

Birds of the Salton Sea: past, present, and future

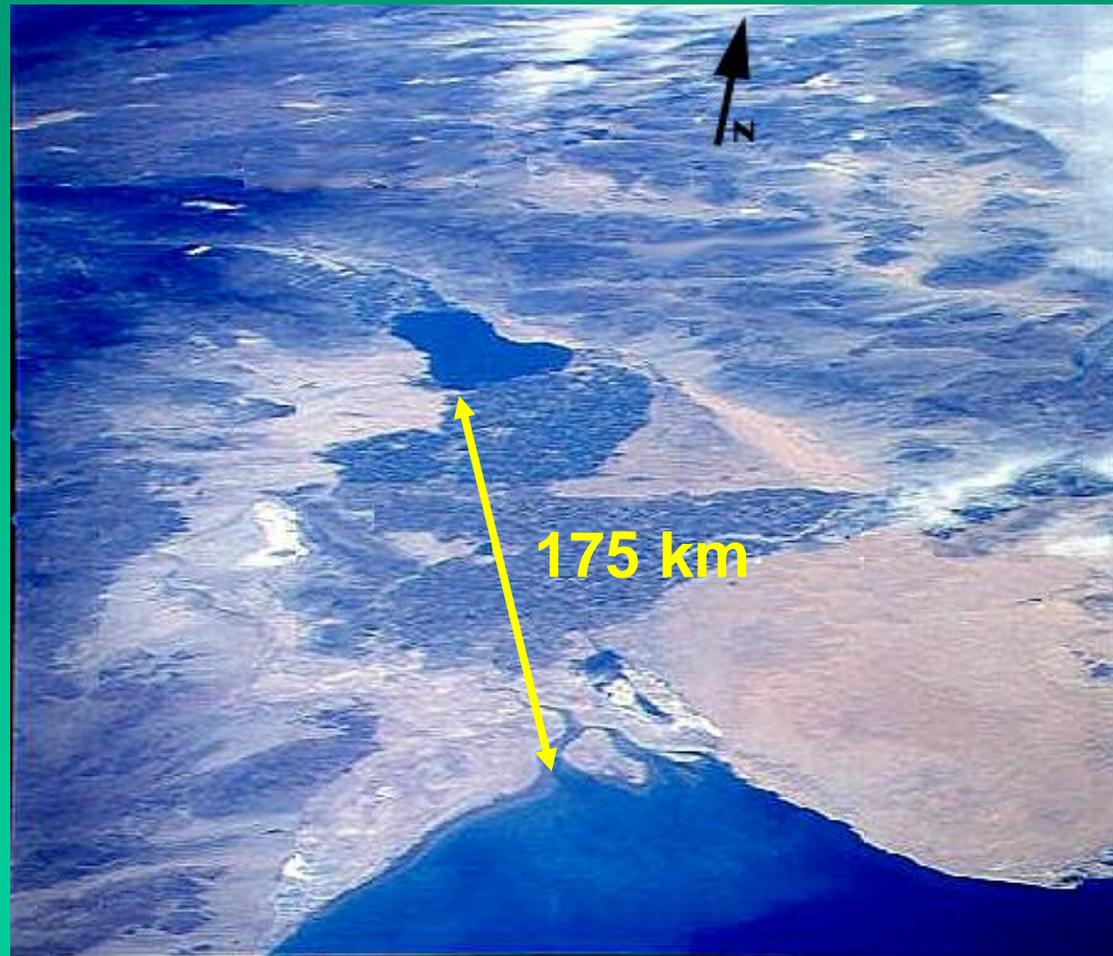
Acknowledgments

- Tom Kirk, Salton Sea Authority
- Milt Friend, US Geological Survey
- Doug Barnum, USGS; Stuart Hurlbert, SDSU
- Photos by: Peter LaTourrette, <http://birdphotography.com/>; Bruce Sanford, Image Northwest

