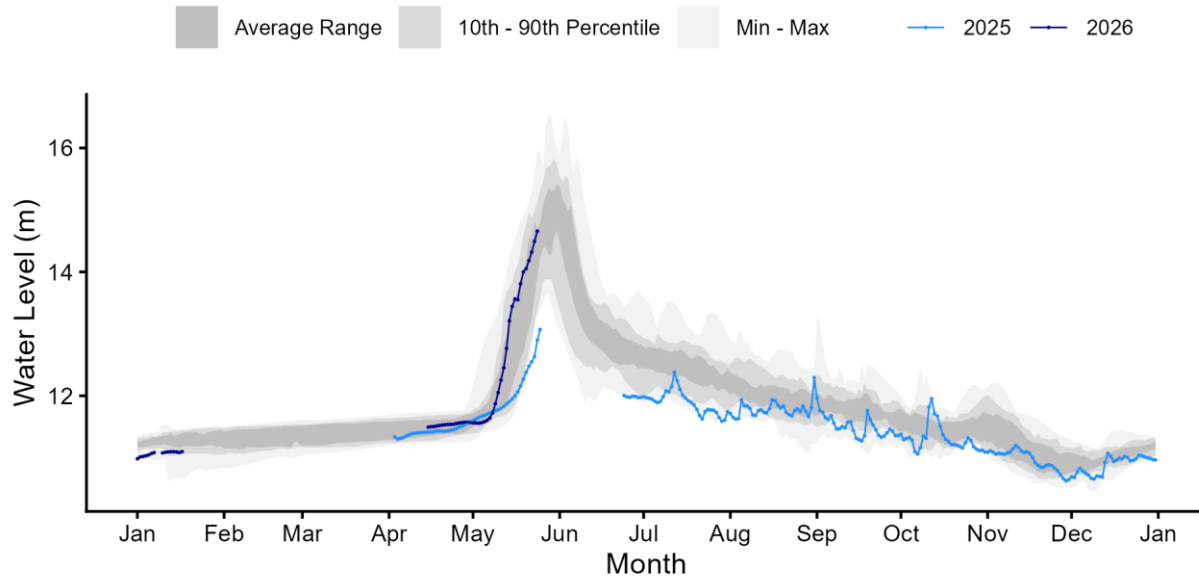


Above - Water level data for Mackenzie River (Middle Channel) below Raymond Channel [10MC008]. Daily average levels for the previous year also are shown here.

Mackenzie River (East Channel) at Inuvik [10LC002]*

MACKENZIE RIVER (EAST CHANNEL) AT INUVIK (10LC002)

Record Length: 25 years | Period of Record: 1984-1990; 2002-2017; 2025-2026



Above - Water level data for Mackenzie River (East Channel) at Inuvik [10LC002]. Daily average levels for the previous year also are shown here.

** Note – there is a technical issue at this gauge as of 16:55 on 24 May 2026. Water levels since this time have not been recorded.*

Gauge photos:

Mackenzie River (Peel Channel) above Aklavik [10MC003]

10MC003 2026-05-28 03:01:17 UTC
68.20366, -135.11475 13.9W 4.5°C P



Above – Mackenzie River above Aklavik [10MC003] hydrometric gauge photo from May 27 at 21:01 MT. Photo courtesy of Water Survey of Canada and GNWT.

Weather Data:

