



# Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

## Rattling Brook Network

April 20, 2022 to June 1, 2022



Government of Newfoundland & Labrador  
Department of Environment and Climate Change  
Water Resources Management Division  
St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6 Canada

## General

- Department of Environment and Climate Change staff monitor the real-time web pages consistently.
- Hydrometric data included in this report is provisional and used only for illustrative purposes. Corrected and finalized data may be retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada website ([https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index\\_e.html](https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html))\*.

## Maintenance and Calibration of Instrument

- As part of the Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocol (QAQC), an assessment of the reliability of data recorded by an instrument is made at the beginning and end of the deployment period. The procedure is based on the approach used by the United States Geological Survey.
  - Upon deployment, a QA/QC Sonde is temporarily deployed *in situ*, adjacent to the Field Sonde. Depending on the degree of difference between each parameter from the Field and QAQC sondes, a qualitative rank is assigned (See Table 1). The possible ranks, from most to least desirable, are: Excellent, Good, Fair, Marginal, and Poor. A grab sample is also taken for additional confirmation of conditions at deployment and to allow for future modelling studies.
  - At the end of a deployment period, a freshly cleaned and calibrated QAQC Sonde is placed *in situ*, adjacent to the Field Sonde. Values are compared between all parameters and differences are ranked for placement in Table 1.

Table 1: Qualitative QAQC Ranking

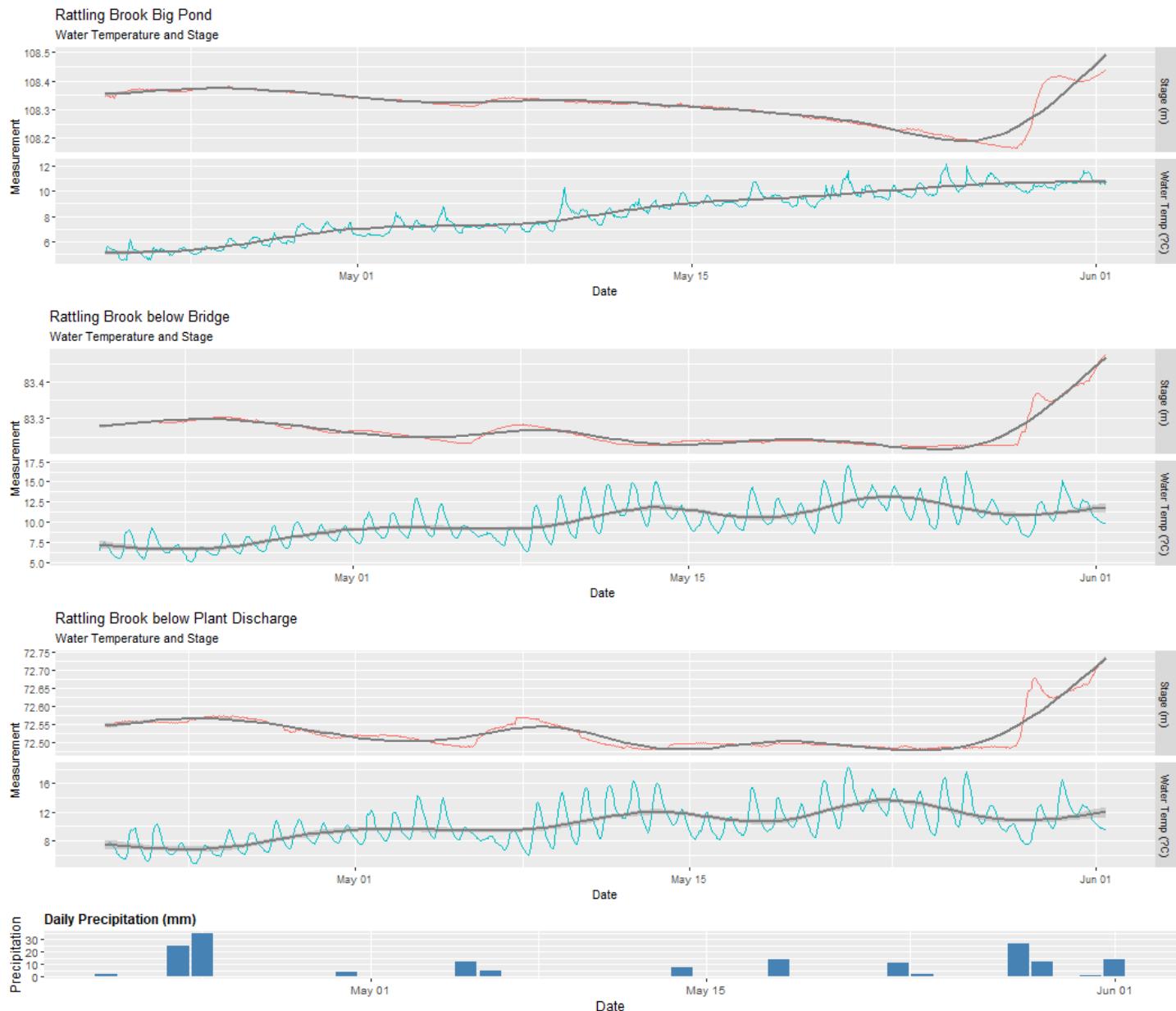
Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
<b>Rattling Brook Big Pond</b>	April 20	Deployment	Excellent	Fair	Good	Excellent	Good
	June 1	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
<b>Rattling Brook below Bridge</b>	April 20	Deployment	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent
	June 1	Removal	Good	Fair	Fair	Excellent	Excellent
<b>Rattling Brook below Plant Discharge</b>	April 20	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
	June 1	Removal	Excellent	Fair	Marginal	Good	Poor

