

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

Patricia J. Loferski, PGM Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-7708, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: ploferski@usgs.gov

Paula R. Neely (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7949
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: pneely@usgs.gov

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

PLATINUM-GROUP METALS IN AUGUST 2012

Engelhard's average August price for platinum increased slightly and that for palladium increased by 4% compared with average July prices. The average monthly ruthenium and iridium prices decreased slightly, and that for rhodium decreased by 9% during the same period. Platinum and palladium prices increased sharply midmonth owing to supply fears related to strike action and violent unrest in the South African platinum mining industry. In 6 days, the platinum price increased from \$1,400 per troy ounce to \$1,543 per troy ounce, its highest price in more than 3 months. In contrast, iridium and ruthenium prices decreased during August. The rhodium price decreased toward midmonth owing to selling by speculative investors or by producers to decrease excess inventory. The rhodium price then increased slightly toward monthend in response to supply concerns caused by the violence in the South African platinum mining industry (Platts Metals Week, 2012). Platinum prices remained below those for gold for the 11th straight month and higher than those for rhodium for the 8th straight month.

Stillwater Mining Co. (Billings, MT) produced 4,150 kilograms (kg) of palladium and platinum during the second quarter of 2012, which was 10% more than production during the first quarter of 2012, and 7% less than production during the second quarter of 2011. Production from the Stillwater Mine was 3,050 kg of palladium and platinum during the second quarter 2012, which was 12% more than production during the first quarter of 2012 and 10% less than 2011 second quarter production owing to lower tonnage milled as a result of variations in mining stopes and the availability of miners. The East Boulder Mine produced 1,100 kg of palladium and platinum, which was 7% greater than production during the first quarter of 2012 and 4% greater than production in the second quarter of 2011. Stillwater's production guidance for 2012 remained at 15,600 kg of palladium and platinum. About 3,830 kg of palladium, platinum, and rhodium was recovered from recycled autocatalysts during the second quarter of 2012, which was a slight decrease compared with recycling volumes in the second quarter of 2011. Progress continued on the Blitz and Graham Creek development projects, adjacent to the Stillwater and East Boulder Mines. The tunnel boring machine was in place at the Blitz project and was expected to be commissioned

by the end of the third quarter. The tunnel boring machine at the Graham Creek project advanced 366 meters (m) during the second quarter of 2012, which brought the total new mine access to about 1,130 m since early in 2011. Completion of the Graham Creek project in the second quarter of 2013 would yield 2,500 m of new mine access. No estimate was given for the anticipated increase in production (Stillwater Mining Co., 2012).

North American Palladium Ltd. (NAP) (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) produced 1,250 kg of palladium during the second quarter of 2012, which was a 15% decrease in production relative to that of the second quarter of 2011. The decreased production was owing to weather-related challenges caused by unprecedented rainfall. NAP expected to produce 4,700 to 5,000 kg of palladium during 2012. Progress continued on the mine expansion in the Offset Zone deposit, and NAP planned to commission the new shaft by yearend. No expected increase in production was given (North American Palladium Ltd., 2012).

Violent conflict erupted at Lonmin plc's (London, United Kingdom) Marikana Mine in South Africa as a result of a wage dispute and conflict between two unions. The mine was shut down following strike action by mine workers, and remained shut beyond monthend pending resolution of the grievances. Lonmin reported that lost production totaled about 93 kg per day of platinum. Platinum and palladium prices increased following the violence owing to supply concerns (Johnson Matthey plc, 2012a).

On August 9, the U.S. Mint released its 2012 platinum American Eagle coin. The 1-ounce coins were composed of 99.95% pure platinum, had a face value of \$100, and were the fourth in the 6-year Preamble series, commemorating core concepts of American democracy. The coins were emblematic of the principle "provide for the common defence" and depicted a minuteman from the Revolutionary War. The Mint planned to produce a maximum 15,000 of the coins (Johnson Matthey plc, 2012b).

References Cited

Johnson Matthey plc, 2012a, The platinum metals report—August 2012: London, United Kingdom, Johnson Matthey plc news release, 3 p. (Accessed

September 24, 2012, at http://www.platinum.matthey.com/uploaded_files/monthlyreports/price-report-aug-12.pdf.)
Johnson Matthey, 2012b, US Mint releases 2012 American Eagle platinum coin: London, United Kingdom, Johnson Matthey plc news release, August 13. (Accessed September 24, 2012, at <http://www.platinum.matthey.com/news-archive/us-mint-releases-2012-american-eagle-platinum-coin/801427146.html>.)
North American Palladium Ltd., 2012, North American Palladium announces second quarter 2012 results: Toronto, Ontario, Canada, North American Palladium news release, August 8. (Accessed September 25, 2012, at

<http://www.napalladium.com/English/investor-relations/news-releases/news-releases-details/2012/North-American-Palladium-Announces-Second-Quarter-2012-Results1130542/default.aspx>.)
Platts Metals Week, 2012, Rhodium prices drift lower on what traders see as speculation: Platts Metals Week, v. 83, no. 33, August 13, p. 3.
Stillwater Mining Co., 2012, Stillwater Mining Co. announces second quarter earnings: Billings, MT, Stillwater Mining Co. news release, July 2. (Accessed September 24, 2012, at <http://investorrelations.stillwatermining.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=99837&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1723716&highlight>.)

