Railway carloadings, March 2024

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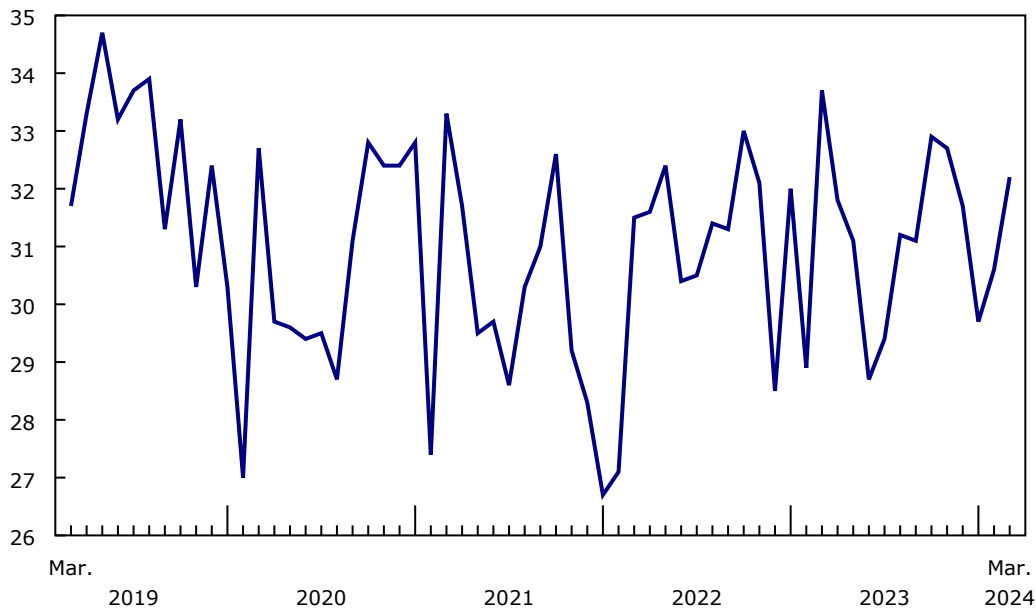
Highlights

In March, the volume of cargo carried by Canadian railways totalled 32.2 million tonnes, down 4.5% compared with March 2023. Fewer shipments of iron ores and coal as well as continuing declines in grain were the main contributors.

The volume of cargo moved by rail totalled 92.4 million tonnes in the first quarter of 2024, 2.2% below the same January-to-March period in 2023.

To further explore the latest data and historical trends in an interactive format, please visit the "Monthly Railway Carloadings: Interactive Dashboard."

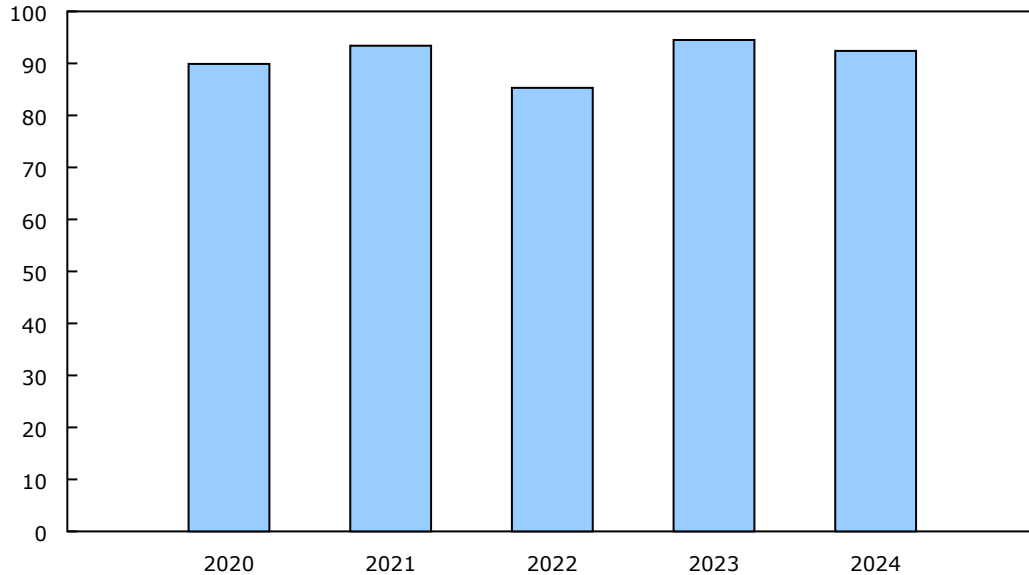### Chart 1
Railway carloadings, total tonnage

millions of tonnes

Source(s): Table 23-10-0216-01.

millions of tonnes

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The decline in March 2024 was the result of lower volumes in domestic non-intermodal loadings (mainly commodities) as well as freight traffic received from railway connections in the United States.

