

FACTS ABOUT THE SEA



SEA FACTS

Our very own Salton Sea is unique for reasons that we sometimes take for granted. For that matter, even those who call the Salton Basin home may not know some of the interesting facts that make the Salton Sea one of the most unusual geographic features in the world. To learn more about California's largest landlocked body of water, read on.



The Salton Sea's surface area (376 square miles) as compared to other notable lakes: Mono Lake (60 square miles), Lake Tahoe (193 square miles), and the Great Salt Lake (1,700 square miles).

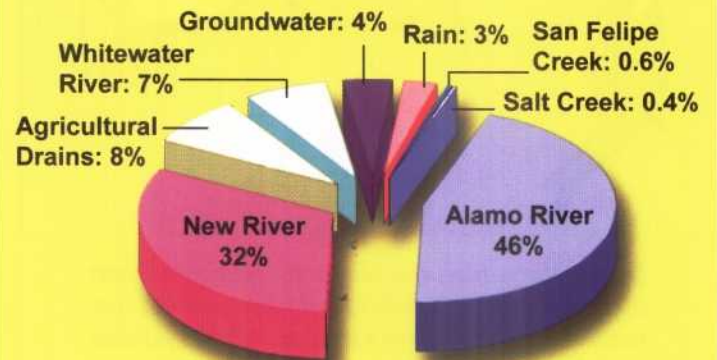
California's Dwindling Wetlands



1780: 5 million acres
1954: 554,000 acres
1985: 454,000 acres
1999: 450,000 acres

As our wetlands decline, the importance of the Sea as habitat for wetland species increases. Since around 1780, 91 percent of California's wetlands have disappeared—more than from any other state in the US. The Sea's habitats support 40 percent of the entire US population of the threatened Yuma clapper rail, 80 to 90 percent of the American white pelican, and 90 percent of the eared grebe.

Sources of Inflow to the Salton Sea



Almost the entire inflow to the Sea (98 percent) is from agricultural runoff, which is transported to the Sea via rivers, creeks, and agricultural drains and by ground water infiltration.



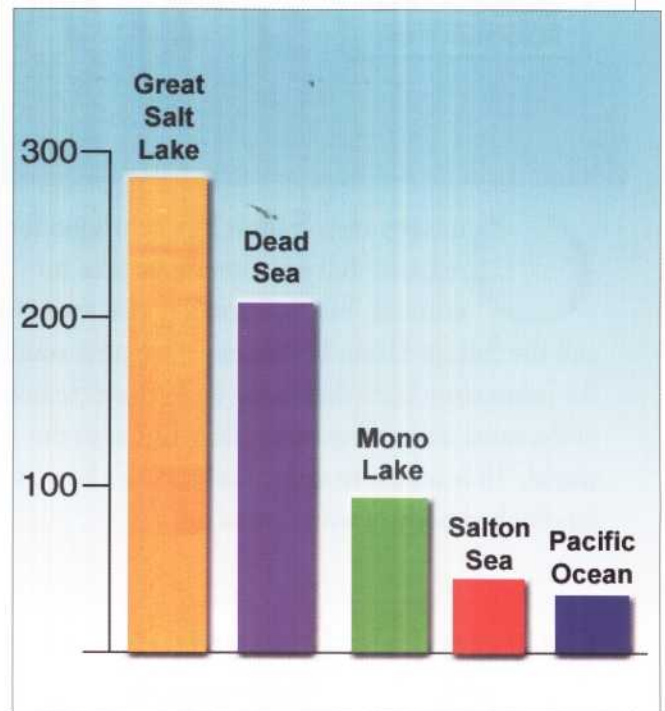
SALTON SEA RESTORATION PROJECT

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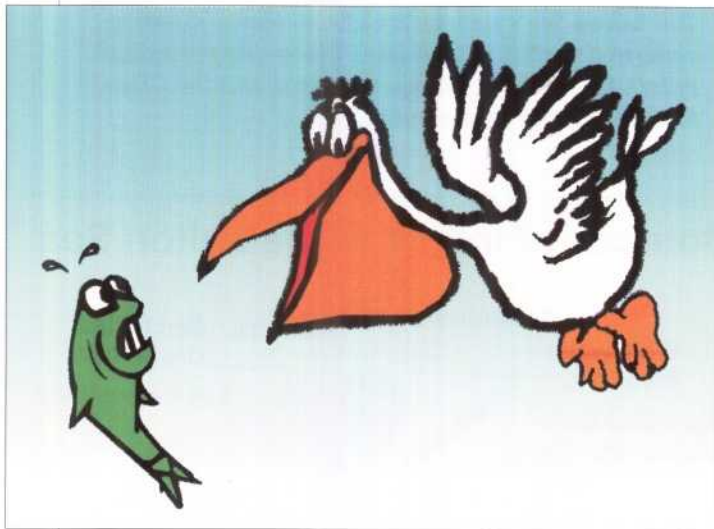
FACTS ABOUT THE SEA (CONTINUED)



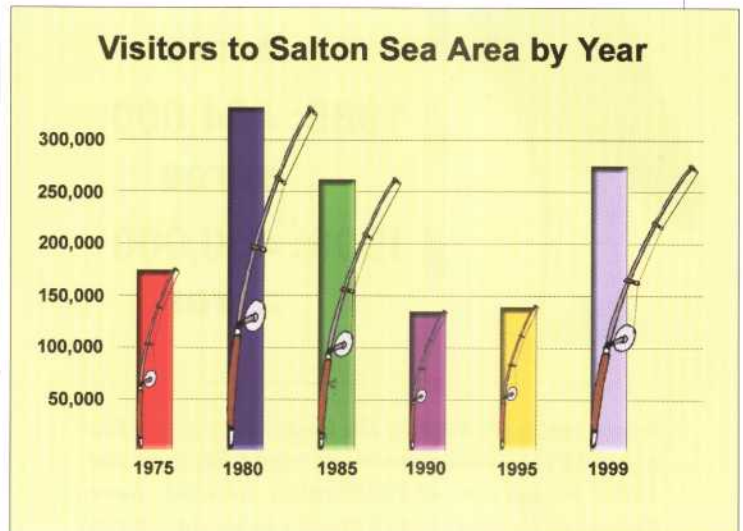
The level of selenium (Se, represented above in blue) recorded at Kesterson near Los Banos was approximately 80 parts per billion, before it was cleaned up; the US EPA's "level of concern" for selenium (represented in green) is five parts per billion. The selenium level at the Salton Sea? One part per billion (represented in red).



The salinity level of the Salton Sea is 44 parts per thousand (ppt), compared to 280 ppt for Utah's Great Salt Lake (at Gunnison Bay), about 210 ppt for Israel's Dead Sea, 87 ppt for Mono Lake, and 35 ppt for the Pacific Ocean.



During the winter, the Salton Sea is host to about 30,000 pelicans. Each bird gobbles up about five pounds of fish daily, for a total of 150,000 pounds of fish every single day. But with an estimated 200,000,000 fish in the Salton Sea, there's plenty to go around.



The numbers of visitors to the Salton Sea area has fluctuated over the past few years. One of the attractions is the Salton Sea State Recreation Area, which has 1,400 campsites in five campgrounds, hundreds of picnic sites, trails, playgrounds, boat ramps, and a visitor center.



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