



# Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

## Rattling Brook Network

June 13, 2023 to July 25, 2023



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>	June 13	Deployment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	July 25	Removal	Excellent	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent
<b>Rattling Brook below Bridge</b>	June 14	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
	July 25	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
<b>Rattling Brook below Plant Discharge</b>	June 13	Deployment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	July 25	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent

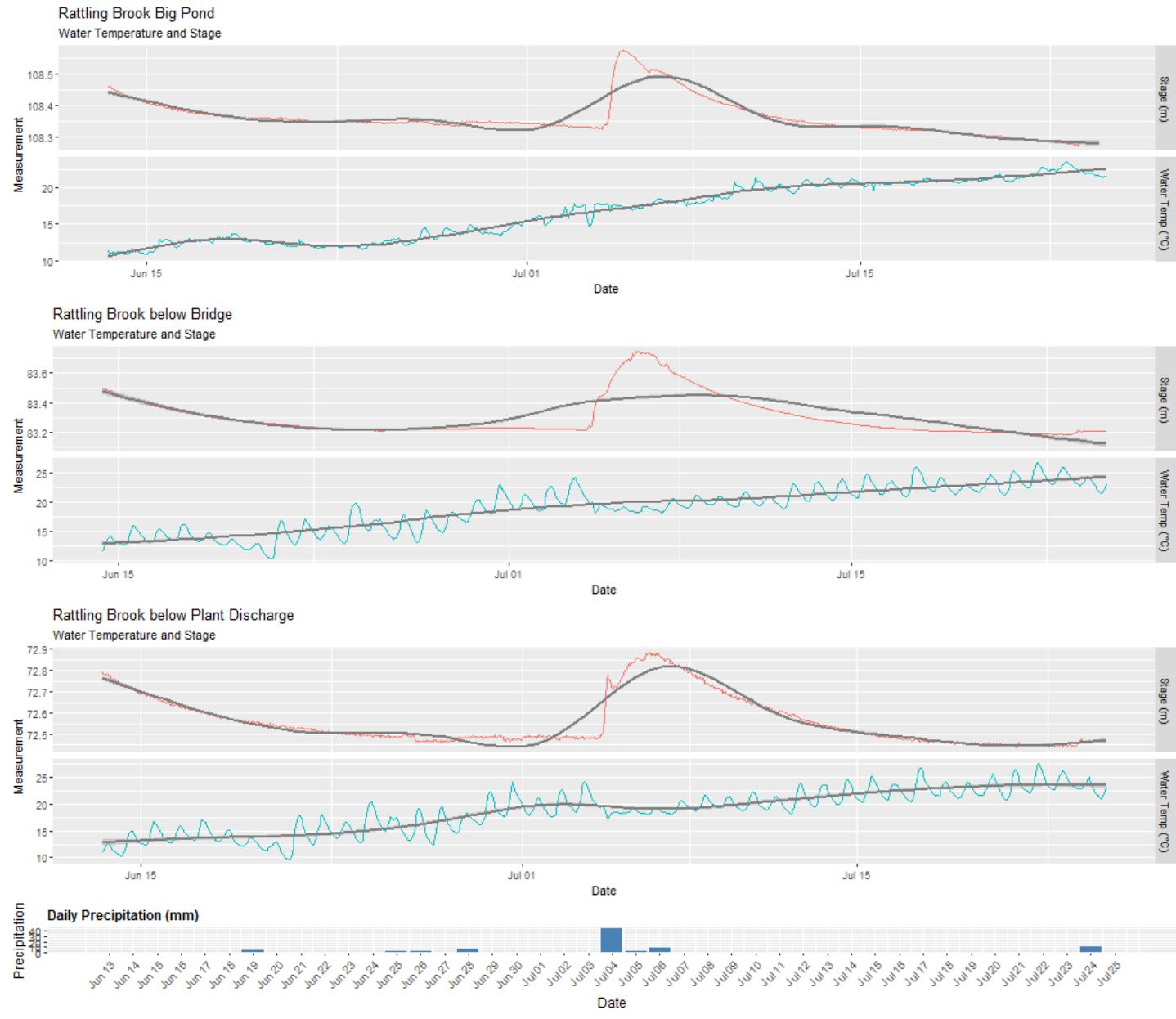
- Due to the QA/QC sonde's failure to connect to the handheld, no comparison ranking was possible on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

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- 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.



