

THE MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

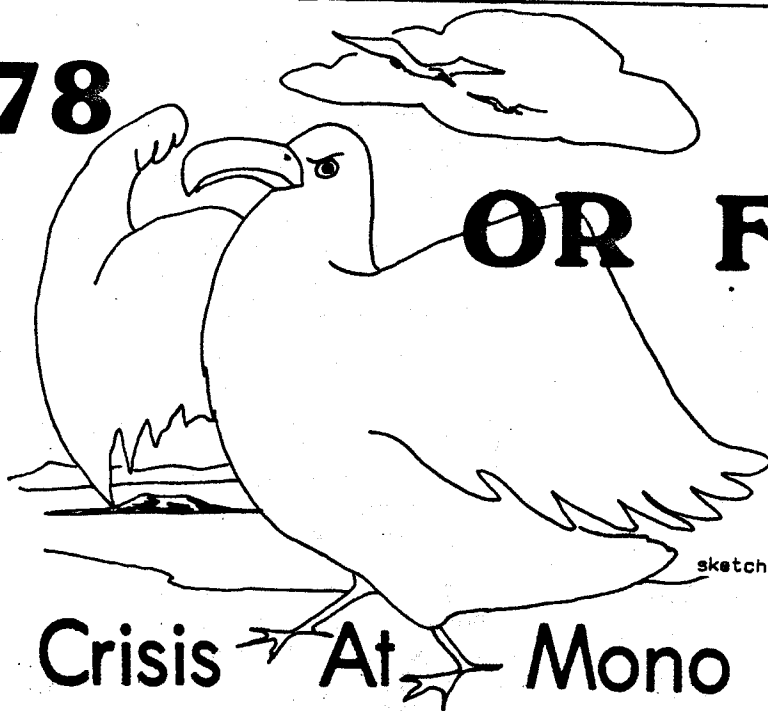
Newsletter

Edited by: David Gaines

Vol. 1 No. 3

Autumn, 1978

6378



OR FIGHT!

*A stable lake elevation of 6378 feet or above is required to protect Negit Island's California Gulls

sketch: Becky Shearin

Crisis At Mono Lake

Mono Lake's gulls are in dire and immediate danger. Coyotes, rabbits and mice have crossed a newly exposed landbridge to Negit Island, jeopardizing the survival of 38,000-40,000 breeding California Gulls, the largest known colony in the world.

The arrival of predators will doom the island's gulls. According to David Winkler, University of California biologist, "no colony near the size of that on Negit has ever survived on a peninsula."

"We must restore the channel and rid the island of all mammals," warns Winkler, "if we are to protect the birds. This must be done before the gulls return in April. If the rabbits and mice persist, they will attract a permanent population of coyotes and other predators. This will spell disaster for the defenseless ground-nesting gulls."

The drawing above is a fantasy. Gulls can stave off neither predators nor human greed. They cannot force the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to grant them a reprieve. If they are to survive, we must be their advocates and act in their defense.

Time is rapidly running out. Immediate action is needed to protect Negit Island and Mono Lake. But unless we speak out, nothing will be done!

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Insist, through letters, phone calls, telegrams and personal entreaties, that our public servants and elected representatives act to protect, not just the gulls, but all the scenic and wildlife resources of this irreplaceable natural treasure.

Please turn to page 3 for further information on whom to contact.

MONO LAKEWATCH: LAKE DROPS TWO FEET; MAMMALS INVADE NEGIT ISLAND; GULLS IMPERILED

An article headlined "Protecting Gulls is a Blast!" appeared in the July-August issue of Fish and Game's Outdoor California magazine. In addition to describing how a channel was blasted through the Negit Island landbridge last March, the article reported encouraging news from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. According to author Tom Rahn, the DWP "recently announced water diversions from the basin would be drastically reduced this year."

Too bad it didn't happen. Diversions were increased. And the blasting afforded an all-too-short reprieve. By the end of September Mono Lake had fallen about two feet, draining the blasted channel and leaving Negit Island a peninsula once again.

According to Ben F. Collins, Area Manager with the BLM in Bishop, "the blasting was not a success" as "it resulted in a series of potholes with several landbridges inbetween." And the wet winter was little help. Run-off was 160 percent above average, but most was shunted south into the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

On October 11th BLM biologist Joe Capodice discovered a coyote and numerous tracks and droppings on Negit Island. The droppings contained bird bones and feathers. Capodice also found signs that rabbits and rodents have invaded the island.

This is ominous news for the tens of thousands of California Gulls which annually raise their young on Negit Island. Unless something is done, the gulls, formerly protected by two miles of water, may be greeted by predators when they return next April.

Since its fiery birth two thousand years ago, Negit Island has never known the small earth-bound vertebrates so characteristic of the nearby mainland. No lizards scurry over its volcanic ramparts. No mice gather seeds beneath its scrubby greasewood.

After the gulls depart in August, the island becomes a vegetable empire until their return in April. Those dog-paddling coyotes who reach its shores depart by fall or quickly starve. But will this be true much longer?

The gull colony is threatened, not by a few coyotes alone, but by a year-round community of predators ranging down in size to ground squirrels and snakes. They will be sustained, not just by gull egg omelettes and gull chick stews, but by large populations of mice, rabbits and other prolific small animals formerly lacking on the island. Protecting Negit's gulls will require preventing these small animals from becoming established.

This is why the presence of mice and rabbits is much more alarming than a few coyotes. If these animals have indeed reached the island, they will have to be eradicated before they can multiply. Or we might as well abandon our efforts to save the gulls.

At stake is not just another gull colony, but a genetically unique population attuned to the Mono Lake and High Sierran environment. If we allow these gulls to perish, we will lose about one-fourth of the world population and deprive the Sierra and ourselves of an elegant and ecologically important avian inhabitant.

What can be done? Fencing will not keep out the smaller animals. The best short-term band-aid remedy is to blast or dredge a channel between Negit Island and the mainland. And this time make sure the channel is deep and long enough to provide several years of protection at present diversion rates. Lets face it! The long-term solution, a stabilized lake above the present level, may require a long, determined fight.

But in urging the short-term solution let us not forget that creating another channel will be a futile gesture unless water diversions are severely curtailed. If diversions continue unabated, not only will the lake's islands become peninsulas, but its waters will become too salty and alkaline, not only for gulls, but for all of its

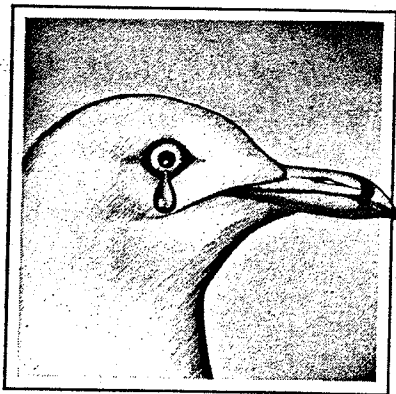
birds and the aquatic life on which they feed.

To save Mono Lake enough water must be released down Rush and Lee Vining Creeks, its principal tributaries, to halt its shrinkage. Otherwise it will become a birdless and lifeless chemical sump.

The DWP recently announced that Los Angeles has purchased approximately 500 acres on Paoha Island "in anticipation that the rookery on Negit Island may relocate to the larger island in the future." Most of Paoha, however, is plagued with violent summer dust storms that would bury eggs and chicks. Furthermore the Negit gulls may not abandon their ancestral nesting sites until it is too late.

Still their concern is heartening. With so much invested in avian welfare, how can the DWP allow increasing salinities to doom, not only gulls, but all of Mono's birdlife? That awful day, at present diversion rates, is probably less than a decade away!

And birds, after all, are only the tip of the tufa. If Mono continues to shrink, the result will be an ecological, environmental and human disaster of major proportions. Clouds of dust will be swept from the exposed lakebottom into the eastern Sierran atmosphere, polluting the air and jeopardizing the health of plants, animals and humans far from Mono's shores. A grand and haunting landscape will be lost forever.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP MONO LAKE:

1. MOST IMPORTANT! Please write personal letters to:

Edward L. Hastey, State Director,
Bureau of Land Management, 2800
Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825

E. Charles Fullerton, Director,
Department of Fish and Game, 1416
Ninth St., Sacramento, CA 95814

Express, in your own words, why you feel Mono Lake and Negit Island should be protected. Emphasize the urgency of the present crisis.

- Just a few handwritten sentences can be extremely effective. Include your address and ask for a response.

2. JUST AS IMPORTANT! Contact your elected representatives in the California Senate and Assembly and in the U.S. Congress. If they would like additional information, have them contact us.

3. VERY IMPORTANT! Please try to send copies or additional letters to:

Huey D. Johnson, Secretary, Resources
Agency, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento,
CA 95814

Ronald B. Robie, Director, Department
of Water Resources, 1416 Ninth St.,
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tom Bradley, Mayor, City Hall, Los
Angeles, CA 90051

Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor,
State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814

Cecil D. Andrus, Secretary, Department
of the Interior, Interior Bldg.,
Washington, D. C. 20240

Jimmy Carter, President, The White
House, Washington, D. C. 20240

4. Spread the word about Mono's plight. Tell your friends. Tell your enemies. Contact the press. Help us however you can to defend this irreplaceable natural treasure.

The MONO LAKE COMMITTEE is a not-for-profit citizen's group.

OUR PURPOSE: To preserve the scenic, wildlife and scientific values of Mono and other Great Basin Lakes by limiting water diversions to levels that are not environmentally destructive, to further public interest in the natural history and preservation of these lakes, and to facilitate relevant research.

Sponsored by the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.

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3045 McConnell Dr.	Robert A. Barnes
Los Angeles, CA 90064	PO Box 269
213/838-4909	Porterville, CA 93257
	209/784-4477

The newsletter features updates on the latest developments affecting Mono's future as well as articles on the natural, geological and human history of Mono and other Great Basin lakes, reviews of current research and recent publications, plant and animal checklists, and announcements of field trips and talks. We invite your comments and contributions!

