



# Salton Sea Public Access Community Survey

KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF SALTON SEA AREA  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONDUCTED MAY 20–JUNE 2, 2022

# Salton Sea Public Access Community Survey

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AUDUBON CALIFORNIA

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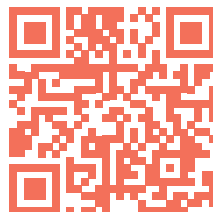
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**Cover photo:** Local students from Indio High School gathered on the east shore of the Salton Sea. Photo: Ryan Llamas

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**Additional Resources:** For more information, visit the Audubon California Salton Sea [website](#) or scan the QR code.



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# Executive Summary

For successful implementation of public access projects, it is important to understand what local communities want and need and what activities and services they value. To inform the development of long-range planning, public access, and research opportunities around the Salton Sea, Audubon California sought to find out how community members feel about the Salton Sea, what they value about outdoor public access, and what types of activities and services were most important to them. To do this, Audubon California surveyed community members to better understand 1) *how community members value nature and outdoor recreation*, 2) *how community members value the Salton Sea*, 3) *what activities and services do community members value at the Salton Sea*, 4) *what does the community's vision for a future Salton Sea look like*, all in the context of public access to the Salton Sea.

On behalf of Audubon California, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz, & Associates (FM3) conducted a survey of 631 Salton Sea-area adult community members to capture current impressions of the Salton Sea and explore their priorities for possible future services and recreational opportunities. Interviews were conducted online and by phone in English and Spanish. Additionally, 40 community members from the Purépecha community were interviewed in person in the native Purépecha language. Survey questions fell into three main categories: 1) *Current Recreation Habits*, 2) *Potential Services and Future Activities*, and 3) *Restoring the Salton Sea*. Responses to these interviews were then analyzed and summarized into key findings as the broadest and most detailed study of its kind in the region.

## CURRENT RECREATION HABITS

When asked about their experiences visiting natural recreation areas, responses revealed that a majority of Salton Sea community members visit California parks and natural areas, including along the Salton Sea. However, most Salton Sea visitors characterize the purpose of their visit as “passing through” places like Bombay Beach and Desert Shores. Community members who do not visit the Salton Sea largely say that concern about water quality is a barrier. Improving water quality is the most popular among proposed improvements to encourage more visitors to the area.

## POTENTIAL SERVICES AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The survey assessed which services community members valued most -- exploring their desire for more public availability in greater detail. In general, the services community members valued most were basic infrastructure features. These include bathrooms with running water, drinking water, lighting, paved roads, and spaces for people to gather (such as shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues). Improved access for people with disabilities is also very important for broad majorities. Women and community members of color are especially likely to value lighting, improved disability access, changing rooms and showers, and public transportation access.

## RESTORING THE SALTON SEA

In addition to understanding how people spend time at the Salton Sea and what barriers and opportunities exist for increasing visitation, the survey aimed to better-understand community members' sense of ongoing restoration efforts. Here, restoring the Salton Sea refers to restoration projects around the Sea and not necessarily restoring the Salton Sea to a past state. The study found that for a majority of locals, the most important reason to restore the Salton Sea is to protect public health followed by protecting fish, bird, and wildlife habitat; recreation was a distant third priority.

## HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Slightly over half of respondents indicated that they visited National or State Parks or beaches or Wildlife Areas in the last five years. A much higher percentage of respondents reported being extremely likely or very likely to visit local outdoor areas with improvements to environmental quality and accessibility. This seems to indicate that a larger percentage of community members value spending time in nature areas and outdoor recreation than was indicated by reporting on current visitation alone. This was true across demographics and geographic distribution, suggesting that given the opportunity, accessibility, and appropriate services, community members would take advantage of local opportunities to recreate and enjoy natural areas outdoors.

## HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE THE SALTON SEA

Nearly half of community members surveyed had visited the Salton Sea in the last five years. People visiting the Salton Sea usually visited established communities on either side of the Sea or established visitation centers like The Salton Sea State Recreation Area Visitors Center or the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. The established visitation centers already offer services and recreational opportunities.

## ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE AT THE SALTON SEA

Highly valued services were those that increased feelings of safety, comfort and accessibility. Services related to activities that were most likely to increase visitation included trails and paths, picnic and barbecue areas, boating opportunities, and nature education centers. Results suggest that if valued services and activities were implemented, a broader range of demographics would visit and engage in activities around the Sea. Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) projects such as the Bombay Beach Wetland Project and the Species Conservation Habitat area present opportunities to include public access and highly valued services and activities to create greater and more equitable access to the Salton Sea.

## THE COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR A FUTURE SEA

This study tells a story about what the community's vision for a future Salton Sea looks like. It includes projects at the Salton Sea that restore habitats, protect public health and provide opportunities to enjoy and recreate in nature. Community members prioritize the very basics when forced to choose (such as clean air or clean water or human health) because recreation is contingent on clean water and a healthy environment. Community members want safe, comfortable, and accessible places to visit the Salton Sea. They value public access and want more opportunities to enjoy it including opportunities for recreation. A future that includes public transit to the Sea is also valued, especially by community members of color. Community members want a future Sea with cleaner water and opportunities to recreate on it. These results are important because they can inform project development as well as communication and planning to set realistic expectations. It is important that the SSMP and long-range planning take into consideration what the local community values and wants in a future Salton Sea but also that the communication about long-term plans is clear so that community members understand what opportunities are likely to become available and what opportunities are unlikely to be realized in the near-, mid-, and long-term.



Salton Sea quarterly bird survey team and volunteers gathered at Salt Creek. Photo: Ryan Llamas

## Introduction

The Salton Sea has been in decline, economically and environmentally, for decades. As water is diverted less water is flowing into the Sea, prompting water levels to continue to recede and a consequential exposure of the lakebed and polluted sediments. Receding water levels have also led to increased salinity, impacting fish populations and food sources for migratory birds that depend on this important wetland resource in the Pacific Flyway (Jones et al. 2019; Bradley et al. 2022). Understanding how local communities view and value the environment and access to it is an important step in creating meaningful change with community buy-in and benefits. The State of California has been working for decades to plan and implement habitat projects around the Salton Sea to mitigate habitat loss.

Exposed sediments on the lakeshore also contribute to dust pollution and public health issues in the surrounding communities. Many of the State's and Imperial Irrigation District's efforts have also been focused on dust mitigation (Johnston et al. 2019; Doede & DeGuzman 2020; Biddle et al. 2022). As the state develops a long-range plan for habitat and dust suppression projects, public access must be an important factor to create access for local communities and tourists alike.

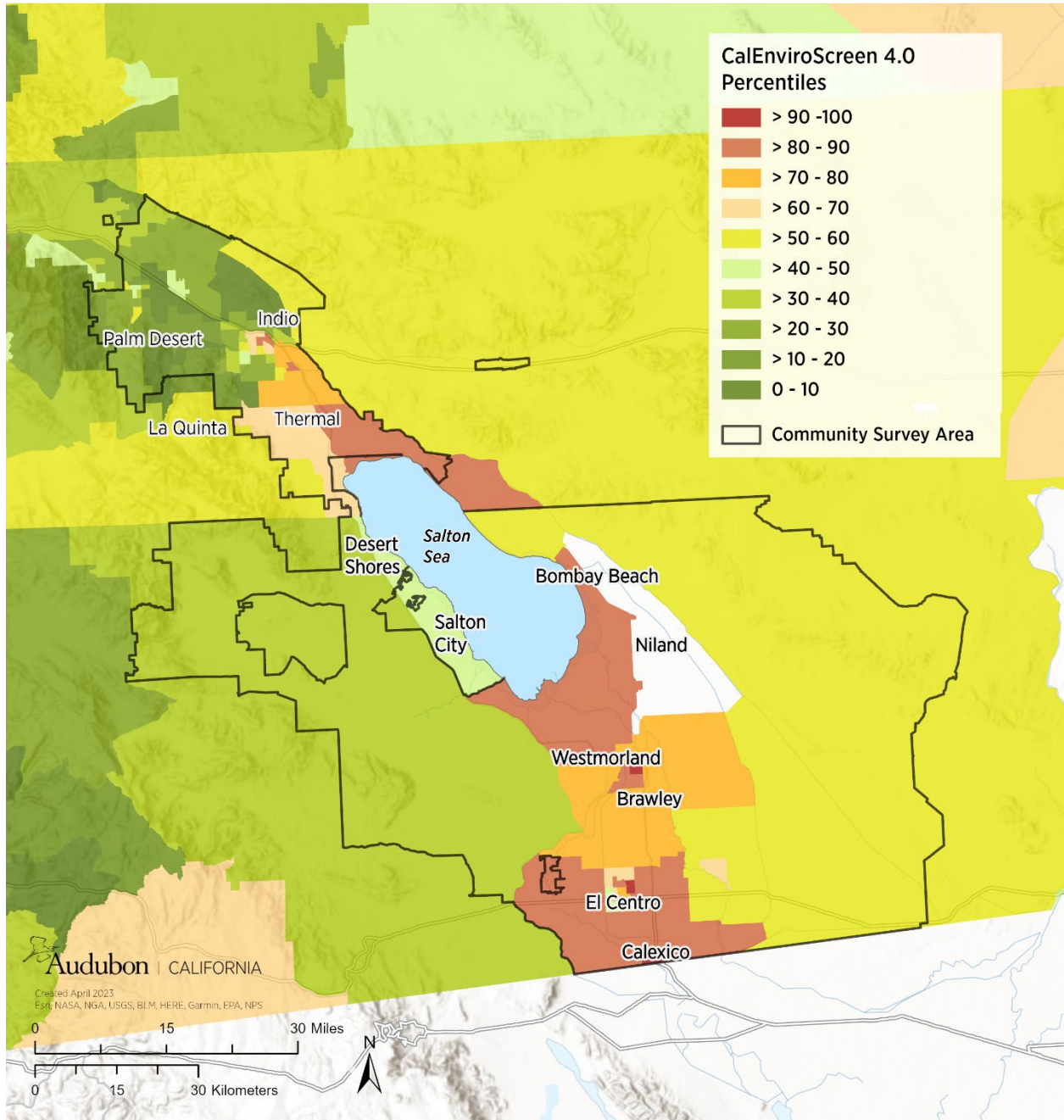
Communities directly adjacent to the Salton Sea are disadvantaged—exposed to health risks and environmental justice issues. Many of these communities are highlighted by CalEPA as being in the top 25% of CalEnviroScreen (Figure 1), which indicates these communities face a high pollution burden (OEHHA 2010). In addition, many of these communities are highlighted by the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Tool as disadvantaged (Figure 2) (White House Council on Environmental Quality 2022). Many community members of living around the Sea are also non-English speakers who may have difficulty getting their opinions heard by those who are developing project plans in the region. Engaging these communities in the context of public access and long-range planning at the Salton Sea could help create greater equity, opportunities, and community buy-in.

