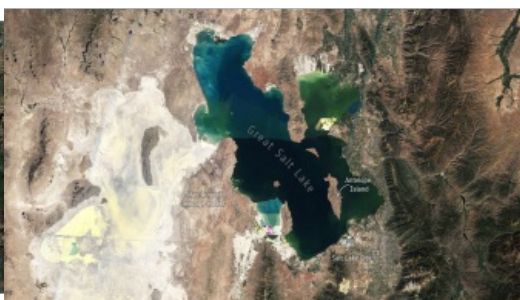
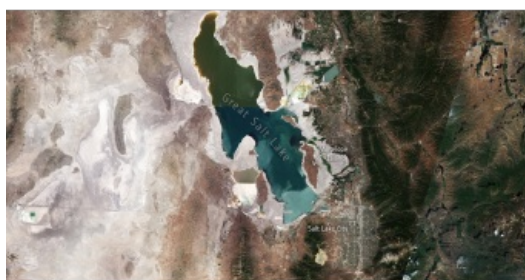
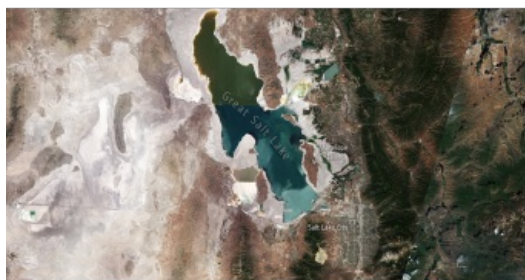


# Satellite Imagery Reveals How Utah's Great Salt Lake Is Disappearing



Utah's Great Salt Lake dropped to its lowest recorded water level last month as a megadrought persists across the US southwest, forcing the fast-growing city to curb its water use. From space, satellite images show how water levels have fallen in the period from 1985 to 2022, exposing large expanses of lakebed.




According to data from the [US Geological Survey](#), the Great Salt Lake's surface water elevation fell to the lowest level since records began in the mid-1800s, to an average of 1,277m above sea level. As a result of this drop in water level, the lake has lost nearly half of its surface area from the historical average, exposing around 2,000 square kilometres of lakebed – an area the same size as Tenerife.


The lake now contains little more than a quarter of the volume of water now as it did at its high point in 1987, according to the US Geological Survey. Water usage and the climate change-fuelled drought are two of the main reasons behind the lake's decline.

The lake goes through seasonal cycles of water loss and replenishment after rain and snow melt fills it back up. According to officials, the water evaporation and depletion exceed the amount of water entering the lake. The lake's water levels are expected to further decrease until autumn or early winter, when incoming water equals or exceeds the evaporative losses.

The satellite images below reveal how water levels have fallen from 1985 to 2022, exposing large expanses of the lakebed.

[Read the full story here](#)

 Great Salt Lake in 1985. (Courtesy: USGS – contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data, processed by ESA)

 Great Salt Lake in 2022. (Courtesy: USGS – contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data, processed by ESA)