The newsletter is published at cost four times a year by California Syllabus, 1494 MacArthur, Oakland, CA 94602.

IMPORTANT! If your copy is improperly addressed, if you fail to receive an issue, or if you are moving, please let us know!

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Financial Report-- how much we have raised and how we have spent it. See p. 18.

Dear Ranger Rick-- a letter from Amanda Abarbanel-Rice. See p. 19.

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Plus our usual babbling reflections on what it all means! See p. 22.

OUR SECRETARY/TREASURER SPEAKS...

How many newsletter did you receive? Two? Three? The card files have been thoroughly weeded, so most duplication should cease. But I need your help to prevent future mix-ups.

We send a position paper and/or a recent newsletter (depending on supply) to anyone requesting information. Others pick up literature at field trips, slide presentations, etc. You then get duplicate copies when you contribute.

So when you send us a contribution, renew your subscription, or whatever, please remind us (1) whether you are already on our mailing list, and (2) what literature you have already received. Please print legibly and include your zip code (essential for bulk mail sorting).

And please pass extra literature on to your friends!

WHATS HAPPENING

We Keep on Keepin' On

During the past few months we have continued to focus our activities on publicizing Mono Lake's plight. Hopefully, as our efforts bear fruit, there will be more and more news about the lake in magazines and newspapers, and on radio and television (see, for instance, the editorial reprinted on page 23).

At the same time we have intensified our efforts to convince governmental agencies and legislators of Mono Lake's importance.

Are we making headway? Its difficult to judge. As we go to press, we have yet to win protection for Negit Island's gull colony, much less for Mono Lake.

Agency Meetings: Lots of Talk, but Still No Plan to Act

At least Sacramento is taking notice. On December 20th representatives from the Bureau of Land Management will be conferring with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), the Department of Water Resources, and Fish and Game about Mono Lake's future. We have learned, however, that only "long-range" solutions will be addressed, not the immediate need to protect Negit Island's gulls. Our wish to participate has been politely but firmly refused.

What can we expect from this meeting? Probably not much. We can hope for BLM and Fish and Game sympathy, but Water Resources may parrot the DWP line. This, at least, is the indication we received from a recent meeting at the Sierra Club's office in San Francisco.

That meeting was called by Gerald H. Meral, Deputy Director of the Department of Water Resources, in response to increasing public outcry over Mono Lake. The Mono Lake Committee, oddly enough, was not invited. In fact we barely got word in time to attend. At the meeting Meral presented a bewildering array of graphs and tables assembled by his Southern District Office. Overall they reiterated what we have always heard from DWP: Mono's water is worth a lot of money!

This was not what distressed us. It was the biased presentation of data and the failure to address any alternative other than replacing Mono Lake water with that obtained from the Delta through the State Water Project. Another, more environmentally sensible solution, that of water conservation, was not seriously mentioned (see page 6)! Instead there was the old terminology of "tradeoffs" with the Peripheral Canal as ransom for Mono Lake's life.

Do the agencies realize what is at stake? That it is not "just a few seagulls," but an entire ecosystem, millions of birds and grand, haunting scenery unlike anything else on earth?

Pleading Mono's Cause in Sacramento

During the past few months committee members Gray Brechin, David Gaines, Dean Jue and Stuart Schulz have been making the rounds in the state capitol. We have explained, to anyone who would listen, why Mono Lake must be preserved. Many had never heard of Mono, or if they had, thought it a "dead sea." So we

(continued p. 21)

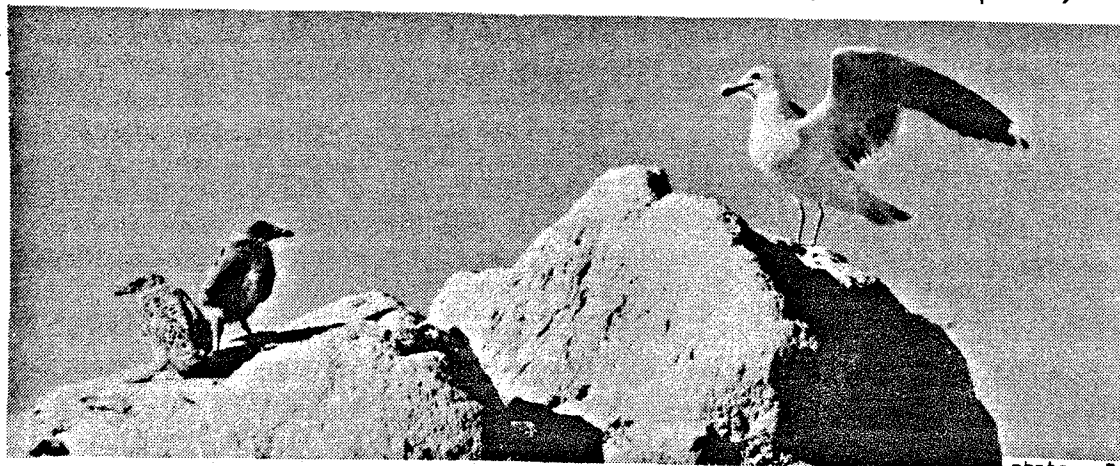


photo: Bev Stevenson

THE WATER CONSERVATION ALTERNATIVE TO MONO LAKE'S DESTRUCTION

"The City of Angels... wears its water as ostentatiously as a newly-rich widow displays her jewels..."

L. G. Richards, quoted in C. McWilliams,
California: The Great Exception (1949)

"If we don't get the water we won't need it..."

William Mulholland, Los Angeles Water Superintendent, 1907, quoted in V. Ostrom Water and Politics

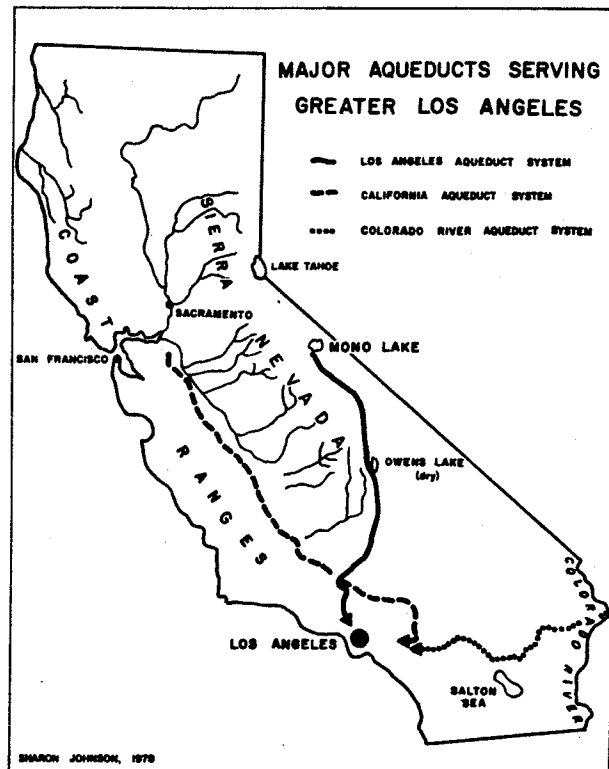
Why is Mono Lake being laid to waste? Part of the answer is the monetary value of water and power in the arid west. The Mono diversions are worth millions of dollars a year. Alternative sources, such as the California Water Project, are much more expensive and exact environmental costs in other parts of the state.

There is, however, a way to preserve Mono Lake that is environmentally and economically sensible: water conservation. We have heretofore been profligate in our use of this precious resource. The 1976-77 drought taught us that we can get along comfortably with much, much less. During 1977 the people of Los Angeles conserved more than the 12 percent necessary to allow Mono Lake to live on. If they knew the consequences, might they continue to conserve?

But most people in Los Angeles, indeed throughout the nation, have never heard of Mono Lake. And the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power does not seem inclined to publicize Mono's plight or to plead for conservation on its behalf.

In fact, in the recently released draft EIR on Increased Pumping of the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin, the DWP appraises water conservation in a cursory and superficial manner. Why do they refuse to take this alternative seriously?

Lets review the Los Angeles water supply system and the value of the Mono Basin diversions, and evaluate for ourselves the potential for water conservation.



The Los Angeles Water Supply

The City of Los Angeles has three sources of water: (1) local groundwater, (2) imported water delivered by the Los Angeles Owens River Aqueduct from the Owens Valley and the Mono Basin, and (3) Imported water purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). MWD water comes from the Colorado River and Northern California (see figure).

Of these sources the second, Owens Valley - Mono Basin water, is the least expensive. The reason is the transport cost. The Los Angeles Aqueduct, despite its length, is

a gravity flow system that is a net producer of hydroelectric energy. The MWD, in contrast, must pay the power bill for pumping Northern California and Colorado River water over mountain ranges into Southern California.

To save money the DWP has minimized its dependence on MWD water by attempting to squeeze every drop from the Owens Valley and Mono Basin. Since 1970, when the "second barrel" of the Los Angeles Aqueduct became operational, Mono Basin diversions have doubled and Owens Valley groundwater pumping has far exceeded all expectations.* This augmented water supply has allowed the DWP to reduce their dependence on MWD water from over 20 percent to only three percent in an average year.

Since 1970 the Owens Valley - Mono Lake watersheds have furnished nearly 80 percent of the Los Angeles City water supply in an average year. About 17 percent has derived from the Mono Basin. Local groundwater has comprised another 17 percent and purchases from MWD the remaining three percent.

Value of the Mono Basin Water

The value of the Mono Basin export derives from the water itself and the hydroelectric power it generates. The power, although less than two percent of L.A.'s annual consumption, is worth almost as much as the water. DWP places the water value at \$95 an acre-foot, the cost of purchasing a like amount from the MWD. They figure the power value at \$90 an acre-foot, the cost of generating equivalent energy at oil-burning plants. Based on these values, it will cost 13 million dollars per year to release about 75,000 more acre-feet into Mono annually- enough to stabilize the lake at its 1976 elevation.

