



CALIFORNIA Bass Lake

By Lora J. Finnegan

Bass Lake has star quality. A classically pretty mountain lake, ringed by tall sugar and ponderosa pines, it served as Technicolor backdrop to the beautiful-if-evil Gene Tierny in the '40s classic, *Leave Her to Heaven*. In the '80s, less glamorously, it costarred with John Candy in *The Great Outdoors*.

Today, the biggest lakeside celebrities may be the bald eagles that nest each spring and summer by the shore. But Bass Lake still appeals. Set in the Sierra Nevada foothills, it's an easy detour on the way to Yosemite National Park. On a map it looks like a fat pinkie finger, with a slight crook in the

middle. It's 4 miles long, ½ mile wide, and fairly shallow, so the water really warms up in summer. That makes it a hot spot for those on water skis and water scooters.

Three good resorts—Ducey's on the Lake, the adjoining Pines Resort and Conference Center, and Bass Lake Lodge—give you a range of places to stay. The lake has several marinas where you can rent ski boats, water scooters, patio boats, and the like. Send up some rooster tails as you zip across the lake on water skis. Find a quiet cove to wet a fishing line, or just spread a shoreside picnic and take a dip. The water's fine.



Go fast, go slow: Bass Lake fun ranges from waterskiing to easy canoeing.

BASS LAKE TRAVEL PLANNER

Bass Lake is 47 miles northeast of Fresno via State 41 (Yosemite Hwy.). From Oakhurst, take State 41 north to the Bass Lake turnoff (County Rd. 222) and drive about 4 miles to the lake.

The lake is at its best between Memorial Day and Labor Day—after that, water levels drop. It's managed by California Land Management; pick up a map or parking pass (\$3) at its Bass Lake office (559/642-3212) on County Rd. 222 on the south shore. Parking passes are required for developed picnic areas.

Area code is 559 unless noted.

■ **LAKE FUN: BOAT RENTALS.** The Bass Lake Water Sports and Marina (642-3200) is the lake's only full-service marina, with rentals, dock, ramps, and supplies. Boat rentals are

also available at Miller's Landing Resort (642-3633) and the Forks Resort (642-3737). **FISHING.** Try for any of 16 species, including kokanee salmon and rainbow trout. A California fishing license is required. **SWIMMING.** The two main swim beaches (no boats allowed) are Falls Beach Picnic Area and Recreation Point; there are no lifeguards.

■ **DINING** Ducey's Dining Room. Restaurant is the best around (in Ducey's on the Lake; see "Lodging"), with favorites like salmon Wellington and rack of lamb, and tables with water views.

■ **LODGING** Bass Lake Lodge. This luxurious lodge was inspired in part by Yosemite's Ahwahnee Hotel. It's right on the shore, with a boat dock offering small boats for guests. Six rooms from

\$250. 54300 North Shore Rd.; 642-2399. **Ducey's on the Lake.** Modern and plush, Ducey's has 20 lake-view suites; the lobby is a pine-paneled paean to the mountains, with deer heads and Native American rugs on the walls. From \$219. 39255 Marina Dr., Bass Lake; (800) 350-7463 or www.basslake.com.

Pines Resort and Conference Center at Bass Lake. Managed with Ducey's, the Pines is the largest resort on the lake; it offers over 100 condolike chalets. From \$179. 54432 North Shore Rd. at the Pines Village; (800) 350-7463 or www.basslake.com.

■ **CAMPING** There are 280 sites at four campgrounds around the lake. Spring Cove, close to a great beach, is a favorite. \$16; reservations required. (877) 444-6777.

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