

Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

Rattling Brook Network

October 12, 2023 to November 14, 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)*.

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

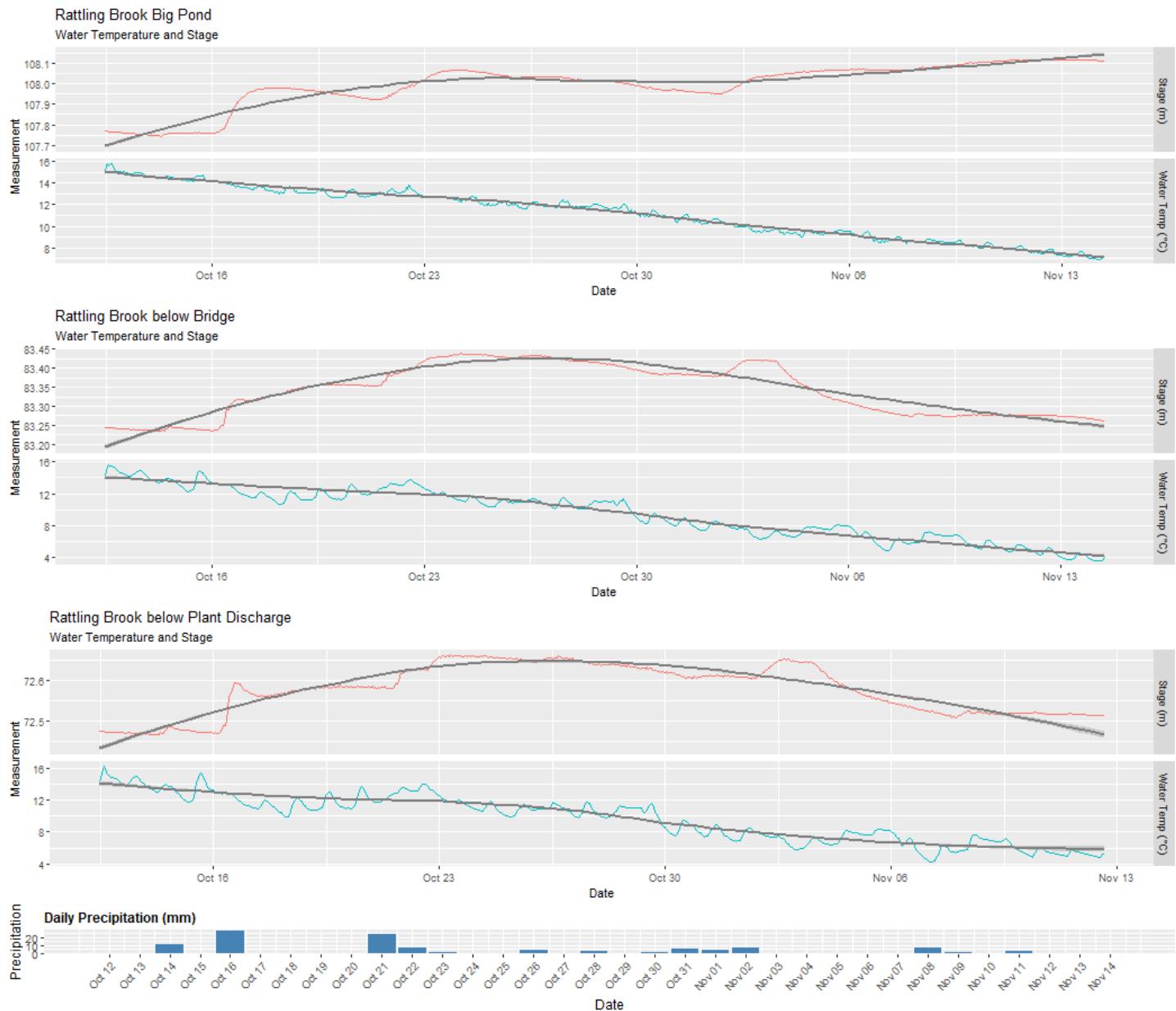
Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Rattling Brook Big Pond	October 12	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Marginal
	November 14	Removal	Excellent	Fair	Poor	Excellent	Excellent
Rattling Brook below Bridge	October 12	Deployment	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent
	November 14	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Marginal
Rattling Brook below Plant Discharge	October 12	Deployment	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	November 14	Removal	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Good

- The 'Poor' ranking for Conductivity in Big Pond may be attributed to a potential sensor drift, indicating a possible sensor issue. The sonde has been taken out of the field, and it is scheduled for the annual evaluation to confirm its proper functioning.