*Massive groundwater pumping could turn Owens Valley into a dustbowl. Faced with environmental disaster, Inyo County is fighting back in court.

This cost, which we believe is inflated, is a multi-million dollar excuse that obfuscates the real issue of Mono Lake's worth. It ignores the terrible cost exacted upon the Mono Basin environment and the very feasible alternative of reducing wastage among urban consumers. Somehow we must weigh intangible values, such as millions of birds, an irreplaceable living community and scenery as marvelous as anything on earth, against the pecuniary one of water export. And we must consider whether we need Mono's water at all.

Water Conservation: How Much Can Be Saved?

Water conservation is viable. A recent, thoroughly researched California Department of Water Resources report, for example, demonstrates that modest conservation measures can bring about a 24 percent savings in Los Angeles by the year 2000. The principal methods would be improved design of plumbing fixtures, more efficient irrigation of lawns and gardens, increased residential density, greater use of dry-climate plants, and reduction of pressure in the water system. "All in all," writes Walt Anderson in the Summer 1978 issue of "Cry California," "this is a fairly conservative program of conservation; the amount of water-use reduction that could be done in the Los Angeles Basin is enormous."

Los Angeles Water Supply and Demand (in acre-feet per year)			
	1980	1990	2000
Projected Water Supplies¹			
Local Sources			
Groundwater	102,500	102,500	102,500
Reclaimed Water	56,000	218,400	235,200
Imported Sources			
Owens Valley - Mono Basin	470,600	470,600	470,600
MWD - Colorado River	348,200	137,500	133,200
MWD - Northern California	305,500	566,200	555,300
Total	1,282,800	1,495,200	1,496,800
Projected Water Demand²			
With Water Conservation	553,000	530,000	496,000
Without Water Conservation	602,000	636,000	654,000

¹So. Ca. Assoc. of Govts. 1977. Compilation and Analysis of Water Supply System Data-- City of Los Angeles.
²Ca. Dept. of Water Resources, So. District. 1977. Effect of Conservation on South District Urban Water Demand for 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Even this modest, state-proposed program will conserve enough water to save Mono Lake. According to the report, total demand in the year 2000 can be reduced from a projected 654,000 acre-feet per year to 498,000 acre-feet with conservation. At least 28 percent of this demand can be met through local sources (groundwater and reclaimed water). The rest can be supplied from the Mono Basin and Owens Valley without groundwater pumping and still leave over 75,000 acre-feet per year for Mono Lake-- enough to stabilize the lake at its 1976 elevation. Not a drop need be taken from Northern California or the Colorado River.

The DWP on Water Conservation

The DWP betrays their biased attitude in their recently released draft EIR on Owens Valley groundwater. Conservation beyond 15 percent is arbitrarily dismissed as unreasonable, even though the state study shows that 24 percent is easily attainable.

Many fiscal and environmental benefits are completely ignored. The DWP maintains, for example, that water conservation would result in the loss of hydroelectric generation in the aqueduct, but fails to mention the substantially greater amounts of energy that conservation would save. The state's program could reduce energy consumption by 1,046 million kilowatt hours within Los Angeles by the year 2000. In fact each acre-foot conserved in Los Angeles saves over four times as much energy as it generates flowing down the aqueduct!

The DWP not only ignores this savings, but also paints a fallacious picture of increased air pollution from oil-fired power plants in the South Coast Air Basin making up the supposed loss along the aqueduct. In fact, because of the substantial energy savings, water conservation would reduce the use of oil-fired power plants and improve air quality.

This superficial treatment of water conservation is one of the draft EIR's critical failings. To judge by the bibliography, not one of the hundreds of germinal references were studied. Nor were experts in the field consulted.

The DWP's reasons for rejecting conservation are unconvincing. "Economic hardships" are not substantiated. Instead of complaining that "it would not be reasonable" to conserve in Los Angeles when "neighboring communities receive normal supplies," we urge the city to take the lead in wise water husbandry as mandated by planetary ethics and the California State Constitution. Such a course would honor the people of Los Angeles while serving the interests of the whole earth.

We All Must Conserve

It's unfair to single out the Angelenos. Their per capita water consumption does not exceed that of most other Californians. We have all been wasting water.

In decades past our forbears consumed without a thought of ever running dry. The wealth of a virgin continent seemed virtually limitless. No more.

Glen Canyon is a reservoir. The Stanislaus is being drowned. Owens Lake is alkali dust. Will Mono Lake be next? Are we willing to share a precious resource with our fellow non-human living beings?

Here in the arid west that resource is water. It sustains, not only the Mono Lake ecosystem, but what is left of our marshes, estuaries, free-flowing rivers and riverine forests.

If these places are to survive, we must cease wasting water. All of us.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: In your letters to legislators and public officials, express your personal commitment to conserving water for the sake of Mono Lake and our living environment.

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE CRITIZES DWP IMPACT REPORT ON OWENS VALLEY GROUNDWATER

This past August the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) released the latest draft of their controversial environmental impact report (EIR) on "Increased Pumping of the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin." On November 15th David Gaines explained the Mono Lake Committee's objections to the Los Angeles Board of Water Commissioners.

This EIR is the latest chapter in an ongoing dispute between Inyo County and the DWP over groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley, the watershed to the south of Mono Lake. The conflict dates back to 1970, when the DWP completed its second Los Angeles aqueduct, augmenting by 50 percent its capacity to export Owens Valley water. To fill this second aqueduct, Owens Valley groundwater pumping was increased beyond all expectations. Dismayed by dessicated springs, dying vegetation and a dramatic increase in the frequency and intensity of dust storms, Inyo County filed a lawsuit claiming that DWP's groundwater pumping project was causing irreparable environmental impact to the Owens Valley and that the department had failed to prepare an EIR.

In 1973 the court sustained Inyo's claims requiring an EIR. The resultant document, however, was a travesty. The court, ruling in 1977, declared the EIR legally inadequate and chastised DWP's misrepresentation of the project as "serious," "wishful" and "egregious."

Even more significant was the court's interpretation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the law requiring an EIR. CEQA, opined the court, limits "the approving agency's power to authorize an environmentally harmful proposal when an economically feasible alternative is available." This means that CEQA requires the selection of water conservation over groundwater pumping if conservation is "economically feasible" and less damaging to the environment. "Never before," notes

Inyo's lawyer Antonio Rossmann, "had a court so ruled."

The court also cited California Deputy Attorney General Larry King's advice that DWP prepare a comprehensive EIR on all of its water-gathering operations.

This year's draft EIR is the DWP's most recent attempt to comply with the law. We believe it is still woefully inadequate. Following are excerpts from the testimony presented by David Gaines on the Mono Lake Committee's behalf at the November 15th public hearing in Los Angeles:

"The Mono Lake Committee contends that the impact of the operation of the Los Angeles Aqueduct cannot be seriously considered in the draft EIR without including its effect on the Mono Basin. Groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley affects the operation of the entire Los Angeles Aqueduct system, which includes the Mono Basin diversions. This is implicit in the draft EIR, which cites project benefits "on lands owned by Los Angeles within the Mono Basin." Since no groundwater pumping is proposed in the Mono Basin, the "benefit" will derive from utilization of surface flows. This is ignored in the draft EIR, which takes a narrow view of the project's environmental impact by focusing solely on groundwater pumping and its cause and effect implications in Owens Valley and Los Angeles..."

"Specifically the draft EIR does not address the substantial environmental damage occurring as a consequence of the Mono Basin diversions at the northern terminus of the aqueduct system..."

"Legally and ethically we believe that Mono Lake and its environment warrant a fair hearing. No EIR has ever considered the lake's importance. The intangible values of clean air, scenic vistas, immense flocks of birds, a unique ecosystem and a precious scientific resource deserve to be carefully weighted against the pecuniary one of water export..."

FROM GOLD SEEKERS TO WATER SEEKERS: A HISTORY OF THE WHITEMAN AT MONO LAKE

by David Gaines

"I never dreamed this was here. I don't understand why this isn't a national park..."

Field trip participant after a canoe trip
in Mono Lake's south tufa grove, August 8, 1978

"The plot of (the movie) Chinatown is not that far from reality. The relationship between the business community and the Department of Water and Power is extremely close..."

Peter Marcuse, former Chairman of the Los Angeles Planning Commission, quoted in the Washington Post, September 8, 1976

Why is Mono Lake, a place so obviously of national park stature, being annihilated? Depending on your viewpoint the answer lies in greed, progress or (lets hope not) human nature.

We can trace the whiteman's involvement with Mono Lake from fur trappers and mountain men to scientists and aqueduct engineers. There have been a few, like the geologist Israel Russell, who saw more than opportunities to fatten themselves at the cost of natural values and other living things. But they have been exceptions.

The First Whites

The identity of the first white man to lay eyes on Mono Lake may never be known. The American fur-trappers and mountain men, Jedediah S. Smith and Joseph R. Walker, may have seen the lake on their wanderings across the Sierra Nevada in 1826 and 1833 respectively (Sullivan 1934; Farquhar 1965). Zenus Leonard, who accompanied Walker, described a lake that sounds like Mono:

"This lake... has no outlet for the water, except that which sinks into the ground. The water... is similar to lie, and tastes much like pearlash... It is admirably calculated to wash clothes without soap... There is also a great quantity of pumice stone floating on the surface of the water, and the shore is covered with them..."

If this was Mono, and not Carson Lake as some historians believe, Leonard may also be credited as the first in a line of writers (including Mark Twain) to extoll the purgative qualities of its waters.