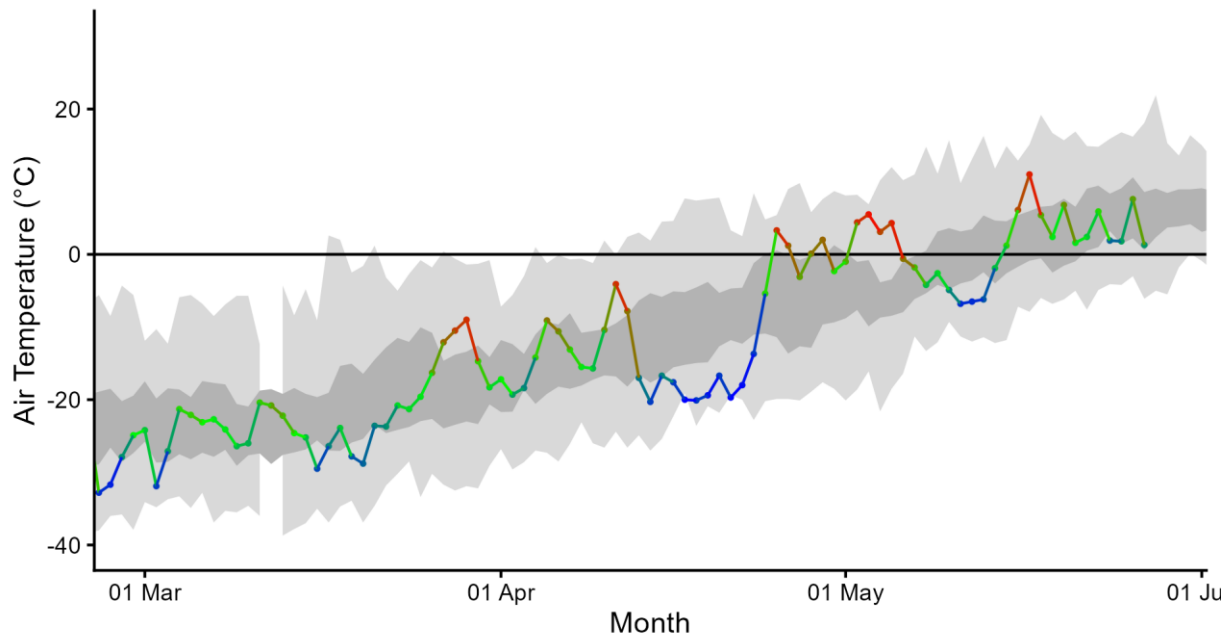
Weather information informs how snow and ice will melt and provides information about how this spring is unfolding relative to previous springs. Warmer than normal conditions early in the spring allow for additional energy to melt the snowpack and soften river ice. Rain-on-snow events can cause rapid melt of snowpacks and facilitate quick delivery of snowmelt water to rivers. Locations included here cover basin areas that feed into NWT rivers that are currently undergoing break-up.

The first set of figures show how temperatures have been relative to average (dark grey band) this spring, while the second set is Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) weather forecast data for the next seven days.

- The lower Mackenzie River basin (Beaufort Delta Region): temperatures over the last seven days have been average. Light, scattered showers were recorded over the Delta yesterday, May 27.