Carloadings of iron ores and concentrates down

Non-intermodal freight loadings in Canada fell 5.5% year over year in March to 25.3 million tonnes, led by a sharp decline in carloadings of iron ores and concentrates.
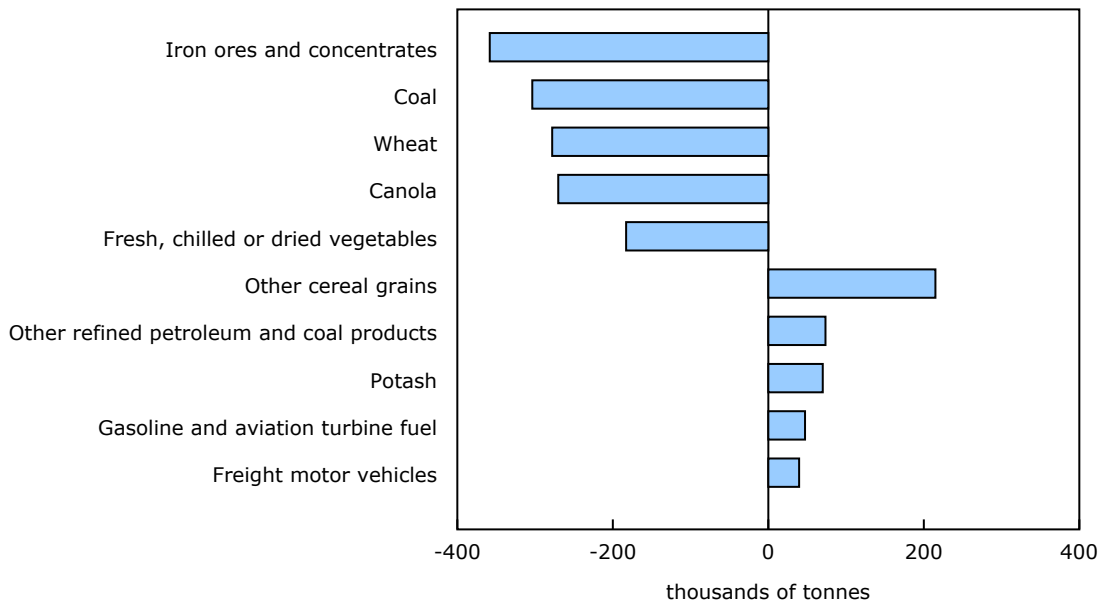
In March, carloadings of iron ores and concentrates declined by 358 000 tonnes year over year, reflecting the softening of global steel production.

Similarly, loadings of coal decreased 8.5% (-304 000 tonnes) in March compared with the same month in 2023.

In March 2024, wheat loadings continued to fall, down 9.9% (-278 000 tonnes) compared with March 2023. Similarly, carloadings of canola, on a downward trend since October 2023, dropped 28.5% (-270 000 tonnes) in the period from March 2023 to March 2024.

On balance, these declines mirror those reported in the March "Canadian international merchandise trade" release.

Chart 3
Railway carloadings, largest commodity differences, March 2023 to March 2024

Source(s): Table 23-10-0216-02.

Carloadings of other cereal grains increase

The above-noted decreases were partly offset by a large increase in carloadings of other cereal grains, up 42.9% (+215 000 tonnes) in March, compared with the same month in 2023.

Continued strength in intermodal traffic

In March 2024, intermodal shipments—mainly containers—originating in Canada also helped to offset the overall decline in loadings, rising 4.4% year over year to 3.1 million tonnes, a second consecutive increase.

American freight down again

Loadings from connections with American railways declined on a year-over-year basis for the third consecutive month in March, down 4.7% year over year to 3.8 million tonnes.

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Note to readers

The Monthly Railway Carloadings Survey collects data on the number of rail cars, tonnage, units and 20-feet equivalent units from railway transporters operating in Canada that provide for-hire freight services.

Cargo loadings from Armstrong, Ontario, to the Atlantic Coast are classified to the eastern division (Eastern Canada), while loadings from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to the Pacific Coast are classified to the western division (Western Canada).

Survey data are revised on a monthly basis to reflect new information.

The data in this release are not seasonally adjusted.

The Transportation Data and Information Hub provides Canadians with online access to comprehensive statistics and measures on the country's transportation sector.

Available tables: table 23-10-0216-01.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2732.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; **infostats@statcan.gc.ca**) or Media Relations (**statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca**).