No other whites are known to have visited Mono Lake until 1853, when Lieutenant Tredwell Moore was dispatched from Fort Miller in the San Joaquin Valley "to finish off the Yosemite Indians once and for all." Moore pursued the leader of the Yosemite, Teneiya, across the Sierra via Tuolumne Meadows and Mono Pass to the shores of Mono Lake (Farquhar 1965). With the aid of the Kuzedika Paiutes dwelling along the lake, Teneiya escaped his pursuers. But the future of the region was sealed when Moore discovered "gold and gold-bearing quartz, obsidian and other minerals, while exploring the region north and south of Bloody Canyon and of Mono Lake (Bunnell 1880).

Twilight of the Fly-Pupae Eaters

The prospectors and settlers which streamed to the shores of Mono Lake and to the surrounding mining districts in the following decades disrupted the culture of the Kuzedika Paiutes. Linguistic evidence suggests that the Kuzedika were themselves relative newcomers to the Mono Basin. Between 1200 and 1800 A.D., they evidently displaced the previous occupants, perhaps the very people who carved the mysterious, intriguing petroglyphs of animals, plants and geometric designs

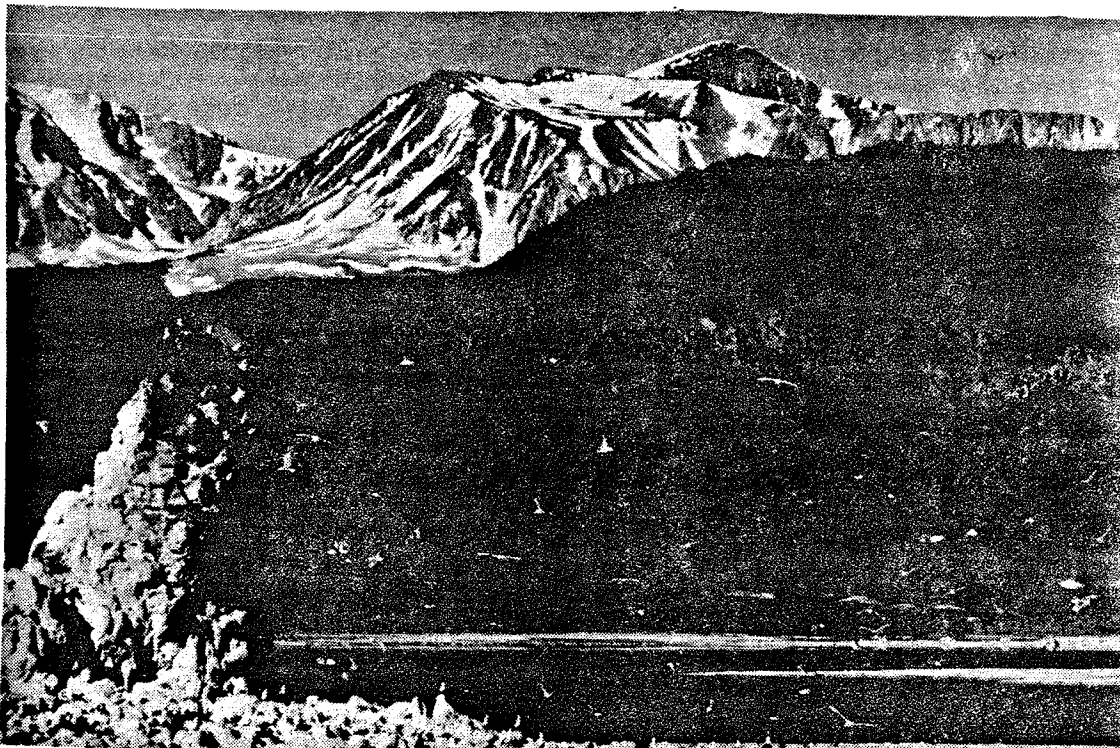


photo: Bev Steveson

on rocks about the lake. The little that is known about the Kuzedika, "the kutsavi or fly-pupae-eaters," is summarized by Davis (1965).

No early visitor could overlook the fact that the Kuzedika relished the pupae of the Mono Lake brine flies as a source of nourishment. In 1863, for example, Brewer wrote in his journal (Brewer 1966):

"They come from far and near to gather them. The worms are dried in the sun, the shell rubbed off, when a yellowish kernal remains, like a small grain of rice. This is oily, very nutritious, and not unpleasant to the taste, and under the name koo-chah-bee forms a very important article of food. The Indians gave me some; it does not taste bad, and if one were ignorant of its origins, it would make a fine soup."

Unfortunately the stories, legends, mythologies and beliefs of the Kuzedika were never recorded. Even the aboriginal names for Mono Lake and its islands have been lost. In naming the islands, however, Russell (1889) "preferred to record some of the poetic words from the language of the aboriginal inhabitants of the valley":

"...there is a story about diminutive spirits, having long, wavy hair, that are sometimes seen in the vapor wreaths ascending from hot springs. The word pa-o-ha, by which these spirits are known, is also used at times to designate hot springs in general. We may therefore name the larger island Paoha Island, in remembrance, perhaps, of the children of the mist that held their revels there on moonlit nights in times long past..."

During the Mining Boom

Many early travellers were awed by the magnificent panorama of peaks and volcanoes which grace Mono's shores. In the 1865 issue of Harper's New Monthly Magazine, for example, J. R. Browne described the Mono landscape:

"The glowing atmosphere hung over the lake like a vast prismatic canopy. Myriads of aquatic fowl sported on the glassy surface of the water, which reflected the varied outlines and many-colored slopes of the surrounding mountains. Trees, rocks, islands and all visible objects were duplicated with wonderful clearness and accuracy."

At the time of Browne's visit Mono Lake's wealth of bird-life was being exploited to supply Lundy, Mono Mills, Aurora, Bodie and other nearby mining towns with fresh meat and eggs. What he saw amounted to market hunting of migratory and wintering waterfowl:

"During the winter months the waters of the lake are literally covered with swans, geese, brant, ducks, and smaller aquatic fowl. It is incredible the numbers of these birds that appear after the first rains. Sportsmen find it a laborious job to carry home their game. A regular gunning expedition in this region results in nothing short of wholesale slaughter."

"Mono Lake ducks" were sold house to house in Bridgeport for 20¢ apiece (Cain 1961).

Local entrepreneurs also recognized the opportunity to make more money selling gull eggs than they could working the mines. In his 1863 journal, Brewer (1966) described the origin of this commerce:

"Hens' eggs are worth from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per dozen in Aurora, 30 miles distant, so an old mountaineer conceived the idea of gathering these gull eggs for market. He dug out a neat canoe from a tree, and in the spring hired two Indians to help him collect the eggs."

During the peak of the mining era, the demand for eggs must have been enormous. Between 1862 and the stock market crash of 1889, the population of Mono County was many times larger than at present. Aurora boasted 5000 people in 1863, Bodie 10000 in 1880; both are ghost towns today. Several decades of "egging" may well have devastated Mono Lake's gull colony. Browne (1865) suggests the rapacity with which the gulls were exploited:

"It is a common practice for the settlers to go over in their boats, and in the course of a few hours gather as many eggs as they can carry home... The Indians, until recently, derived a considerable portion of their subsistence from this source; but the white man, having a better right, of which gunpowder is the proof, has ordered the aboriginal egg-hunters to keep away."

In the ensuing years Mono Lake saw new, sometimes surprising, human endeavors. A five-ton steamer was hauled from San Francisco Bay to Mono in 1879 for the purpose of transporting wood from Lee Vining Creek to Bodie. On Sundays, "the Rocket... was used as an excursion craft... for people who wanted to visit the islands" (Cain 1961). Around 1910 an oil seepage was discovered on Paoha Island. A well drilled through two thousand feet of lake sediments failed to produce "black gold," but it told geologists the lake was ancient (Calhoun 1967). In 1917 Paoha's first and only homesteaders, the Wallis D. McPherson family, built a seven room house on the island and raised goats. The McPherson's departed in 1922, but the goats remained to populate Paoha's greasewood-covered hills.

Almost a National Park

John Muir was sufficiently impressed by Mono Lake to propose extending the boundary of Yosemite National Park eastward to its shores. "A country of wonderful contrasts," he wrote, "hot deserts bounded by snow-laden mountains, cinder and ashes scattered on glacier-polished pavement, frost and fire working together in the

making of beauty." In 1890 Robert Underwood Johnson, the editor of *Century Magazine* and Muir's friend, took up the cause in Washington D.C. He urged Congress to extend Yosemite's northern and southern boundaries eastward to the Nevada line. Such a park would have included the Mono Craters and all of Mono Lake. At the behest of mining interests, however, the Mono Lake drainage was excluded (Jones 1963).

Scientific Research

The first serious scientific research at Mono Lake focused on the geological features of its basin. In the spring of 1881, Israel Russell initiated a study that was to occupy him off and on for the next two years. His Quaternary History of Mono Valley, California, published in 1889, remains the outstanding contribution in its field. Russell was the first to deduce, for example, that Mono Lake had expanded more than once, that there had been multiple glaciations in the eastern Sierra and that Mono Craters and the islands were of recent origin. His report is still the most lucid introduction to the region. In his honor, another geologist, W. C. Putham, proposed that ice age Mono Lake be named Lake Russell (more on Russell in a future newsletter).

Although the geological wonders of the Mono Basin have continued to attract the interest of scientists, its biological wonders have been neglected. Of 12 doctoral dissertations conducted in Mono Basin during

the past 15 years, only Mason's 1965 Limnology of Mono Lake dealt with living organisms, primarily plankton. The remaining body of data on the lake's biology consisted almost entirely of casual, sometimes contradictory observations until studies were initiated by the Mono Basin Research Group in 1976.

The Water Seekers

Ironically, while the interest of the biological community lagged, that of the City of Los Angeles increased. To understand its involvement with Mono Basin water, we must look back to the turn of the century. At that time wealthy development interests realized that Southern California's sparse water supply, less than two percent of the state's total, condemned their plans for massive future growth. In 1904 William Mulholland, the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Water System, camped among the green fields and Sierra-fed streams of the Owens Valley, a burgeoning agricultural community 250 miles north of Los Angeles and 50 miles south of Mono Lake. Nine years later water from the Owens River was flowing through the newly completed Los Angeles Aqueduct, and Owens Lake, a large saline sea at the foot of Mt. Whitney, was turning into alkali dust (Nadeau 1974).

