

Water Quality Report Card

Dissolved Oxygen in New River

Regional Water Board: Colorado River Basin, Region 7

Beneficial Uses Affected: RARE, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, WILD

Implemented Through: 3rd Party (USEPA & United States International Boundary and Water Commission)

Effective Date: November 2012

Attainment Date: 2018

STATUS **Conditions Improving**

Pollutant Type: Nonpoint Source

Pollutant Source: Wastewater discharges originating from Mexico

Water Quality Improvement Strategy

The New River originates in Mexico, twenty miles south of the International Boundary, and flows northward into the United States to the Salton Sea in Imperial County, California. The New River is dominated by industrial and municipal wastewater discharges, and agricultural wastewater discharges from both Mexico and the Imperial Valley. The main pollutants of concern causing in-stream low dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations are biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and ammonia (NH₃). Low DO conditions exceed water quality objectives (WQOs) established to protect warm water ecosystems, endangered species, and recreational beneficial uses. A [TMDL for DO in the New River](#) was completed by the Regional Water Board and approved by the USEPA in November 2012. The TMDL addresses impairment of low DO in the first half mile reach of the New River downstream of the International Boundary, caused mainly by wastewater discharges originating from Mexico. The Regional Water Board does not have jurisdictional authority over Mexico and relies on cooperation between Mexico and the U.S. Government to reduce BOD and NH₃ concentrations. The TMDL is implemented in two phases over six years and was expected to achieve applicable water quality standards for DO by 2018.

New River Watershed Map



Water Quality Outcomes

- Water quality monitoring data show improved DO conditions; however, WQOs are not consistently being met.
- Data for BOD and NH₃-N show that these allocations are not being met and need improvement.
- The Regional Water Board will continue to work with the United States International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), and the USEPA to monitor the water quality and clean-up efforts in Mexico.
- Negotiations are ongoing to ensure coordination of International Boundary projects to bring the New River into compliance.

TMDL Waste Load Allocations/Load Allocations^a

Pollutant	Concentration (mg/L)	Mass/Day (kg/day) ^b
BOD	5.0	1529
NH ₃ -N	0.5	153

^a Phase 1 (first 3 years) load allocations. If targets not met by end of Phase 1, load allocations will be reassessed for Phase 2 (second 3 years).

^b Load allocations based on 2007 average flows of 125 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Water Quality

