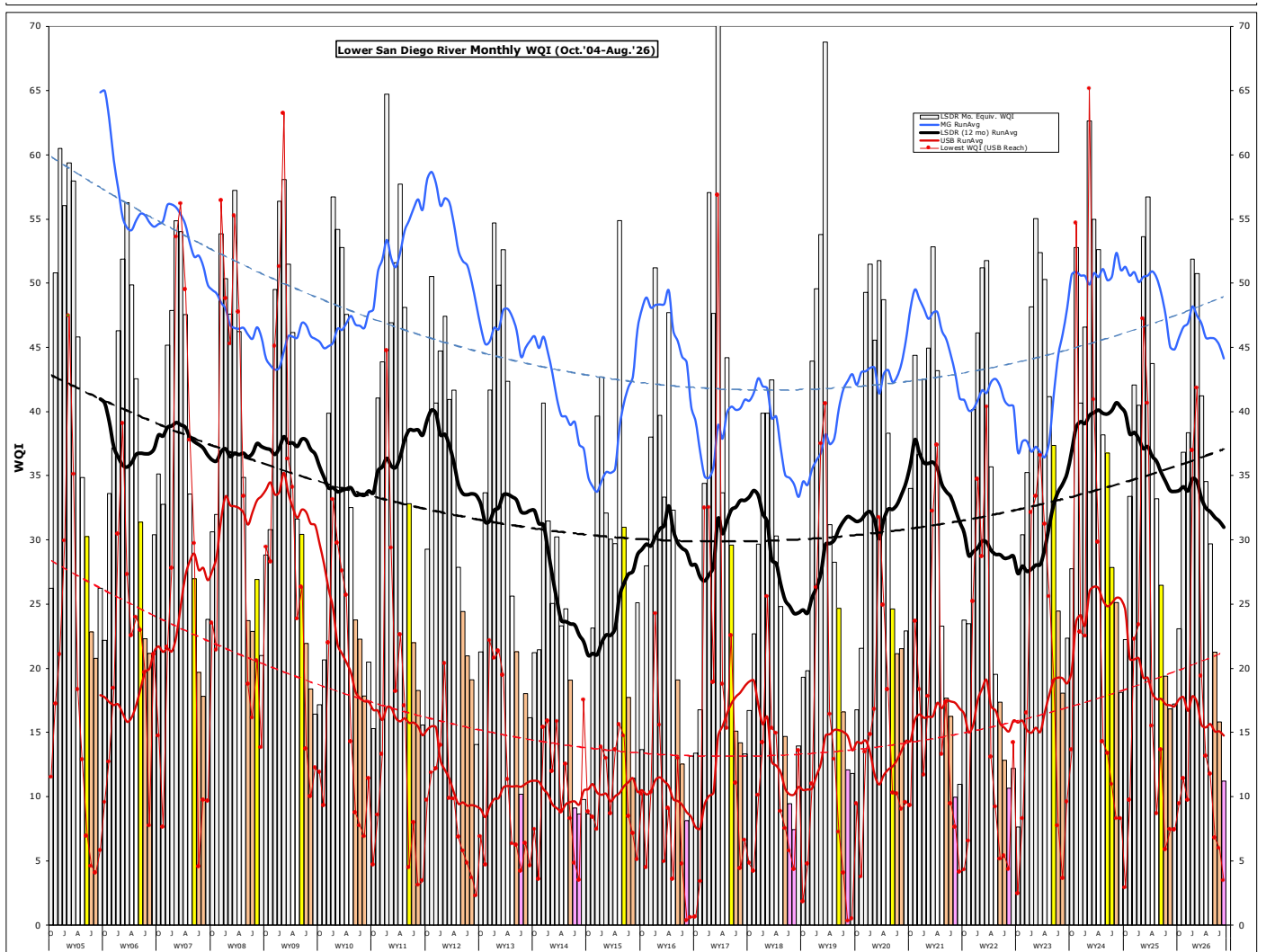


Monthly WQM Report

Lower San Diego River - August 2026



Lower SDR Water Quality Monitoring Data Summary

Table 1 presents a summary of water quality data monitored by the SDRPF RiverWatch Team within the Lower San Diego River (LSDR) watershed over the past two months (July/Aug). The overall index for this month of 11 (F-Very Poor) is five points (-29%) below last month, six points (-33%) less than a year ago and five points (-31%) below the 22-yr August norm of 16 (E-Poor).

