

2009 IRON ORE TRADE

Iron ore shipments on the Great Lakes totaled 31.8 million net tons in 2009, the lowest total since 1938. The decline actually began in late fall 2008 when the recession expanded from banks and housing to the economy in general. By the beginning of 2009, the capacity utilization rate at North American steel mills had fallen to only 42 percent. As a result, iron ore shipments in January were only 708,000 tons. During a period of normal demand, just one Lake Superior dock can ship that much iron ore in January.

Shipments remained depressed throughout the summer. Docks that can load a million tons or more in a month found themselves handling just one or two ships.

The steel industry began to stir in the fall and shipments topped 4 million tons in both November and December. Even so, when 2009 came to an end, the iron ore trade had declined more than 46 percent compared to 2008.

GREAT LAKES IRON ORE SHIPMENTS: 2004-2009 AND 5-YEAR AVERAGE (net tons)

PORT / DOCK	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	AVERAGE 2004-2008
LAKE SUPERIOR							
Duluth, MN							
DM&R.....	6,801,114	7,065,743	7,164,620	6,362,054	8,429,849	5,544,879	7,164,676
Superior, WI							
BNSF.....	13,127,810	11,113,193	11,998,407	12,396,921	10,285,069	2,427,228	11,784,280
Two Harbors, MN							
DM&R.....	14,008,154	12,968,011	14,447,327	13,651,111	13,461,896	7,001,579	13,707,299
Silver Bay, MN							
Northshore Mining Co.....	5,723,301	5,292,528	4,814,260	4,905,387	6,684,812	3,390,818	5,484,057
Presque Isle, MI							
LS&I Railroad.....	8,359,468	8,800,944	7,210,441	6,530,532	7,104,003	5,266,079	7,601,077
TOTAL – LAKE SUPERIOR	48,074,811	45,240,419	45,635,055	43,846,005	45,965,629	23,630,583	45,752,383
LAKE MICHIGAN							
Escanaba, MI							
CN.....	5,036,886	3,705,873	4,505,150	4,877,479	5,260,006	4,298,566	4,677,077
TOTAL – U.S. PORTS	53,111,697	48,946,292	50,140,205	48,723,484	51,225,635	27,929,149	50,429,460
EASTERN CANADA							
Pointe Noire, QC							
Arnaud Railroad.....	1,933,262	1,820,614	1,779,433	1,646,387	1,359,061	938,450	1,707,751
Port Cartier, QC							
Quebec Cartier Mining Company	5,516,236	3,945,792	4,726,226	5,135,121	4,190,324	1,256,675	4,702,739
Sept Iles, QC							
Iron Ore Company of Canada	2,053,416	3,474,850	3,232,234	2,594,146	2,467,934	1,668,357	2,764,516
TOTAL – EASTERN CANADA.....	9,502,914	9,241,256	9,737,893	9,375,654	8,017,319	3,863,482	9,175,007
TOTAL – ALL PORTS	62,614,611	58,187,548	59,878,098	58,099,138	59,242,954	31,792,631	59,604,467

To convert iron ore to gross tons, multiply by .89286.

Note: 2004 total and the average for the years 2004-2008 includes 54,964 tons shipped from Taconite Harbor, Minnesota. The dock stopped shipping iron ore in 2001, and has not loaded any iron ore since those two cargos in 2004. Taconite Harbor continues to receive coal.