- During the weekend of January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Vale weather station was compromised during a wind event. As data is suspect, this report utilizes weather data at St. John's West, 78kms NE of Long Harbour.
- Plant Discharge Turbidity sensor experienced issues May 1<sup>st</sup> onward. These values have been omitted.

## Data Interpretation

### Temperature

Water Temperature is a major factor used to describe water quality. Temperature has major implications on both the ecology and chemistry of a water body, governing processes such as the metabolic rate of aquatic plants and animals and the degree of dissolved oxygen saturation.



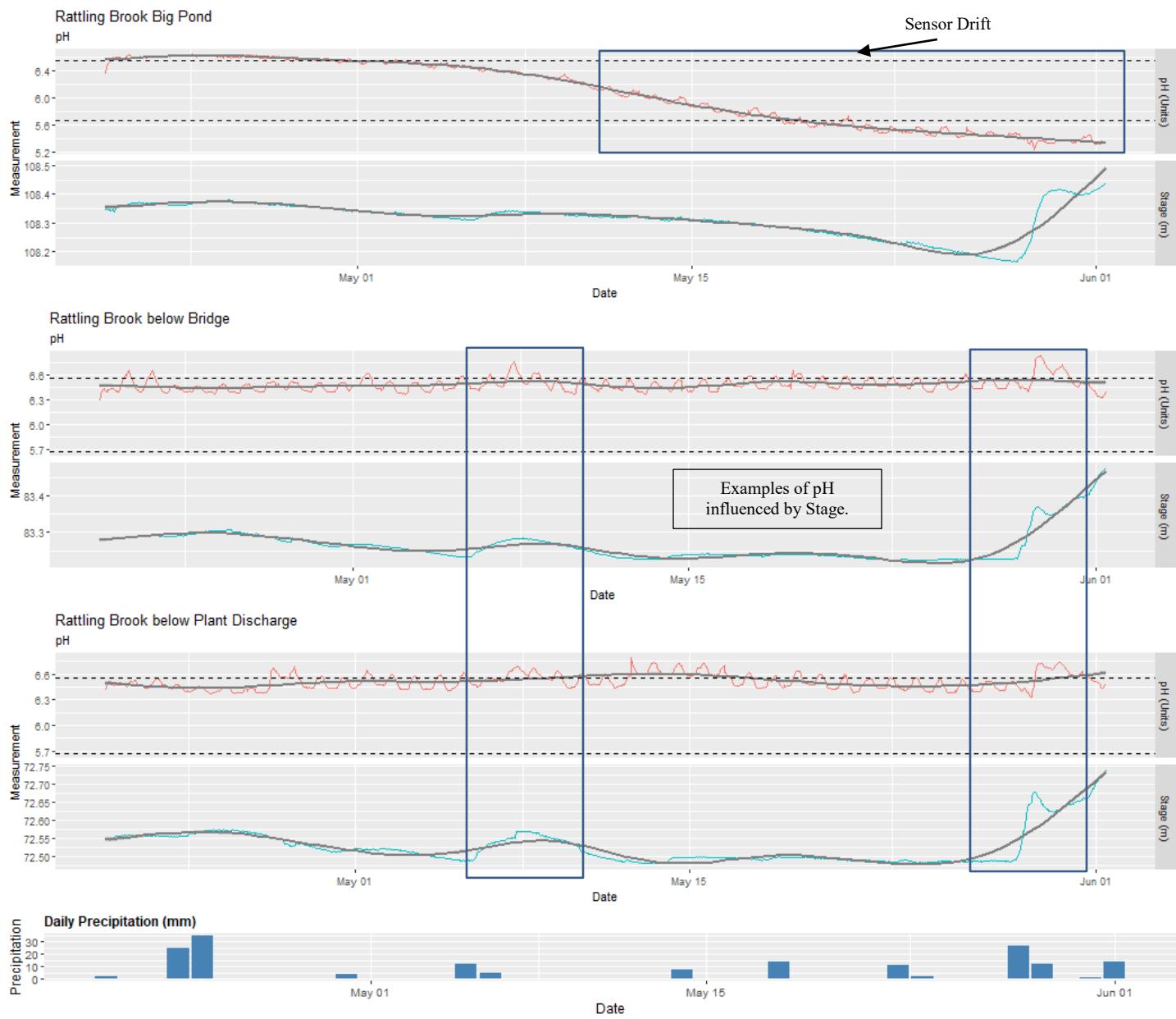
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	12.20	4.51	8.38	8.22
Below Bridge	17.01	5.06	9.84	10.00
Below Plant Discharge	18.22	4.87	9.93	10.30

- Gradual water temperature increases are observed at all stations during this deployment period, as expected.

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## pH

pH is used to give an indication of the acidity or basicity of a solution. A pH of 7 denotes a neutral solution while lower values are acidic and higher values are basic. Technically, the pH of a solution indicates the availability of protons to react with molecules dissolved in water. Such reactions can affect how molecules function chemically and metabolically.



