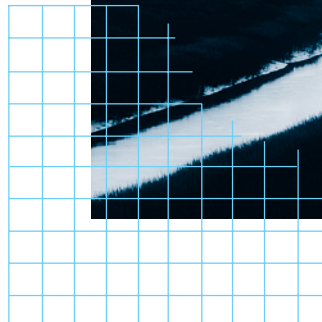


THE BAY INSTITUTE
Ecological Scorecard

SAN FRANCISCO BAY INDEX

2003



San Francisco Bay is a unique national treasure. This vast estuary, where ocean and fresh water meet, provides habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else in the world.

The Bay supplies seafood for businesses and anglers. Its watershed provides water for cities and agriculture. Residents and tourists sail and swim in its waters, play along its shoreline, and value its wildlife and scenic qualities.

But the Bay's vital signs are not good. Native fish and wildlife populations have declined drastically, while harmful alien species have invaded the Bay. Wetland habitat area and freshwater flows into the Bay have been reduced, while pollution levels have risen. Commercial and recreational fisheries have collapsed, and those fish that are caught in the Bay are not safe to eat. The fair to poor grades reported in the 2003 Bay Index reflect this long-term decline in the Bay region's ecological health—but the current situation is not all bleak. In most cases, the decline has been halted and short-term conditions are relatively stable. In some cases, such as habitat and shellfish populations, there have been small but noticeable improvements.

Many efforts are underway to improve the Bay's health. The 2003 Bay Index uses science-based indicators, combined into eight Indexes, to track the Bay's environment, its fish and wildlife, our management of its resources, and its direct value to the people who use it. The grading system compares conditions in the Bay and its watershed to historical conditions, environmental and public health standards, and restoration targets.

- 1 Be a smart water user.**
- 2 Don't pollute the Bay.**
- 3 Restore your local habitat.**
- 4 Keep rivers flowing to the Bay.**
- 5 Vote for the environment.**

It all adds up to educating yourself and others. Congratulations – you've taken the first step by reading this!

Grades based on data from 2000-2003 period

A *Excellent*

B *Good*

C *Fair*









D *Poor*

F *Critical*

↑ *improving*

↓ *declining*

↔ *stable*

	<p>D+ Score = 32</p>	<p>Habitat Bay habitat loss is slowly being reversed, but it could take nearly 200 years to reach the tidal marsh restoration goal.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↑</p>
	<p>D Score = 29</p>	<p>Freshwater Inflow Reduced inflows are still degrading the Bay ecosystem, and recent gains from wetter years and new standards are being eroded</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↓</p>
	<p>C Score = 55</p>	<p>Water Quality Open waters are cleaner, but standards are not met in parts of the Bay. Toxic sediments and storm runoff are a major problem.</p>	<p>↑ long-term short-term ↔</p>
	<p>F Score = 10</p>	<p>Food Web Plankton levels in the upper Bay have crashed, reducing food sources for fish and birds. Alien species are locally dominant.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↔</p>
	<p>B- Score = 63</p>	<p>Shellfish Crab and shrimp numbers are increasing, but commercial harvest is still down from previous high levels.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↑</p>
	<p>C- Score = 39</p>	<p>Fish After a long decline, fish populations are stable at low levels, but some species are still endangered.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↔</p>
	<p>D+ Score = 31</p>	<p>Fishable-Swimmable-Drinkable Fish are harder to catch, and unsafe to eat. Beach closures are up, drinking water violations are down.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↔</p>
	<p>C- Score = 43</p>	<p>Stewardship Water conservation, pollution limits, monitoring, and restoration efforts are finally underway, but progress is slow.</p>	<p>↓ long-term short-term ↔</p>



© 2003 The Bay Institute of San Francisco

The Bay Institute (TBI) is a non-profit research, education and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the ecosystems of San Francisco Bay, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the estuary's tributary rivers, streams, and watersheds. Since 1981, TBI's policy and scientific experts have worked to secure stronger protections for endangered species and habitats; improve water quality; reform how California manages its water resources; and promote comprehensive ecological restoration from the Sierra to the sea.

To order copies of the 2003 Bay Index, or a CD of the report and the Technical Appendix, contact:

The Bay Institute
500 Palm Drive, Suite 200
Novato, CA 94949
Phone: (415) 506-0150
Fax: (415) 506-0155
www.bay.org

The entire 2003 Bay Index report and Technical Appendix can also be downloaded from our website at www.bay.org.

The 2003 San Francisco Bay Index, and the Bay-Delta Ecological Scorecard Project of which it is a part, were made possible by the generous financial support of the Compton Foundation, Inc.; the Mary A. Crocker Trust; the Fred Gellert Family Foundation; the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund; the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; the Marin Community Foundation; the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment; the San Francisco Foundation (Switzer Environmental Leadership Program); the San Francisco Estuary Project; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Weeden Foundation; and the Dean Witter Foundation, as well as individual supporters of the Bay Institute.

Cover photo: Napa Slough, by David Sanger.