



BOATING



ABOVE

Marina at Moabi Regional Park in Needles, CA

PHOTO BY D. A. DEMEO

RIGHT

Colorado River boating can be a tranquil experience

PHOTO BY D. A. DEMEO

In 2005, when uncommonly abundant rains filled the Badwater area, kayaks paddled below sea level in Death Valley National Park for the first time in recent memory. Of course, most boaters would like a more reliable outlet for their sport — and they have it in the desert. Almost year round, southern Californians tow their motorboats to one of several inland bodies of water that offer a launch ramp. “The River” draws so many weekenders because it offers abundant sites for groups of people to camp, BBQ, swim, Jet Ski, and water ski all from one location. At county facilities like Moabi Regional Park on the Colorado River, you can rent canoes, kayaks, and boats, and gain access to a boat launch. Much of the activity along the Colorado River is found on the Arizona side, but there are many sites on the California side, such as BLM campgrounds south of Parker Dam, the Riviera Blythe Marina Park, McIntyre Park, Palo Verde Park and Goose Flats near Blythe, and Imperial Dam Long Term Visitor Area near the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge.

Boaters may also maneuver their craft into the fascinating Cibola or Sunny Bono National Wildlife Refuges to catch a sight of a rare, migrating bird. The 35-mile long Salton Sea is a beautiful, underutilized asset, and the focus of several restoration projects. Summer temperatures make this destination a better choice from October to May; the east side of the sea is better developed for recreation than the west side. Smaller sloops and catamarans often skim its surface, but motorboats are a more common sight.

Despite the mild weather and calm waters of the desert, boater safety is still critical. Responsible boaters respect the wildlife that live in the marshes at the water’s edge by not disturbing them with excess noise and waves. Boaters should naturally avoid polluting the waterways and become better educated on more efficient engines and fuels.

Books and Online Resources for Boating can be found at http://www.npca.org/desert_recreation/boating.pdf and on page 48 of this report.



PERSONAL PROFILE

Steve Bier

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS RANGER

Ranger Steve Bier of California's Department of Parks and Recreation oversees the Salton Sea State Recreation Area. Since being transferred from the Ocotillo Wells Vehicle Recreation Area a year ago, he's come to appreciate the refreshing sea breezes of his new assignment. Steve is eager to tell people about the advantages of boating and fishing on the Sea. The park offers a nice area to launch boats, and a visitor center with interpretive displays. Steve can give first-hand accounts of the fun that families have on the water and at the semi-shaded picnic shelters at the water's edge. The unhurried pace is reminiscent of the California beach culture before it became so commercialized. Yes, the algae can bloom unpredictably, and there may be the occasional smell from the release of Hydrogen sulfide that builds up on the lake's bottom, but the Sea is not polluted and it's a really fun place to explore. It's a resource that more desert residents in the Coachella Valley could appreciate by taking a short drive in the direction of the date farms and date shakes at the north end of the Sea.



[HTTP://WWW.NPCA.ORG / DESERT_RECREATION / BOATING.PDF](http://www.npca.org/desert_recreation/boating.pdf)



ABOVE

Devil's Elbow in Havasu National Wildlife Refuge

PHOTO BY TONY RILEY

FAR LEFT

California State Parks Ranger Bier

PHOTO BY D. A. DEMEO

LEFT

Sheltered picnic station at Salton Sea State Recreation Area

PHOTO BY D. A. DEMEO

BOATING BOOKS AND ONLINE RESOURCES

SUGGESTED BOOK:

Colorado River Recreation, 4th edition, Diane Dirksen, Recreation Sales Publishing, 2005

WEB SITES:

COLORADO RIVER BOATING GUIDES FROM CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

(<http://dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/BlythetolImperial/BlythetolImperial.pdf>)

(<http://dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/DavistoParker/DavistoParker.pdf>)

Kayaking in the Havasu Wildlife Refuge (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/havasus/kayakingandcanoeing.html>)