Successful implementation of public access requires an understanding of what local communities want and need and what activities and services they value. To help inform the development of long-range planning and public access opportunities around the Salton Sea, Audubon California wanted to find out from community members how they feel about the Salton Sea, how they value outdoor public access and what types of activities and services were most important to them. A broad and detailed study of what communities want and value would help ensure that planning and development of public access projects in the region would have the support of, and ultimately be used by the surrounding communities. To do this, Audubon California surveyed community members to better understand 1) *how community members value nature and outdoor recreation*, 2) *how community members value the Salton Sea*, 3) *what activities and services do community members value at the Salton Sea*, 4) *what does the community's vision for a future Salton Sea look like*, all in the context of public access to the Salton Sea. Audubon worked with Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz, & Associates (FM3) to develop specific survey questions to inform these larger questions and conduct a survey.

The intent of the community surveys was to interview individuals representing the entire adult population comprising the Salton Sea region, including those who are marginalized and often disregarded in community decision-making. Surveys reached community members as far north as Thousand Palms and as far south as Calexico and were conducted in two parts. For the first survey, 631 community members were interviewed in English and Spanish via telephone and online interviews. To ensure that the survey responses included underrepresented individuals who may not have the resources or language to respond to phone or internet surveys, Audubon California contracted a local Purépecha- and Spanish-speaking community leader to interview 40 community members from the Purépecha community in the native Purépecha language. This survey methodology that Audubon California and FM3 employed ensured that community survey results were inclusive of opinions, desires, and feelings of individuals from different socioeconomic and racial groups that comprise the Salton Sea region. Survey questions fell into three main categories: 1) *Current Recreation Habits*, 2) *Potential Services and Future Activities*, and 3) *Restoring the Salton Sea*. Survey data were then analyzed and summarized into key findings as the broadest and most detailed study of its kind in the region.

### Figure 1. CalEnviroScreen

CalEnviroScreen is a screening methodology that can be used to help identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution (California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment).





## Figure 2. Climate and Economic Justice

Census tracts that are overburdened and underserved are highlighted as being disadvantaged (gray) according to White House Council on Environmental Quality, Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.



## STUDY AREA

The Salton Sea is California's largest lake, spanning around 35 miles in length and around 15 miles in width. The Salton Sea is located within Imperial and Riverside counties and is a part of the Salton Trough, a geologic basin formed by the San Andreas Fault System that extends from southeast California to Baja Mexico. There are no outflows from the Salton Sea and inflows to the Salton Sea have been reduced due to less inflow from Mexico, diversion of water use from agricultural uses to coastal Southern California as a part of the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) (Barnum et al. 2017; Bradley et al. 2022), and increased evaporation due to climate change (Bradley et al. 2022). As the Salton Sea surface elevation has decreased, the water quality and air quality at the Salton Sea have worsened, significantly impacting the health of communities and ecosystems surrounding the Salton Sea (Jones et al. 2019; Johnston et al. 2019; Biddle et al. 2022).

The Salton Sea is a part of an arid desert environment composed of emissive sediment including lacustrine sediment from Holocene and Pleistocene periods and exposed lakebed sediment (playa) (Babcock 1974). The Salton Trough has one of the highest levels of particulate matter with aerodynamic diameter <10 (PM10) in the country (Chavez et al. 2007; United States Environmental Protection Agency 2021, Dickey et al. 2023). Receding water levels expose playa that contribute to dust pollution that have been correlated to public health issues among communities surrounding the Salton Sea (Johnston et al. 2019). In addition, the terminal nature of the Sea compounded with agricultural runoff and evaporation have caused salinity levels to increase to 74 PPT (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation 2020), compared to average salinity levels of about 35 PPT for the ocean.

## STUDY POPULATION

The Salton Sea is surrounded by rural towns and cities with populations ranging from around 231 (Bombay Beach) to around 44,000 (El Centro) (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). The east and west shores consist of rural towns including Desert Shores, Salton City, Niland, and Bombay Beach, while the North and South regions of the Salton Sea include larger sprawling cities such as Brawley, El Centro, and Indio. The Salton Sea region predominantly consists of Latino, white, and Native American communities including Purépecha community members. Purépecha is a vulnerable indigenous group largely comprised of immigrants from the Mexican state of Michoacan. Many from this group lack internet access, have limited education, and exclusively speak the native Purépecha language, and thus are often disregarded from community planning, policy, and decision making.

# Methodology

On behalf of Audubon California, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz, & Associates (FM3) conducted a survey of Salton Sea-area community members to capture current impressions of the Sea and explore their priorities for possible future services and recreational opportunities.

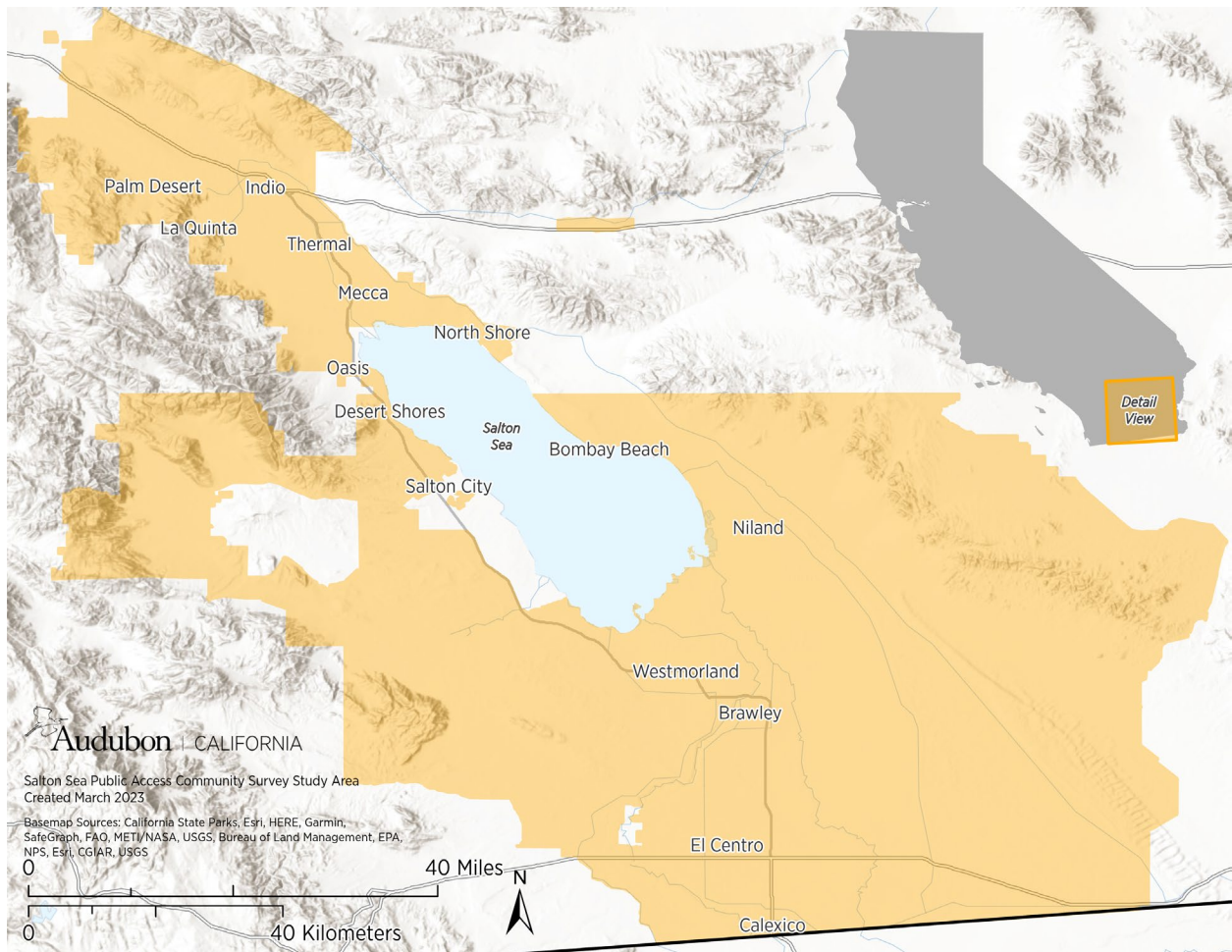
Interviews were conducted online and by phone (landline and cell) in English and Spanish between May 20 and June 2, 2022, comprising 631 adult community members who live in one of 24 selected ZIP codes near the Salton Sea (highlighted in the regional map in [Figure 3](#)). These ZIP codes were selected to ensure representation of communities adjacent to the Salton Sea that were most impacted by deteriorating environmental conditions at the Sea, underrepresented, disenfranchised and/or disadvantaged. Respondents were contacted via telephone calls, email invitations, and text invitations. The margin

of error for the full sample is  $\pm 4.0\%$  with a 95% confidence interval. Margins of error for population subgroups will be higher. Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Audubon California contracted community leader María Concepción Pozar Gonzalez to interview 41 adult community members in-person from the Purépecha community in the indigenous Purépecha language. To conduct these interviews, FM3 translated the community access survey into Spanish then Gonzalez verbally administered the surveys in Purépecha and translated and recorded their responses in Spanish via a tablet device. As the Purépecha community members were not randomly selected, this subset of survey results should be considered more qualitative in nature.