Inuvik Air Temperature

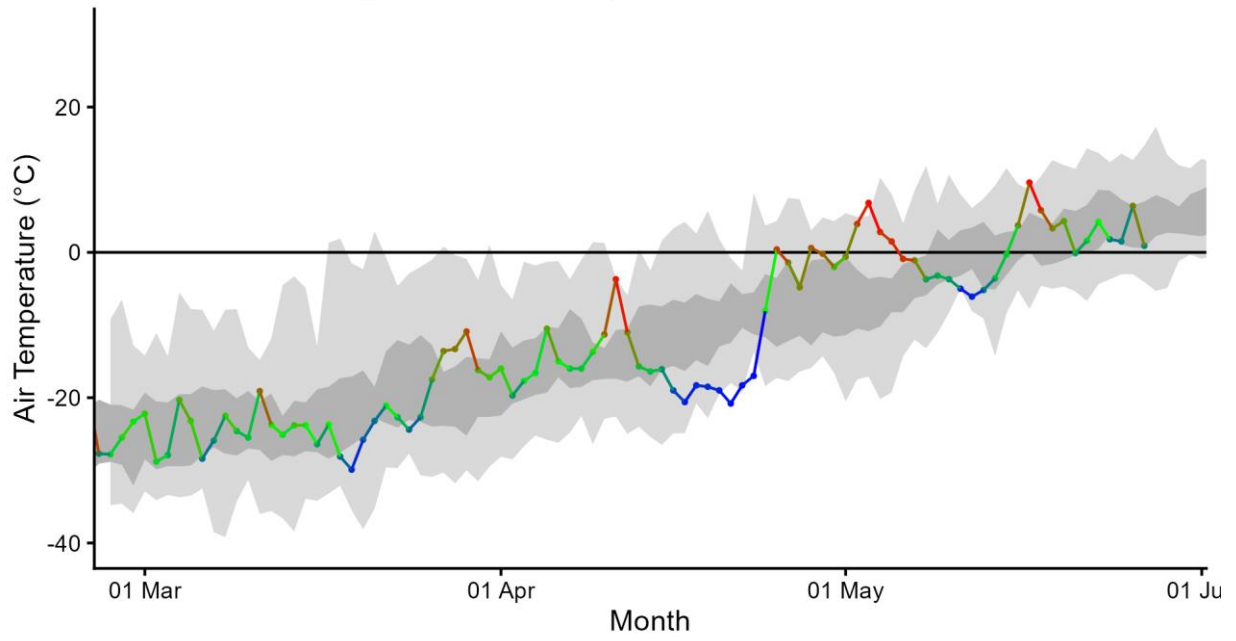
2026 Inuvik Daily Mean Air Temperatures



Above - Daily mean air temperature for Inuvik. Shaded areas represent the historical range (1991-2025).

Aklavik Air Temperature

2026 Aklavik Daily Mean Air Temperatures
















Above - Daily mean air temperature for Aklavik. Shaded areas represent the historical range (1991-2025).














Weather Forecasts:

- Lower Mackenzie River basin (Beaufort Delta Region): forecasted temperatures over the week from May 28-June 3 begin cooler than average, warming to average by the end of the forecast period. Snow flurries are anticipated over the basin today until Saturday, with maximum forecast accumulations of approximately 4cm over the Richardson Mountains west of Aklavik, near the Yukon border. No significant impact on water levels is anticipated.

Inuvik seven-day weather forecast:

▼ Forecast							Hourly Forecast	Air Quality	Alerts	Jet Stream
Thu 28 May	Fri 29 May	Sat 30 May	Sun 31 May	Mon 1 Jun	Tue 2 Jun	Wed 3 Jun				
 2°C 30% Chance of flurries	 0°C 60% Chance of flurries	 0°C Periods of snow	 10°C Sunny	 11°C Cloudy	 15°C A mix of sun and cloud	 15°C A mix of sun and cloud				
Tonight	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night					
 -2°C Mainly cloudy	 -5°C Snow	 -3°C A mix of sun and cloud	 2°C A mix of sun and cloud	 5°C A mix of sun and cloud	 5°C A mix of sun and cloud					

Aklavik seven-day weather forecast:

▼ Forecast							Hourly Forecast	Air Quality	Alerts	Jet Stream
Thu 28 May	Fri 29 May	Sat 30 May	Sun 31 May	Mon 1 Jun	Tue 2 Jun	Wed 3 Jun				
 0°C 30% Chance of flurries	 -1°C 60% Chance of flurries	 1°C 40% Chance of flurries	 9°C Sunny	 7°C 30% Chance of showers	 12°C A mix of sun and cloud	 11°C A mix of sun and cloud				
Tonight	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night					
 -4°C 30% Chance of flurries	 -5°C 40% Chance of flurries	 -3°C Sunny	 0°C Cloudy	 3°C A mix of sun and cloud	 3°C A mix of sun and cloud					

Factors to Watch:

It is important to note that much of the water contributing to NWT rivers originates from outside of the NWT, which is why we also rely on information from the Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The potential and severity of flooding will depend in large part on the weather over the upcoming weeks and how this interacts with existing ice conditions, water levels and snowpack amounts.

The primary factors that influence water levels in the spring are:

- Ice jams (can result in out-of-bank flows, even if there are below normal flows)
- Rate of melt of ice and snow:
 - Gradual vs quick melt
 - Rain on snow or ice events (rain brings a lot of energy to help melt happen more quickly)
- Current water levels
- How wet the ground was in the fall
- Snowpack

Spring Break-up on NWT Rivers: Mechanical vs Thermal

In any given year, spring flooding can occur in a number of NWT communities, including Hay River, Jean Marie River, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson and Aklavik. Spring flooding is caused by ice jam-induced flooding and can occur irrespective of existing water levels. However, if existing water levels are high, the impact of an ice jam flood can be much worse.

Ice jams typically occur on north-flowing rivers where warm weather and snowmelt cause ice to break-up on the southern reaches of a river. As this ice flows north (downstream), it meets a more solid ice cover, hits the ground, or gets stuck in a river bend. When this happens, the pieces of floating ice jam can form a dam, which causes water levels to rise rapidly. This is called a **mechanical break-up**, whereby the ice downstream is broken up by the force of ice moving into it.

