

## Table 347. Great Lakes Profile

[The Great Lakes contain the largest supply of freshwater in the world, holding about 18% of the worlds total freshwater and about 90% of the United States total freshwater. The Lakes are a series of five interconnecting large lakes, one small lake, four connecting channels, and the St. Lawrence Seaway. Combined, the lakes cover an area of over 94,000 square miles (245,000 square kilometers) and contain over 5,400 cubic miles (23,000 cubic kilometers) of water]

Characteristics	Unit	Lake Superior	Lake Michigan	Lake Huron	Lake Erie	Lake Ontario
Length . . . . .	Miles . . . . .	350	307	206	241	193
Breadth . . . . .	Miles . . . . .	160	118	183	57	53
Depth						
Average . . . . .	Feet . . . . .	489	279	159	62	283
Maximum . . . . .	Feet . . . . .	1,333	923	750	210	802
Volume . . . . .	Cubic miles . .	2,935	1,180	849	116	393
Water Surface Area <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	Square miles.	31,700	22,300	23,000	9,910	7,340
Retention/Replacement Time <sup>2</sup> . . .	Years . . . . .	191	99	22	2.6	6

<sup>1</sup> Includes both U.S. and Canada surface area.    <sup>2</sup> The amount of time it takes for lakes to get rid of pollutants.

Source: Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, "About Our Great Lakes," June 2004; <<http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/pr/ourlakes/intro.html>>.