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	15.82	6.89	11.74	11.19
Below Bridge	15.60	3.63	10.39	9.53
Below Plant Discharge	16.25	4.22	10.76	9.98

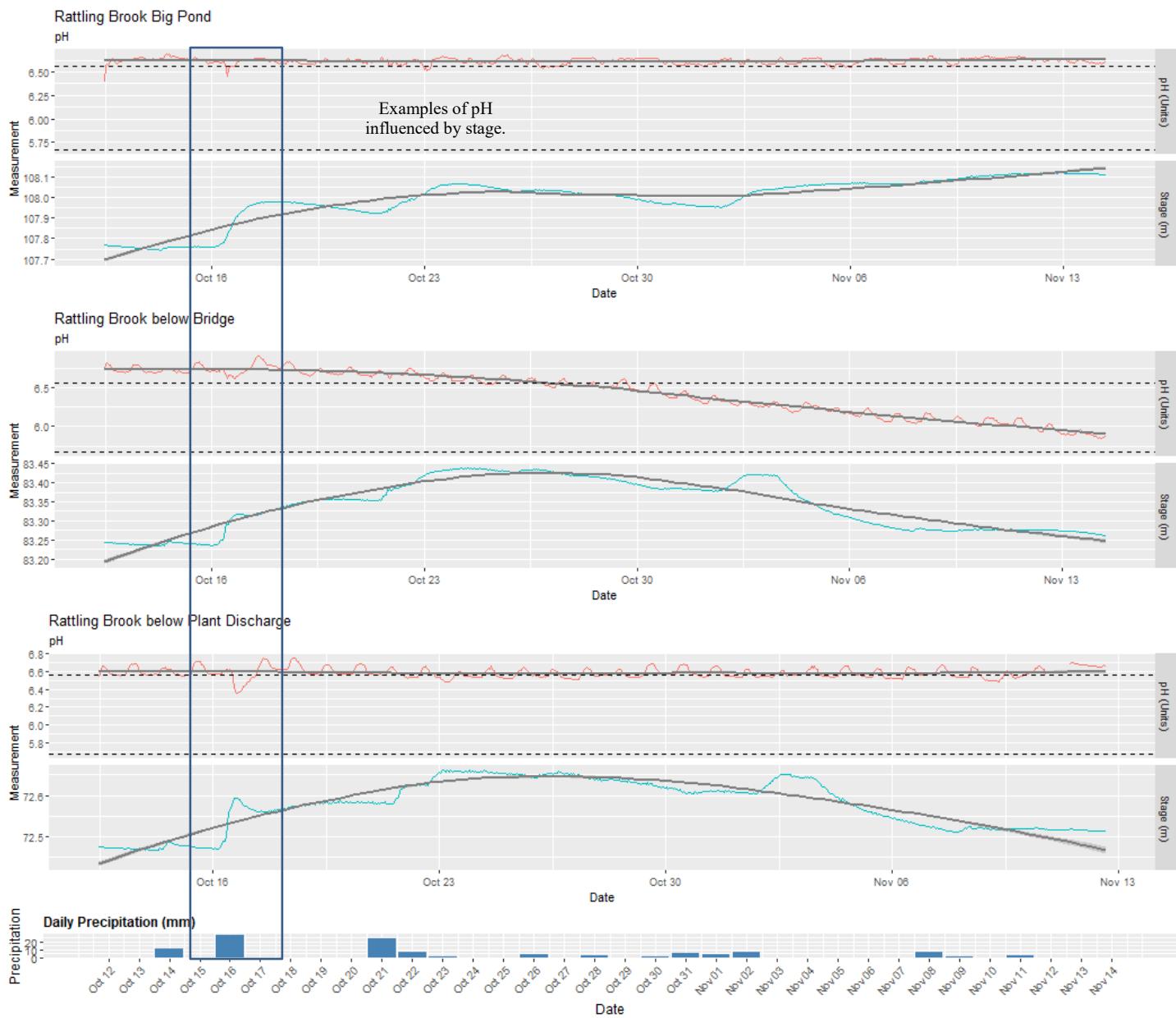
- Trend lines indicate a steady decline of water temperature at all three stations.