If there is warm and sunny weather throughout early spring, the ice may thermally erode and weaken. This provides less of a resisting force for ice and water moving down the river and will have less of a chance of causing water levels to rise behind an ice jam. This is called a **thermal break-up**.

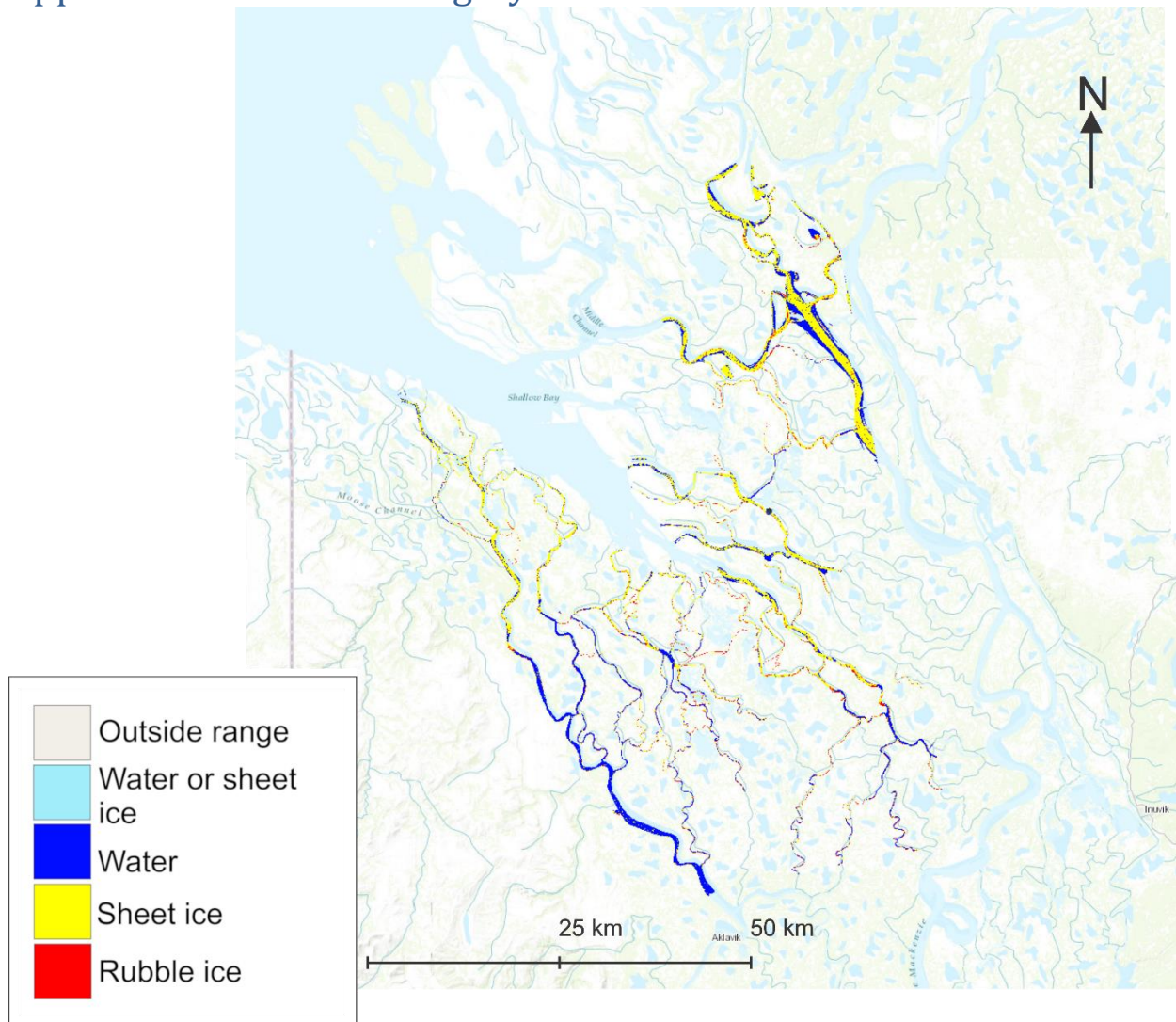
The causes of mechanical and thermal break-ups are usually dependent on the weather during early spring. Warm weather, sunshine, and rain on snow events are usually a good way to bring extra energy into the system to help melt the ice. Warm temperatures in the upstream part of a basin could also cause a rapid snowmelt and move water to the river very quickly. This could lead to ice-jam conditions downstream if the ice has not yet received