HISTORY OF WATERBIRD COLONIZATION

- **1905-1906: current sea created and almost immediately used by waterbirds**
- **1908:**
American White Pelicans (1,000 occupied nests), Great Blue Herons (few hundred nests) and Double-crested Cormorants nesting; Eared and Western grebes, Common Loons, Caspian Terns and Ring-billed Gulls using sea

Rapid colonization and re-colonization influenced by proximity to Gulf of California and Colorado River

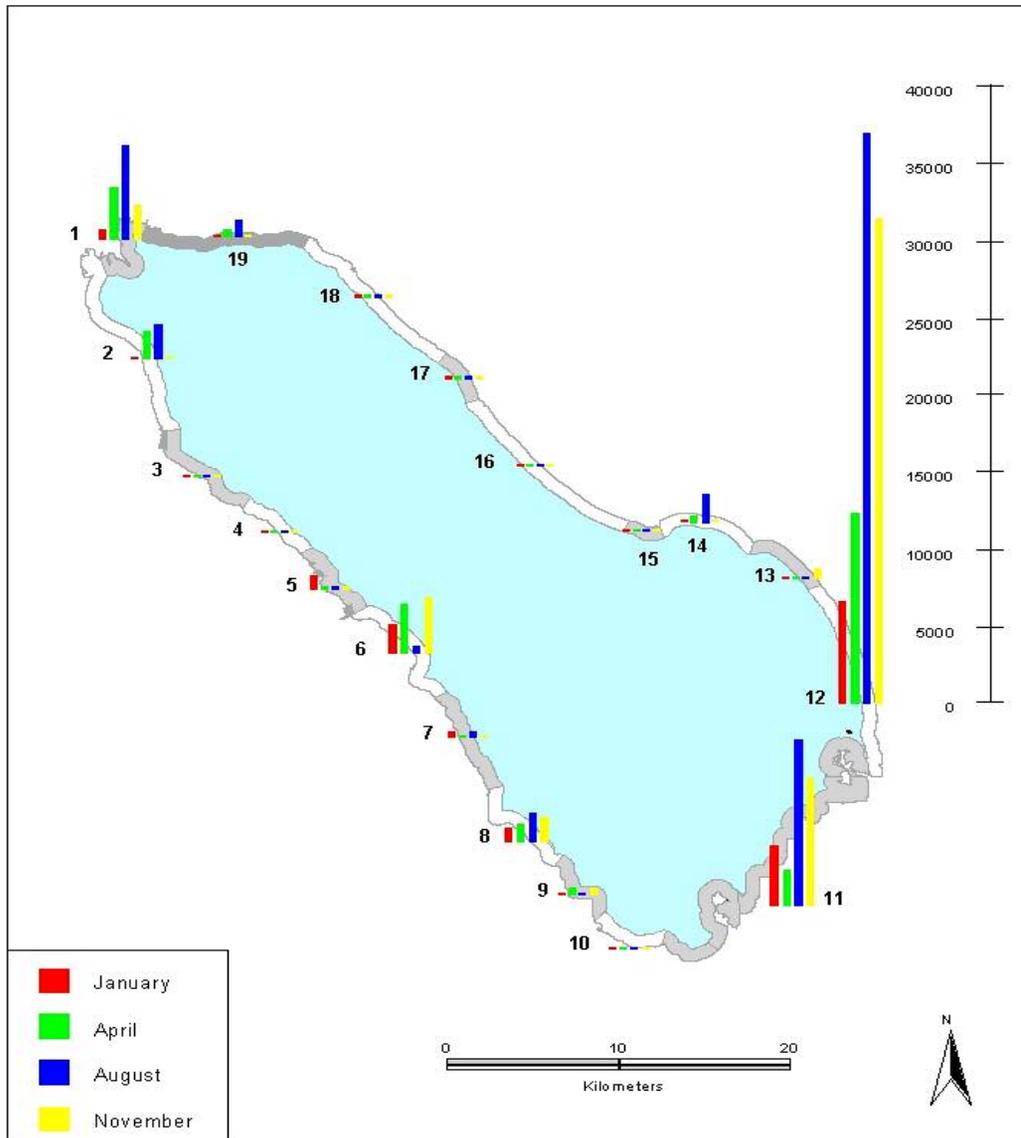


A large flock of birds, likely terns, is captured in flight against a clear, vibrant blue sky. The birds are densely packed, filling most of the frame with their dark wings and light-colored bodies. The perspective is from below, looking up at the birds as they fly. The overall scene conveys a sense of a massive, active bird colony.