TABLE 1
PLATINUM-GROUP METALS PRICES¹

(Dollars per troy ounce)

	Platinum	Palladium	Rhodium	Iridium	Ruthenium
2011:					
Low/date	1,356.00 Dec. 29	553.00 Oct. 5	1,400.00 Dec. ²	780.00 Jan. 3 and 4	110.00 Dec. ²
High/date	1,892.00 Aug. 22 and 23	851.00 Feb. 18	2,500.00 Jan. 31 and Feb. ²	1,085.00 Sep.–Dec. ²	180.00 Jan.–Aug. ²
Average	1,724.51	738.51	2,024.35	1,035.87	165.85
2012:					
July:					
Low/date	1,395.00/24	570.00/23 and 25	1,165.00/30 and 31	1,070.00 ²	115.00 ²
High/date	1,478.00/3	596.00/3	1,250.00 ²	1,075.00 ²	115.00 ²
Average	1,425.86	582.95	1,225.48	1,071.19	115.00
August:					
Low/date	1,393.00/2 and 3	577.00/3	1,100.00 ²	1,050.00 ²	110.00 ²
High/date	1,543.00/23 and 27	650.00/27	1,165.00 ²	1,070.00 ²	115.00 ²
Average	1,455.35	607.04	1,117.83	1,059.57	112.39
January–August:					
Low/date	1,393.00 Aug. 2 and 3	570.00 July 23 and 25	1,100.00 Aug. ²	1,050.00 Aug. ²	110.00 Jan. and Aug. ²
High/date	1,731.00 Feb. 29	727.00 Feb. 29	1,540.00 Feb. 14 and 15	1,085.00 Jan.–Feb. ²	130.00 Feb.–Mar. ²
Average	1,528.89	644.31	1,339.06	1,074.34	117.21

¹Quotes from Engelhard.

²Occurred multiple days in month(s) listed.

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PLATINUM METAL, BY COUNTRY¹

(Kilograms metal content, unless otherwise specified)

Period and country	Platinum grain and nuggets		Platinum sponge		Other unwrought platinum		Platinum, other		Platinum waste and scrap		Platinum coins	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)
2011	1,230	\$65,700	35,800	\$1,910,000	7,160	\$211,000	4,660	\$206,000	78,900	\$832,000	1,200	\$66,300
2012:												
May	2	56	4,450	210,000	236	10,200	302	11,200	14,500	81,800	47	2,310
June	265	12,700	3,650	174,000	380	13,300	512	21,100	30,300	68,800	95	4,760
July:												
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	39	1,320	37	1,810
Belgium	--	--	55	2,500	--	--	63	2,830	--	--	--	--
Brazil	--	--	--	--	--	--	-2	2	1,180	4,150	--	--
Canada	(2)	8	--	--	--	--	18	782	756	20,900	48	2,280
Chile	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3,000	156	--	--
China	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	116	2,220	--	--
Colombia	--	--	--	--	94	3,570	6	215	23	772	--	--
France	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	38	1,860	--	--
Germany	2	87	72	3,460	237	7,820	142	4,820	688	31,600	--	--
Israel	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	223	--	--
Italy	--	--	567	25,900	--	--	45	2,090	116	3,760	--	--
Japan	--	--	--	--	6	221	2	54	205	6,970	--	--
Korea, Republic of	--	--	100	5,400	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Malaysia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	43	1,080	--	--
Mexico	--	--	23	1,020	--	--	--	--	56	1,590	--	--
Norway	--	--	187	8,660	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Philippines	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	19	422	--	--
Russia	90	4,410	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Singapore	--	--	--	--	26	1,470	(2)	2	222	9,330	--	--
South Africa	--	--	1,170	53,700	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	31	1,420	31	1,480	3	168	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	320	8,500	--	--
United Kingdom	--	--	392	18,600	(2)	3	17	782	1,240	10,800	15	660
Venezuela	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	14	441	--	--
Other	--	--	--	--	(2)	7	1	72	17	270	--	--
Total	92	4,510	2,590	121,000	394	14,600	297	11,800	8,100	106,000	100	4,750
January–July	860	41,500	20,700	1,020,000	2,400	101,000	2,720	109,000	67,700	564,000	576	29,100