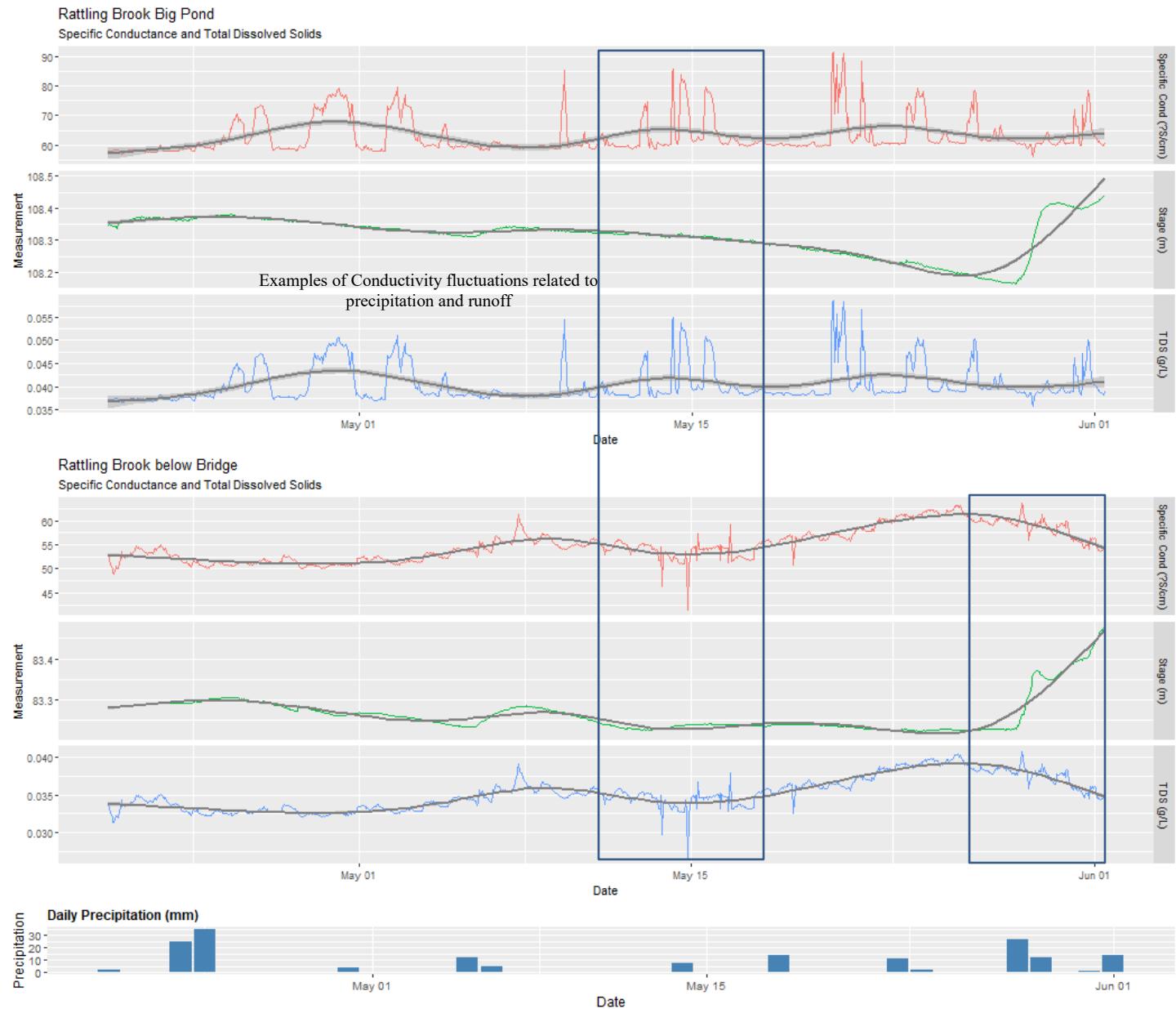
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	6.65	5.23	6.12	6.07
Below Bridge	6.83	6.28	6.47	6.48
Below Plant Discharge	6.79	6.33	6.50	6.51

- pH values were generally consistent with the majority of values within the site-specific guidelines (5.67-6.56 pH Units). pH levels started to decline at the beginning of May at Big Pond due to sensor drift.

