



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
Jacksonville District

# NEWS RELEASE

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CAUTIONS BOATERS, ANGLERS TO BEWARE OF EXTREMELY LOW CONDITIONS ON OKEECHOBEE WATERWAY**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, is strongly advising mariners to take several factors into serious consideration whether crossing Lake Okeechobee or stopping for recreational activities such as fishing. The lake has been averaging 9.1 feet or below for about 60 days.

A lake elevation of 9.1 feet translates to a channel depth of 3.04 feet on Route 1 of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway, which crosses the lake. At this level, based on the 2001 Channel Condition Survey, the maximum recommended draft of vessels is only 1.44 feet.

Mariners are advised that if they decide to cross Lake Okeechobee they are doing so at their own risk. During such conditions bad weather can have an immediate impact on vessels. Mariners are warned not to leave the Route 1 channel, to absolutely avoid uncharted waters and be aware that depths could change without notice. Route 2, known as the Rim Canal, is closed to navigation.

The Corps has also announced that Ortona Lock, which is located 14 miles west of Lake Okeechobee and which had been closed for regular maintenance, was reopened last week, three days ahead of schedule. It is now open for lockages upon demand and is not on a restricted time schedule as are other locks on the waterway.



Additional information concerning Lake Okeechobee, the Waterway and related Navigation Bulletins can be viewed by accessing the Jacksonville District website at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil> and linking to the Navigation selection from the menu, or by calling 904-232-2236.

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