

## California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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## **New Fish Habitat for Silverwood Lake**

Fish at Silverwood Lake will find shelter in a new kind of habitat as the Department of Water Resources last week began placing more than 600 fish spheres in the Cleghorn and Miller Canyon areas of the Lake.

Made of plastic PVC pipe complete with limbs, branches and leaves, the fish spheres, which provide small fish with cover and protection from predators, will not decompose and are designed to be snag-free to fishing tackle. Sphere leaves promote the growth of bio-film, nourishment for small fish which in turn attract larger fish.

"We feel these artificial spheres are an effective way of providing a long lasting, non-biodegradable habitat for fish in the lake," says Chuck Keene, environmental project coordinator at Silverwood Lake, located in the San Bernardino National Forest. "In mid-November, we will also be placing rock reefs which will provide additional cover for fish."

The California Conservation Corps will place 640 fish spheres, with each sphere measuring up to 6 1/2 feet in diameter. They will be anchored with a noncorrosive wire to rubble or rock and placed in selected locations about 10 to 40 feet beneath the maximum Lake water surface. It will be the largest use of the artificial cover in California, according to DWR biologists. Fish spheres were also placed in July at another State Water Project facility, Lake Oroville.

Because the Department is constructing a new intake tower at Silverwood Lake, the surface elevation is now 43 feet below its maximum elevation of 3353 feet and will be lowered another 55 feet by early January.

Construction of a new intake tower was ordered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission because

recent studies indicated the existing intake tower could fail during a moderate to large earthquake. Such a failure could cause interruptions in water deliveries to more than 15 million Southern Californians.

Note to Editors: Best photo opportunities for fish sphere and rock reef placement are from mid-November to mid-December.

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*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.*

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