Current importance of Salton Sea to Birds

Distribution of waterbirds at the Salton Sea in 1999

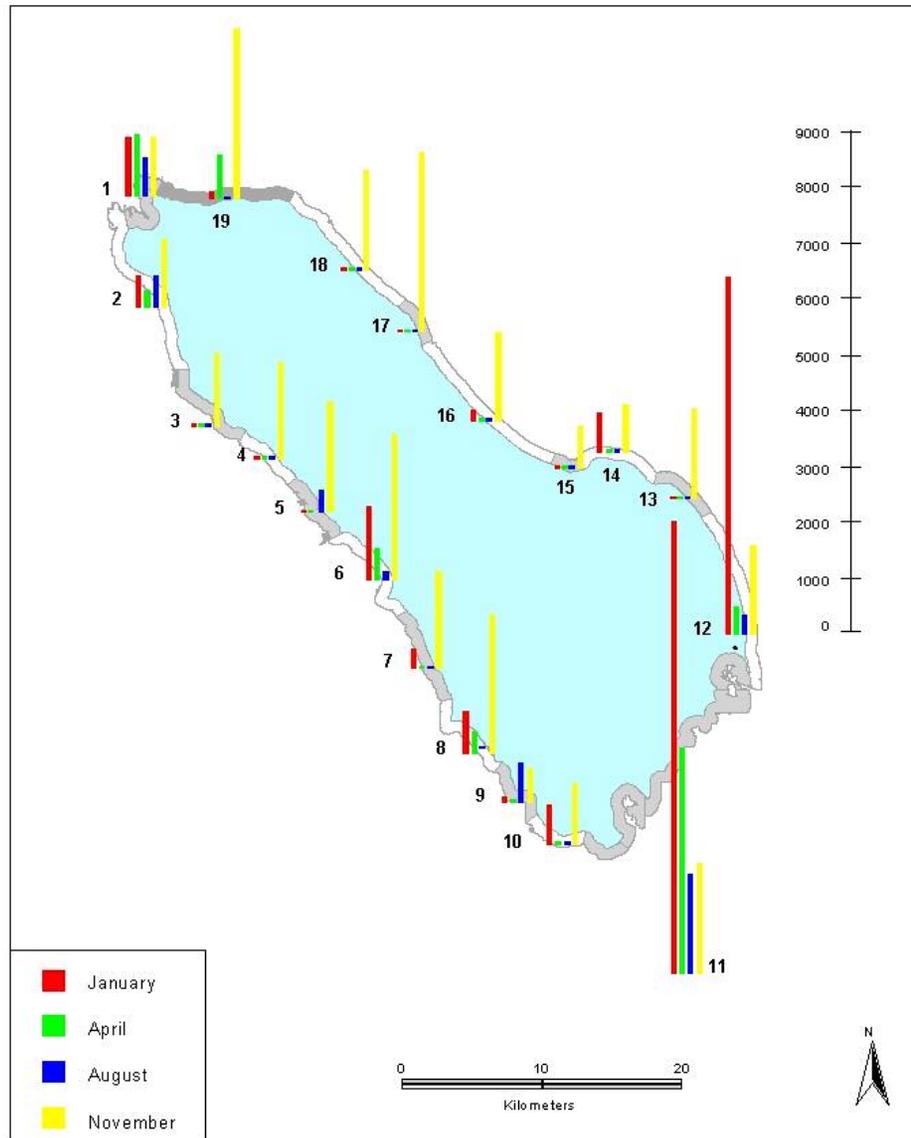
(Shuford et al. 2000)