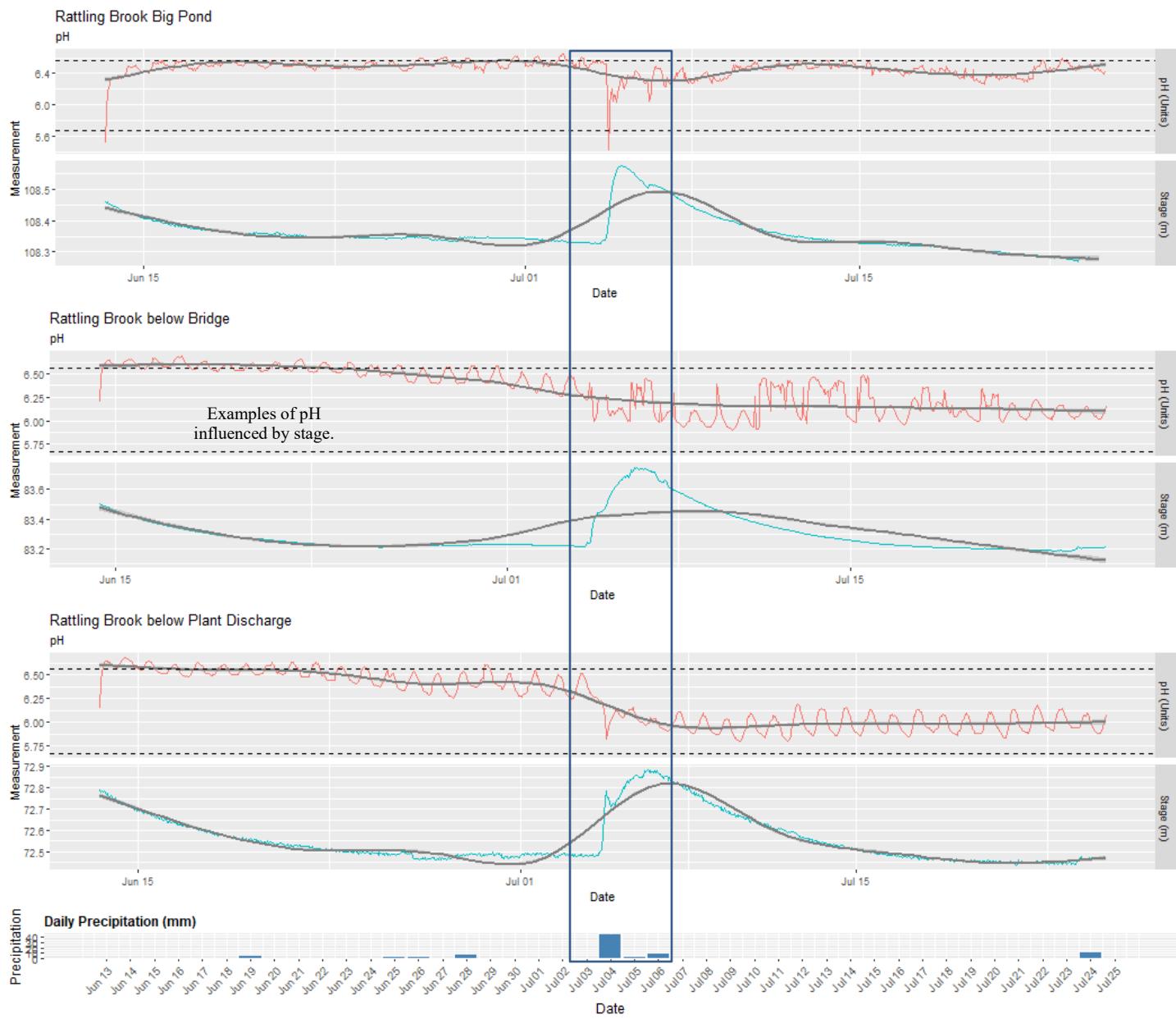
- Trend lines show water temperatures increasing at all three stations.