To promote municipal bond issues to finance the aqueduct, Mulholland fabricated a drought which never existed. To quote from Kahrl (1976): "Cooper's Aqueduct Empire recalls on Mulholland's authority that the average

rainfall in Los Angeles from 1895 to 1904 dropped to only six inches per year; in fact, national weather bureau records reveal that Los Angeles' annual precipitation in this period averaged 11.52 inches." Remi Nadeau, in his widely read book The Water Seekers, repeats the same fabrication. And, ironically, we repeat it once again in our own publication "Mono Lake: Its Uncertain Future" (on page 10)!



Cartoon from the Los Angeles Times, November 23, 1924, when Valley ranchers "captured" the Alabama Gates and turned water out of the aqueduct for five days. Valley farmers posted armed guards at their headgates, opened spillway gates, and blew up the aqueduct seventeen times. Newspapers generally condemned Los Angeles.

Will Rogers extended sympathy through his syndicated column: "Ten years ago this was a wonderful valley with a quarter million acres of fruit and alfalfa. But Los Angeles had to have more water for its Chamber of Commerce to drink more toasts to its growth, more water to dilute its orange juice. . . . So, now this is the valley of desolation."

Eventually the city's unquenchable growth led to a bitter, sometimes violent and devious struggle with Owens Valley farmers over water rights. The full story of the "embattled farmers" who "seized the Los Angeles Aqueduct and made a sport of blasting it with dynamite" is told by Kahrl (1976), Nadeau (1974) and Wood (1973). Los Angeles triumphed, leaving a legacy of abandoned houses and barns, "dead trees, weed-grown fields, neglected fences, and empty ditches" as "poignant reminders of shattered hopes and dreams" (Smith 1978). Although the city invoked the "greatest good for the greatest number" as justification for its actions, critics claimed "the planners of the aqueduct, besides devastating the valley, bilked the citizens of Los Angeles in order to reap swollen profits on San Fernando real estate" (Caughey 1970; Kahrl 1976). Even before the struggle ended, the city cast its eyes on the waters which fed Mono Lake.

The Mono Basin Diversions

The plans of the Los Angeles water seekers were grandiose: diversion of all but one of Mono Lake's major tributary streams into the Owens River via an eleven mile tunnel under the Mono Craters. In 1930 the people of Los Angeles approved a \$38,800,000 bond to finance the project. Public Law 864, passed by Congress on March 4, 1931, withdrew public lands in the Mono Basin "from settlement, location, filing, entry, or disposal under the land laws of the United States for the protection of the watershed supplying the City of Los Angeles." Suits were brought to condemn property and water rights in the basin, a maneuver to force ranch owners to sell to the city for lower prices (Wood 1973). Eventually over five million dollars was spent by Los Angeles on land and water rights (Lane et al. 1974). In 1934 construction of the Mono Craters tunnel was begun, but difficulties with steam, hot water, volcanic gases and ground caving delayed completion of the project until 1940. One year later the first Mono Basin water was diverted into the Owens River,

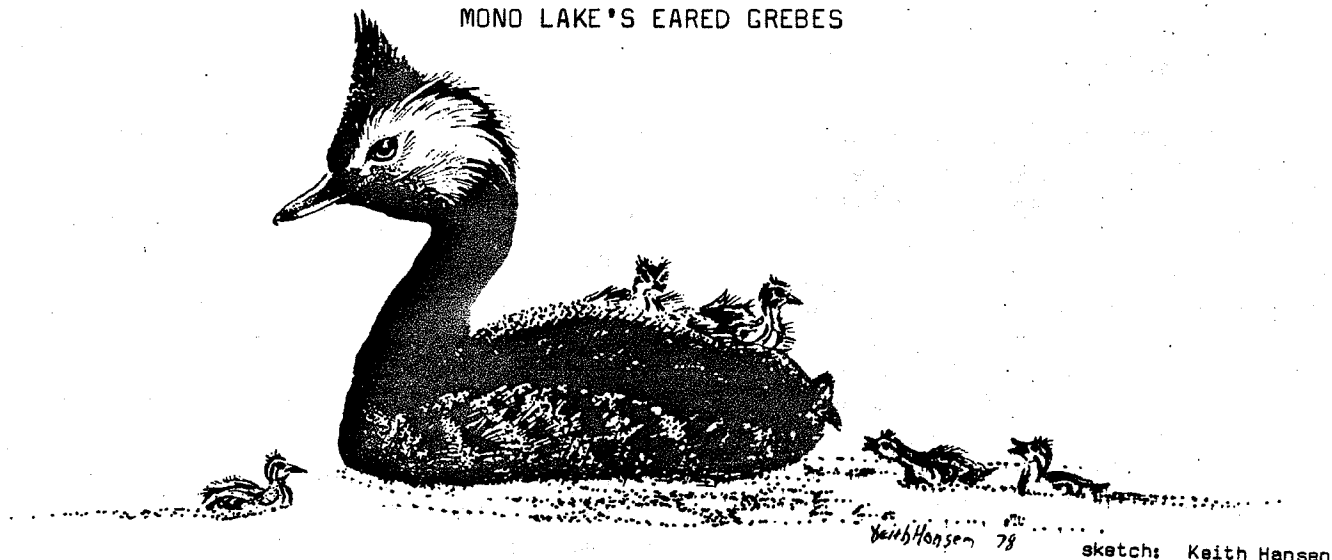
extending thereby the aqueduct system to an intake 338 miles from Los Angeles, farther north than San Francisco. But for Mono Lake, worse was yet to come.

In 1963 Los Angeles announced plans to construct a second Los Angeles Aqueduct. According to the DWP, the water for this aqueduct would derive from "further utilization of the ground water resources of the Owens Valley by increased pumping" and "salvage of the water in Mono Basin being lost into the saline water of Mono Lake." Since the completion of this aqueduct in 1970, mean annual export of water from the Mono Basin has increased from approximately 55,000 acre-feet per year (1941-1970) to 110,000. Releases into Mono Lake have fallen from approximately 40,000 acre-feet per year to practically zero. As a result the level of Mono Lake has fallen over 30 feet and continues to drop at an average rate of almost two vertical feet per year.

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MONO LAKE'S EARED GREBES



sketch: Keith Hansen

If only to see the Eared Grebes no naturalist should bypass Mono Lake. These small diving birds are partial to Mono's briny waters. The term "abundant," applicable at least from May through December, fails to describe their incredible numbers. At few places on earth do so many birds gather at once.

The Eared Grebe is most numerous at Mono during their southward migrations. From August until the end of November the lake is dotted with hundreds upon hundreds of thousands. The birdwatcher surveying the scene may well imagine that all the Eared Grebe millions of western North America stop here to rest and feed. Estimates of their numbers have ranged as high as 1,115,000 (Amer. Birds 28: 98)!

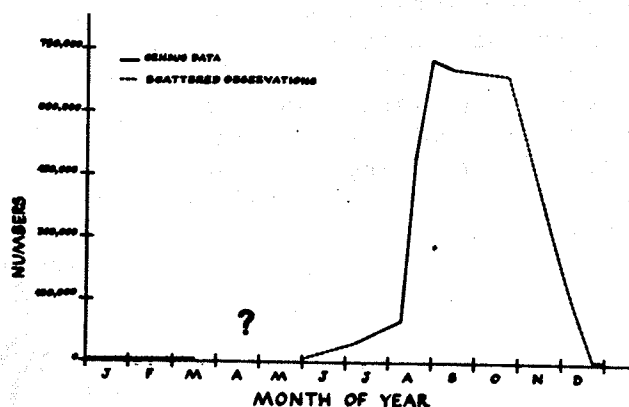
In 1976, according to careful censuses conducted by the Mono Basin Research Group, the population peaked at 730,250 grebes on August 30th. As late as November 21st, half a million still lingered on the lake. In 1978 over 800,000 were tallied in September. These figures are conservative, however, since for every three counted, two more were probably missed because they were diving underwater.

Grebes are beautifully adapted to aquatic life. They not only feed, sleep, court and mate in water, but are also the only birds known that

carry their young pickaback under the surface. They build floating nests out of buoyant aquatic vegetation which can adjust to rises and fall in water level.

Because Mono is destitute of aquatic vegetation, the grebes do not nest there. But they depend on the lake's abundance of food during their long migratory journeys. Without Mono, it is doubtful they could cross the vast arid interior of western North America.

The Eared Grebe is Mono Lake's most numerous avian visitor, and her least studied. We know virtually nothing about the ecological relationships between this bird and the lake. What do the grebes eat? How do they cope with the salty, alkaline water? These are just two of the many basic and intriguing questions that remain to be answered.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Smith, Genny Schumacher, ed. 1978.
Deepest Valley: A Guide to the Owens Valley. Revised Ed. William Kaufmann Inc., Los Altos, CA.

The revised edition of Genny Smith's guidebook to the Owens Valley is the best source of general information, not only on the geology, biology, history, roadsides and trails of the "deepest valley," but also on Inyo County's groundwater conflict with the Los Angeles DWP. This conflict, which erupted into a court battle in 1972 and still rages furiously, is of germinal importance to Mono Lake and, indeed, to the preservation of water-dependent habitat throughout the arid west.

To quote from Smith's introduction to the chapters she has added on the controversy:

"Yesterday's conflict revolved around the right to use surface water, the right to divert running streams. Today's conflict centers on the right to use groundwater, which lies below the surface of even the most arid valleys. Does the owner of land have exclusive control over use of the water below? Does he have the right to drill and pump without limit--regardless of harm to plants, animals, air and people? An even broader argument questions whether anyone has the right to use any water without regard for the impact that use will have on other people and on the environment..."

