



Media Release

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How Healthy Are California's Estuaries?

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"*How Healthy are California's Estuaries?*" is one of the many questions that the latest update to California's innovative *My Water Quality* website will answer. The California Estuaries Portal is a new tool that presents information on the health of California's estuaries, with an initial emphasis on the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary; content relating to California's remaining estuaries will be added in future portal updates. The goal is to provide timely information in an easy-to-understand manner for the public, environmental organizations, and water resource professionals. View the new California Estuaries Portal from the My Water Quality website, www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov, under "Are Our Aquatic Ecosystems Healthy?"

The *My Water Quality* website enters its fourth year and is sponsored by the California Water Quality Monitoring Council (Monitoring Council). It is a partnership between the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), the California Natural Resources Agency, and numerous other federal, state, and local government and non-government organizations. This innovative website houses the widest collection of water quality and ecosystem health data ever available about our state's water resources.

The California Estuaries Portal helps facilitate the dissemination of information generated through monitoring and research efforts to a variety of audiences, including the public, managers, and policy makers. The California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup is creating opportunities to make monitoring efforts more efficient, reduce redundancies, and improve coordination among member agencies.

"We are pleased to collaborate with our state partners on the California Estuaries Portal," said Jared Blumenfeld, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Supporting better estuary resource management is vital because California's economic security depends on a healthy San Francisco Bay-Delta."

Formed in 2007 by Cal/EPA and the Natural Resources Agency, the Monitoring Council brings together water quality and ecosystem health information from a variety of organizations with special expertise and data relating to specific ecological attributes, including: phytoplankton, zooplankton, benthic organisms, fish and birds. The efforts in these specific areas were coordinated through the Estuary Monitoring Workgroup, which facilitates dialogue and coordination among 16 state, federal and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations that monitor and assess our state's estuaries.

“By making data and information about the Delta and San Francisco Bay readily available, the Estuary Portal will be an immense help in developing a common understanding of the challenges facing the largest estuary on the west coasts of the Americas,” said Delta Stewardship Council Deputy Executive Officer Rainer Hoenicke. “The portal will greatly assist in the urgent efforts to achieve California’s co-equal goals of protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem and providing a more reliable statewide water supply.”

Recognizing the importance of integrating existing estuary monitoring and assessment programs, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy participates in the California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup. “We are very excited about the release of the Estuaries Portal as it serves an important role in identifying and communicating information to the Delta community on the ecological health of the Delta,” said Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer of the Delta Conservancy.

“The California Estuaries Portal is fundamental to furthering the discussions and understanding of ecosystem health and Delta resources,” said Department of Water Resources Director Mark Cowin. “The portal represents a collaborative effort among agencies involved in Delta Science that serves to improve the delivery of estuarine health information to decision makers and the public.”

Estuaries Portal

www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/estuaries/

Fact sheet on the new Estuaries Portal:

www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/estuaries/docs/estuaries_factsheet.pdf

More information on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council:

www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/

More information on the California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup:

http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/estuary_workgroup/