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Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	23.60	10.80	17.43	16.79
Below Bridge	26.60	10.41	19.45	18.91
Below Plant Discharge	27.51	9.64	19.09	18.71

## 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.



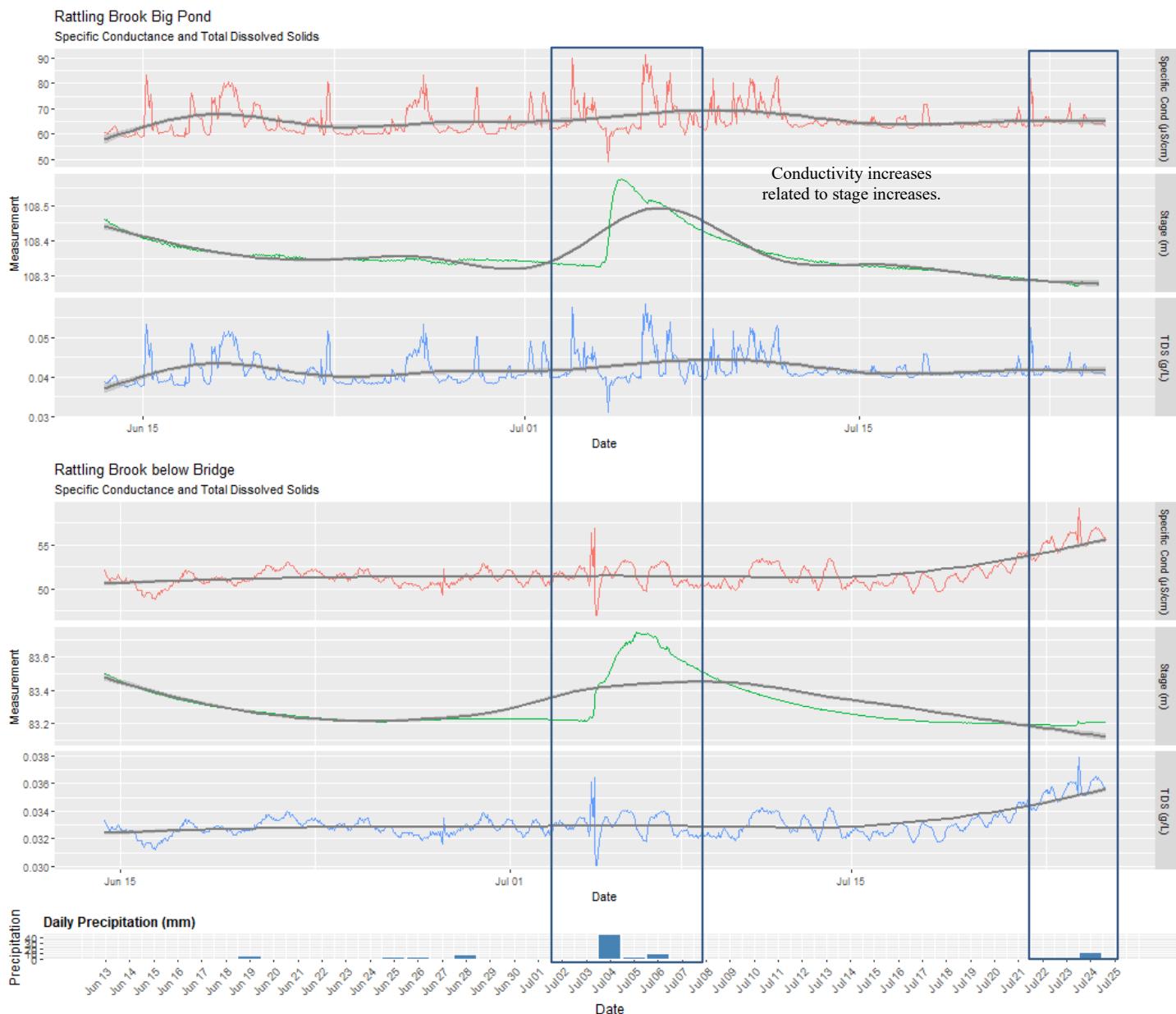
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	6.65	5.42	6.48	6.46
Below Bridge	6.69	5.90	6.38	6.33
Below Plant Discharge	6.68	5.80	6.18	6.23

- pH values were consistent with the majority of values within the site-specific guidelines (5.67-6.56 pH Units). Highlighted pH data displays the influence of a large rainfall on the water conditions.