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PLATINUM-GROUP METALS, BY COUNTRY¹

(Kilograms metal content, unless otherwise specified)

Period and country	Unwrought palladium		Palladium, other		Iridium ²		Osmium ²		Ruthenium ²		Rhodium ²	
	Quantity	Value (thousands)	Quantity	Value (thousands)	Quantity	Value (thousands)	Quantity	Value (thousands)	Quantity	Value (thousands)	Quantity	Value (thousands)
2011	87,000	\$1,890,000	11,900	\$268,000	2,790	\$59,000	48	\$261	13,300	\$69,700	13,100	\$844,000
2012:												
May	3,260	66,800	1,160	23,500	130	4,430	--	--	1,030	3,760	836	36,700
June	4,680	93,300	830	18,200	18	545	20	100	463	1,730	1,310	55,100
July:												
Belgium	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	194
Canada	110	2,590	23	594	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Germany	3	58	3	14	35	1,150	--	--	135	596	26	1,100
Italy	70	1,350	1	17	--	--	--	--	--	--	15	678
Japan	170	1,410	39	169	(3)	13	--	--	53	164	--	--
Korea, Republic of	122	2,820	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	205
Norway	311	5,830	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	182
Russia	7,430	133,000	311	5,790	--	--	--	--	--	--	58	2,270
South Africa	2,270	44,500	133	2,510	26	871	35	203	510	1,690	451	18,200
Switzerland	(3)	5	9	299	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	119	2,390	239	4,510	2	65	--	--	245	968	32	1,370
Other	3	92	(3)	4	1	18	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	10,600	194,000	758	13,900	63	2,120	35	203	943	3,420	597	24,200
January–July	40,800	844,000	6,490	140,000	747	24,500	55	303	7,120	25,300	7,360	329,000

-- Zero.

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

²Unwrought and other forms.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF PLATINUM-GROUP METALS, BY COUNTRY¹

(Kilograms metal content, unless otherwise specified)

Period and country	Platinum ²		Platinum waste and scrap		Palladium ²		Iridium, osmium, and ruthenium ^{2, 3}		Rhodium ²	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)		(thousands)
2011	11,300	\$552,000	118,000	\$1,440,000	32,000	\$416,000	1,150	\$18,000	1,370	\$71,700
2012:										
May	418	17,300	2,720	60,800	3,840	50,500	335	2,900	141	6,300
June	795	32,800	3,140	79,000	2,780	43,900	102	1,480	22	1,250
July:										
Australia	3	169	(4)	8	42	466	(4)	4	--	--
Austria	2	45	--	--	1	19	--	--	--	--
Belgium	(4)	9	270	1,480	2	26	--	--	--	--
Brazil	205	4,380	--	--	177	3,470	--	--	--	--
Canada	15	635	4	109	546	9,280	--	--	--	--
China	2	33	25	1,260	137	2,530	--	--	13	690
Costa Rica	(4)	12	--	--	1	7	1	33	--	--
Czech Republic	--	--	--	--	60	116	(4)	6	--	--
France	23	754	--	--	45	324	(4)	10	--	--
Germany	254	11,600	169	4,450	756	13,800	20	685	(4)	3
Hong Kong	4	99	--	--	37	487	9	215	--	--
India	(4)	4	--	--	5	47	(4)	5	--	--
Ireland	18	674	--	--	10	115	1	6	--	--
Israel	2	50	--	--	43	251	--	--	--	--
Italy	3	201	20	563	57	619	--	--	7	245
Japan	348	11,800	127	3,210	57	1,090	1	38	--	--
Korea, Republic of	127	5,940	--	--	9	102	14	378	--	--
Mexico	28	984	--	--	38	286	--	--	(4)	10
New Zealand	(4)	16	--	--	6	154	--	--	--	--
Romania	(4)	3	--	--	8	6	--	--	--	--
Singapore	--	--	--	--	13	126	9	221	--	--
South Africa	--	--	11	900	--	--	--	--	--	--
Switzerland	(4)	6	347	7,670	5	63	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	2	70	--	--	72	1,050	32	151	--	--
Thailand	(4)	7	--	--	2	32	--	--	--	--
United Arab Emirates	(4)	11	--	--	(4)	11	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	59	2,480	432	13,400	76	1,360	2	43	--	--
Other	6	269	--	--	60	298	--	--	--	--
Total	1,100	40,200	1,400	33,100	2,270	36,100	90	1,800	20	948
January–July	5,420	233,000	24,700	458,000	21,200	291,000	918	10,600	413	20,000

-- Zero.

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

²Unwrought and other forms.

³Gross weight.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.