Smith lets each side speak for themselves. Antonio Rossmann, Special Counsel to the County of Inyo, and Paul Lane, Chief Engineer of the DWP, interpret the critical issues as they see them. The outcome of this case will have far-reaching implications for water use throughout the arid west. Essential reading!

Bowen, S. T. et al. 1978. *Artemia Hemoglobins: Genetic Variation in Parthenogenetic and Zygogenetic Populations*. Biol. Bull. 155: 273-287.

Does the "Mono Shrimp" deserve species status? Or should it be considered a subspecies or race of a cosmopolitan brine shrimp superspecies?

Bowen and her co-workers at San Francisco State University have been investigating the genetics of brine shrimp populations for many years. In this recent publication they present and discuss the results of electrophoretic analysis of shrimp hemoglobins. Although the paper is technical, it contains a brief but illuminating summary of the state of brine shrimp taxonomy.

The Mono Shrimp was described as a distinct species, *Artemia monica*, by A. E. Verill in 1869 (Am. J. Sci. Arts, Ser. 2, 43: 244-254). But, as Bowen et al. point out, "the taxonomy of *Artemia* is in a state of flux because the morphological differences between sibling species vary with age, sex and environmental influences" and because "early taxonomists assigned species names to shrimp at each locality and these names were often based on preserved specimens of different ages which were collected from salterns of different salinities." Hence the status of various brine shrimp "species" must be reviewed in light of recent studies of their biochemistry and reproductive isolation.

Based on such considerations, Bowen et al. recognize the Mono Shrimp as a distinct, reproductively isolated species, *Artemia monica*.



RESEARCH NEWS

Comparative Study of Brine Fly and Brine Shrimp Populations at Mono and Abert Lakes

David Herbst Dept. of Zoology
Oregon State Univ., Corvallis 97331

Mono Lake, though having a comparatively unique biological community and natural history, is only one of many high desert salt-alkali lakes found in the Great Basin. These lakes have different numbers and types of organisms present in them, which may in part be due to their varied physical and chemical characteristics.

Two aquatic animals occurring in great abundance at salt lakes are brine shrimp (*Artemia*) and brine flies (*Ephydra hians*), both of which serve as critical food sources to migratory and breeding birds. I have been conducting research on the populations of these animals found at Mono Lake and at Lake Abert in southeastern Oregon. Although both of these bodies of water are highly alkaline, Mono is more stable, being one of the oldest continuously existing lakes in North America. Lake Abert, on the other hand, has been dry for short periods during the last century and fluctuates greatly in salinity from year to year. At present it is slightly more saline than sea water, whereas Mono is nearly three-fold as salty.

I have focused my research on how the shrimp and fly populations survive such extreme environmental conditions and fluctuations. My major objective is to integrate adaptations by internal adjustments (physiological) with those involving external interactions and living habits (ecological).

Among my most intriguing discoveries to date are

(continued p. 18)

Spring Waterbird Migration at Mono Lake

David Winkler Museum Vertebrate Zoology
Univ. of Calif., Berkeley 94720

This spring, yet another way in which Mono Lake is important to birds was revealed when an extensive migration of waterbirds, virtually unknown previously, was documented on its shores. No less than 17 species were added to the lake's list of spring migrants. The numbers recorded for several species indicate that they are no doubt of regular occurrence. The utility of Mono's waters for spring migrants is doomed, as are nearly all other aspects of the lake's biota, if the City of Los Angeles continues to divert its tributaries at the present rate.

Waterbird Migration at Mono Lake, Spring 1978.

Species	First count	Peak No.'s	Last count
Eared Grebe	87 (4/5)	45,000 (4/23)	3000 (5/31)
Western Grebe *	24 (4/18)	24	1 (5/31)
White Pelican	125 (4/4)	125	55 (5/4)
		100 (4/30)	
Cattle Egret *	1 (5/4)	—	1 (5/23)
Great Egret *	1 (4/7)	—	—
Snowy Egret *	2 (5/9)	2	1 (5/23)
Green Heron *	1 (4/5)	—	—
Black-bellied Plover	100 (4/4)	100	35 (5/12)
Semipalmated Plover	2 (4/15)	268 (5/2)	2 (5/17)
Snowy Plover	9 (4/5)	214 (5/17)	28 (5/31)†
Killdeer	16 (4/4)	45 (4/16)	7 (5/31)†
Greater Yellowlegs *	5 (4/4)	23 (4/15)	1 (5/2)
Lesser Yellowlegs	1 (4/16)	2 (4/30)	2 (5/9)
Willet *	2 (4/17)	12 (4/23)	1 (5/2)
Ruddy Turnstone *	12 (5/12)	—	—
Red Knot *	12 (4/19)	15 (4/21)	1 (5/12)
Least Sandpiper	76 (4/4)	2000 (4/30)	20 (5/12)
Baird's Sandpiper *	5 (4/17)	5	1 (4/21)
Dunlin *	1 (4/9)	802 (5/2)	10 (5/17)
Western Sandpiper	4 (4/15)	2025 (5/2)	1 (5/29)
Sanderling *	3 (4/21)	21	21 (5/17)
Long-billed Curlew *	1 (4/17)	1 (4/29)	1 (5/9)
Whimbrel *	1 (5/12)	—	—
Marbled Godwit *	1 (5/2)	—	—
Long-billed Dowitcher	5 (4/5)	44 (5/12)	44
Short-billed Dowitcher	38 (4/5)	135 (4/25)	26 (5/2)
Black-necked Stilt	1 (4/17)	6 (5/9)	6
American Avocet	152 (4/5)	300 (4/30)	+ (5/31)†
Wilson's Phalarope	4 (4/17)	240 (4/30)	+ (5/31)†
Northern Phalarope	30 (5/1)	1200 (5/17)	4 (5/31)

* First spring record(s) for Mono Lake.

† Remain to breed.

from: Am Birds 32:1051

Comparative Study, continued from p. 17.

substantial differences in population dynamics and life histories between the Mono Lake and Lake Abert brine shrimp. For some as yet unknown reason brine shrimp nauplii (early developmental stage) hatch from their protective eggs or cysts in the frigid 30° water of Lake Abert in midwinter. These animals continue to develop through the spring as the water of this shallow lake warms. No further nauplii are found after their initial appearance. As the summer waters bloom with algal growth the shrimp mature, the females producing egg sacs from which the overwintering cysts and the following year's generation of shrimp arise. This single long annual generation is in marked contrast to the shorter spring-summer, multi-generational population at Mono Lake.

This information, as well as studies on the seasonal abundance and distribution of brine fly adults, may aid in understanding the migratory time schedule and ecological affinities of birds visiting Mono and Abert Lakes.

MLC UNOFFICIAL FINANCIAL REPORT March 1 - December 20, 1978

prepared by Sally Judy, Treasurer

I. Recorded Expenses¹

Materials and Supplies

Photographic (10 slide shows, prints, etc.)	\$498.19
Stationery	116.95
Displays	85.43

Desk Business

Phone	152.68
Copying	104.09
Books and Subscriptions	73.77

Publications

Printing ² (typesetting, graphics, paper)	1197.70
Postage	615.33

Bumper Stickers (3000)

787.57

Fees

Secretarial ³	600.00
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Travel

Car Mileage @ 10¢/mile	755.45
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TOTAL

\$4887.15

II. Income

Contributions

\$4680.32

Sale of Slide Show (At Cost)

34.15

TOTAL

\$4714.47

BALANCE

(\$172.68)

¹Many miles, hours, phone bills, meals, photos, etc. have been donated to the cause.

²Offset shop time donated by Mark Ross of California Syllabus, Oakland, California.

³Stipends to keep our director from starving and yours truly from throwing down the pen and taking a Christmas job.

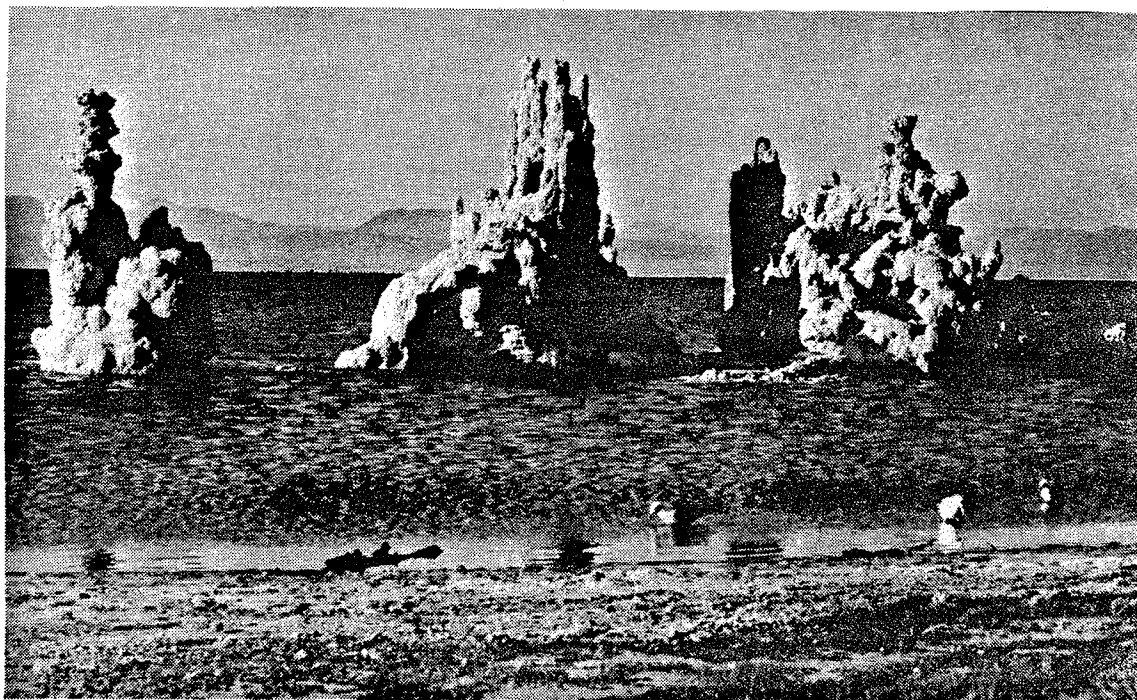


photo: Bev Stevenson

10/1/78

Dear Mono Lake committee

Remember me? I'm going to try to save Mono Lake, by making a little speech. Well I made it. Here is a copy. I'm going to send it out I hope soon.