enough energy to degrade. Another important factor is the thickness of the ice. Thicker ice takes longer to melt and can increase the chances of ice jams. If an ice jam occurs, the location of the ice jam is also very important. Each river reach has different locations that are prone to ice jams. The location of the ice jam can be an important factor as to whether or not a community floods. Furthermore, ice will jam and then move again at multiple locations along a river as break-up progresses downstream. The timing and location of each jam can also influence if a community will flood.

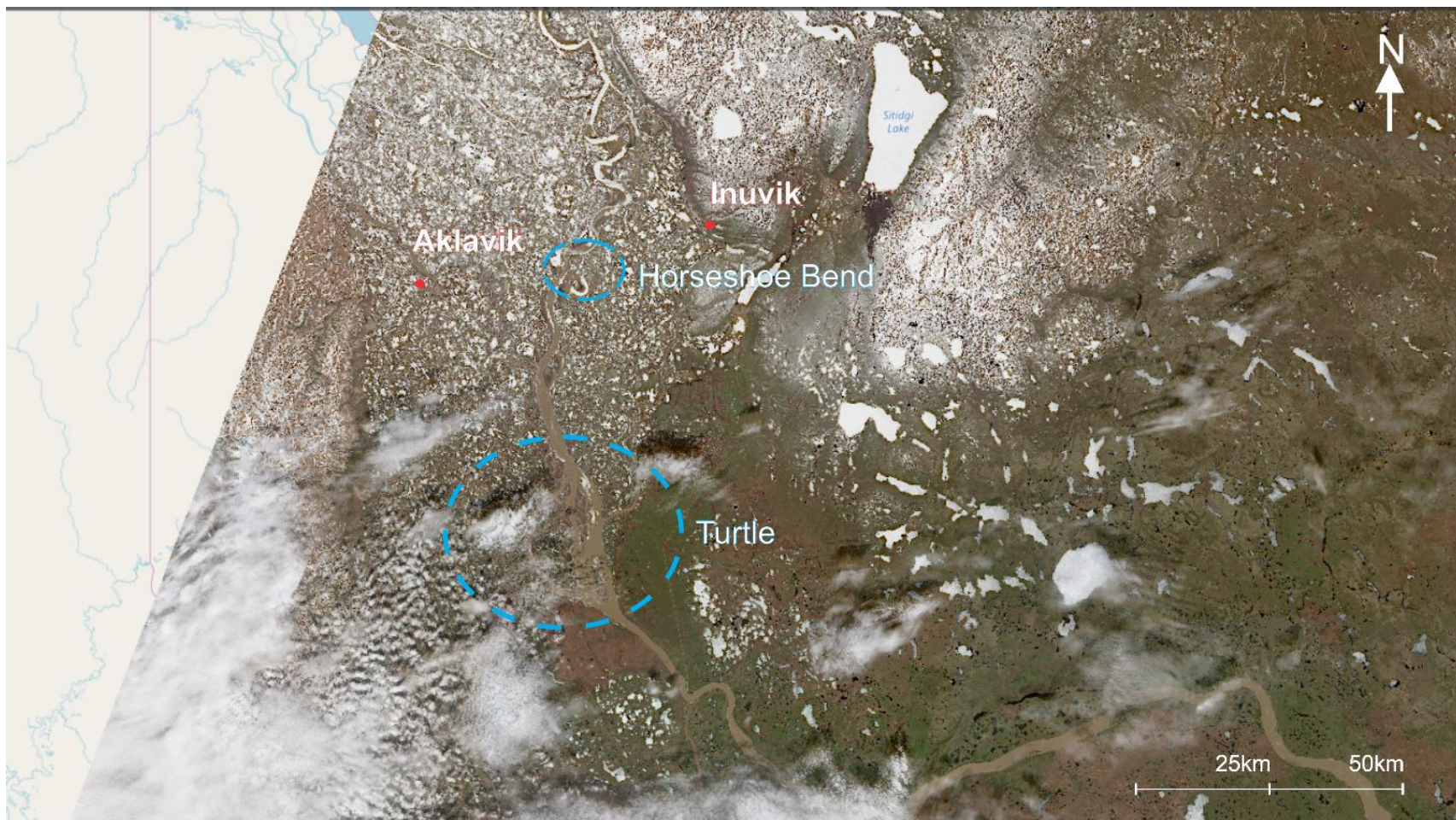
Technical Note:

- The figures in this report plot water levels. The values on the y-axis are (in most cases) relative to an arbitrary datum. This means that the values on each gauge can be compared to different years but should not be used to compare water levels from one location to the next.
- For example, the Hay River near the border gauge (070B008) records a level of about 288 m. The Hay River near Hay River gauge (070B001) usually records a level of about 4 m. This **does not mean** that the water level at the Hay River at the border site is 284 m higher than the water level at the Hay River near Hay River site

Appendix A: River Ice Imagery



Above – Classified river ice imagery captured on May 27 at 20:27 MT over the Mackenzie Delta, including downstream of Aklavik. The image shows the previously-jammed rubble ice downstream of Aklavik on the Peel channel appears to have released and there is now open water up to approximately ~50km downstream of Aklavik. The satellite image is provided courtesy of the federal government’s Government Operations Centre, and the river ice classification was completed using the IceBC algorithm.



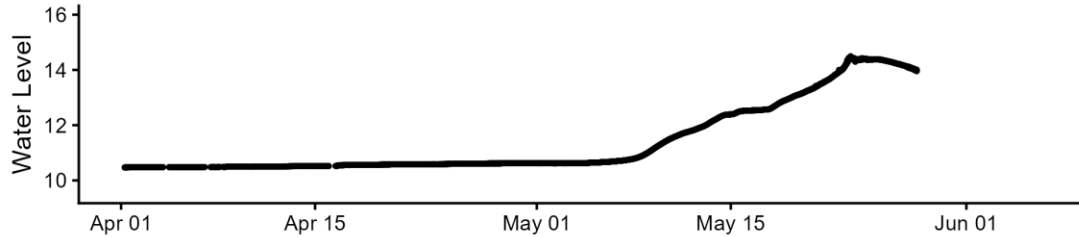
Above - optical satellite imagery acquired on May 26 at 14:38 MT by Copernicus Sentinel-2 shows river ice conditions in the Mackenzie Delta.

Appendix B: High resolution and historic water level plots

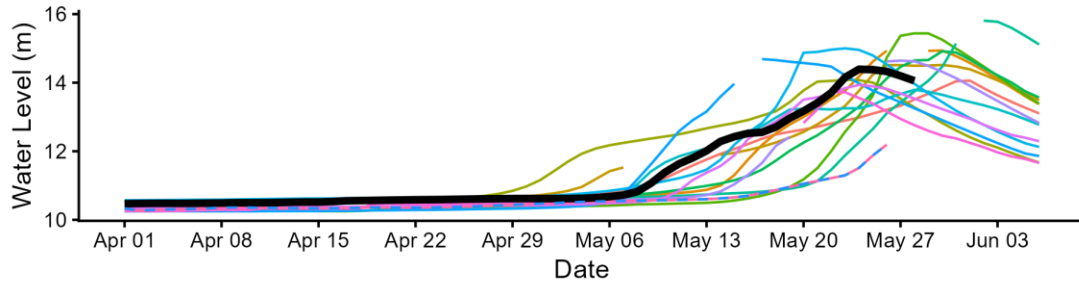
Mackenzie River (Peel Channel) above Aklavik (10MC003)

MACKENZIE RIVER (PEEL CHANNEL) ABOVE AKLAVIK (10MC003)

2026 Water Levels (5 minute resolution)



Historic Daily Water Levels

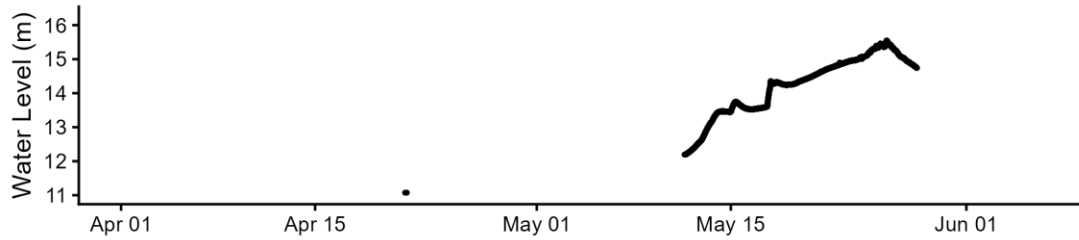


Above - The upper graph in the figure presents real time water level data at 5-minute resolution. The lower graph shows daily average levels relative to the previous 20 years.

