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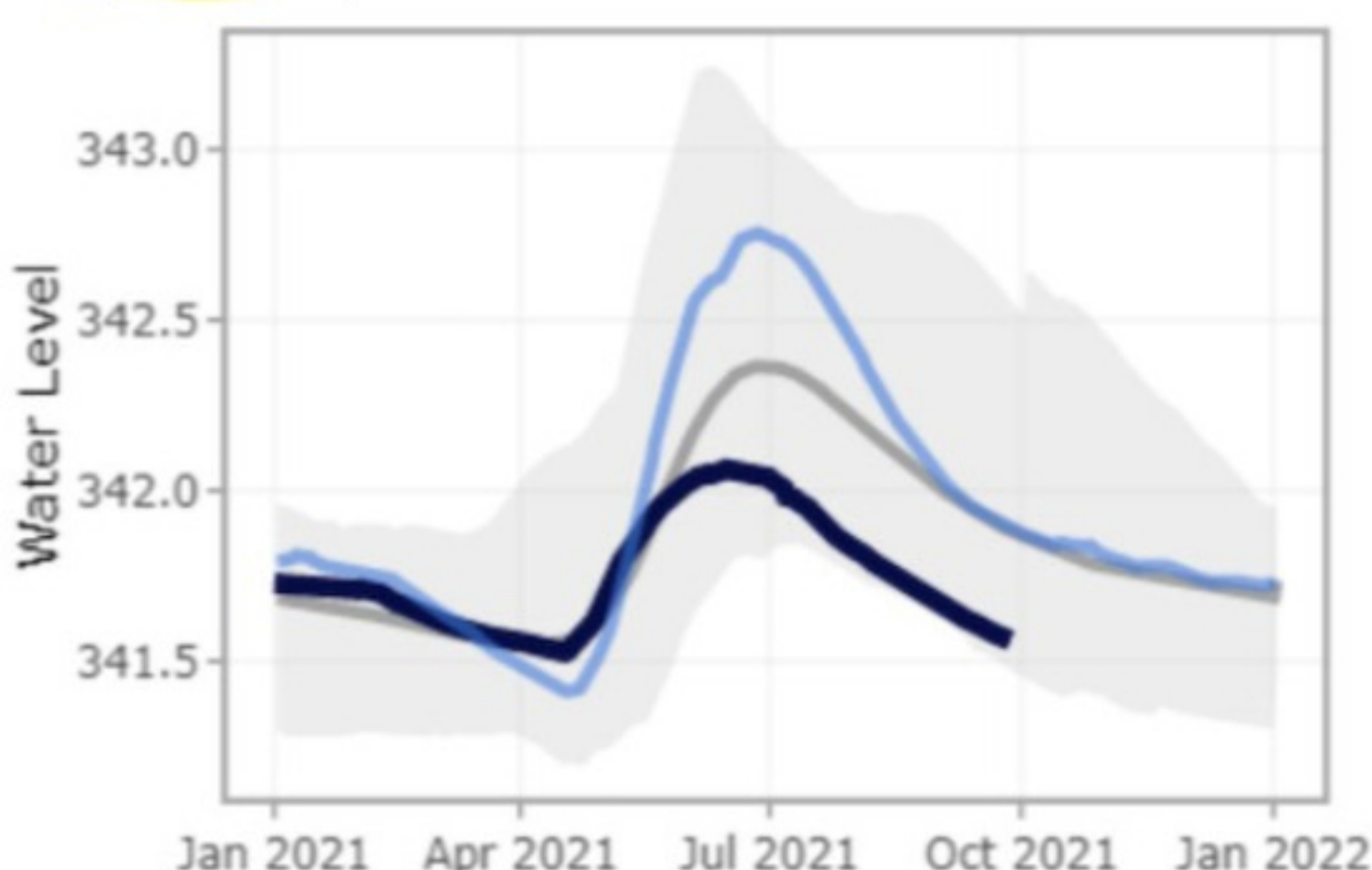
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Vernon

Lakes at historic lows

Okanagan and Kalamalka lake levels at bottom end of historic range

Jon Manchester - Sep 30, 2021 / 2:23 pm



Okanagan Lake (08NM083)

Historic Range
 Historic Mean 1943-2019
 Current Data
 2020 Data

Photo: Water Survey of Canada

A report to the Okanagan Basin Water Board indicates drought conditions are improving somewhat.

The Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Response Team report met weekly in September and notes the Okanagan Basin was downgraded to drought Level 3 on Sept. 22.

This was due to improved streamflow conditions, thanks to precipitation and cooler temperatures bringing less irrigation demand.

However, in the South Okanagan, Shuttleworth and Inkaneep creeks remain at Level 4 and Vaseux Creek at Level 5.

Water Survey of Canada lake level data collected Sept. 29 show both Kalamalka and Okanagan lakes at the bottom of historical ranges.