Dear Ranger Rick:

My dad took me on a tour of Mono Lake. It is two times saltier than the ocean. When you swim in Mono Lake, if you are four feet tall and you go in six feet of water and you are not a good swimmer you will not drown because all the minerals and salts hold you up.

Mono Lake is living now but it has gotten smaller because of the L.A. Water Department. It could die if L.A. keeps taking the water.

Mono Lake has two islands on it named Negit and Paoha. One is bigger and one is smaller. They were made from volcanoes.

Birds stop at the lake because of the brine shrimp. They eat the shrimp. There are few lakes where the birds can stop and they are far away from each other. If Mono Lake dies the birds may not make it south to the next lake.

Also the California Gulls nest on the small island. But because of the L.A. Water Department the small island got so close to land they had to get the Army to boom it out back more into Mono Lake. The reason why they had to boom it out was because the coyotes could get to the island and eat the gulls' eggs and chicks.

The reason why the L.A. water dept. is taking this water is because L.A. wants water and because it is very cheap.

What will happen if they keep taking the water is the lake will shrink up and get very small and the brine shrimp will die so the California Gulls will not nest and other birds will not find a place to stop for many miles.

I would like you to make a story about Mono Lake or tell people in some other way to save Mono Lake.

Ananda Abarbanal-Rice

493 Central Ave.

Alameda C.A.

94501

Age 9

WHERE ARE WE?

One of our most frequently asked questions, after "where is Mono Lake?", is "where is the Committee?" Being a low-budget, volunteer organization, we have no central office where you can visit or call us. We pick up mail at an Oakland postal box and work out of our homes and tents scattered hither and yon. When possible, many of us are at the lake, so there may be delays in answering mail. Please forgive and understand. If you have a problem with mailing, we promise that a real human, not a computer, will try to correct it.

VOLUNTEERS, ANYONE?

We need dependable and stalwart people to oversee the production of our forthcoming T-shirts; the design is ready and legwork is needed.

We need leaders for this coming summers Mono Lake field trips; definite commitments to week-ends between June and September are required.

We always need help with newsletter assembly, such as typing, paste-up, stapling. Is there anyone out there with a selectric and speedy fingers?

HELP US GET PRESS COVERAGE FOR THE GULLS AND MONO LAKE!

Ask your newspaper, radio station, or television station to do a report. We will supply a press kit that includes a press release and full background information. We will forward the kit directly to the station or newspaper at your request. Or, better yet, we will send it to you for personal delivery.

Please let us know whether we can list your name and phone number as the local MLC member working on the campaign. Having someone involved from the community increases our chances for coverage.

ON BEHALF OF MONO LAKE AND ITS LIVING INHABITANTS WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK
OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT...

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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FROM: Mike and Joy Barclay, Rochelle Oldfield, Thelma Prescott, Albert Vogel, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Robert Bakker (present from C. Z.), Betty Alex, Tim Manolis, Contra Costa Hills Club, Mystery Friend (Fresno postmark)

PUBLIC TALKS ON MONO LAKE: THE LIVING DEAD SEA OF THE WEST

JANUARY

- 3 Santa Monica; Santa Monica Public Library, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.
- 4 Pomona; Pomona College, Siever Lab, Rm. 108; sponsored by Pomona Valley Audubon Society.
- 5 Van Nuys; Sherman Oaks

JANUARY

- 3 Santa Monica; Santa Monica Public Library, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.
- 4 Pomona; Pomona College, Siever Lab, Rm. 108, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Pomona Valley Audubon Society.
- 5 Van Nuys; Sherman Oaks Recreation Center, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by San Fernando Audubon Society.
- 8 Thousand Oaks; First Federal Savings, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Conejo Valley Audubon Society.
- 8 Corte Madera; Corte Madera Co-op, 8:00 p.m.; sponsored by the Marin Chapter, Calif. Native Plant Society.
- 11 San Mateo; San Mateo Garden Center; sponsored by the Sequoia Audubon Society.
- 15 Morro Bay; Del Mar School, 501 Sequoia, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Morro Coast Audubon Society.

- 16 Riverside; First United Methodist Church, 4825 Brocton Ave., 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by Riverside Audubon Society.
- 17 Redlands; San Bernardino County Museum, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by the San Bernardino Audubon Society.
- 18 Whittier; Community Center, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by the Whittier Audubon Society.
- 18 Long Beach; El Dorado Nature Center, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by the El Dorado Nature Center.
- 19 Pasadena; Eaton Canyon Nature Center, 1750 North Altadena Dr., 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by the Pasadena Audubon Society.
- 26 Santa Barbara; Museum of Natural History, 8:00 p.m.; sponsored by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.

FEBRUARY

- 9 Reno; to be arranged; sponsored by the Sierra Club; for details call: Marge Sill, 702/322-2867.
- 13 Stockton; sponsored by Stockton Audubon Society; for details call: Dick Filsen, 209/466-8414.
- 15 San Francisco; Sierra Club dinner.
- 21 Davis; sponsored by Davis Audubon Society; for details call: Dean Jue, 916/756-3849.
- 22 Chico; Altacal Audubon Society annual dinner.

MARCH

- 15 South Lake Tahoe; sponsored by Tahoe Audubon Society.
- 21 Santa Monica; Santa Monica Public Library, 7:30 p.m.; sponsored by the Sierra Club.

discoursed on birds, brine shrimp, productivity, and so forth. Although the response was sometimes discouraging, we did reach sympathetic ears, including those of Assemblyman Norman Waters and Senator John Garamundi, whose districts include Mono Lake.

So we do have friends in the legislature. But to get something done in Sacramento, we need widespread support. To garner that support we must convince our elected officials that Mono Lake is too precious to sacrifice to the almighty dollar. It will have to be a grassroots campaign, and everyone who loves the lake will have to help.

Talking Our Hearts Out for Mono

Mono needs people raising their voices on its behalf. To win that support, committee volunteers have been presenting slide programs to interested groups from San Diego to Portland.

During October and November, committee chairperson David Gaines drove over 2300 miles and presented about 40 programs to schools, colleges, Audubon societies, Sierra Club chapters and other gatherings. He ranged from Modesto, Fresno and Bakersfield south to Los Angeles, Santa Ana and San Diego. During his travels he met with conservationists and reporters, and appeared on several radio and television broadcasts.

During the same period Gray Brechin, Elliot Burch, Steven Cunha, David DeSante, Howard Ferguson, David Herbst, Jim Sano and David Winkler talked to other groups throughout California and Oregon. We also furnished copies of our slide show to the Mammoth Lakes Ranger Station in Mono County and to the Yosemite Institute in Yosemite National Park.

We intend to keep on talking. If you know of an interested audience, please get in touch with one of our regional representatives. Programs already scheduled are listed on the opposite page. All are open to the public and free of charge, so tell your friends and spread the word!

Strategy: Where To From Here?

On October 26th we met with representatives from the Citizens Nongame Advisory Committee to Fish and Game, Friends of the Earth, Friends of the River, National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Presbyterian Church, Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund to discuss the Mono Lake crisis. Robert Langbauer, Minister at the Lee Vining Presbyterian Church, briefed us on over two years of efforts by his congregation on behalf of the lake, and, in general, the deep concern of local residents. Antonio Rossman, Special Counsel to the County of Inyo, reviewed the Inyo County lawsuit to limit groundwater pumping for the Los Angeles Aqueduct, its implications for Mono Lake, and our hopes for legal or legislative redress. From the presentations and ensuing discussion we concluded the following:

- (1) All avenues need to be pursued: governmental agencies, the California legislature, the U. S. Congress, the courts...
- (2) We must make Mono Lake a national issue and coalesce support from environmental, wildlife and political organizations nationwide...
- (3) We need to articulate alternatives to Mono Lake's destruction, i.e., urban water conservation in Los Angeles...

During the coming months we will keep working on all of these fronts. David Gaines will be spending January wooing the concerned citizens of Los Angeles to the Mono Lake cause. The rest of us will be travelling to Sacramento and Washington D. C. to plead for this inland sea and its embattled living inhabitants.

Meanwhile, on a more prosaic level, we are revising and upgrading our literature, printing more bumper stickers, designing T-shirts and planning for the coming summer's Mono Lake field trips.

MONO REFLECTIONS

On the barren shores of this great inland sea a slow, primal dawn has risen at the edge of the sky. The seasons leave on dry wind. For generations past a legion of kuchaba flies have followed an inward moving circle at this waters edge, leaving themselves in the deep black mud of bygone. From the intensity of this life we borrow excitement and joy, from its end know destiny and take solace at the rekindling of a pattern, reaffirmed through both the journey of the individual and the cycle of generations.

...David Herbst

Sitting in a warm Berkeley living room, fortified with coffee and discussing Mono's plight, my mind wandered out to that old lake in the desert night 200 miles away. It's very cold out there now, and the lake is largely alone except for a few hundred thousand grebes and some year-round people harder than myself.

If there are place spirits, Mono has one of the strongest I have ever encountered. It's easy to personify the lake; I sometimes wonder what it thinks as its three million years of existence comes to an abrupt end. I have thought of Mono as an old friend for so many years that it now looks to me like a prone patient being bled to death on an operating table, and I wonder if that great reservoir of experience dreams back to the ground-breakings and upthrust of the Sierra which gave it birth, to the icebergs and volcanic fountains which have reflected on its surface in the recent past. Morbidly I wonder if it will stink when its prodigious life finally expires out on the bone-white lakebed.