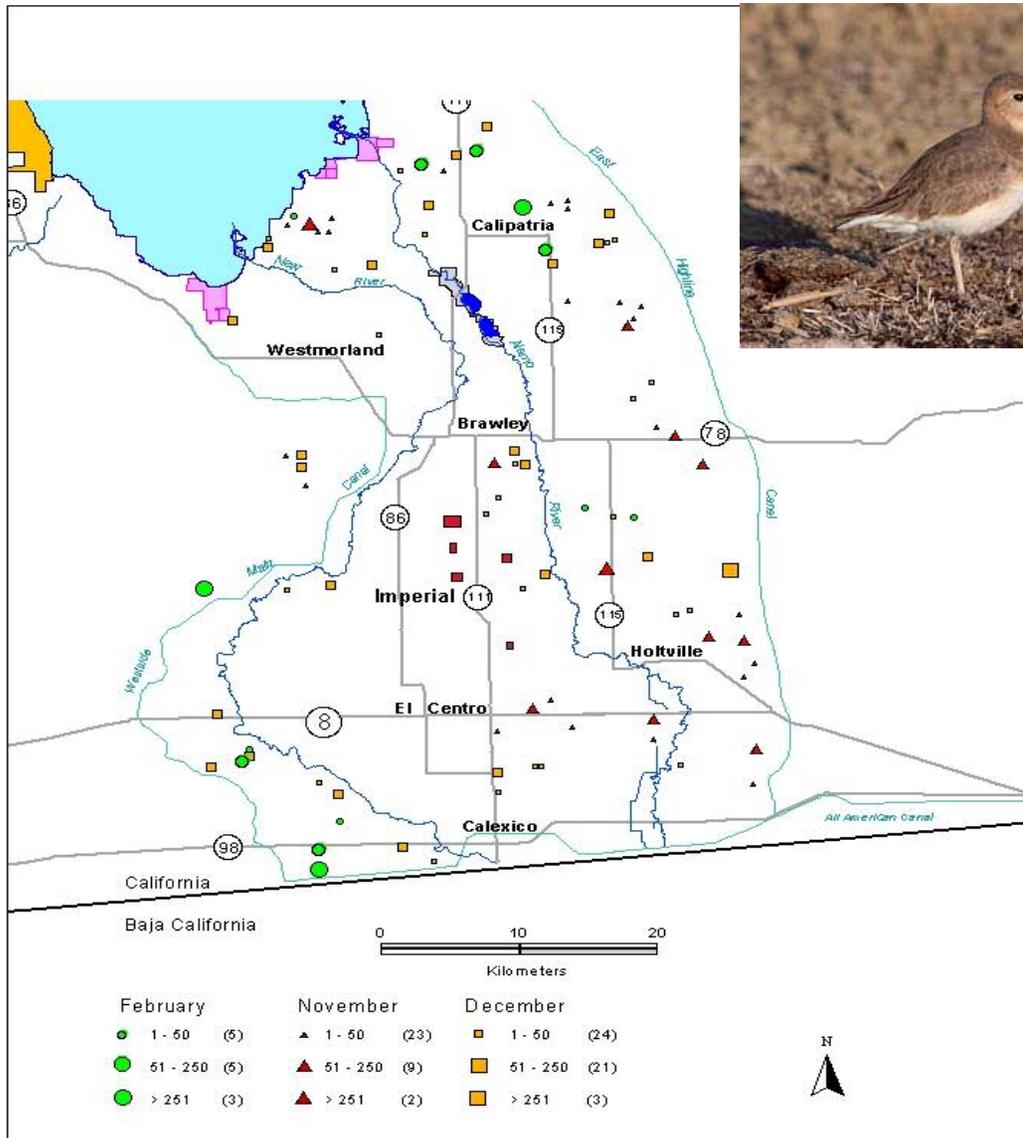


Total Shorebirds



Pelicans and Cormorants





Mountain Plover

Key Bird Areas at and around Salton Sea

(Shuford et al. 2000)