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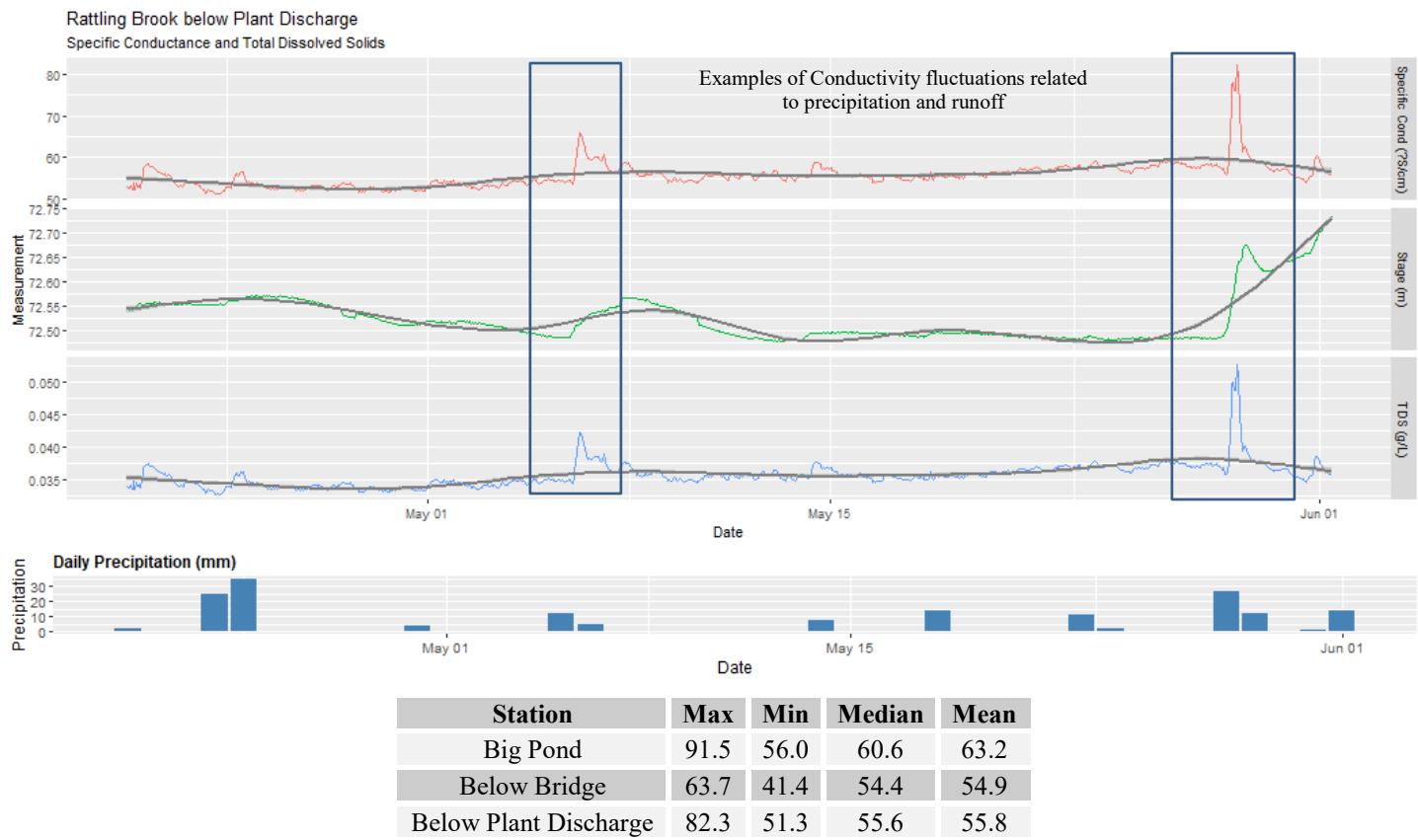
## Specific Conductivity

Conductivity relates to the ease of passing an electric charge – or resistance – through a solution. Conductivity is highly influenced by the concentration of dissolved ions in solution: distilled water has zero conductivity (infinite resistance) while salty solutions have high conductivity (low resistance). Specific Conductivity is corrected to 25°C to allow comparison across variable temperatures.