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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.



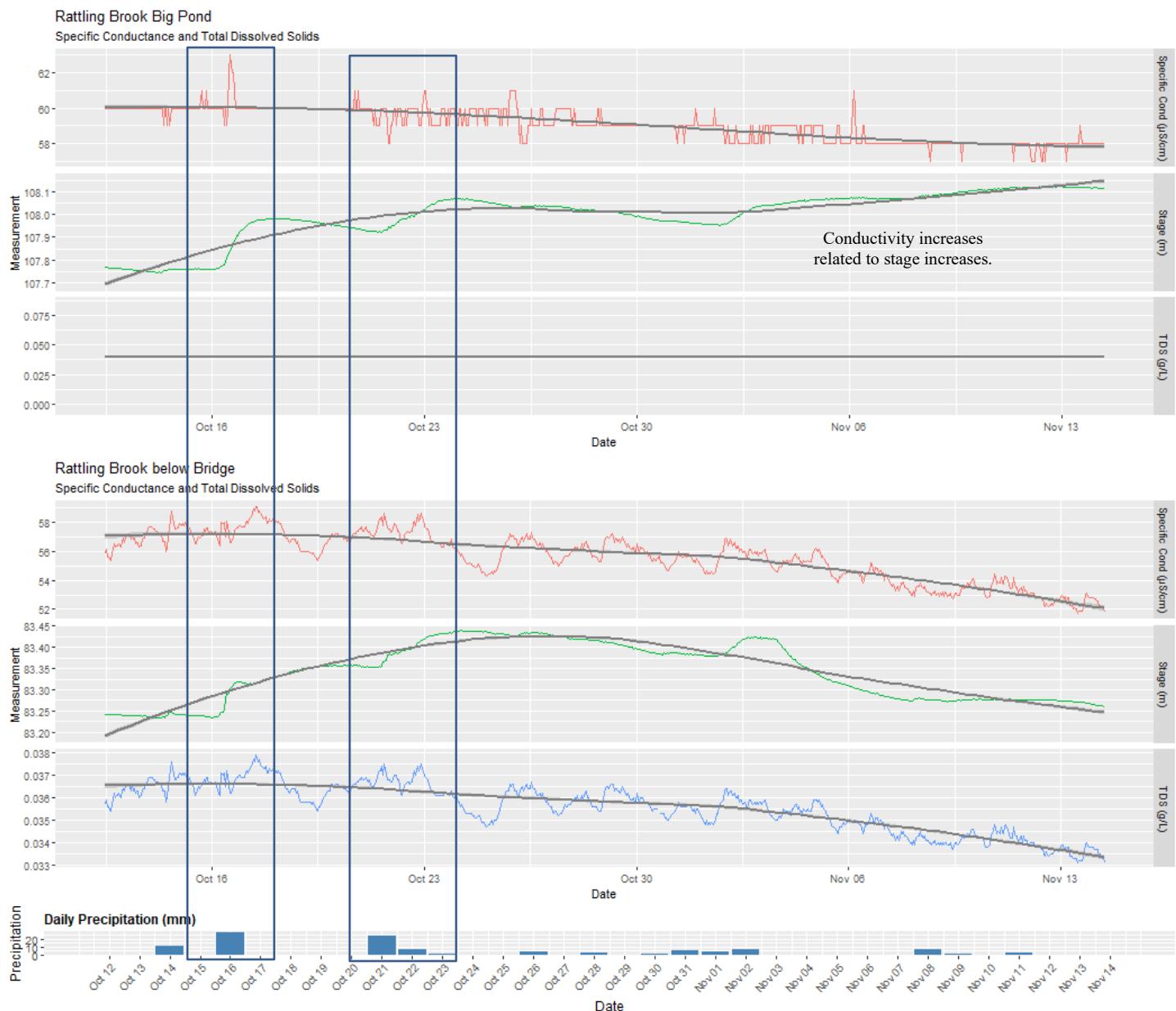
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	6.69	6.39	6.62	6.62
Below Bridge	6.90	5.85	6.52	6.43
Below Plant Discharge	6.75	6.36	6.57	6.58

- pH values were consistent with the majority of values within the site-specific guidelines (5.67-6.56 pH Units).

