of the glaciated areas of Canada are in the Arctic islands and 31,300 sq miles (81 067 km²) or 25% on the mainland. Of the latter figure some 23,500 sq miles (60 865 km²) are in the Pacific drainage basin and 6,300 sq miles (16 317 km²) in the Yukon drainage basin. The remaining 1,500 sq miles (3 885 km²) are shared among the Arctic, Great Slave, Saskatchewan–Nelson and Labrador drainage basins. Altogether, the number of glaciers in Canada is estimated at 75,000.

In Canada 90% of the water used comes from streams and other surface sources such as lakes and man-made reservoirs. The combined mean annual flow of all streams in Canada has been estimated to be 3.5 million cu ft per second (99.1 million dm³/s), equivalent to about 60% of Canada's mean annual precipitation. This represents about 9% of the total flow of all the rivers of the world.

It is understandable that Canada's history of settlement and industrial development has been influenced by its great rivers. From the earliest times, settlements have centred around water supplies. In the early days, water for transportation took priority. Canada's first industry, the fur trade, flourished because of the ready access to the interior provided by the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes and many other large and small waterways. The plentiful water supplies of the fertile plains of southern Ontario and Quebec attracted an industrious farming people. The river-borne transportation of lumber and later the power of water-driven turbines were vital factors in building the country's industrial base. Today more than ever water is a key to Canada's development, supplying renewable energy required for industrial growth, providing easy and cheap transport for raw materials and playing a vital part in their processing.

Water problems in Canada are associated with storage, distribution and pollution. Current demands for greater and more diversified water use are complicated by a need to reverse the trend toward deterioration in water quality resulting from urbanization, industrialization and agricultural developments. The allied topics of pollution and water quality are matters of major concern since they have a direct bearing on Canada's national well-being and economic growth.

The international boundary line between Canada and the United States, including Alaska, is 5,525 miles (8 892 km) long. Of this total, 3,146 miles (5 063 km) lie along or across water bodies. The economic importance of boundary water basins to both countries is indisputable. The natural resources of the boundary basins and the transportation and hydro-electric power resources of the waterways in these basins have helped foster concentration of population and industrial development in Canada along a broad band bordering the 49th parallel.

The approximate population in some selected boundary basins is summarized in the following table. (The Canadian statistics are compiled from census divisions that approximate the basin boundary; the US statistics were published in 1974, prepared jointly by the US Departments of Commerce and Agriculture for the US Water Resources Council. Both give 1971 figures.)

	Canada	*United States*
Saint John–St. Croix	450,000	125,000
Chaudière	215,000	395,000
St. François	295,000	20,000
Richelieu–Lake Champlain	325,000	335,000
Lake Ontario–Upper St. Lawrence	4,430,000	4,115,000
Lake Erie–Lake St. Clair	1,580,000	9,780,000
Lake Huron–Lake Michigan	690,000	14,900,000
Lake Superior	265,000	535,000
Lake of the Woods–Rainy River	80,000	20,000
Red River	715,000	545,000
Souris River	100,000	110,000
Missouri–Milk	200,000	225,000
Pend d'Oreille–Kootenay	86,000	225,000
Columbia River	190,000	195,000
Lower Mainland	1,490,000	1,190,000
Alaska Panhandle and Yukon	80,000	315,000