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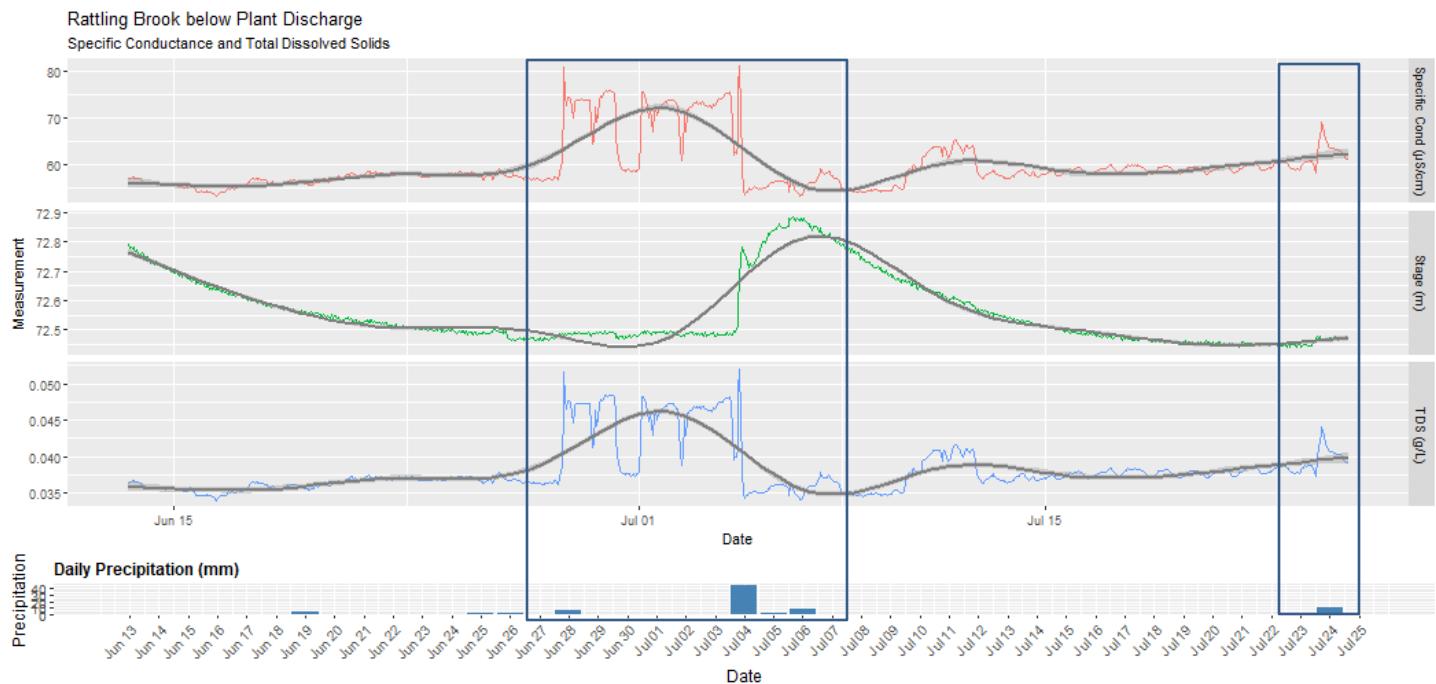
## Specific Conductivity

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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## Rattling Brook Network, Long Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador



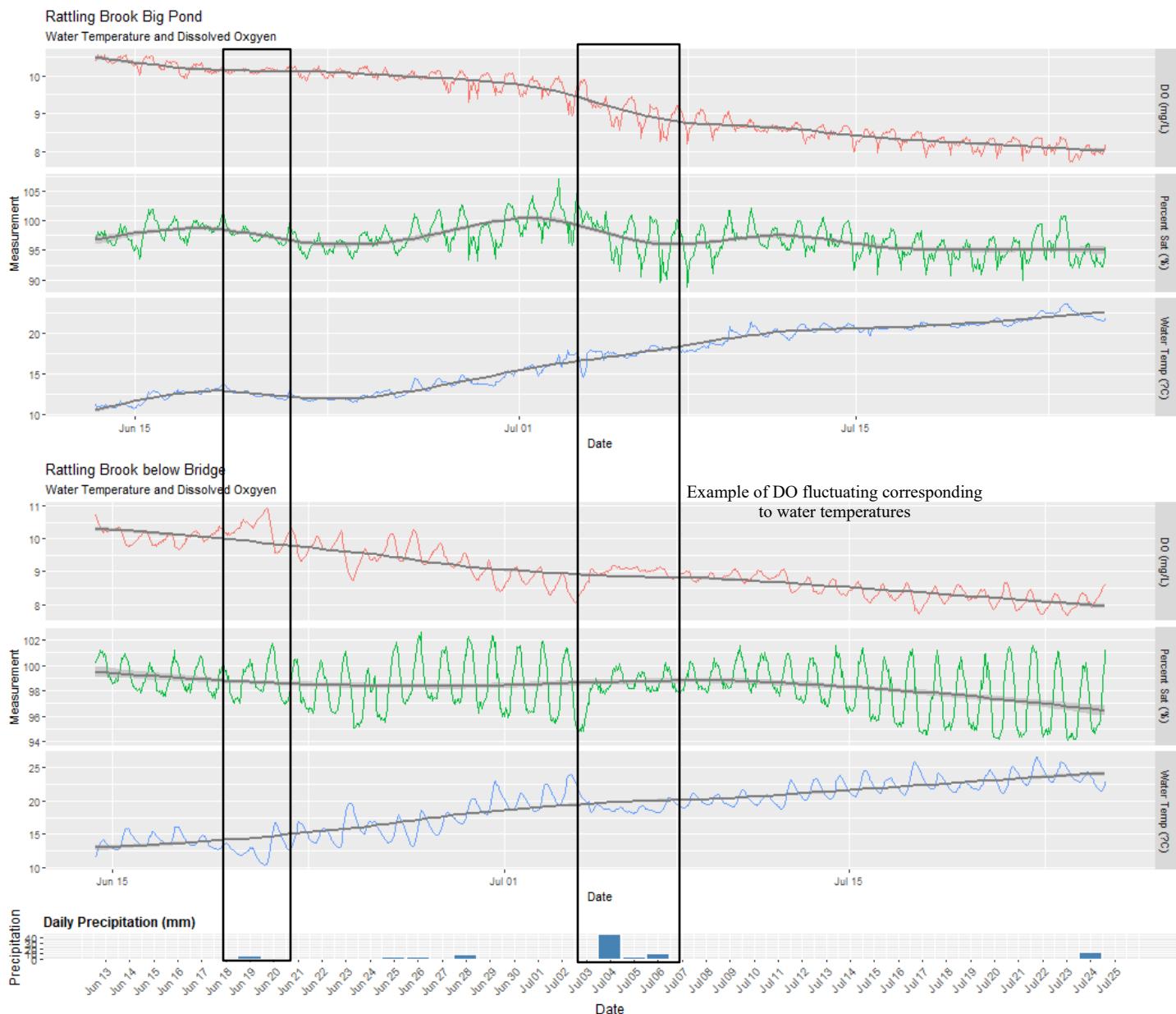
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	91.5	48.8	63.8	65.4
Below Bridge	59.2	47.0	51.3	51.6
Below Plant Discharge	81.2	53.1	58.1	59.7

- Specific conductivity was relatively stable at all stations with most peaks occurring during precipitation events.