### Figure 3. Map of Surveyed Region

Showing the areas surveyed around the Salton Sea in orange. Some key cities are shown for reference. Boundaries of surveyed areas were based on zip codes.





Loma Linda University graduate students and partners head out to survey the northern side of the Salton Sea near the White Water River mouth. Photo: Andrea Jones/Audubon

## Results

### CURRENT RECREATION HABITS

A majority of Salton Sea community members surveyed visit California parks and natural areas, including along the Salton Sea. However, most Salton Sea visitors characterize the purpose of their visit as “passing through” places like Bombay Beach and Desert Shores. Community members who do not visit the Salton Sea largely say that concern about water quality is a barrier. By the same token, improving water quality is also the most popular among proposed improvements to encourage more visitors to the area.

### General Park and Wildlife Visitation

A narrow majority in the region spends time outdoors generally. Fifty-two percent of Salton Sea-area community members have visited a state park, beach, national park, or wildlife area in California in the last year. Women community members under 50, community members ages 30-49, community members with children, and community members of the cities of Imperial and Indio are more likely to visit than community members in the surveyed region overall (the largest of which include the cities of Brawley, Calexico, Coachella, El Centro, and La Quinta).

Among Purépecha community members, more than half (56%) had not visited a park, beach, national park, or natural area in California in the last year.

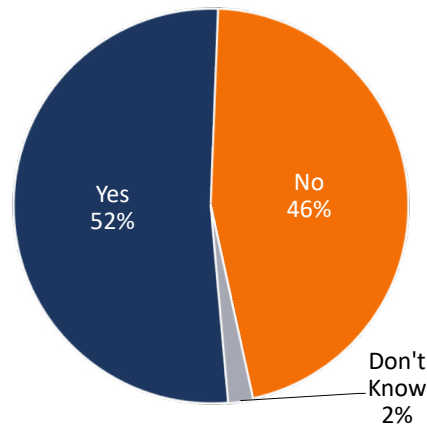
### General Salton Sea Visitation

Just under half (49% in [Figure 5](#)) of area community members have visited the Salton Sea in the last five years. Sixteen percent (16%) said they visited once, 18% said they visited two to five times, and 15% said they visited more than five times.

Visitation rates vary among the major demographic groups, though men, older community members, and white community members tended to visit more often than their counterparts. Men (54%) are slightly more likely to report having visited the Salton Sea than women (46%), as are community members ages 65 to 74 (58%) compared to other age groups ( $\leq 54\%$ ). By a 10-point margin, white community members (58%) are more likely to have visited the Salton Sea than Latino community members (47%) or community members of color overall (48%).

#### Figure 4. Natural Recreation Area Visitors

Survey question: Have you visited a state park, beach, national park, or wildlife area in California in the last year?

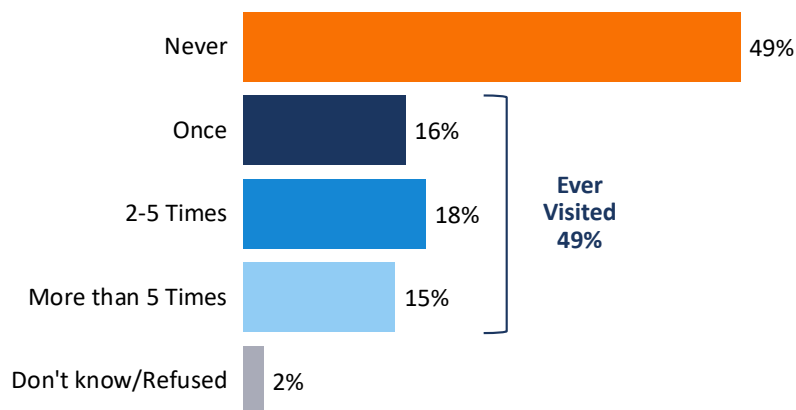


Majorities of community members of the most-populous cities north of the Sea had visited, including in the cities of Coachella (52%) and Indio (52%). Notably, nearly three in five El Centro (59%) and Imperial (57%) community members had visited as well. Perhaps unsurprisingly, community members in Calexico - the farthest city from the Salton Sea included in the sample - were the least likely to have visited (29%). Results for visitation by every major demographic and geographic subsample can be found in [Table 1](#) in Appendix B.

Among Purépecha community members, 78% had visited at least once in the last five years. Most (41%) said they visited just once, 22% said they visited two to five times, and 15% said they visited more than five times. Purépecha community members' responses are fully shown in [Table 2](#).

#### Figure 5. Salton Sea Visit Frequency

Survey question: In the past 5 years, how often have you visited the Salton Sea?



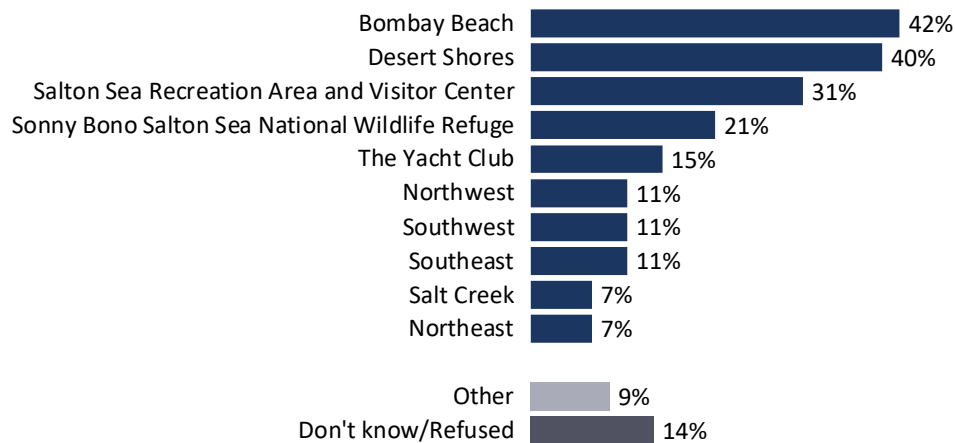
## Salton Sea Visitation by Location

Among those who have visited the Salton Sea, towns including Bombay Beach (42% in [Figure 6](#)) and Desert Shores (40%) are more commonly visited than park or recreational destinations. Three in ten say they had visited the Salton Sea Recreation Area and Visitor Center on the north end of the Sea, while one in five had visited the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge on the south end. Visitation of general areas such as the Northwest or Southeast rather than specific, named places was roughly evenly distributed.

Among Purépecha community members who visited the Salton Sea (n=32), Desert Shores was the most-visited location (72%), followed by the Yacht Club (47%), and Bombay Beach (19%). Purépecha community members' responses are fully shown in [Table 3](#).

### Figure 6. Most Visited Salton Sea Areas

Survey question: I will read you a list of areas near the Salton Sea. Please tell me which you have visited in the last 5 years or so. (Asked of Visitors, n=311; Multiple Responses Accepted)

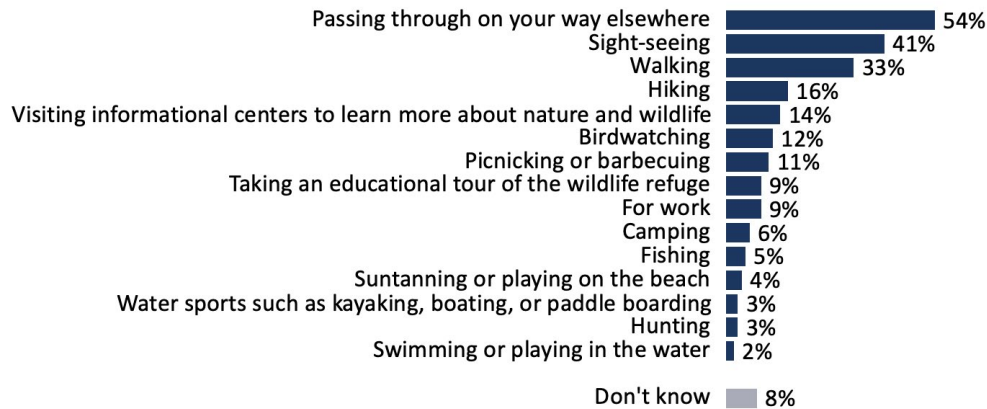


## Current Activities at the Salton Sea

Community members who have visited the Salton Sea in the last five years largely say they were sightseeing or “just passing through.” Active outdoor recreation is less common than other reasons for visiting the Salton Sea. More than half (54% in [Figure 7](#)) said they were just passing through the area. This is followed by sight-seeing (41%) and walking (33%). Notably, activities that require more skills and equipment, such as camping, hunting, fishing or water sports, are less popular; swimming or playing in the water was the least popular activity, with just 2% reporting doing so. As shown later in this report, concerns about water quality may be a barrier to spending time on the beach or in the water for many people.

