

Fascinating Facts about the Fabulous Salton eSa

What is the Salton Sea?

- **California's largest lake** -- Area: 365 sq mi; Shoreline: 110 miles; Depth: Ave. 29', Deepest: 51'
- **National Wildlife priority** – Home of North America's largest population of **migratory waterfowl** outside of the Everglades, the sea is a stopover for 2/3 of the bird species in the Continental US
- **America's Renewable Energy Powerhouse** – Largest, most diverse sources of renewable energy
- Water inflow roughly equal to evaporation = water **1.5 times saltier than the ocean**
- Sea elevation -- **235 feet below Sea Level**
- Situated in **Riverside and Imperial Counties** near the California-Mexico border.

Formation of the Sea: The Salton Sea occupies a valley below sea level and has no outlet, causing minerals that flow in to become concentrated. For thousands of years, the Colorado River washed sediment and flood waters into the Gulf of California, eventually creating a large sea (Lake Cahuilla) where the Salton Sea is now. Lake Cahuilla has alternately flooded, evaporated and dried up many times in history. The most recent Sea formed in 1904 when the Colorado River flooded into the dry Salton Trough, creating the Salton Sea.

Serious threats & Liabilities: In compliance with a legal settlement on water called the Quantitative Settlement Agreement, nearly a third of the inflow to the Salton Sea will bypass the region due to transfer of Colorado River water from regional agricultural to urban use in San Diego, starting in 2017. This will result in **exposure of dusty shoreline and accelerated salinity** of the remaining Sea.

- **Water Quality decline = Ecosystem collapse** from hyper-saline Sea
- **Air Quality decline = Public Health Emergency** and economic demise from airborne dust

New hope for the Sea: restoration funded through Economic Development:

- **World's largest Renewable Energy potential: A powerhouse for California and America**
 - World's largest geothermal energy production
 - World's greatest solar energy potential (most reliable sunshine outside Sahara Desert)
 - America's largest biofuel production potential
 - World's largest potential source of Lithium metal
 - Billions of new potential revenues over next 30 years
- Eco-Tourism paradise
 - Among **world's most diverse bird populations** (400 species)
 - Winter nesting ground for hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl
- Water Sports recreational mecca
 - Numerous world records for speedboating were set at Salton Sea
 - America's most productive sport and commercial fishery (until recent decades)
 - More annual visitors to Sea than Yosemite National Park, during peak in 1960's