

## Trends in World Oil Production 1974 - 2008

**John H. Walsh**  
**Energy Advisor**

World oil production was 81.82 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2008 according to the *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* available on the Web at [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com). Production increased 0.4% over the previous year.

In this note, world oil output is divided among four major producing zones because of the markedly different circumstances pertaining to each. The area chart in Figure 1 shows total world oil output as summed from: (1) the OPEC group of producing nations; (2) the U.S.A.; (3) Eastern Europe/C.I.S. nations (but not including new members of the expanded European Union); and (4) the remainder calculated by difference which is termed here the Rest-of-World (R-O-W). Production in the U.S.A. fell by -1.8% to 6.736 million barrels per day. In the countries of the eastern Europe and Asia group, production slightly +0.79% to 13.197 mbpd due in part to gains in the Caspian Sea and other regions in Central Asia. Oil consumption increased +3.1% in the Russian Federation compared to -0.9% reported for the previous year.

Production in the R-O-W nations as defined here fell by 602,000 barrels per day in 2008 as compared to the 293,000 bpd decrease reported in 2007. Production in this category has decreased every year of the past five. Growth was rapid up to 1985, the one year R-O-W production actually exceeded that from the OPEC nations, and, after a period of more moderate growth, there was a major increase in 1994 before a period of slow gains followed by recent small losses. As illustrated in Figure 1, the latter grouping's share in world output has now fallen for five successive years from the high of 35.9% reached in 2003 to 30.8% in 2008.

Production from the OPEC nations was no doubt restricted by the increase in output from the R-O-W nations during the decade of the 1990s but that situation has now changed until very recently. Production data from these two sectors has been plotted together in Figure 2 to permit closer comparison. Since 1985, OPEC production has generally increased and re-

mained higher than that of the R-O-W group but, until 1997, production from the latter grouping of nations was rising more rapidly. The gap between OPEC and R-O-W production widened each year but one between 2003 and 2008. However, OPEC production increased 2.7% in 2008 to 36.705 million bpd though measures to reduce production were introduced during 2008.

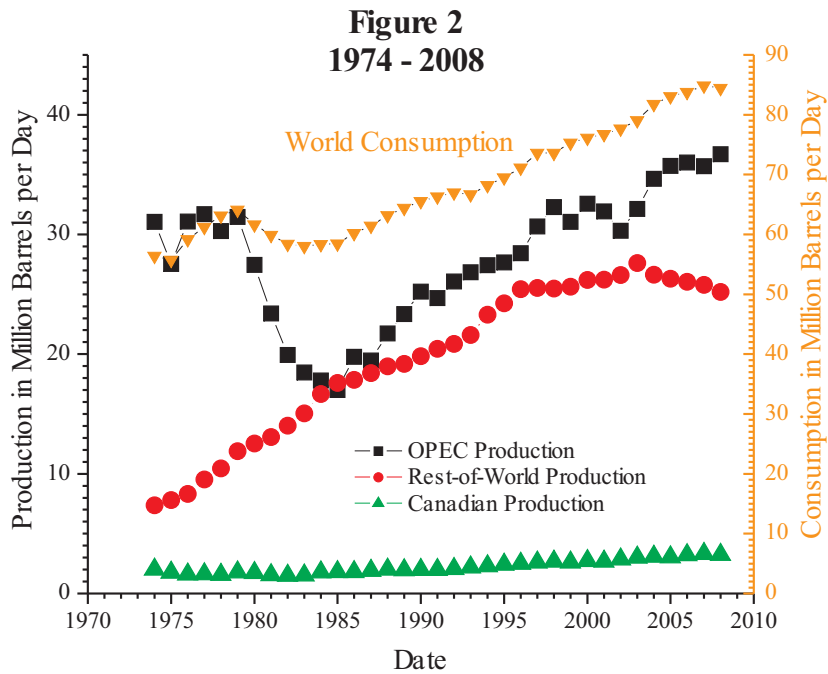
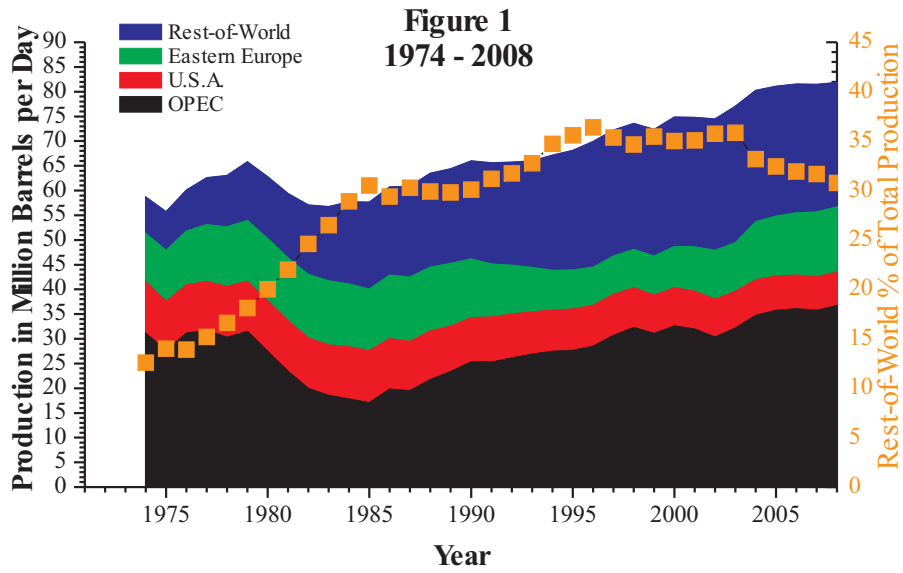
Canadian oil production was also plotted in Figure 2. Output fell -2.0% to 3.238 million bpd which accounted for 4.0% of the world's total production in 2008. Production is steadily growing from oil sands surface mining and *in-situ* facilities in Alberta, and from conventional production in the eastern offshore. Oil sands production is expected to grow steadily to reach four to five mbpd in the 2030s. This additional output will more than off-set the continuing decline in output of the lighter oils from the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin. Canada is among the diminishing number of nations that will increase production during the next decade.

World oil consumption is also shown in Figure 2 on the separate scale to the right. By 1989, it too had recovered from its previous peak in 1979, but growth was uncertain between 1990 and 1993. Consumption decreased to 84.455 million bpd in 2008 down -0.6% from the previous year. It has since fallen markedly due to the world-wide recession despite the rising needs in countries such as China and India.

Published world reserves of oil fell for the first time 3.0 gigabarrels (-0.24%) to 1258.0 GB at the end of 2008. The *BP Statistical Review*, unlike the *Oil and Gas Journal*, makes only a partial allowance (that termed 'under active development') for the oil sands of Alberta but reports another 150.7 gigabarrels as available.

This author, using a novel parabolic projection technique, expects the peak in world conventional oil production to occur in the period 2015-20. (J.H. Walsh, *Procedure for the Parabolic Projection*

Trends in World Oil Production  
1974 - 2008



*of Geological Assessments of Conventional Oil and Gas Resources with Examples*, (Revised January 2004) Web: [pages.ca.inter.net/~jhwals/wpara1.html](http://pages.ca.inter.net/~jhwals/wpara1.html)

June 2009

19 Lambton Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1M 0Z6  
Tel: 613-745-6279  
E-Mail: [jhwals@ca.inter.net](mailto:jhwals@ca.inter.net)  
Web Site: <http://pages.ca.inter.net/~jhwals/index.html>