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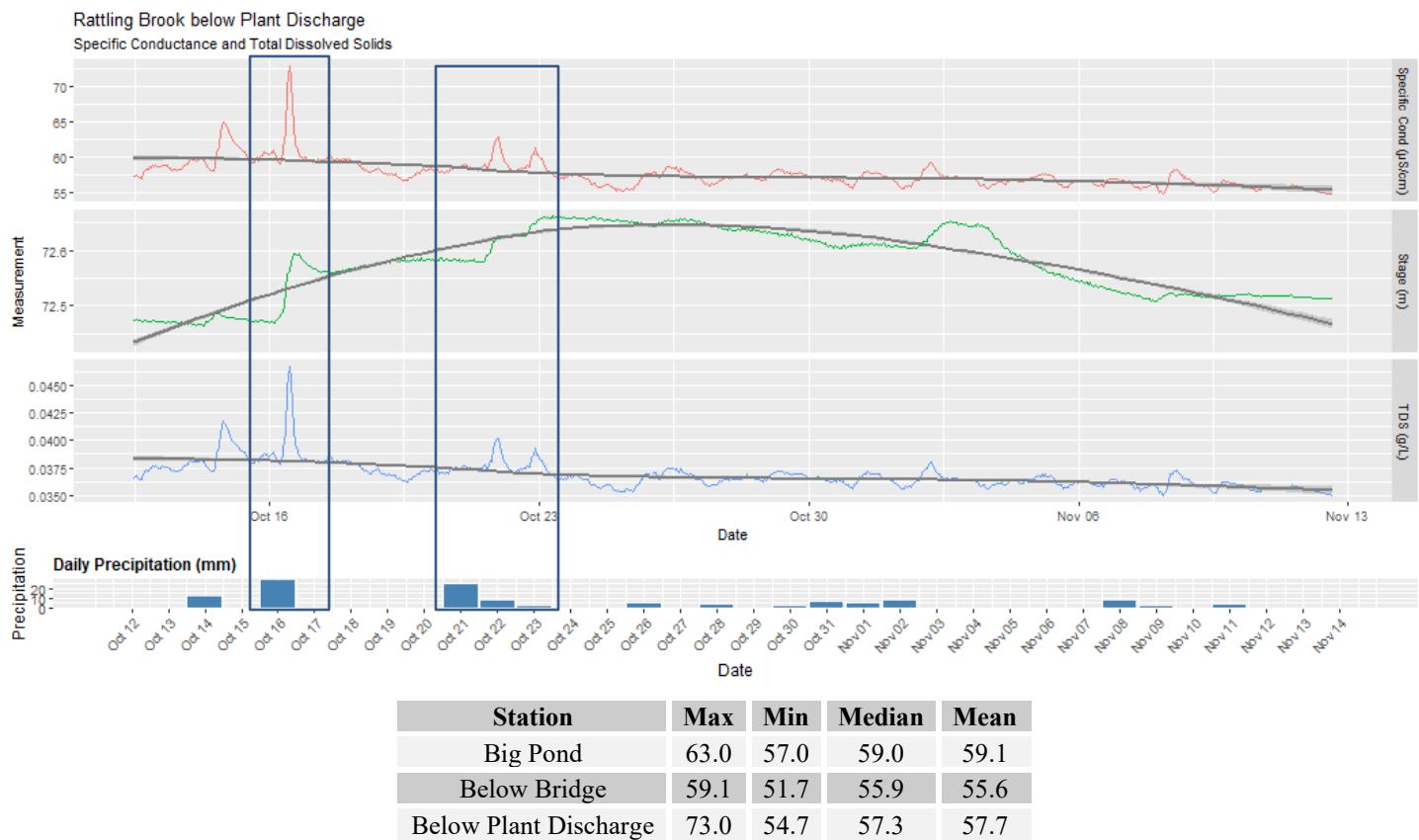
Specific Conductivity

