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Survey Highlights Key Trends in San Andreas' Aquatic Ecosystems

The San Andreas Parks Department has released findings from a comprehensive survey conducted across nine freshwater and saltwater locations statewide, including coastal and deep sea observations. The survey provides valuable insights into the health of fish populations, their ecosystems, and the environmental challenges they face. These findings will inform conservation efforts and guide sustainable management practices to preserve the state's diverse aquatic habitats.

Population Booms and Invasive Species Risks

Several species are experiencing significant population growth, raising concerns about potential ecological imbalances. Halibut, Barred Sand Bass, Kelp Bass, Rainbow Surfperch, and Garibaldi have all shown substantial increases in numbers. While population growth can indicate a healthy environment, unchecked surges risk disrupting native species and habitats. SAPD is prioritizing research and monitoring to understand the causes of these trends and to develop proactive management strategies.

Species in Decline or at Risk of Endangerment

The survey highlighted troubling declines in key species, including California Corbina, Starry Flounder, Gulf Croakers, and Barred Perch. Factors such as habitat degradation, pollution, and competition are contributing to these declines. SAPD is considering conservation actions, such as habitat restoration, to prevent further losses and ensure long-term sustainability.

Stable Populations Indicate Thriving Ecosystems

Encouragingly, several species, including Anchovies, Sardines, Perch, and California Scorpionfish, exhibit stable populations across surveyed areas. These species serve as indicators of healthy ecosystems, underscoring the importance of ongoing environmental stewardship to maintain these favorable conditions.

Environmental Challenges and Habitat Health

Water quality issues are affecting several freshwater and marine habitats. Coastal development and other human activities also pose risks to critical habitats, while vibrant coral reefs and underwater structures offer valuable support for marine biodiversity. SAPD will continue to monitor state water quality in both freshwater and coastal areas.

Looking Ahead

"The survey results highlight a complex reality in San Andreas' aquatic ecosystems, where some species are thriving while others are declining due to pollution, habitat loss, and competition," said Callie Frost, SAPD's lead surveyor for this engagement. "This emphasizes the urgent need for sustainable management and habitat restoration to protect our natural resources and preserve biodiversity for the future."

Eric Olson, Supervisor of the San Andreas Parks Department, commented that “San Andreas’ aquatic ecosystems are deeply connected to the health of our overall environment. It is SAPD’s goal to ensure a sustainable future for our state’s fish populations and their habitats, and we call on the general public to aid in conservation efforts and make socially conscious choices. By reducing pollution, supporting sustainable practices, and preserving natural habitats, we can safeguard not only marine and freshwater life but also the ecosystems that sustain us all.”