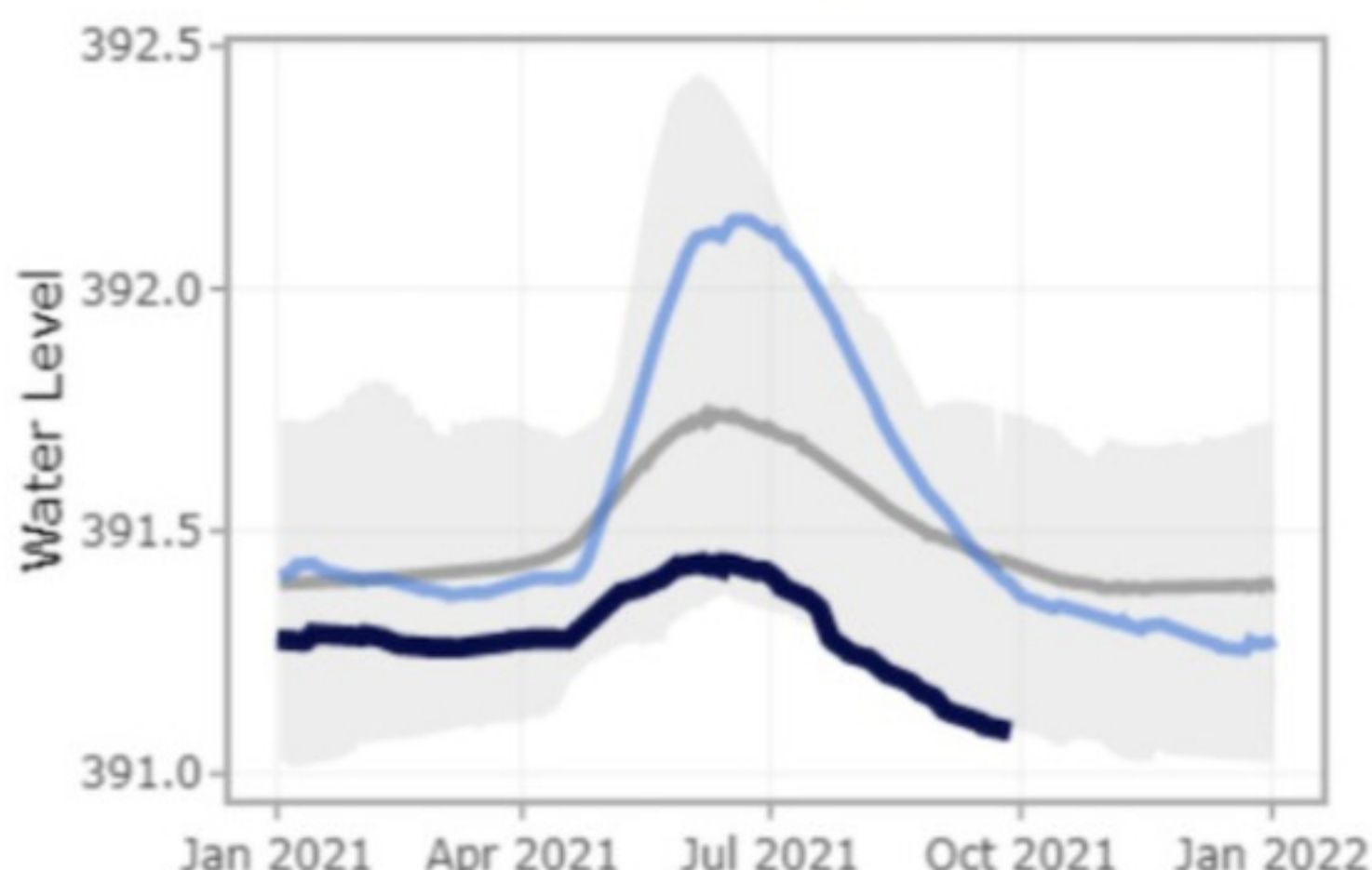
"Environment Canada is predicting that the autumn will be warmer and wetter than normal, which hopefully will help lake levels recover. Both Okanagan and Kalamalka lakes are close to the lowest levels of their (recorded) historic range," the board says.

It says climate change is leading to more significant fluctuations than in the past.

Both drought and flooding conditions are projected to become "much more common" in the next few decades.

The water board suggests this can lead to costly damage to public and private infrastructure, challenge the agricultural economy, and create conflict between water users, as well as harm ongoing work to restore sockeye, chinook, and kokanee salmon populations.

An October debriefing will discuss the role of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in drought response, working with Agriculture Canada to better co-ordinate drought communications, and improvements to streamflow data collection and sharing.



Kalamalka Lake (08NM143)

Historic Range
 Historic Mean 1967-2019
 Current Data
 2020 Data

Photo: Water Survey of Canada