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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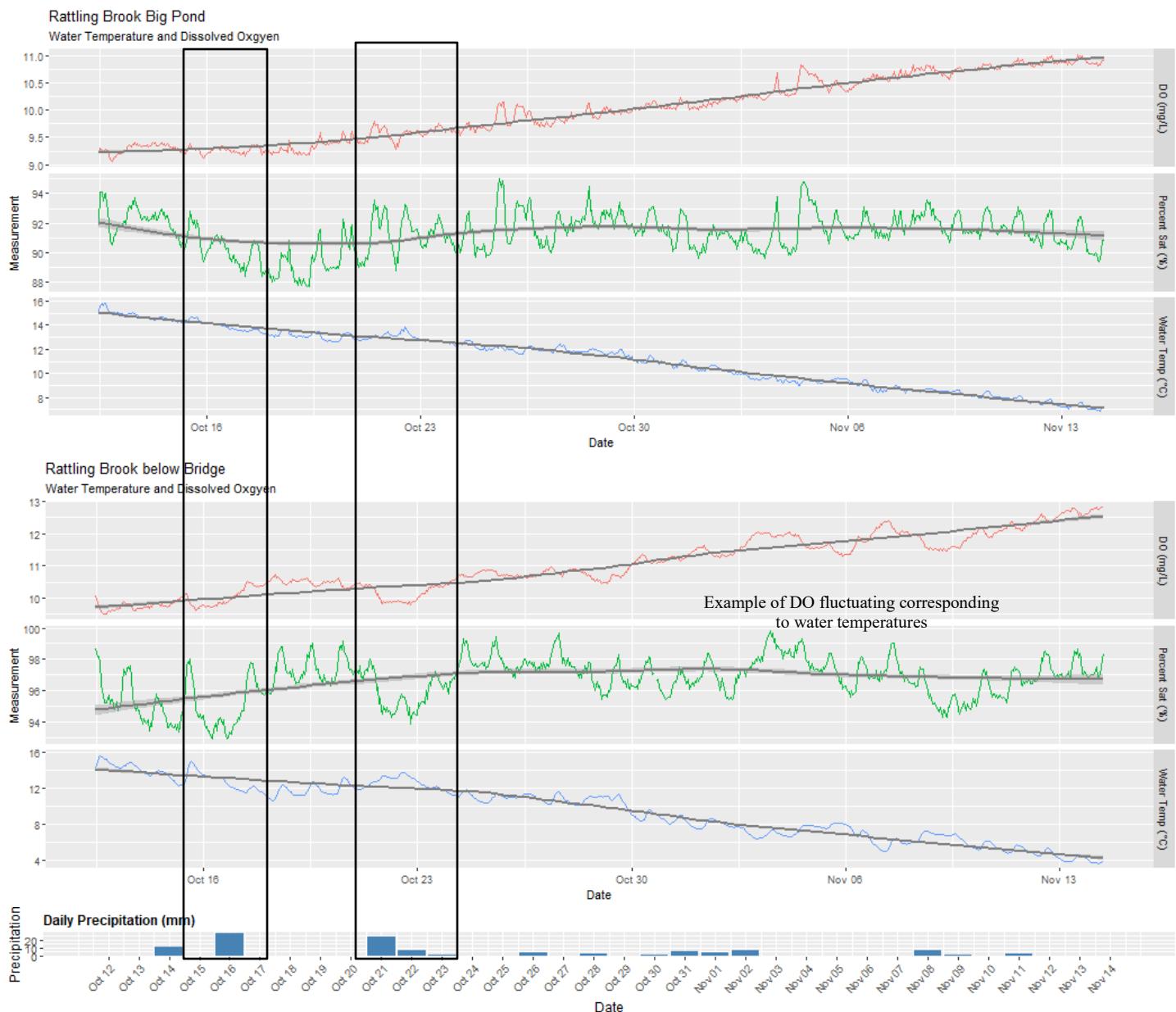


- Specific conductivity was relatively stable at all stations with most peaks occurring during precipitation events.

