

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN JANUARY 2014

Average daily U.S. mine production of iron ore in January 2014 was 126,000 metric tons (t) (Table 1), slightly higher than that of December 2013 and 7% less than that of January 2013. Average daily U.S. iron ore shipments were 77,000 t, 49% less than those of December 2013 and 23% less than those of January 2013.

Mine stocks at the end of January 2014 were 41% more than those held at the end of December 2013 and 58% greater than those of January 2013 (Table 1). U.S. imports of iron ore were 456,000 t in January 2014, 164% greater than those in December 2013 and 463% greater than those in January 2013. Imports increased in January owing to startup of Nucor's DRI plant in Louisiana in late December. U.S. exports of iron ore were 778,000 t in January 2014, 30% less than those in December 2013 and 24% less than those of January 2013.

U.S. Steel Corp.'s Minntac Mine in Mountain Iron, MN, received State permits required to expand mine pits by 5% and extend mine life by 16 years. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) stated that water quality standards were not expected to be violated at the project. PCA officials stated that the mine was working to resolve compliance issues and expected a new discharge permit for the company by 2015. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources determined a full environmental impact statement would not be necessary. The expansion requires a Federal permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; a decision was expected by spring (Associated Press, 2014; Myers, 2014).

Lake Carriers' Association (LCA) announced that iron ore cargos in U.S.-flag ships totaled 43.9 million metric tons (Mt) in 2013, 3% less than in 2012, due to early, harsh winter conditions and weather on the Great Lakes. As of November 30, 2013, cargos were recorded at only slightly below 2012 levels

but only 4 Mt were shipped in December, 21% less than in December 2012 (Marinelink.com).

The locks at Sault Ste. Marie, MI, were closed in January and were expected to be re-opened in mid-March. During this time maintenance, inspections, and improvements to iron ore carriers and other ships would be carried out. LCA estimated that the fleet of ships would receive repairs and improvements worth \$70 million. An estimated 1,100 tons of steel would be required to repair and improve hulls on carriers, including conversion of one ship to a barge. Iron ore and fluxstone, raw materials for producing steel, comprise the largest shipping customer on the Great Lakes. LCA represents 57 U.S.-flag vessels, among 17 companies, which transport 115 million tons of cargo and have an economic impact of more than \$20 billion (Lake Carriers' Association, 2014).

## References Cited

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TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks <sup>4</sup>
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2013:					
January	4,200	4,200	3,110	3,110	3,290
February	3,900	8,100	611	3,720	6,580
March	4,400	12,500	2,020	5,740	8,960
April	3,460	16,000	4,670	10,400	7,830
May	4,280	20,200	5,680	16,100	6,350
June	3,990	24,200	5,170	21,300	5,390
July	4,400	28,600	5,650	26,900	4,130
August	4,610	33,200	5,430	32,300	3,320
September	4,780	38,000	5,400	37,700	2,770
October	4,460	42,500	5,120	42,900	2,110
November	4,650	47,100	4,280	47,100	2,470
December	3,870	51,000	4,660	51,800	3,690
2014, January	3,900	3,900	2,390	2,390	5,200

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores.

<sup>3</sup>Includes rail and vessel.

<sup>4</sup>Includes usable (marketable) material at mines, concentrators, pelletizing plants, and loading docks. Excludes stocks of crude ore at mine and concentrates at agglomerating complexes.

TABLE 2  
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	Total
2013:			
January	1,080	1,600	2,680
February	1,000	1,430	2,430
March	845	1,620	2,470
April	1,730	1,730	3,460
May	1,950	1,650	3,600
June	2,220	2,060	4,280
July	1,880	2,140	4,030
August	1,840	2,260	4,100
September	1,640	2,000	3,640
October	1,710	2,300	4,010
November	1,640	1,690	3,330
December	1,390	2,440	3,830
January–December	18,900	22,900	41,800
2014, January	1,370	1,570	2,940

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 3  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
	Monthly	Year to date	Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
			Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2013:						
January	3,060	3,060	2,740	2,740	4,300	4,300
February	2,760	5,820	2,530	5,280	4,050	8,350
March	3,040	8,860	2,660	7,940	4,300	12,600
April	2,800	11,700	2,510	10,500	4,340	17,000
May	2,880	14,500	2,660	13,100	4,480	21,500
June	2,760	17,300	2,440	15,500	4,340	25,800
July	2,760	20,100	2,430	18,000	4,680	30,500
August	2,890	22,900	2,550	20,500	4,580	35,100
September	2,880	25,800	2,460	23,000	4,400	39,500
October	2,870	28,700	2,510	25,500	4,490	44,000
November	2,760	31,500	2,430	27,900	4,340	48,300
December	2,780	34,200	2,380	30,300	4,340	52,600
2014, January	2,430	2,430	2,680	2,680	4,650	4,650

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

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 4  
U.S. EXPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2013	2014	
	January	January	
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Canada	832	446	60,200
China	47	202	22,300
Japan	--	27	3,500
Mexico	120	102	10,300
United Kingdom	23	--	--
Other	--	(4)	36
Total	1,020	778	96,300
Coarse ores	71	--	--
Concentrates	120	251	28,000
Fine ores	(4)	27	3,500
Pellets	833	446	60,200
Other	--	53	4,620
Total	1,020	778	96,300

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2013 January	2014 January	
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Brazil	--	149	21,900
Canada	81	306	44,800
Other	(4)	(4)	8
Total	81	456	66,800
Coarse ores	3	--	--
Concentrates	--	(4)	8
Fine ores	(4)	--	--
Pellets	78	456	66,800
Other	(4)	--	--
Total	81	456	66,800

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN JANUARY  
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets		Total, all products	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
Baltimore, MD (13)	--	128	--	128
Cleveland, OH (41)	--	28	--	28
New Orleans, LA (20)	78	300	--	300
Other	--	--	3	(3)
Total	78	456	3	456

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons total included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.