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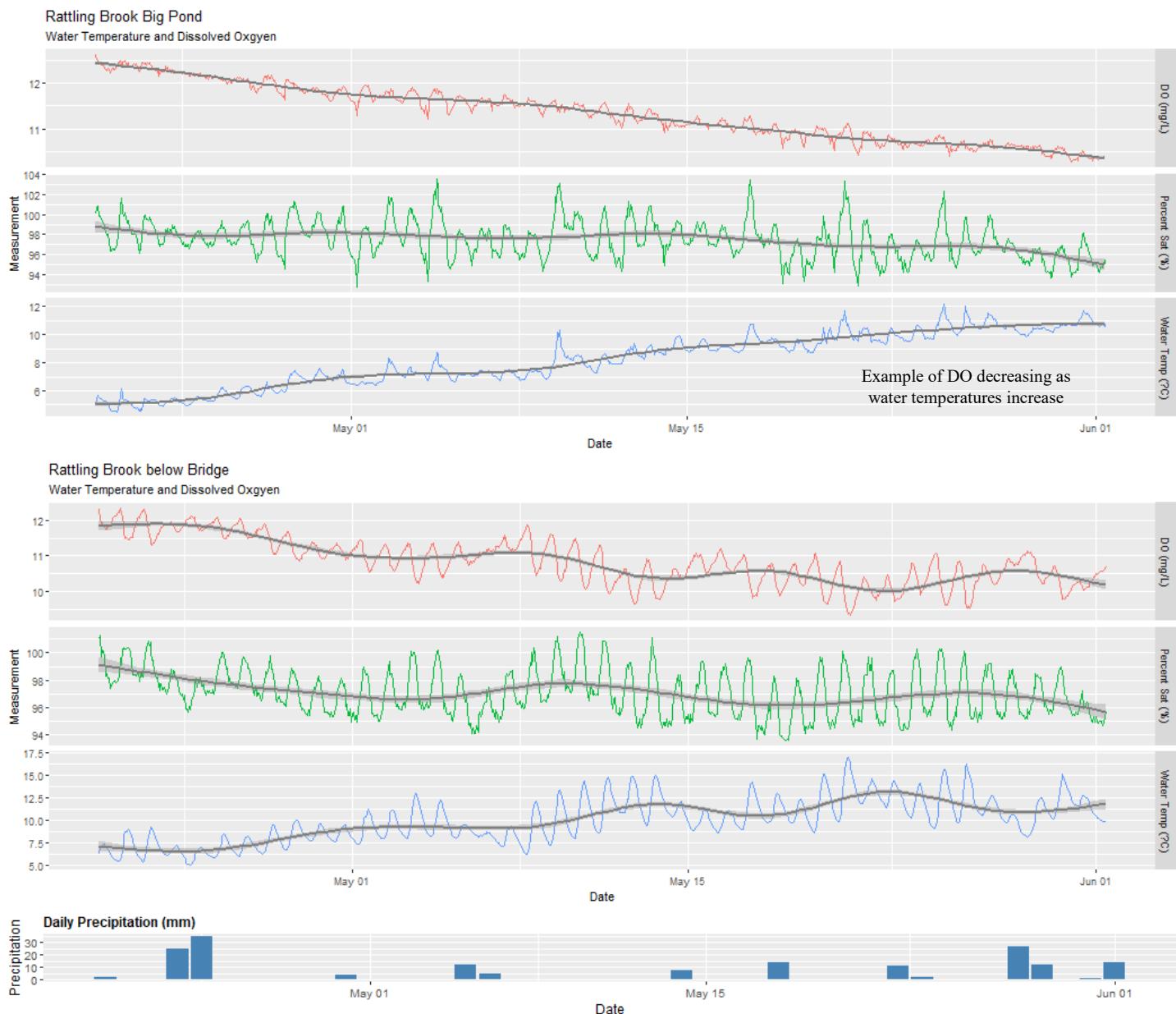


- Specific conductivity was relatively stable at all stations. There were peaks at both Below Bridge and Plant Discharge stations throughout the deployment during precipitation events. Variation in conductivity was more substantial at Big Pond station. This may be due to wave/wind action stirring sediments around the instrument.