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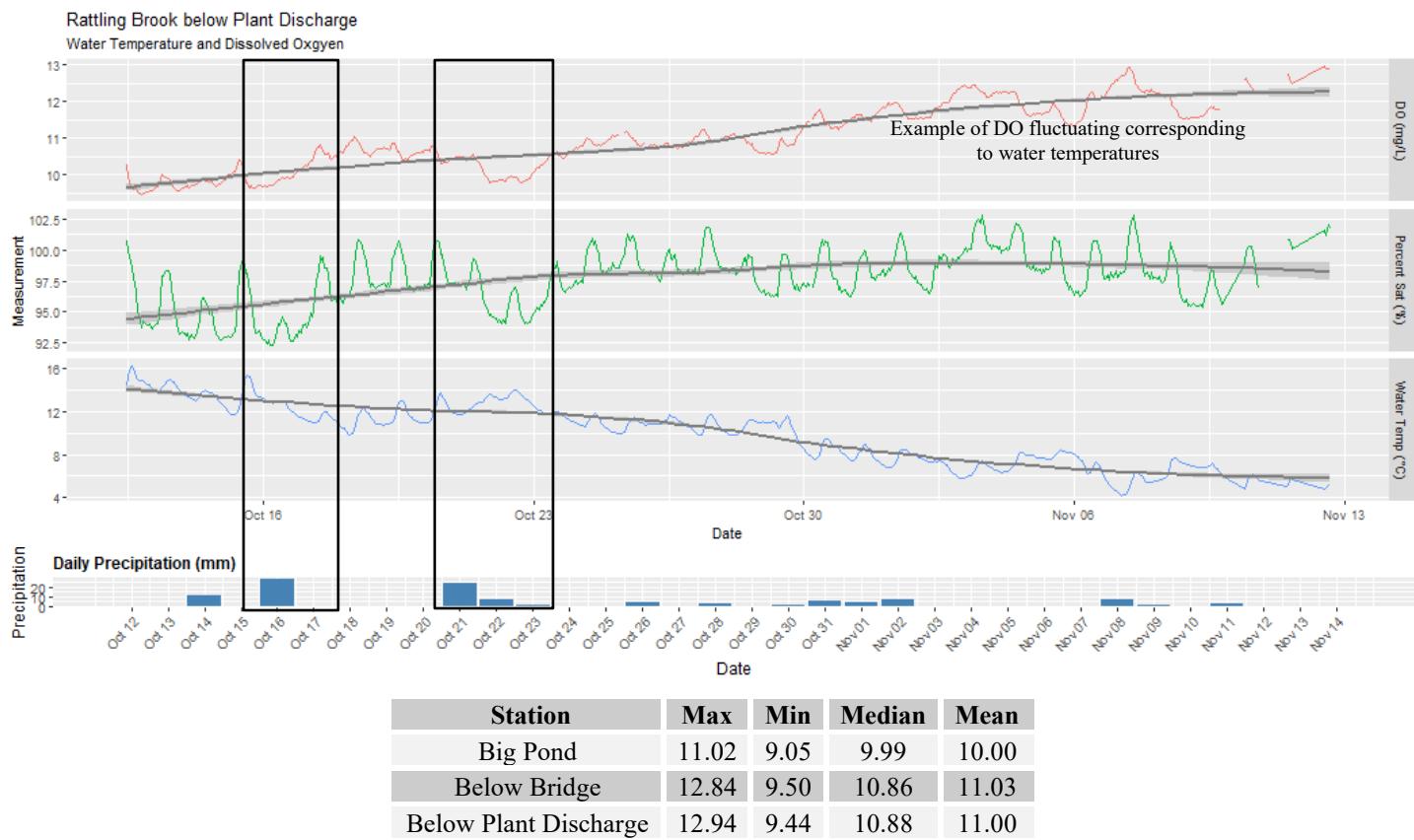
Dissolved Oxygen

