

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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CONTACTS:

- [Pete Weisser](#), DWR Office of Water Education - (916) 653-9712
 - [Chris Erickson](#), DWR Environmental Specialist - (909) 765-5706
 - Mike Giusti, Department of Fish and Game Biologist - (916) 653-1154
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Fish Stocking Begins at Silverwood Lake

The Department of Water Resources this week began stocking Florida strain largemouth bass at Silverwood Lake. This marks the third phase in a court-ordered plan to revitalize the bass fishery at this State Water Project lake in northern San Bernardino County.

Between now and the end of October, about 3,500 Florida strain largemouth bass will be planted in the lake. The fish will come from two sources. About 2,000 fish, ranging in size from 12 to 20 inches, will be brought in from lakes in San Diego. Another 1,500 fish of various sizes are scheduled to be brought in from Willow Creek Fish Farm in Clovis. Many are expected to survive to spawn in the lake next spring.

This summer, DWR took two earlier steps in the fishery restoration effort. Starting in July, a seining crew netted and removed rough fish--such as carp, goldfish and Sacramento blackfish--returning game fish unharmed to the lake. Removing rough fish encourages expansion of bass populations by reducing predation and competition for food. Starting in August, 300 habitat structures made of lemon wood were installed in the lake to enhance fish habitat

The goal of this fishery restoration plan is to enhance bass populations and revitalize the bass fishery. Recently amended at the request of the Southern California Bass Council, the current fishery restoration plan was developed cooperatively by DWR, the Department of Fish and Game and the Bass Council. DWR and DFG fish biologists are working together to assure that the plan is effectively implemented.

The restoration program is the most recent effort to improve recreational fishing at the lake since an earthquake resistant water intake tower structure was built in 1997. The construction project was designed to make Southern California water supplies less vulnerable to interruption due to earthquakes. However, lowering the lake for construction purposes impacted fishing access and reduced fish populations.

The lake returned to normal levels by the summer of 1997. Due to a leak repair project scheduled this fall upstream on the California Aqueduct, the lake level will decline temporarily by about 20 feet during November. However, this temporary drop is not expected to have an adverse effect upon the fish or implementation of the fishery mitigation plan.

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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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