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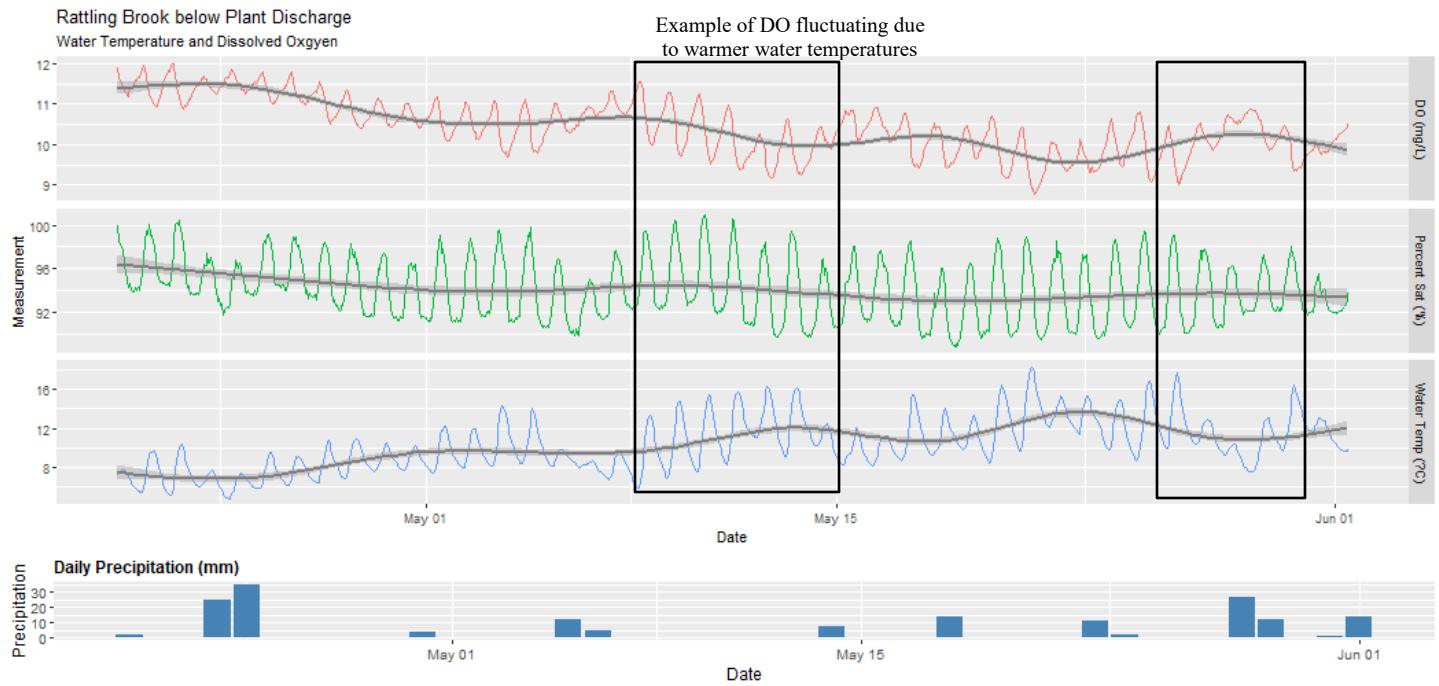
## Dissolved Oxygen

Dissolved oxygen is a metabolic requirement of aquatic plants and animals. The concentration of oxygen in water depends on many factors, especially temperature – the saturation of oxygen in water is inversely proportional to water temperature. Oxygen concentrations also tend to be higher in flowing water compared to still, lake environments. Low oxygen concentrations can give an indication of excessive decomposition of organic matter or oxidation reactions.