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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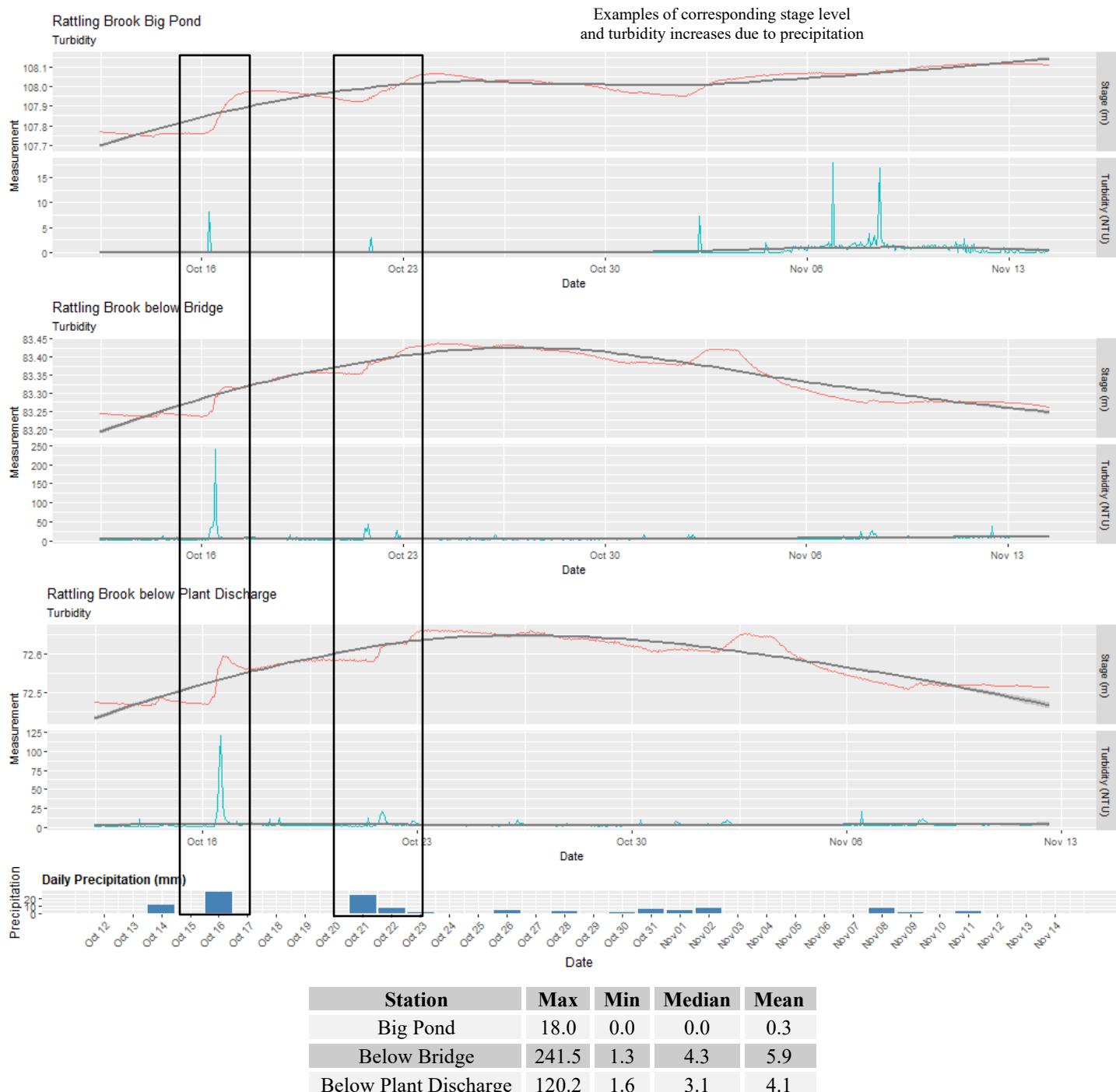


- As shown on all three graphs, as the temperature of the water decreases, its ability to retain dissolved oxygen increases. This aligns with the CCME guideline of 9.5 mg/l for the protection of cold water biota. Cooler water temperatures during this deployment allowed oxygen concentrations to rise at all stations.

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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.



- Turbidity was stable at all stations with exception of during precipitation events.

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Appendix

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