## Figure 7. Activities Around the Salton Sea

Survey question: I am going to read a list of activities people do in and around the Salton Sea. Please tell me whether you have done each activity in or around the Salton Sea in the past 5 years. (Asked of Visitors, n=311; Multiple Responses Accepted)



The vast majority of Purépecha respondents who visited the Sea said they do so for work (81%). Walking at the Sea is the second most popular activity (75%), followed by passing through on the way elsewhere (53%). In contrast to community members overall, a very small share of Purépecha respondents had hiked, birdwatched, picnicked or barbecued, fished, or visited informational centers, while none said they swam, camped, played on the beach, participated in water sports, or hunted in the last five years. Purépecha community members' responses are fully shown in [Table 4](#).

## Reasons For Not Visiting The Salton Sea

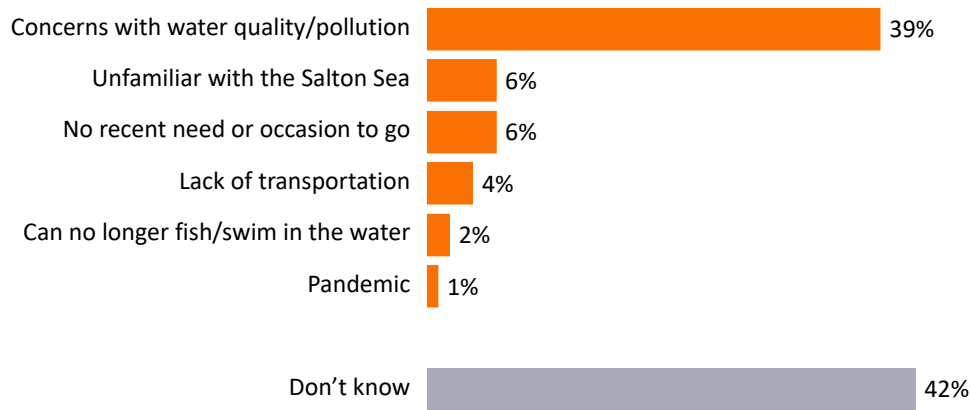
Among those who have not visited the Salton Sea, water quality is a central concern. Taken together, two in five (42% in [Figure 8](#)) expressed concern with water quality or said that “you can’t fish or swim there anymore.” However, just as many (42%) do not have a specific reason for not visiting, indicating that those people have spent less time considering potential visits generally. Among the small share of Purépecha community members who had not visited (n=8), nearly equal shares cited air pollution, lack of transportation, and water quality.

## What Would Make Visitation More Likely

Improved water quality is the chief factor that would make visitation more likely. As shown in [Figure 9](#), 91% would be more likely to visit the Salton Sea if water quality were improved—and 78% say they would be “much more likely” to visit an improved Salton Sea. A clear second tier of factors influencing increased visitation have to do with facilities and staff. Three-quarters say they would visit if there were more areas accessible to the public (74%), and if they knew other people and park rangers were nearby (73%). Among community members overall, public transit would make no difference in visitation to nearly half (47%), while a significant minority see it as a plus (49%). Notably, community members of color are much more likely to value greater public transit access, as are Coachella and Calexico community members. Fifty-four percent of community members of color are “much” or “somewhat more likely” to visit the Salton Sea if there was public transit access from their location compared to 28% of white community members. Meanwhile, 65% of Coachella community members and 56% of Calexico community members are at least “somewhat more likely” to visit with greater public transit access compared to 42-51% of community members in other major cities.

## Figure 8. Reasons for Not Visiting the Salton Sea

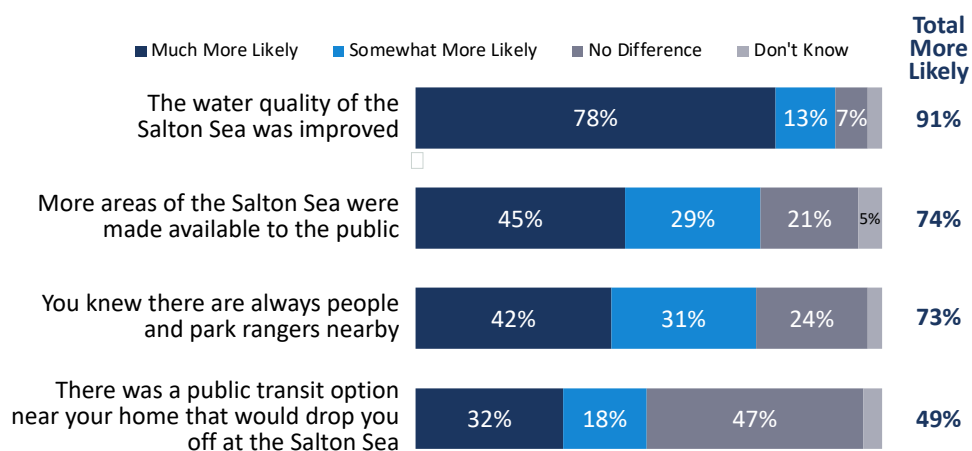
Survey question: This was an open-ended question. What is the main reason you have not visited the Salton Sea in recent years? (Asked of Those Who Have Never Visited, n=298)



All major demographic groups value improved water quality the most, but other potential improvements had varying degrees of perceived importance. Other factors (public access, increased visitation, and transportation access) were more likely to be valued by women and younger community members than men and older community members. These differences can be viewed in detail in [Table 5](#), [Table 6](#), and [Table 7](#) in Appendix B. All interviewed Purépecha community members said each of the presented factors would make them at least “somewhat more likely” to visit. There was unanimous agreement that the greater presence of people and rangers would make them “much more likely to visit,” followed by near-universal agreement that they would be more likely to visit if water quality were improved. Purépecha community members’ responses are fully shown in [Table 8](#).

## Figure 9. Potential Improvements to Encourage Visits

Survey question: Would you be much more likely to visit the Salton Sea, somewhat more likely, or would it not make a difference on your decision to visit the Salton Sea in the future if \_\_\_\_\_?







Scientists gathered on a viewing platform at the Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge Unit 1 Management Area. Photo: Camila Bautista/Audubon

## POTENTIAL SERVICES AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The survey also assessed which services community members valued most -- exploring their desire for more public availability in greater detail. In general, the services community members valued most were basic infrastructure features. These include bathrooms with running water, drinking water, lighting, paved roads, and spaces for people to gather (such as shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues). Improved access for people with disabilities is also very important for broad majorities. Women and community members of color are especially likely to value lighting, improved disability access, changing rooms and showers, and public transportation access.

### Desired services and recreation needs

Should these improvements be made, community members say they are most likely to walk on trails and paved paths and to picnic and barbecue at the Salton Sea. Younger community members, women, and community members of color rate their likelihood to participate in most activities higher than older community members, men, and white community members, respectively. Basic infrastructure comes first. Fundamental services such as bathrooms with running water (85%, as shown in [Figure 10](#) on the following page), lighting (71%) and drinking fountains (70%) were among the items community members consider extremely or very important. Community members also valued having spaces to gather, such as shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas and barbecues (73%). Accessibility, including paved roads to shoreline access points (71%), and more specifically, improved access for people with disabilities (70%) are also high on the priority list. Active recreation needs such as trails, boardwalks, and campgrounds are also important for a majority of community members, though the intensity is less broad. Features that are more specialized, such as electric vehicle charging stations and boat ramps, were seen as less important overall.

Community members who have not visited the Salton Sea in the last 5 years are more likely to value lighting (81% “extremely” or “very important”) and changing rooms and showers (63%) than community members who have visited once or more.

Women assign more value to many of these services than men, including lighting (by 24 percentage points), improved access for people with disabilities (18-point difference), swimming facilities such as changing rooms and showers (an 18-point difference), and bathrooms with running water (a 16-point difference). Community members of color are more interested in lighting (by 35 percentage points), public transportation options that connect communities to park centers (27-point difference), improved access for people with disabilities (21-point difference), and boardwalks along the shore (a 21-point difference) than are white community members.

Calexico community members, who live farthest from the shoreline, are also more likely to value public transportation than community members of other cities (64% of Calexico community members compared to 24% to 57% of community members of other cities). Further demographic breakdowns are shown in [Table 10](#) and [Table 11](#) in Appendix B.

Almost all potential services and recreation needs tested were said to be extremely or very important by at least nine in ten Purépecha community members. The exceptions were swimming facilities such as changing rooms and showers (which 80% rated extremely or very important) and boat ramps (59%). Purépecha community members' responses are fully shown in [Table 12](#).

## Preferred Activities

Community members also indicated they are more likely to participate in activities that do not require additional equipment when visiting the Salton Sea in the future. Community members were asked which types of activities they would be most likely to participate in at the Sea if the improvements discussed above were implemented. Over three in five say that if they were to visit the Sea in the future, it would be to walk on trails and paved paths (64% in [Figure 11](#)) or to picnic or barbecue (62%). At least half said they would participate in water-related activities, including water sports and swimming.

Although fewer community members indicate they would visit to camp, fish, or hunt, these activities require equipment, skills, and extended time that may not be as accessible to everyone. Hunting is notably the least popular activity among community members surveyed, with more than half (52%) saying they would be “not at all likely” to participate as part of a future visit to the Sea.

