

P R O J E C T   D E S C R I P T I O N

## Westlake Lake Carp Population Control Project

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DATE:        02 March 2021  
TO:            Carl Koenig, Westlake Lake Management Association  
FROM:        Matt Drenner, Stillwater Sciences

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Stillwater Sciences (Stillwater) is conducting activities to control the carp population in Westlake Lake with the overall goal being to improve lake conditions. Carp are an invasive species that can have adverse impacts on water clarity and water quality in lakes because they stir up sediment from lake bottoms while they feed. Because carp reduce water clarity, their presence is also associated with reduced angler catch rates of sport fish. Complete eradication of carp in Westlake Lake is not possible because eradication would require the use of chemicals and/or draining the lake. However, the carp population can be reduced and controlled using a variety of techniques, the most common being boat electrofishing and seining with nets. Boat electrofishing is used as a lake management tool to monitor fish populations across the U.S. and is the technique Stillwater is using to capture and remove carp from Westlake Lake. Boat electrofishing entails emitting an electrical current into the water that temporarily stuns fish. Stunned fish can then be netted, processed, and either released (non-target fish such as bass) or removed from the lake (carp).

To increase the efficiency of boat electrofishing for carp removal, it is best to target carp when they are spawning because they congregate in large numbers in shallow water. Carp can spawn from spring to summer, and Stillwater is relying on two sources of information to determine when spawning activity has begun in Westlake Lake. First, Stillwater is relying on reports from fisherman based on their observation of spawning behavior. Second, Stillwater is monitoring water temperature, which is related to the timing of spawning. Based on observations of spawning in previous years, Stillwater is planning to remove carp from Westlake Lake the week of April 5. However, removal of carp could occur earlier or later depending on when carp begin spawning. During carp removal activities, Stillwater may also test the use of nets for corralling carp in areas where they can be more easily targeted. All carp removal activities are permitted through the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

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