

# **Monterey County Water Resources Agency**

## **Bass Monitoring Plan**

### **Introduction and Timing of Bass Spawn**

San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs support recreational bass fisheries. Bass are known to use the shallow, nearshore habitat in reservoirs for spawning. Reservoir releases can adversely affect spawning and recruitment in these areas if water is released too rapidly. That is, if releases cause a rapid decline in water surface elevations, nests and eggs in the nearshore areas could become exposed and stranded. Spawning in San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs usually begins in May or early June, but can differ temporally between reservoirs. In an effort to maximize nesting success and population recruitment during bass spawning season, Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) will consult California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and determine the timing of bass spawn.

### **Rate and Duration of Water Releases**

Releases shall, to the extent possible, not exceed an amount that results in a maximum decrease in reservoir elevation of one foot per week for a three week period during bass spawning. A goal of six inches per week or less shall be used when practical. In many years the Agency has been able to shift releases between the two reservoirs to reduce impacts to bass spawning habitat. Additional reservoir release information and data can be found on the [Agency website](#).

In the event that the bass spawns from both reservoirs coincide at a time when more water is needed for water conservation releases than can be obtained without exceeding the one foot per week rate, then one reservoir shall be held to a one foot per week decline and the other dropped at a greater rate. The following year, or the next time the situation occurs, the other reservoir shall be lowered faster. Thus, the benefits to the bass spawn shall be alternated between the reservoirs during years when greater releases are necessary.

### **Bass Habitat Management**

In addition to modulating reservoir releases during the bass spawning season, when practical, the Agency will continue to support efforts made by CDFG and Monterey County Parks Department, which enhance bass habitat in one or both reservoirs. The inter-agency efforts to enhance bass habitat include, but may not be limited to the distribution of discarded Christmas trees to provide spawning and rearing habitat in near shore areas of San Antonio Reservoir and recreational restrictions in near shore areas during bass spawn. For example, near shore areas may be closed to anglers and boaters using an identifiable buoy system, when bass are thought to be spawning.