

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

Christopher A. Tuck, Iron Ore Commodity Specialist
National Minerals Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4912, Fax: (703) 648-7757
Email: ctuck@usgs.gov

Michelle B. Blackwell (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7943
Fax: (703) 648-7975
Email: mblackwell@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals>

IRON ORE IN AUGUST 2014

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in August 2014 were 4.79 million metric tons (Mt) and 6.37 Mt, respectively. Average daily production in August was 155,000 metric tons (t), 3% less than that of July 2014 and 4% more than that of August 2013. Average daily shipments were 205,000 t, slightly less than those of July and 17% more than those of August 2013. Mine stocks at the end of August 2014 were 17% less than those held in July and more than double those in August 2013.

U.S. imports of iron ore were 465,000 t in August 2014, 64% greater than those in July 2014 and more than double those of August 2013. U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.62 Mt in August 2014, 17% greater than those in July 2014 and double those of August 2013.

Industry News

Gogebic Taconite LLC announced a delay in submitting its application to develop a \$1.5 billion iron ore mine in Ashland County and Iron County, WI, from the spring until the fall of 2015 (Bergquist, 2014).

Iron ore shipments at U.S. and Canadian ports reported by the Lake Carriers' Association (2014) were 7.2 Mt in August, the highest level since July 2008, and a 33% increase from August 2013. Shipments from ports in Canada declined by 32% owing to the closure of the Wabush Mines in Newfoundland and Labrador. High water levels allowed for higher loading totals; however, lack of dredging and seasonal variations were expected to cause decreased loads through yearend, reducing the carrying capacity of iron ore freighters. Year-to-date iron ore shipments on the Great Lakes totaled 33.7 Mt, a decrease of 5% from that of 2013.

Three Australian iron ore mines, all in the Northern Territory, announced operations would cease owing to declines in global spot prices. Territory Iron Ltd.'s Frances Creek Mine was scheduled to cease operations in November. Sherwin Iron Ltd.

and Western Desert Resources Ltd. entered voluntary administration status in July and September, respectively. These companies were in early stages of production and employed mobile screening and crushing equipment, which could be restarted if prices increased (Brown and McCarthy, 2014).

The average spot price for iron ore fines at 62% iron content (cost and freight at Tianjin port) fell to \$92.63 per dry metric ton in August 2014, 3.5% lower than in July 2014 and 32% lower than in August 2013 (Index Mundi, undated).

List services and Web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>.

References Cited

- Bergquist, Lee, 2014, Gogebic's formal request for iron ore mine to be delayed: Milwaukee-Wisconsin Journal Sentinel, August 26. (Accessed October 29, 2014, at <http://www.jsonline.com/news/gogebics-request-for-mining-permit-to-be-delayed-gogebics-request-for-mining-permit-to-be-delayed-b9-272796301.html>.)
- Brown, Carmen, and McCarthy, Marty, 2014, Plummeting iron ore prices claims third Top End miner: Northern Territory, Australia, ABC Rural, September 8. (Accessed October 29, 2014, at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-08/western-desert-resources-goes-into-voluntary-administration/5722388>.)
- Index Mundi, [undated], Iron ore monthly price: Index Mundi. (Accessed October 29, 2014, at <http://www.indexmundi.com/commodities/?commodity=iron-ore&months=120>.)
- Lake Carriers' Association, 2014, August another strong month for U.S.-flag fleet: Cleveland, OH, Lake Carriers' Association press release, September 8. (Accessed October 29, 2014, at <http://www.lcaships.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/usf0814-text.pdf>.)
- Lake Carriers' Association, 2014, Lakes' ore trade stays in high gear in August: Cleveland, OH, Lake Carriers' Association press release, September 9. (Accessed October 29, 2014, at <http://www.lcaships.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/glore0814-text.pdf>.)

TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks ⁴
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2013:					
August	4,610	33,200	5,430	32,300	3,320
September	4,780	38,000	5,400	37,700	2,770
October	4,460	42,500	5,120	42,900	2,110
November	4,650	47,100	4,280	47,100	2,470
December	3,870	51,000	4,660	51,800	3,690
2014:					
January	3,900	3,900	2,390	2,390	5,200
February	5,460	9,370	1,900	4,290	8,820
March	4,440	13,800	1,310	5,600	11,900
April	3,930	17,700	2,690	8,290	13,200
May	4,740	22,500	5,880	14,200	12,000
June	4,690	27,200	5,940	20,100	10,900
July	4,930	32,100	6,490	26,600	9,350
August	4,790	36,900	6,370	33,000	7,770

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores.

³Includes rail and vessel.

⁴Includes usable (marketable) material at mines, concentrators, pelletizing plants, and loading docks. Excludes stocks of crude ore at mine and concentrates at agglomerating complexes.

TABLE 2
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	Total
2013:			
August	1,840	2,260	4,100
September	1,640	2,000	3,640
October	1,710	2,300	4,010
November	1,640	1,690	3,330
December	1,390	2,440	3,830
January–December	18,900	22,900	41,800
2014:			
January	1,010	1,570	2,580
February	919	2,380	3,300
March	821	1,680	2,510
April	811	2,560	3,370
May	860	2,680	3,540
June	835	2,550	3,380
July	839	2,730	3,570
August	NA	NA	NA

NA Not available.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 3
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
	Monthly	Year to date	Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
			Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2013:						
August	2,890	22,900	2,550	20,500	4,580	35,100
September	2,880	25,800	2,460	23,000	4,400	39,500
October	2,870	28,700	2,510	25,500	4,490	44,000
November	2,760	31,500	2,430	27,900	4,340	48,300
December	2,780	34,200	2,380	30,300	4,340	52,600
2014:						
January	2,430	2,430	2,680	2,680	4,650	4,650
February	2,450	4,880	2,580	5,250	4,230	8,880
March	2,820	7,700	2,490	7,740	4,690	13,600
April	2,580	10,300	2,120	9,860	4,580	18,100
May	2,710	13,000	2,380	12,200	4,740	22,900
June	2,760	15,800	2,500	14,700	4,590	27,500
July	2,930	18,700	2,630	17,400	4,760	32,200
August	2,920	21,600	2,600	20,000	4,840	37,100

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2013			2014		
	January–August Thousand metric tons	August		January–August Thousand metric tons	Value ^{3,4}	
		Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)		Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ^{3,4} (dollars per ton)
Canada	3,710	1,300	\$151,000	5,280	\$639,000	\$121.10
China	1,380	119	11,200	1,520	137,000	90.01
Japan	28	35	3,340	94	10,500	112.21
Mexico	769	168	12,000	1,220	96,400	79.27
Other	905	(⁵)	14	77	6,870	89.25
Total	6,790	1,620	178,000	8,180	889,000	108.70
Concentrates	1,610	72	6,120	1,250	120,000	95.55
Fine ores	331	35	3,360	95	10,700	112.59
Pellets	4,420	1,330	153,000	6,150	702,000	114.21
Other	419	182	14,800	688	57,000	82.88
Total	6,790	1,620	178,000	8,180	889,000	108.70

¹Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month of report included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Values are calculated and may not reflect actual price per ton.

⁵Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. IMPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2013			2014		
	January–August	August		January–August		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ^{3,4} (dollars per ton)
Brazil	227	223	\$25,500	1,120	\$159,000	\$141.53
Canada	1,320	189	26,900	1,990	291,000	146.47
Other	204	53	6,470	195	26,300	140.10
Total	1,750	465	58,900	3,300	476,000	144.12
Concentrates	213	115	8,800	308	29,100	94.38
Fine ores	422	32	3,760	272	36,500	134.14
Pellets	1,090	311	45,100	2,690	408,000	151.64
Other	20	8	1,150	36	2,990	83.06
Total	1,750	465	58,900	3,300	476,000	144.12

¹Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month of report included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Values are calculated and may not reflect actual price per ton.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE,
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–August		August	January–August		August
	2013	2014	2014	2013	2014	2014
Cleveland, OH (41)	937	618	85	938	618	85
New Orleans, LA (20)	156	1,670	226	594	1,960	246
Other	(3)	403	--	220	725	135
Total	1,090	2,690	311	1,750	3,300	465

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons total per month of report included in "Other."

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.