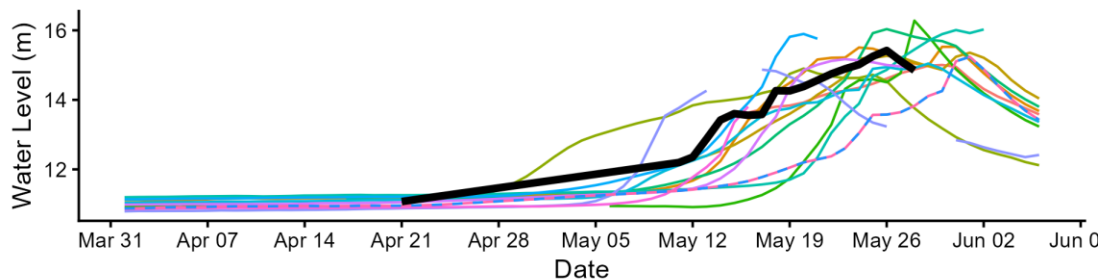
Mackenzie River (Middle Channel) below Raymond Channel (10MC008)

MACKENZIE RIVER BELOW RAYMOND CHANNEL (10MC008)

2026 Water Levels (5 minute resolution)



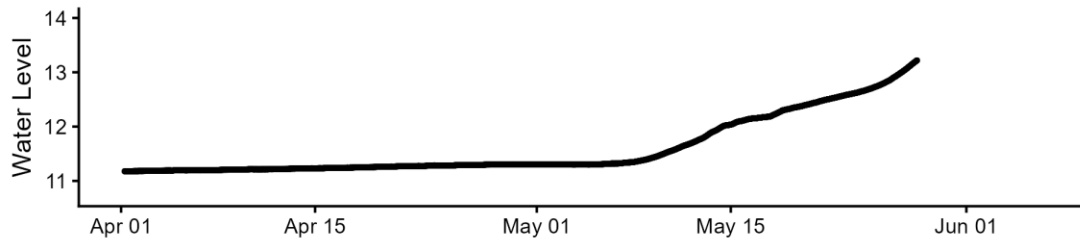
Historic Daily Water Levels



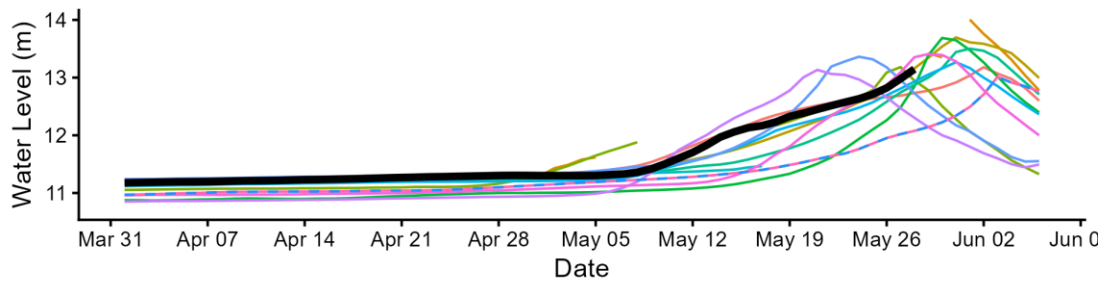
Above - The upper graph in the figure presents real time water level data at 5-minute resolution. The lower graph shows daily average levels relative to the previous 20 years.

Mackenzie River (Napoik Channel) above Shallow Bay (10MC023)

MACKENZIE RIVER (NAPOIAK CHANNEL) ABOVE SHALLOW BAY (10
2026 Water Levels (5 minute resolution)



Historic Daily Water Levels



Above - The upper graph in the figure presents real time water level data at 5-minute resolution. The lower graph shows daily average levels relative to the previous 20 years.