

## RECREATION

### Visitation number from EIS/EIR & Horvitz

Recreational areas around the Sea, points of interest, what to do, beaches, campgrounds.

In the 1950s the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) stocked a variety of fish species into the Salton Sea in a successful attempt to create a sportfishery. For decades the Sea was a noted destination for anglers. A 1985 CDFG study found that the Salton Sea was more productive (fish caught per angler hour) than any California marine fishery and equal to the most productive freshwater fisheries.

When the Sea was healthy, it drew recreationists from all around and was a popular sport fishing site. The high salinity made it a great place to race boats and allowed for the introduction of salt-water marine life. With all this attention the north side shoreline soon became the Salton Sea State Recreation Area.

In its hay day the Salton Sea was home to over 400,000 boats and 16 camp-sites. People from all around came out to the Sea for various activities such as camping, water skiing, fishing, jet skiing, hiking, birdwatching, sailboarding and boating. In fact, the lake is known as the fastest boat racing lake in the nation because its salt content causes vessels to be much more buoyant. And at 227 feet below sea level, its high atmospheric density (because of the low elevation) causes engines to perform much more powerfully than on other lakes. (Salton Sea Authority and Bureau of Reclamation, 1997) Many people that I talked to spoke of a time when they were young and their families would go to the Salton Sea on the weekends. They remember that this was the place they learned how to water-ski when they were children and a place of innocent fun and family togetherness. The Salton Sea was such a popular recreation site that in 1955 sealions were brought to the Salton Sea as it was being established as a State Park and Recreation Site.

Bird watching revenues brought in 3.1 million dollars annually.

Sportfish - Corvina (*Cynoscion xanthulus*) are generally caught in excess of 20 pounds. Gulf Croaker (*Bairdiella chitius*) are small fish from ½ pound to 3 pound and are the main forage fish for the Corvina. Sargo (*Anisotremus davidsoni*) range from ½ to 3 pounds. Much like the Croaker are from the Gulf of California. Tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) comes from East Africa and range from tiny up to 4 pounds. Not sure how these were introduced into the Sea. Fishers have been known to fish for a day and leave with over 100 Tilapia.