



## **Editorial: Few trout plants, few licenses sold**

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Just reading down our Formcharts in the back of Western Outdoor News, we see listing after listing of lakes that haven't received a plant of trout in months, or not at all this year. Places once popular with fishermen are now empty of anglers.

About the only places that still receive reliable trout plants are by counties or private lakes, as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has stepped farther and farther away from their responsibility to the anglers of California to plant trout.

In fact, trout plants in California have declined 39 percent since 2012, and by 50 percent in pounds of trout. DFW trout plants went from over 4 million pounds of trout in 2012 to barely over 2 million pounds last year, and judging by the looks of things this year, 2017 will go down in history as planting fewer trout than any time in decades — or maybe forever.

Here are the dismal facts about California trout plants in pounds and number of fish planted in the state:

2012 — 4,103,928.3 pounds 11,896,835 fish

2013 — 3,403,425.5 pounds 10,144,803 fish

2014 — 3,180,514.6 pounds 11,568,638 fish

2015 — 1,970,538.8 pounds 8,371,431 fish

2016 — 2,046,149.6 pounds 7,276,598 fish

And meanwhile, the sale of fishing licenses has plummeted, of course! If there aren't any fish to catch, why spend a ton of money to buy a fishing license? Especially when that fishing license will cost an adult \$47.01 without tags, and \$61.61 if you add a second-rod validation. That's one of the most expensive licenses in the United States!

According to a 2015 California Sportfishing League (CSL) study, since 1980 annual fishing license sales decreased over 56 percent in California, while the state's population increased over 60 percent during the same time period. And despite having one of the nation's longest coastlines

and thousands of rivers and lakes, the U.S. Census reported that only 4.3 percent of California adults fish, which ranks dead last per capita among all 50 states.

It's obvious that anglers are somewhere near the bottom of the list when it comes to funding hatcheries by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife heads. The entire system needs to be changed, beginning with making a fishing license good for one year from time of purchase instead of expiring on Dec. 31 every year.

We strongly urge all of our readers and all fishing groups to join with the California Sportfishing League (CSL), a nonprofit coalition of fresh and saltwater anglers, and businesses devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. They have been extremely active in trying to improve things for California anglers. Go to [www.savefishing.com](http://www.savefishing.com) to see how you can help.

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