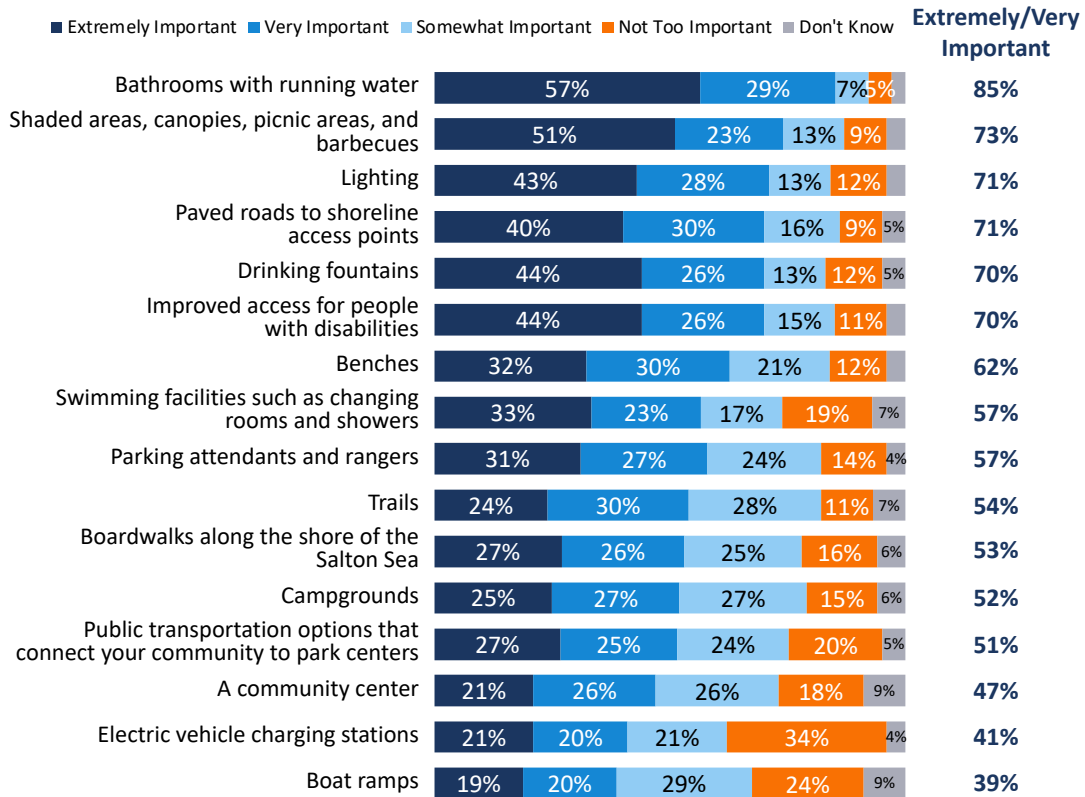
Overall, women rate their likelihood to participate in many activities higher than men do - walking on trails (73% “extremely” or “very likely”), picnicking or barbecuing (71%), and taking educational tours (60%) are especially popular with women in comparison to men (55%, 54%, and 45%, respectively). Younger community members are also generally more likely to say they would participate in a wide array of activities, as are community members of color compared to white community members.

Community members in Calexico are more likely to say they would visit the Salton Sea for water-related activities than community members of other cities. For example, 60% of Calexico community members say they would be extremely or very likely to visit to swim or play in the water, and 61% to sunbathe or play on the beach, compared to just half of community members overall (50% and 49% respectively).

By contrast, community members in La Quinta are less likely to visit the Sea for water-related activities. Only 29% say they would visit the Sea for sunbathing or playing on the beach, 27% for swimming or playing in the water, and 19% for fishing. It is worth noting, however, that La Quinta is close to Lake Cahuilla, which offers a public pool for swimming and allows fishing. Full demographic breakdowns are shown in [Table 13](#), [Table 14](#), [Table 15](#), and [Table 16](#) in Appendix B. Purépecha community members said they would be more likely to visit the Salton Sea for all activities that were tested. The most popular activities were walking on trails and paved paths (100% extremely or very likely); visiting information centers (98%); taking an educational tour (95%), birdwatching (95%); camping (95%) and swimming or playing in the water (95%). Purépecha community members' full responses are shown in [Table 17](#).

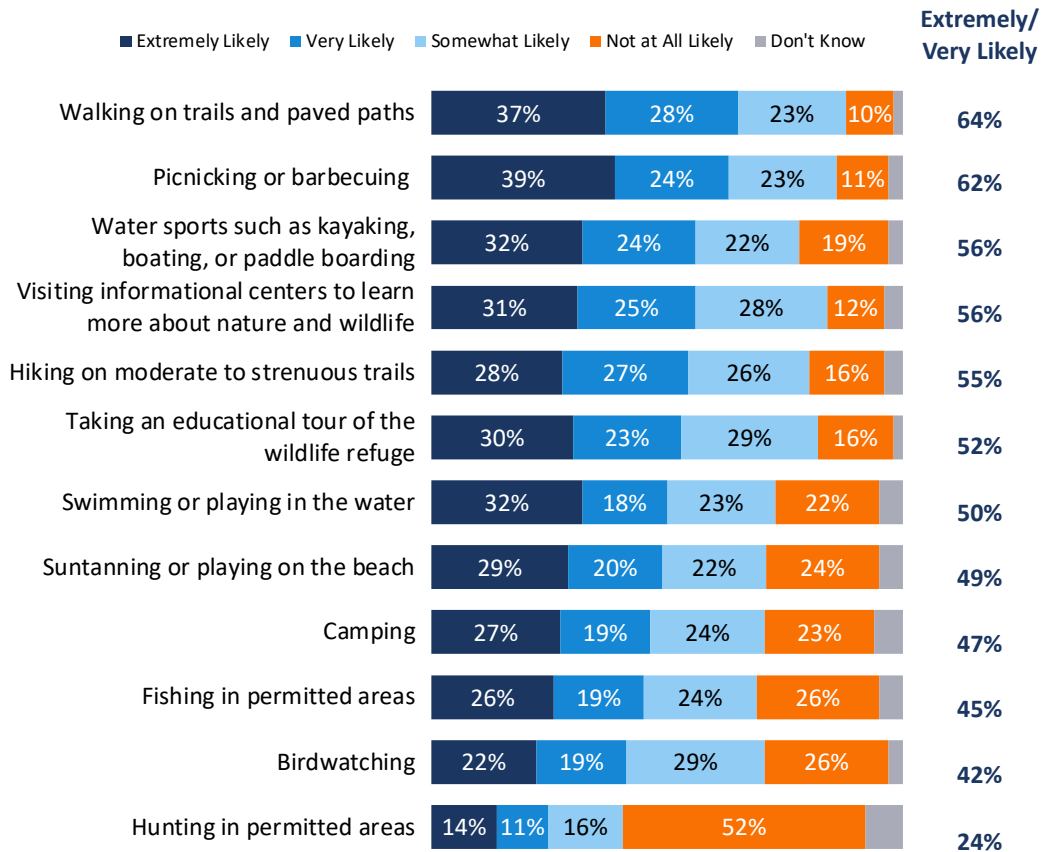
## Figure 10. Resident Priorities for Potential Future Amenities at the Salton Sea

Survey question: I am going to read you a list of potential amenities and features that could be created at the Salton Sea to make it more accessible and welcoming to visitors. As I read each one, please tell me whether each potential feature would be extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important to you personally.



## Figure 11. Activities for Which Residents are Likely to Visit the Salton Sea

Survey question: Now, assuming that some of the improvements we have been discussing could be made, please consider this list of activities you could participate in at the Salton Sea. Please tell me whether you would be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, or not at all likely to visit Salton Sea in the future to participate in that activity if some of those improvements were made.



## RESTORING THE SALTON SEA

In addition to understanding how people spend time at the Salton Sea and what barriers and opportunities exist for increasing visitation, the survey aimed to better-understand community members' sense of ongoing restoration efforts. Here, restoring the Salton Sea refers to restoration projects around the Sea and not necessarily restoring the Salton Sea to a past state. The study found that for locals, the most important reason to implement restoration at the Salton Sea for most is to protect public health. The second-most important is to protect fish, bird, and wildlife habitat; recreation was a distant third priority.

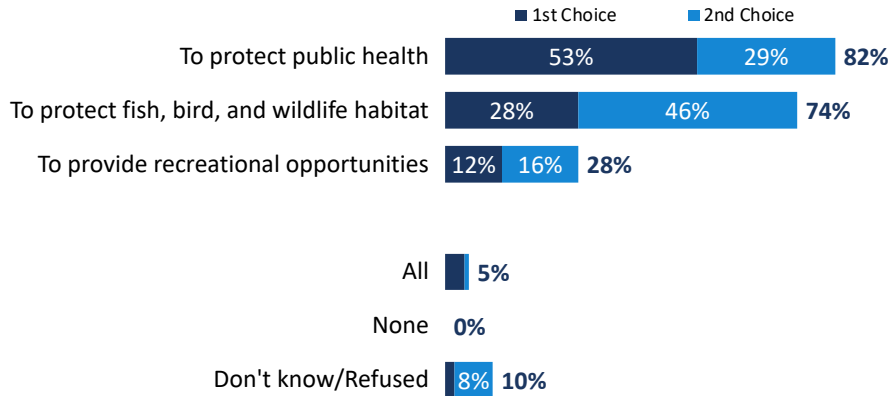
### Restoration Priorities

Most community members prioritize restoring the Salton Sea to protect public health. Community members were asked to choose between three reasons for restoring the Salton Sea as the most important to them personally. After community members selected the most important reason for restoring the Salton Sea, they were asked to also select their second-most important reason. Over half indicated

protecting public health is the most important reason (53% in [Figure 12](#)) and an additional 29% indicated it is the second-most important. Protecting fish, bird, and wildlife habitat was selected by nearly three in ten as the most important reason (28%) and by a plurality as the second most important reason (46%).

