

Re: Fishing at Lake Los Carneros

Dear members of the Parks and Recreation Commission,

I am the chair of Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS)'s Conservation Science Committee, and I am writing to express our views regarding the recent stocking of trout by the Department of Fish and Wildlife at Lake Los Carneros (LLC). Although there were no press releases, apparently some members of the public learned about the stocking. Subsequently there has been a vast increase of fishing activity at, in, and around the lake. As you may know, SBAS has hundreds of members within the Goleta Valley, who seek out the "non-consumptive" recreational opportunities that LLC provides for bird watching and wildlife viewing. Our members simply enjoy being outside in nature and observing wildlife from a distance. Our members also care deeply about the well-being of birds and wildlife that have found safe shelter within this important city park and open space.

We are not inherently against the activity of fishing, but currently at LLC fishing is pitted against the well-being of the birds and wildlife that our members cherish.

There is currently no signage encouraging fishers to clean up their trash, to warn against getting their lines stuck in the vegetation, or how to minimize their negative impacts on birds and bird habitat. It is currently the start of bird breeding season and there are many birds and other wildlife that breed in and around the reeds that line the lake edges. We have documented many people walking through and upon the reeds and vegetation since the lake was stocked back in early February, and there is a growing number of fishing floats in the lake, indicating lost fishing tackle. You are probably well aware of the sad story of the entangled barn owl that had to be rescued when found to be hanging upside down in fishing line from its home nest tree.

If fishers were to confine their activity to the dam, many of the negative impacts would be minimized. Eventually the trout will either be caught or die as the waters warm, so we are hopeful that any ecological damage from adding a non-native species can be mitigated.

We ask that this Commission recognize the value in non-consumptive recreational activities at LLC, and work with the City to implement measures that will minimize the impact of fishing. These would include additional signage and education, and restricting fishing to the dam only.

Sincerely,
Jessie

Jessica Altstatt
Chair, Conservation Science Committee
Santa Barbara Audubon Society