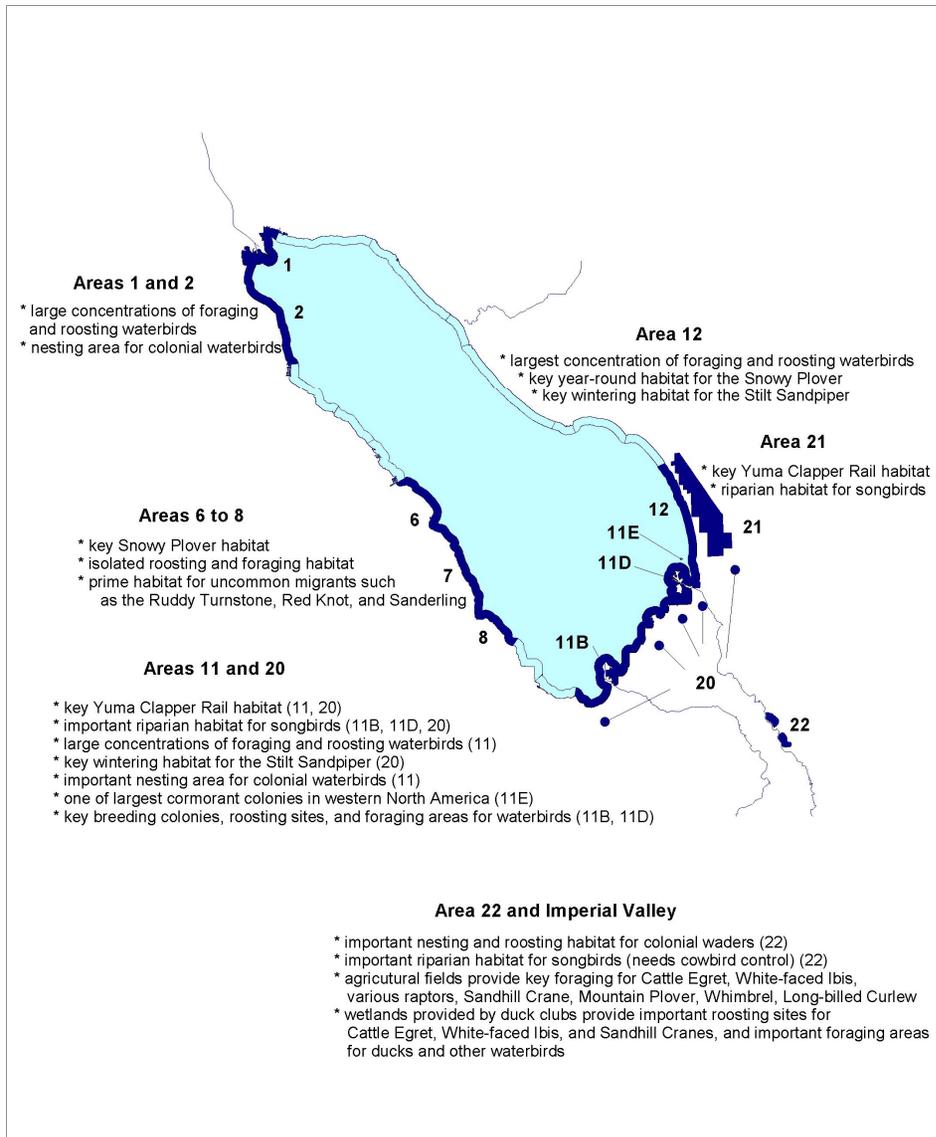
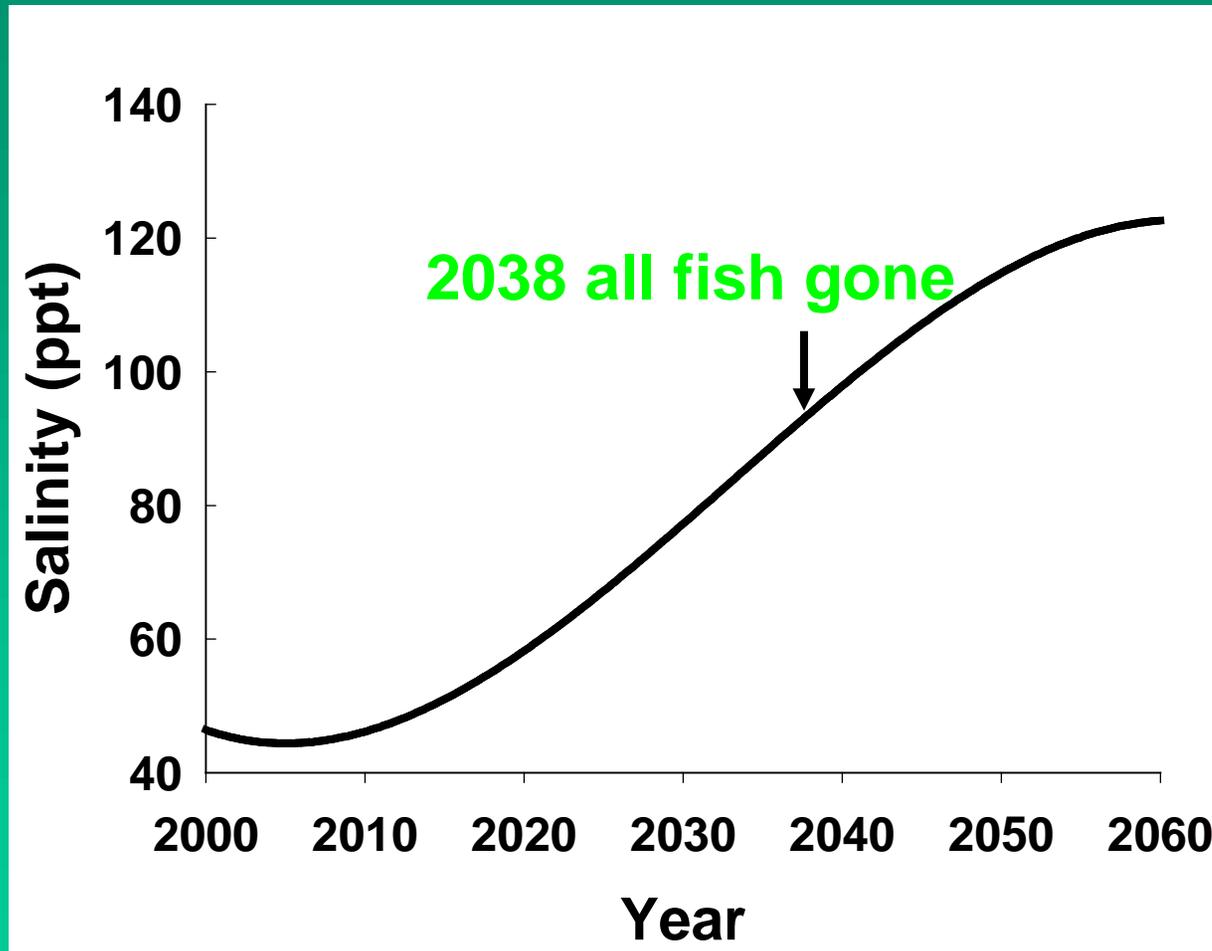


Figure 2 - 1. Areas of particular importance to birds at the Salton Sea.

Future of birds at the Salton Sea based on no action



Projected salinity at Salton Sea with reduced water supply (1.06 maf/yr)



(Salton Sea EIS/EIR 2000)

- **Based on no action, birds at the Salton Sea probably face a long-term decline in suitability of the sea**
- **To lose the Salton Sea for birds means losing one of the most important interior sites in North America for waterbirds**