### Figure 12. Reasons to Restore the Salton Sea

Survey questions: Next, as you may know, there have been efforts to restore the Salton Sea to protect public health by minimizing dust; provide habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife; and provide recreation opportunities for local residents. For you personally, which of these is the most important reason to restore the Salton Sea? And what is the second-most?



Community members in Imperial and Brawley are among the most likely to say the number one reason to restore the Sea is to protect public health - 68% percent of Imperial and 62% of Brawley community members say public health is their top priority compared to between 36% and 58% of community members of other major cities. On the other hand, community members in Calexico are among the likeliest to say their top priority is to protect fish, bird, and wildlife habitat. Forty-six percent of Calexico community members say protecting wildlife is their top priority compared to 17-28% of community members in other major cities. Community members with children are also likely to say protecting public health is the most important reason for restoring the Salton Sea.

Fewer than three in ten said providing recreational opportunities was either the most or second-most important reason to restore the Sea (28%). La Quinta, El Centro, and Imperial community members were the most likely to make recreation opportunities their top priority - 18%, 16%, and 15% respectively, compared to 8-11% of community members in other major cities.



Black-necked Stilts on the Salton Sea shoreline. Photo: Ryan Llamas

## Discussion

The Salton Sea Community Access Survey is the first and most extensive survey in the region to interview community members surrounding the Salton Sea about their experiences, feelings, and their desires regarding amenities and activities at the Salton Sea. As the Salton Sea recedes, community members surrounding the Salton Sea are directly and disproportionately impacted by changes to the environment. Therefore, it is imperative to incorporate community input in mitigation planning and project implementation. The results from this survey provide several levels of useful information. They provide detailed information on the types of activities, services and recreation needs that are most valued by local community members, how they differ across demographics, and what would increase local visitation at the Salton Sea. These results also inform the broader questions of *1) how community members value nature and outdoor recreation, 2) how community members value the Salton Sea, 3) what activities and services community members value, 4) what the community's vision for a future Sea looks like*, in the context of public access to the Salton Sea.

### HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

A little over half of community members surveyed had spent time at a National or State Park, beach or Wildlife Area in the last five years. This indicates that visiting nature areas and outdoor recreation is valued by at least half of the population but there is little to inform why this number is not higher. There was no assessment of barriers to this sort of access other than barriers to visiting the Salton Sea. Transportation is not indicated as a major barrier overall but is indicated as a barrier by people of color and community members of some communities, including Coachella and Calexico. Other barriers could include leisure time limitations and trade-offs.

It is important to note that younger community members (30-49) and community members with children were more likely to spend time recreationally in wildlife areas such as National or State Parks,

beaches or Wildlife Areas. This could indicate that there will be a growing interest among community members in these types of areas in the future – or it could be the case that people in this stage of life are more engaged in outdoor recreation. Regardless, research shows that outdoor recreation trended upward during the pandemic through the country (Outdoor Foundation 2022).

Respondents indicated that walking on paths or trails is a valued activity in the community, suggesting that although only a slim majority of community members had visited National or State Parks or Wildlife Areas in the last five years, spending time in outdoors and/or nature is valued. Outside of wildlife viewing, picnicking and barbequing are also highly valued among community members.

Although just over half of respondents indicated that they visited National or State Parks or beaches or Wildlife Areas in the last five years, a much higher percentage of respondents reported being extremely likely or very likely to visit local outdoor areas with improvements to environmental quality and accessibility. This seems to indicate that a larger percentage of community members value spending time in nature areas and outdoor recreation than was indicated by reporting on current visitation alone.

Community members across demographics and geographic distribution value nature areas and outdoor activities. While survey respondents in two cities (Indio and Imperial) were more likely to visit nature recreation areas, valuing spending time in nature and recreation outdoors was ubiquitous across the region. This suggests that given opportunity and accessibility and appropriate services, community members would take advantage of local opportunities to recreate and enjoy natural areas outdoors. Research suggests that there are socioeconomic and demographic inequities equities when it comes to outdoor recreation, which was especially apparent during the pandemic (Taff et al. 2021). Increasing time spent outdoors and in nature has been linked to many health benefits (Pearson and Craig 2014; Beyer et al. 2018). Thus, ensuring greater access to nature and outdoor recreation for marginalized groups around the Salton Sea should be a priority.

## HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE THE SALTON SEA

Slightly under half of community members surveyed had visited the Salton Sea in the last five years, with older community members, white community members and men being most likely to visit. This demographic is different than what was reported for the more-general visitation to National or State Parks, Wildlife Areas and beaches. The reasons behind this difference in demographics is not clear from these results but could be a result of available leisure time and/or disposable income. This could also result from lack of developed public access areas and outreach. In addition, as most community members interviewed were concerned about poor water quality, those who recreate outdoors may opt for other destinations where they feel comfortable swimming or being near the water. Targeted outreach and creating public access areas with amenities could present an opportunity to increase local visitation around the Salton Sea.

Community members were generally enthusiastic about increased services at the Salton Sea, suggesting that formal access areas would increase visitation from the local communities. Simply increasing public access (Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11) could potentially result in many more community members (up to 74%; Figure 9) visiting the Salton Sea.

Spatial trends in visitation show that most community members that visit the Salton Sea go to Bombay Beach or Desert Shores. Bombay Beach and Desert Shores lie on the East and West shores, respectively, which presents opportunities to increase public access sites to serve both these geographically distinct communities. Increased public access at these familiar destinations could increase visitation by locals as well as provide economic support for rural communities on the east and west shores. Notably, the next

two most-visited locations are public access points, the Salton Sea State Recreation Area Visitors Center and the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. Both of these destinations have services and recreation opportunities described as important by community members surveyed, including visitor centers, drinking fountains, trails, bathrooms, and wildlife viewing and picnic areas. Implementing more formal public access areas like these in places already visited by locals on both sides of the Salton Sea could increase visitation by local community members.

An important result from this survey is the understanding that many of the community members who visited the Salton Sea in the last five years did so while passing through to another place. The Salton Sea was not the destination. Many community members also reported that the largest concern and/or barrier to visiting the Salton Sea was poor water quality (Figure 8). Improved water quality was by far one of the most desired improvements (Figure 9). Additionally, of community members surveyed, 91% indicated they would be extremely likely or very likely to visit the Salton Sea if water quality was improved. It could be inferred that the majority of local community members do not see the Salton Sea as a recreational destination and that poor water quality is perceived as a reason not to recreate around the Salton Sea.

## ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES COMMUNITY MEMBERS VALUE AT THE SALTON SEA

This survey provides insight into what types of activities and amenities would make community members more likely to visit and enjoy the Salton Sea. Services and recreation needs that stood out as being highly desired and valued by community members include bathrooms, running water, gathering spaces (shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues), lighting, paved roads to shoreline access, and improved access for people with disabilities. Women value many of these services, including lighting and bathrooms, higher than men. Additionally, community members of color value public transportation, and improved disability access more than white community members. Purépecha individuals surveyed showed strong interest toward all listed services and potential activities at the Salton Sea. Services highly valued by women, community members of color, and Purépecha are those that would improve safety, comfort, and accessibility. If implemented, these services would promote visitation to the Salton Sea representative of the diverse population of the entire Salton Sea region.

Community members expressed that they would be most likely to visit the Salton Sea if there were more trails and paths, picnic and barbecue areas, boating opportunities, and nature education centers. Women, younger community members, and community members of color rate their likelihood to participate in a wide range of activities more than men, older community members, and white community members, respectively. While men, older community members (ages 65-74), and white community members are currently more likely to visit the Salton Sea (Table 1), results suggest that that if valued services and activities were implemented, these statistics could change to include higher proportions of women, younger community members, and community members of color. Ongoing Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) projects such as the Bombay Beach Wetland Project and the Species Conservation Habitat present good opportunities to design highly valued amenities and activities to create greater and more equitable access to the Salton Sea.

## WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR A FUTURE SEA LOOK LIKE?

This study suggests that community members want to see restoration at the Salton Sea that protects habitats and public health but can also provide opportunities for them to enjoy nature and recreate outdoors. Community members view restoration at the Salton Sea as important to protect public health



and protect fish, birds, and other wildlife. These were the primary reasons most respondents indicated restoration was important to them. Providing recreational opportunities was a distant third but survey results indicated that these recreational and public access opportunities are still very much important to the community. People prioritize the very basics when forced to choose because recreation is contingent on clean water and a healthy environment.

Community members want safe and comfortable places to visit the Salton Sea. They value public access and want more opportunities to enjoy it. Community members surveyed valued nature areas and outdoor recreation generally as well as at the Salton Sea. Although the share of community members taking advantage of visitation opportunities at the Salton Sea was low (65% of respondents have visited the Salton Sea once or not at all in the past 5 years), survey results indicated that increased opportunities and services could change that. Amenities related to safety, ease of access and comfort were important indicators of increased visitation with nearly three quarters of respondents indicating they would visit if there were more areas accessible to the public (74%) or if they knew there were other people and park rangers were nearby (73%). Amenities like public restrooms with running water, drinking fountains, lighting and shaded areas with barbecues were also highly desired services that would likely increase visitation. Increased access for people with disabilities also ranked very high.

Community members want to see public access that offers opportunities for recreation, like hiking or walking, nature viewing, picnicking, and visiting nature education centers. These are all highly ranked activities that would likely increase local visitation around the Salton Sea. Although current visitation trends indicated that the most popular activities are those that do not require extra skills or equipment, community members view water sports recreation as part of the future of the Salton Sea and important for increasing visitation by locals. This highlights the largest barrier to visiting the Salton Sea, water quality, which will be difficult to overcome.

