

2008 GRAIN TRADE

The Lakes grain trade fell to one of its lowest levels in years in 2008. Shipments totaled only 7.7 million net tons, a plunge of 31.2 percent. A 66-percent decrease in grain exports from U.S. ports was a major factor in the depressed total.

Another telling comparison is this: Back in the late 1970s, a single port – Thunder Bay, Ontario – routinely shipped more wheat in a year than all the various grains loaded on the Lakes in 2008.

Loss of the Soviet Union as a major customer, Canada's shifting much of its grain exports to the West Coast, and unit trains and population shifts in the U.S. have all combined to downsize the Lakes grain trade.

CALENDAR YEAR	TOTAL
1999.....	15,866,884
2000.....	15,099,337
2001.....	14,011,286
2002.....	12,094,537
2003.....	11,624,713
2004.....	11,667,639
2005.....	11,377,508
2006.....	13,027,667
2007.....	11,135,605
2008.....	7,744,592
10-YEAR TOTAL.....	130,229,391