



# Storm over Mono: The Mono Lake Battle and the California Water Future

*John Hart*

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## **Storm over Mono: The Mono Lake Battle and the California Water Future** John Hart

A dramatic environmental saga unfolds in John Hart's compelling story of the fight to save Mono Lake. This ancient inland sea, in the eastern Sierra near Yosemite National Park, is among the oldest in North America. But over the past fifty years, as its feeder streams were steadily drained to supply water to ever-growing, ever-thirsty Los Angeles, the lake's water volume eventually was reduced by half. Mono Lake's bizarre but productive ecosystem began to collapse: salinity greatly increased, nesting and migrating birds were threatened, and fierce alkali dust storms became a common occurrence.

Then, in the mid-1970s, a handful of people, most of them students with minimal financial resources, began a campaign to save the dying lake. They took on not only Los Angeles but the entire state government and a whole way of thinking about water. Their fight seemed doomed in the beginning, but long years of grassroots education and effort finally paid off. In 1994, the California Water Resources Control Board ruled that Los Angeles's use of Mono Lake's waters be restricted. Over time, the lake will return to a healthy condition.

John Hart integrates natural, social, and political history into a story that is a source of hope for anyone concerned about the environment. *Storm over Mono* demonstrates the important role of science in public policy debates and validates the concept of the public trust, the idea that certain things belong to us all, not metaphorically but in simple legal fact.

Complementing Hart's narrative are 32 stunning color photographs by a dozen leading nature photographers, along with numerous black-and-white photographs, illustrations, and maps.

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