But Mono is not an easy friend. In September it drowned five people who loved it when they were caught in a squall. One local said "its a nasty lake," but it's not that either.

Mono is a mirror and a lens for all people who come to it. If you are careless, it will kill you. It can be one of the loneliest places on earth,

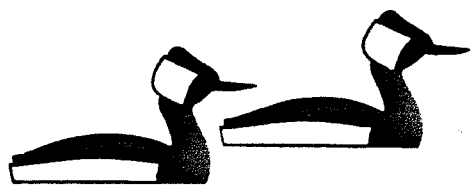
and one of the loveliest. For one is seldom alone at Mono. Canoeing on its ancient green water, you are enveloped within the fecundity of life which wells from its depths and descends on it from the desert sky in ever-flowing migrations.

Whether Mono Lake has a consciousness will remain one of its mysteries. But Mono endows its friends with awareness, for we have all had to learn from it. Mono has taught us to see the world anew, to accept and perceive beauties we had been unaware of, and to ask questions whose answers may be far from simple or comfortable. On the solitude of its beaches, at dawn and at dusk, we have learned to listen and to watch and to live quietly with ourselves. But mostly, we have learned to live with other beings which we cannot use but whose mere presence enhances our daily existence.

Mono doesn't ask simple questions. It demands an examination of the inner and outer worlds which constitute human awareness. And that is why it is the best kind of friend, and that is why we cannot let it die.

...Gray Brechin

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK John and Dorothy Almklov, Bill Goodloe, Joyce Hall, Rob Hansen, Fred Harper, Joe Medeiros, Marsh Pitman and especially Robert Barnes and Edith Gaines for helping to organize our chairperson's very successful November lecture tour; Grace DeLaet for hosting a fund-raising luncheon; Keith Axelson for designing our elegant new stationery; Bev Steveson, Jim Stroup and Woody Woodward for donating excellent and much-needed black-and-white photographs; Eben McMillan and Wallis McPherson for allowing us to copy their pictures of the lake in years past; Keith Hansen and Becky Shearin for their fine pen-and-ink sketches; Gary Haas, Lily Mathieu, the students at Andrew Jackson Elementary School, and all of you for writing letters, filling petitions and helping in other ways to assure that this lake we all love will continue to live on!



Mono Lake Wine Tasting

Presented by George Peyton

SAUVIGNON BLANC

1979 Joseph Phelps

CHARDONNAY

1979 Dry Creek (Sonoma County)

1978 Freemark Abbey (Napa Valley)

1979 Ventana Vineyards (Monterey County)

ZINFANDEL

1977 Ridge (Sonoma County)

1978 Gracich Hills (Sonoma County)

1978 Montevina (Amador County)

(Willow Creek Late Harvest-San Luis Obispo County)

JOHANNISBERG REISLING

1978 Firestone Vineyard Special Selection (with Botrytis)

(Ambassador's Vineyard-Santa Ynez Valley)

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Vol. 241—40,118
Sunday, November 19, 1978



Published daily and Sunday
By McCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

ELEANOR McCLATCHY, chairman
of the board

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Editorials

Crisis At Mono Lake

Environmentalists have raised a warning that Mono Lake, a hauntingly beautiful body of water which Mark Twain called "the dead sea of California" is in danger of being killed by the city of Los Angeles in its drive to slake its insatiable thirst.

They charge the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is jeopardizing the lake's environment by unrestricted diversion of water from its major tributaries. If the lake succumbs, it would be Los Angeles' second ecological victim. Already, the Owens Valley, south of Mono Lake, has been turned from a thriving agricultural area into a salt flat by the city's excessive water drafts.

The diversions at Mono Lake have caused its level to drop nearly 40 feet since the 1940s. Since 1970, when they were doubled, it has dropped almost two feet a year. Even though the runoff last winter was almost twice the usual amount, most of it was shunted south into the Los Angeles Aqueduct, and the lake continued to shrink. The fear is that if the diversions continue at the same rate, the lake will become a dust bowl.

That would be "an ecological and environmental disaster of major proportions," according to David Gaines, a University of

California biologist and a leader of a committee to save Mono Lake.

The lake, a 10-mile by 14-mile body of brackish water east of the Sierra and north of Bishop, is a breeding area for thousands of California gulls. Gaines says millions of other birds also dependent on the lake will have no other place to go. Further, he says, "clouds of alkali dust will be swept from the exposed lake bottom into the eastern Sierra atmosphere, polluting the air and jeopardizing the health of plants, animals and humans far from Mono's shores."

Since the city purchased the water rights years ago, few would deny it has the legal right to divert a certain amount of water. Even the committee to save Mono Lake doesn't want to terminate the diversions. It only wants them kept at the 1976 level.

But Los Angeles doesn't accept this. A representative of the Department of Water and Power puts the issue strictly on economic grounds. To replace Mono Lake water would be extremely expensive, he says — \$9 million a year for 100,000 acre-feet now and maybe \$20 million a year later. That is a lot of money — perhaps as much as \$15 or \$20 a year per Los Angeles user. But it would be a just expense. No area has the right, for its own selfish purposes, to turn another region into a desert.

ALMS FOR MONO? Despite persistent rumors that we are vacationing in Mazatlan or investing in discos, your money really is flowing into Mono Lake. We receive no funds from the Audubon Society. Time is volunteered by bona fide Monomaniacs. Transportation is furnished by a '64 Valiant and a '72 Datsun, both well over 100,000 miles down the road. Your tax-deductable contributions pay our phone bills, travel expenses, and publishing and mailing costs. We anticipate expenses to cover a lobbying trip to Washington D.C. and to pay a full-time staffer to expedite the increasing volume of mail and our publicity efforts.

By the way, BUMPER STICKERS emblazoned with the words LONG LIVE MONO LAKE or SAVE MONO LAKE in attractive blue letters are now available. We ask a minimum donation of one dollar.

Please fill out this coupon and
send to:

Mono Lake Committee
P. O. Box 2764
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I want to help Mono Lake live on.

Here is my contribution for:

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☐ \$25 sponsor
☐ \$100 ☐ I'm interested in promoting
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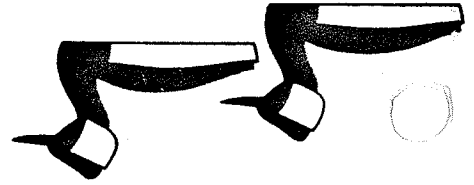
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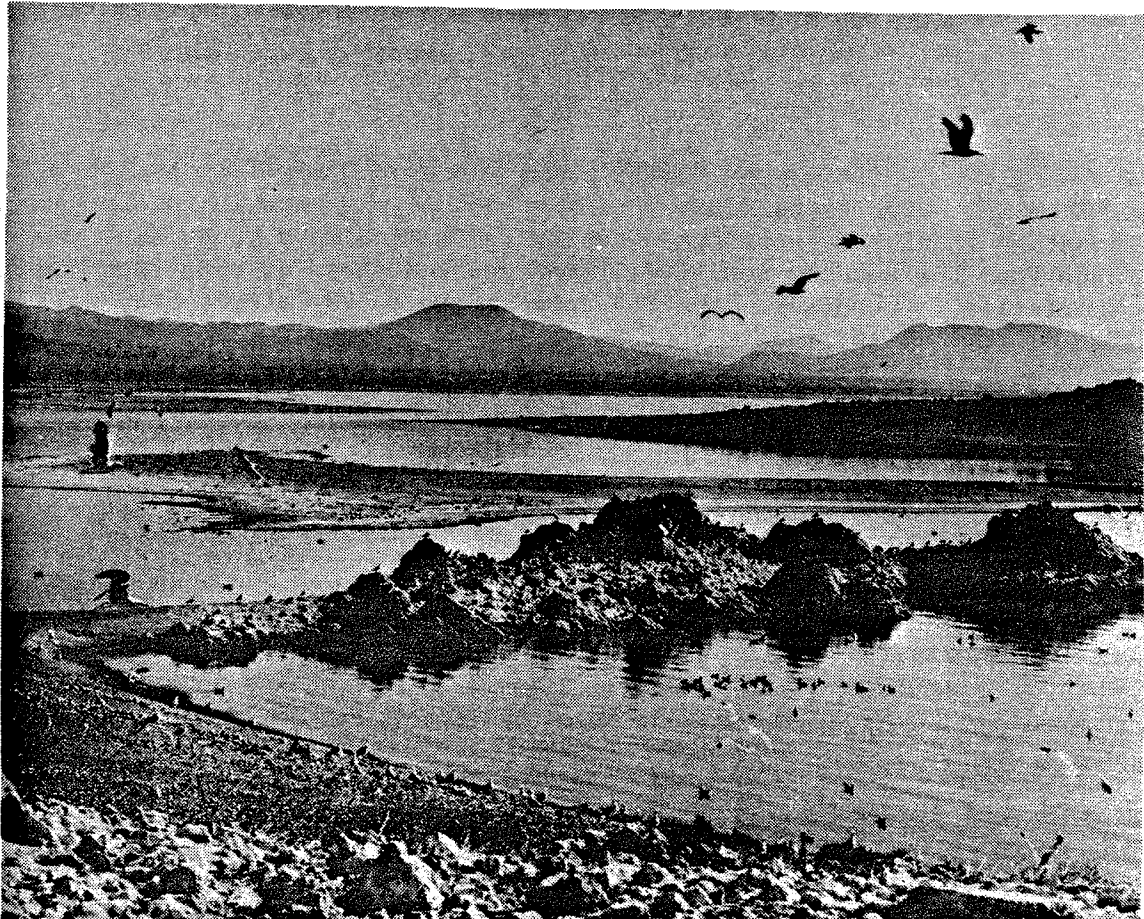


photo: Bev Steveson