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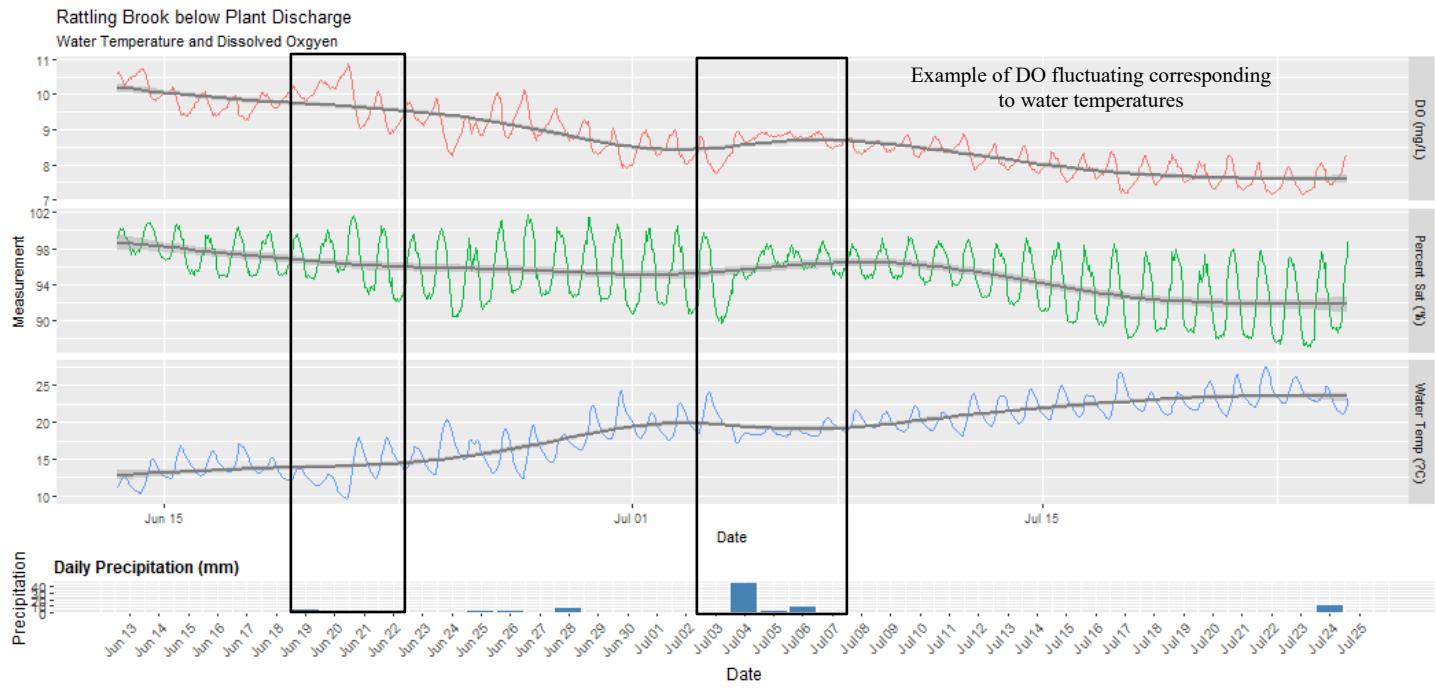
## Dissolved Oxygen

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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## Rattling Brook Network, Long Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador



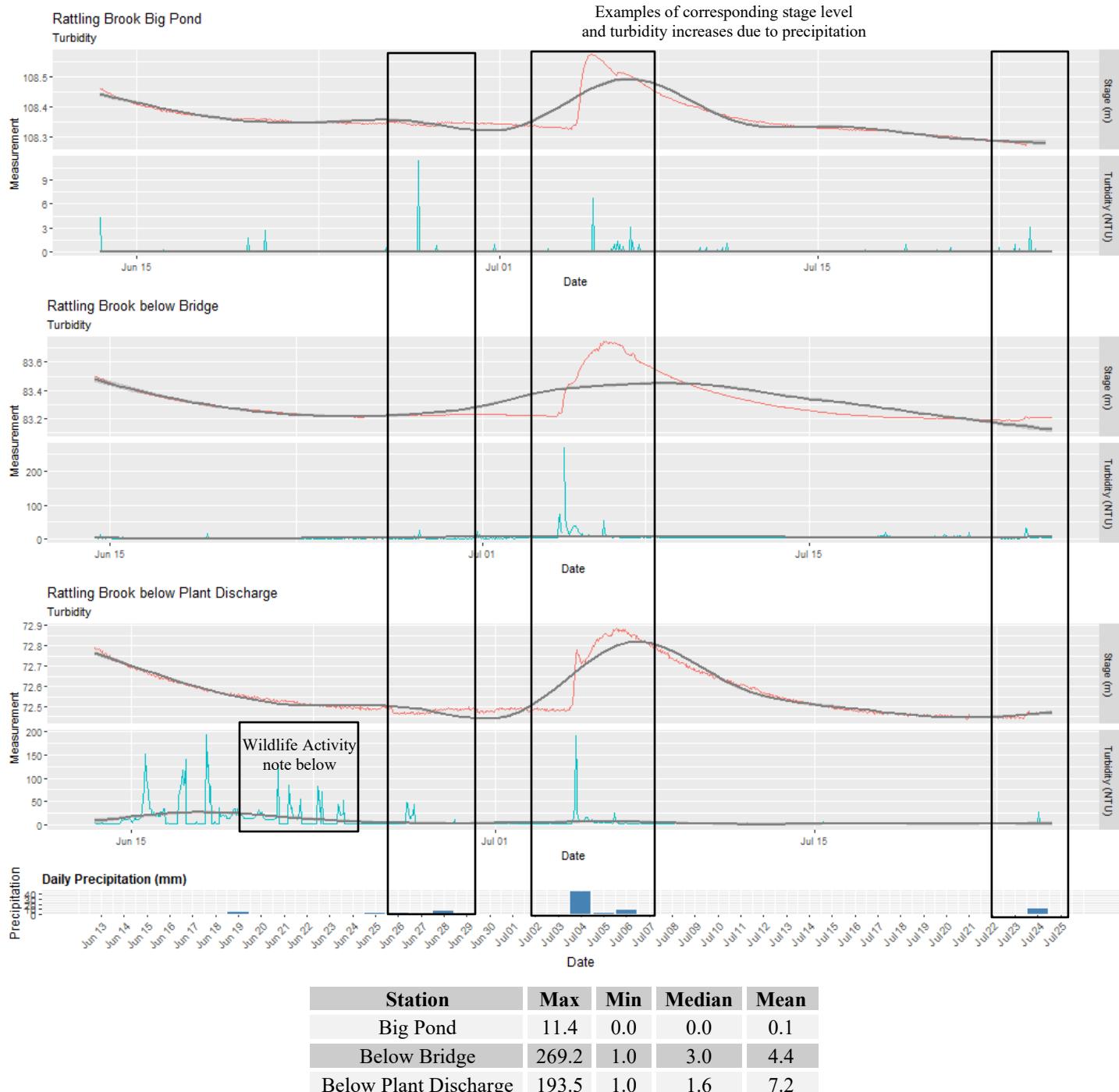
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	10.56	7.71	9.24	9.24
Below Bridge	10.94	7.67	8.93	9.05
Below Plant Discharge	10.89	7.15	8.66	8.72

- During this deployment period, majority of values remained above the CCME Guideline of 9.5 mg/L for the protection of early life stage cold-water biota. Trend lines show decreasing DO as water temperature warms.

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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.



- Isolated turbidity events were experienced simultaneously with precipitation events and are of short duration.

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Rattling Brook Network, Long Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador

- On June 22<sup>nd</sup> Vale personnel conducted an investigation of elevated turbidity levels. During the investigation, it was determined that a moose was present in the area, meandering within the river, and exhibiting disruptive behaviour around the water quality sonde's location. It's worth noting that the station's placement is a known wildlife trail.

## Appendix

### Mean Daily Air Temperature and Total Precipitation at VALE Long Harbour MET station

