

Have you noticed that wind speeds have changed over the years?

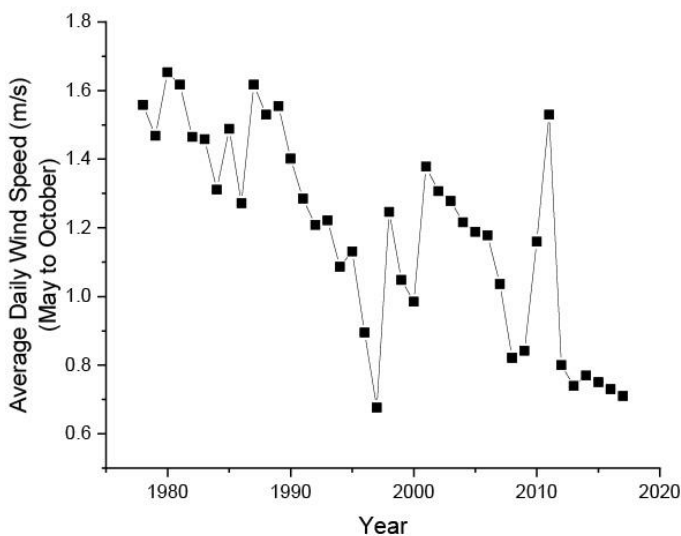


I thought it might interest readers to know that it is much less windy in the summer season now, compared to 4 decades ago. In data provided by Dr. Huaxia Yao from the Dorset Environmental Science Centre, wind speeds measured near Dorset now average about 0.75 m/s from May to October, only half what they were 40 years ago. This is good news for sun bathers and swimmers, but perhaps not so good for sailors.

Lake scientists are keenly interested in how falling wind speeds might change how our lakes work. It could mean different things for different lakes. The surface mixed layer of lakes might actually be warmer but not as deep given less wind-induced mixing. In these lakes, the deeper cool layers will be thicker, and retain their oxygen longer. More cool oxygenated waters is good for trout. On the other hand in other lakes, warmer surface waters might delay fall overturn increasing the risk of losses of deep water oxygen. This would be bad for fish and would increase the risk of fall algal blooms. Indeed, both of these patterns have been documented in different lakes.

We have entered a time when climate change is affecting our lakes in new and sometimes surprising ways. We need to pay attention as we continue to journey through these less predictable times.

Yao
Lake,
PhD,



H, et al, The interplay of local and regional factors in generating temporal changes in the ice phenology of Dickie south-central Ontario, Canada. In: Inland Waters - Journal of International Society of Limnology, 2013, pp 1-14.

Article by Dr Norman Yan

Article Provided by