The results of this study indicate that community members have a strong desire to have cleaner water at the Salton Sea. This was a large barrier and the factor that could contribute the most to increased visitation. Many (39%) of respondents who had not visited the Salton Sea in the last five years indicated that water quality was the main reason they had not visited. Most (91%) of respondents indicated they would be more likely to visit the Salton Sea if water quality were improved. This, taken with the desire by respondents to have opportunities for water sports and/or recreation access, indicates that community members' view of a future Salton Sea includes clean water to recreate on and around.

The results from this study support a view of a future Salton Sea that includes public transit availability from local communities to public access areas around the Salton Sea. Increased availability of public transit would also likely increase visitation by community members of color, 54% of whom indicated they were much more likely or somewhat more likely to visit the Salton Sea if there was public transit access from their locations (compared to 28% of white community members). There was some variation in which cities this was most important, with respondents from Coachella and Calexico ranking it highest.

These results tell a story about what the community's vision for a future Salton Sea looks like. That is important because it can inform project development as well as communication and planning to set realistic expectations. It is important that long-range planning take into consideration what the local community values and wants in a future Salton Sea but also that the communication about long-term plans is clear so that community members understand what opportunities are likely to become available and what opportunities are unlikely to be realized.



Local community members walking towards the Salton Sea shoreline with spotting scopes at the Salton Sea State Recreation Area. Photo: Camila Bautista/Audubon.

## Conclusions

The Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) was implemented to address and mitigate poor air quality and threats to ecosystems at the Salton Sea, promote habitat restoration, improvements to public health. By providing direct input from surrounding communities, including the most marginalized individuals, this survey serves as a vital resource to inform ongoing and future SSMP projects. Interviews across race, age, and gender demographics reveal above all else that community members are most concerned about public health and water quality issues, and their greatest desires, aside from mitigating these issues, are for more basic amenities (such as bathrooms, shaded areas, public transit, accessibility for disabled people, and lighting) that improve safety, comfort, and accessibility.

Water quality is a major concern among communities surrounding the Salton Sea and the principal factor that would increase the likelihood of community members visiting the Salton Sea. Improving water and providing recreational opportunities on the water is part of the community's vision of a future Salton Sea. As the Salton Sea recedes, salinity will increase, and water quality will continue to degrade. Habitat projects include areas for wetlands for wildlife, but water quality will likely not be at a level suitable for many recreational activities, nor would a multipurpose wetland be appropriate in many of these restoration projects. More recreation projects like the North Lake or Perimeter Lake projects could incorporate such important services. It is important that the Long-Range Plan and the SSMP consider what local communities want and seek input before projects are developed. It is equally important that the State communicate clearly with local communities about what the future of the Salton Sea could look like and what opportunities could be implemented and which are unlikely in the near-, mid-, and long-term.

Expanding public access at more sites surrounding the Salton Sea could increase the visitation by local community members from different regions of the Salton Sea. In addition to increasing the number of public access sites, implementing services and recreation needs that elevate safety, comfort, and accessibility could increase visitation by women, community members of color, and younger community members. The results of the survey highlight measures that can be taken to prioritize equal access to the Salton Sea reflective of the diversity of the population surrounding the Salton Sea region.

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# Appendix B: Demographic Tables

**Table 1. Salton Sea Visitations by Demographics**

In the past 5 years, how often have you visited the Salton Sea?

DEMOGRAPHIC	NEVER	ONCE	2-5 TIMES	MORE THAN 5 TIMES	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	TOTAL VISITED
All Respondents	49%	16%	18%	15%	2%	49%
Gender						
Men	46%	17%	19%	18%	1%	54%
Women	51%	16%	18%	12%	3%	46%
Age						
18-29	55%	16%	16%	13%	0%	45%
30-39	46%	13%	17%	22%	3%	52%
40-49	54%	17%	19%	9%	1%	45%
50-64	47%	16%	21%	14%	3%	51%
65-74	38%	15%	23%	20%	3%	58%
75+	44%	26%	19%	9%	2%	54%
Ethnicity						
White Community members	41%	18%	23%	17%	1%	58%
Latino Community members	51%	16%	17%	14%	2%	47%
All Community members of Color	50%	16%	18%	14%	2%	48%
Language of Interview						
English	47%	16%	19%	15%	2%	50%
Spanish	56%	16%	16%	13%	0%	45%
City of Residence						
Brawley	60%	8%	15%	15%	2%	38%
Calexico	69%	5%	14%	10%	1%	29%
Coachella	46%	22%	16%	14%	2%	52%
El Centro	39%	24%	17%	18%	2%	59%
Imperial	41%	23%	13%	21%	3%	57%
Indio	48%	17%	23%	12%	1%	52%
La Quinta	52%	23%	19%	4%	2%	46%
All Other Cities	43%	11%	22%	22%	2%	55%
County of Residence						
Imperial	52%	15%	16%	15%	2%	46%
Riverside	46%	18%	21%	15%	1%	54%

**Table 2. Purépecha Salton Sea Visitations**

<b>TIMES VISITED IN LAST 5 YEARS</b>	<b>%</b>
Total Visited	78%
More than 5 times	15%
2-5 times	22%
Once	41%
Never	20%
Don't Know/Refused	2%

**Table 3. Purépecha Community members' Destinations Near the Salton Sea**

<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>%</b>
The Yacht Club	47%
Bombay Beach	19%
Salton Sea Recreation Area and Visitor Center	3%
Desert Shores	72%
Southwest	9%
Southeast	3%
Don't Know/Refused	3%

**Table 4. Purépecha Community members' Activities Near the Salton Sea**

<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>%</b>
For work	81%
Walking	75%
Passing through on your way elsewhere	53%
Hiking	9%
Birdwatching	6%
Picnicking or barbecuing	6%
Fishing	3%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	3%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife system	3%
Sightseeing	3%

**Table 5. Improvements to Increase Visitations by Salton Sea Visit Frequency**

*Would you be much more likely to visit the Salton Sea, somewhat more likely, or would it not make a difference on your decision to visit the Salton Sea in the future if \_\_\_\_\_?*

*(Total More Likely)*

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	NEVER VISITED IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED ONCE IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED 2-3 TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED 6+ TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS
The water quality of the Salton Sea was improved	91%	86%	93%	98%	97%
More areas of the Salton Sea were made available to the public	74%	71%	71%	83%	77%
You knew there are always people and park rangers nearby	73%	70%	68%	85%	72%
There was a public transit option near your home that would drop you off at the Salton Sea	49%	45%	53%	56%	55%

**Table 6. Improvements to Increase Visitation by Gender and Ethnicity**

*(Total More Likely)*

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	GENDER		ETHNICITY		
		MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	LATINO	ALL OF COLOR
The water quality of the Salton Sea was improved	91%	92%	90%	90%	91%	91%
More areas of the Salton Sea were made available to the public	74%	69%	79%	66%	76%	76%
You knew there are always people and park rangers nearby	73%	65%	80%	63%	76%	75%
There was a public transit option near your home that would drop you off at the Salton Sea	49%	45%	53%	28%	54%	53%

**Table 7. Improvements to Increase Visitation by City**

*(Total More Likely)*

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	BRAWLEY	CALEXICO	COACHELLA	EL CENTRO	IMPERIAL	INDIO	LA QUINTA	ALL OTHER CITIES
The water quality of the Salton Sea was improved	91%	93%	89%	89%	92%	94%	92%	87%	87%
More areas of the Salton Sea were made available to the public	74%	78%	73%	83%	69%	72%	76%	82%	66%
You knew there are always people and park rangers nearby	73%	69%	82%	72%	69%	73%	73%	89%	68%
There was a public transit option near your home that would drop you off at the Salton Sea	49%	42%	56%	65%	48%	51%	44%	23%	54%

**Table 8. Improvements to Increase Visitation among Purépecha**

*(Total More Likely)*

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	%
The water quality of the Salton Sea was improved	100%
More areas of the Salton Sea were made available to the public	100%
You knew there are always people and park rangers nearby	100%
There was a public transit option near your home that would drop you off at the Salton Sea	100%
The water quality of the Salton Sea was improved	100%

**Table 9. Resident Priorities for Potential Future Amenities by Visitation Rate**

*I am going to read you a list of potential amenities and features that could be created at the Salton Sea to make it more accessible and welcoming to visitors. As I read each one, please tell me whether each potential feature would be extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important to you personally.*

*(Extremely or Very Important)*

POTENTIAL AMENITY	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	NEVER VISITED IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED ONCE IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED 2-3 TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS	VISITED 6+ TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS
Bathrooms with running water	85%	89%	75%	92%	75%
Shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues	73%	75%	57%	82%	75%
*Lighting	71%	81%	56%	70%	50%
*Paved roads to shoreline access points	71%	66%	64%	76%	85%
Drinking fountains	70%	71%	61%	76%	69%
Improved access for people with disabilities	70%	70%	62%	81%	67%
Benches	62%	63%	54%	64%	65%
Swimming facilities such as changing rooms and showers	57%	63%	44%	54%	53%
Parking attendants and rangers	57%	59%	54%	62%	49%
Trails	54%	56%	44%	60%	52%
Boardwalks along the shore of the Salton Sea	53%	56%	44%	58%	48%
Campgrounds	52%	51%	49%	59%	51%
Public transportation options that connect your community to park centers	51%	50%	41%	61%	58%
*A community center	47%	43%	38%	55%	60%
*Electric vehicle charging stations	41%	40%	46%	51%	27%
Boat ramps	39%	43%	31%	37%	38%