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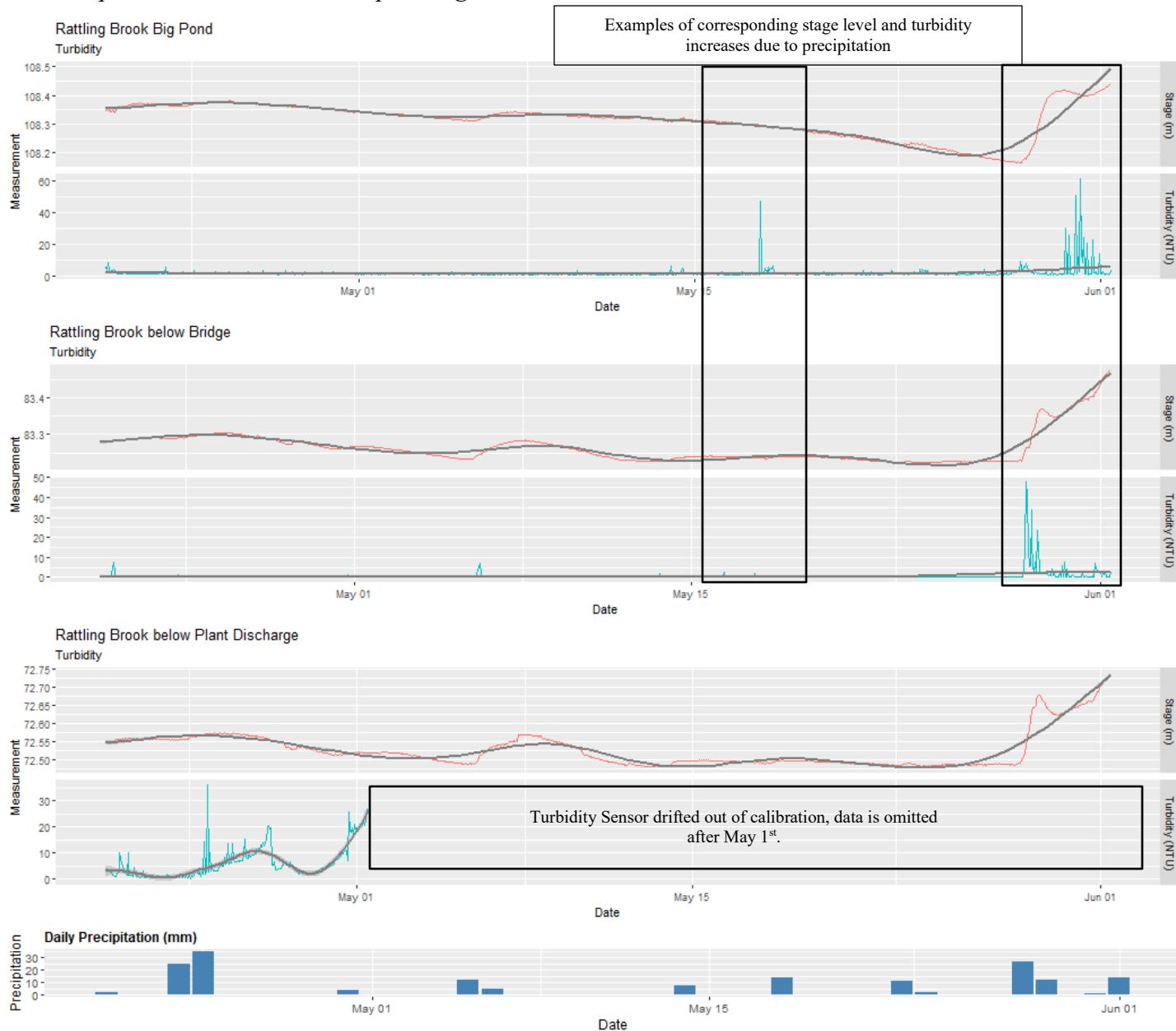
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	12.62	10.28	11.36	11.34
Below Bridge	12.35	9.32	10.82	10.83
Below Plant Discharge	12.01	8.76	10.43	10.43

- As water temperature increased, dissolved oxygen declined due to a reduction in saturation levels. This decline is normal and expected through the late spring and summer months.
- During this deployment, most measurements were found to be above the CCME dissolved oxygen guideline of 9.5 mg/L for the protection of early life stage cold-water biota.

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## Turbidity

Turbidity is typically caused by fine suspended solids such as silt, clay, or organic material. Consistently high levels of turbidity tend to block sunlight penetration into a waterbody, discouraging plant growth. High turbidity can also damage the delicate respiratory organs of aquatic animals and cover spawning areas.



Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	61.2	0.4	0.9	1.5
Below Bridge	47.9	0.0	0.0	0.4
Below Plant Discharge	36.1	0.2	3.8	6.0

- Turbidity levels were low during this deployment period with variation only observed during precipitation events. Plant Discharge Turbidity sensor drifted out of calibration and data is omitted from May 1<sup>st</sup> onwards.

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## Appendix

### Mean Daily Air Temperature and Total Precipitation at St. John's West, 78km from Long Harbour