**Table 10. Resident Priorities for Potential Future Amenities by Gender and Ethnicity**

*(Extremely or Very Important)*

POTENTIAL AMENITY	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	GENDER		ETHNICITY		
		MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	LATINO	ALL OF COLOR
Bathrooms with running water	85%	77%	93%	72%	88%	88%
Shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues	73%	65%	80%	61%	75%	75%
Lighting	71%	58%	82%	41%	77%	76%
Paved roads to shoreline access points	71%	66%	75%	61%	74%	73%
Drinking fountains	70%	63%	78%	53%	74%	73%
Improved access for people with disabilities	70%	60%	78%	52%	74%	73%
Benches	62%	53%	70%	45%	65%	65%
Swimming facilities such as changing rooms and showers	57%	47%	65%	40%	61%	59%
Parking attendants and rangers	57%	50%	64%	44%	61%	60%
Trails	54%	48%	60%	48%	56%	56%
Boardwalks along the shore of the Salton Sea	53%	42%	64%	35%	57%	56%
Campgrounds	52%	46%	58%	35%	55%	55%
Public transportation options that connect your community to park centers	51%	46%	56%	28%	56%	55%
A community center	47%	48%	48%	33%	50%	50%
Electric vehicle charging stations	41%	32%	49%	27%	43%	43%
Boat ramps	39%	36%	42%	30%	40%	40%

**Table 11. Resident Priorities for Potential Future Amenities by City**

*(Extremely or Very Important)*

POTENTIAL AMENITY	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	BRAWLEY	CALEXICO	COACHELLA	EL CENTRO	IMPERIAL	INDIO	LA QUINTA	ALL OTHER CITIES
Bathrooms with running water	85%	81%	95%	91%	79%	80%	87%	92%	80%
Shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues	73%	60%	82%	63%	76%	71%	80%	78%	66%
*Lighting	71%	77%	89%	75%	63%	66%	72%	64%	59%
*Paved roads to shoreline access points	71%	52%	79%	83%	60%	67%	80%	49%	68%
Drinking fountains	70%	68%	76%	85%	68%	62%	69%	68%	63%
Improved access for people with disabilities	70%	51%	91%	83%	66%	80%	64%	65%	64%
Benches	62%	43%	76%	61%	61%	61%	67%	69%	51%
Swimming facilities such as changing rooms and showers	57%	37%	75%	56%	53%	59%	60%	40%	52%
Parking attendants and rangers	57%	44%	78%	61%	52%	53%	57%	65%	50%
Trails	54%	43%	55%	60%	56%	55%	54%	64%	49%
Boardwalks along the shore of the Salton Sea	53%	27%	72%	61%	45%	51%	55%	58%	52%
Campgrounds	52%	29%	66%	62%	48%	53%	57%	27%	46%
Public transportation options that connect your community to park centers	51%	41%	64%	57%	48%	50%	50%	24%	56%
*A community center	47%	38%	51%	54%	48%	50%	45%	30%	48%
*Electric vehicle charging stations	41%	49%	56%	33%	51%	34%	32%	45%	35%
Boat ramps	39%	20%	51%	38%	48%	34%	41%	33%	28%

**Table 12. Purépecha Priorities for Potential Future Amenities***(Extremely or Very Important)*

<b>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>%</b>
Bathrooms with running water	100%
Drinking fountains	100%
Trails	100%
Shaded areas, canopies, picnic areas, and barbecues	100%
Public transportation options that connect your community to park centers	100%
A community center	100%
Boardwalks along the shore of the Salton Sea	98%
Improved access for people with disabilities	98%
Lighting	96%
Electric vehicle charging stations	96%
Parking attendants and rangers	95%
Paved roads to shoreline access points	94%
Campgrounds	93%
Benches	90%
Swimming facilities, such as changing rooms and showers	80%
Boat ramps	59%

**Table 13. Community members' Likelihood of Future Activity Participation by Visitation Rate**

*Now, assuming that some of the improvements we have been discussing could be made, please consider this list of activities you could participate in at the Salton Sea. Please tell me whether you would be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, or not at all likely to visit Salton Sea in the future to participate in that activity if some of those improvements were made.*

*(Extremely or Very Likely)*

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS</b>	<b>NEVER VISITED IN PAST FIVE YEARS</b>	<b>VISITED ONCE IN PAST FIVE YEARS</b>	<b>VISITED 2-3 TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS</b>	<b>VISITED 6+ TIMES IN PAST FIVE YEARS</b>
Walking on trails and paved paths	64%	66%	59%	69%	62%
Picnicking or barbecuing	62%	64%	52%	69%	63%
Water sports such as kayaking, boating, or paddle boarding	56%	59%	49%	53%	58%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	56%	53%	52%	65%	62%
Hiking on moderate to strenuous trails	55%	56%	48%	52%	61%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife refuge	52%	49%	47%	60%	59%
Swimming or playing in the water	50%	52%	40%	56%	50%
Suntanning or playing on the beach	49%	51%	39%	54%	53%
Camping	47%	47%	36%	53%	52%
Fishing in permitted areas	45%	48%	29%	47%	53%
Birdwatching	42%	42%	34%	43%	52%
Hunting in permitted areas	24%	24%	12%	31%	35%

**Table 14. Community members' Likelihood of Future Activity Participation by Age**

*(Extremely or Very Likely)*

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS</b>	<b>AGES 18-29</b>	<b>AGES 30-39</b>	<b>AGES 40-49</b>	<b>AGES 50-64</b>	<b>AGES 65-74</b>	<b>AGES 75+</b>
Walking on trails and paved paths	64%	66%	77%	68%	63%	47%	56%
Picnicking or barbecuing	62%	65%	82%	62%	61%	48%	44%
Water sports such as kayaking, boating, or paddle boarding	56%	59%	61%	62%	60%	41%	36%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	56%	51%	70%	55%	55%	45%	63%
Hiking on moderate to strenuous trails	55%	54%	69%	64%	54%	35%	36%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife refuge	52%	45%	65%	55%	58%	37%	53%
Swimming or playing in the water	50%	52%	62%	52%	53%	35%	31%
Suntanning or playing on the beach	49%	47%	65%	51%	54%	37%	31%
Camping	47%	36%	63%	58%	52%	31%	27%
Fishing in permitted areas	45%	42%	62%	42%	51%	28%	32%
Birdwatching	42%	36%	52%	36%	48%	39%	32%
Hunting in permitted areas	24%	22%	38%	25%	26%	13%	9%

**Table 15. Community members' Likelihood of Future Activity Participation by Gender and Ethnicity**

*(Extremely or Very Likely)*

ACTIVITY	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	GENDER		ETHNICITY		
		MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	LATINO	ALL OF COLOR
Walking on trails and paved paths	64%	55%	73%	51%	67%	67%
Picnicking or barbecuing	62%	54%	71%	48%	66%	65%
Water sports such as kayaking, boating, or paddle boarding	56%	51%	61%	42%	59%	59%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	56%	52%	61%	47%	58%	58%
Hiking on moderate to strenuous trails	55%	52%	56%	37%	58%	58%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife refuge	52%	45%	60%	41%	55%	55%
Swimming or playing in the water	50%	44%	57%	34%	53%	53%
Suntanning or playing on the beach	49%	41%	59%	33%	54%	53%
Camping	47%	43%	50%	34%	48%	49%
Fishing in permitted areas	45%	47%	44%	29%	48%	48%
Birdwatching	42%	39%	44%	33%	43%	43%
Hunting in permitted areas	24%	30%	20%	14%	26%	27%

**Table 16. Community members' Likelihood of Future Activity Participation by City**

*(Extremely or Very Likely)*

ACTIVITY	ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	BRAWLEY	CALEXICO	COACHELLA	EL CENTRO	IMPERIAL	INDIO	LA QUINTA	ALL OTHER CITIES
Walking on trails and paved paths	64%	65%	69%	62%	59%	66%	67%	69%	59%
Picnicking or barbecuing	62%	47%	64%	71%	61%	64%	66%	48%	59%
Water sports such as kayaking, boating, or paddle boarding	56%	46%	65%	73%	59%	43%	57%	40%	45%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	56%	57%	60%	57%	59%	61%	54%	59%	47%
Hiking on moderate to strenuous trails	55%	59%	61%	57%	56%	59%	53%	46%	44%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife refuge	52%	58%	58%	58%	57%	54%	48%	61%	38%
Swimming or playing in the water	50%	44%	60%	66%	52%	48%	47%	27%	43%
Suntanning or playing on the beach	49%	42%	61%	62%	48%	44%	50%	29%	42%
Camping	47%	32%	49%	49%	56%	51%	51%	15%	36%
Fishing in permitted areas	45%	56%	45%	59%	46%	33%	45%	19%	38%
Birdwatching	42%	40%	40%	50%	46%	52%	38%	34%	35%
Hunting in permitted areas	24%	22%	20%	38%	32%	16%	21%	2%	27%

**Table 17. Purépecha Community members' Likelihood of Future Activity Participation**

*(Extremely or Very Likely)*

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	%
Walking on trails and paved paths	100%
Visiting informational centers to learn more about nature and wildlife	98%
Picnicking or barbecuing	95%
Taking an educational tour of the wildlife refuge	95%
Swimming or playing in the water	95%
Camping	95%
Birdwatching	95%
Fishing in permitted areas	88%
Hiking on moderate to strenuous trails	78%
Suntanning or playing on the beach	73%
Water sports such as kayaking, boating, or paddle boarding	68%
Hunting in permitted areas	68%