Table 1 - July/Aug. '26 WQM Data Summary							
	West - MV	Mid - MG	East - SB	LSDR	Variance From		
[Site #s]	[1-7] July/Aug	[8-10] July/Aug	[11-15] July/Aug	[1-15] July/Aug	Last Mo. (7/'26)	Last Yr. (8/'25)	Norm (Aug.)
Temperature, oC	25.1/25.6	24.1/23.1	23.5/25.1	24.2/24.8	2%	10%	6%
Sp.Cond., mS/cm	3.56/3.85	2.15/2.19	2.32/2.39	2.74/2.93	7%	7%	2%
DO, mg/L	3.56/3.10	4.13/2.12	2.87/2.08	3.26/2.42	-25%	-25%	-27%
DO, % of Sat.	44/38	49/25	33/25	39/29			
pH	7.53/7.61	7.64/7.49	7.49/7.61	7.50/7.60	1%	1%	-1%
3-day ADF, cfs	1.7/2.3	1.0/0.6	0.8/0.3	1.2/1.2	1%	-7%	5%
WQ Index	22/20	17/3	11/7	16/11	-29%	-33%	-31%
Letter Grade	E/E	E/F	F/F	E/F			
July/Aug.	Poor/ Poor	Poor/ Very Poor	Very Poor/ Very Poor	Poor/ Very Poor	Index down 5 pts from last month		

Negative variance (declines from norms) and DO deficits (DO < 5.0 mg/L or 52% Sat) expressed in red.

LSDR **water temperatures** rose 0.6oC (2%) from last month to 10% above last year and 6% higher than the monthly norm of 23.3oC for Aug. The overall **specific conductance** of 2.93 mS/cm is up 7% above last month as well as a year ago and 2% more than the 22-yr norm of 2.89 mS/cm. The overall **dissolved oxygen** level of 2.42 mg/L (29%Sat.) dropped 25% below last month and a year ago to 27% below the 22-yr norm of 3.42 mg/L (40%Sat). **Streamflow** over the antecedent 3-days of 1.2 cfs is 1% below last month, 7% less than a year ago and 5% above the 22-yr Aug. norm of 1.16 cfs. This month's overall LSDR **water quality index** (WQI) of 11 (F Very Poor) is 29% below last month, 33% less than as a year ago and 31% below the 22-yr norm of 16 (E Poor) for August.

WQI values computed over the past 25 months of RiverWatch record for the three main sections of the lower river system, the overall LSDR average, plus 30-day antecedent average daily streamflow (ADF) and total monthly rainfall (MRF) values, are expressed in **Table 2** on the next page. Overall the LSDR WQI value for August of this year is five points below both last year and the 22-yr montly norm of 16.

Table 2 - WQI Values, Average Daily Flow and Monthly Rainfall (July '24 - Aug. '26)							
	Mission Valley	Mission Gorge	Santee Basin	LSDR		ADF,cfs	TMR,F,in
July	27 (D)	43 (C)	25 (D)	28 (D)	DW	3.8	0.00
Aug.'24	22 (E)	44 (C)	22 (E)	25 (E+)	DW	2.9	0.00
Sept	18 (E)	19 (E)	20 (E)	18 (E)	DW	1.6	0.01
Oct.	17 (E)	42 (C)	24 (E+)	25 (D-)	DW	1.2	0.01
Nov.	34 (D)	49 (C+)	23 (E+)	33 (D)	T	2.2	0.08
Dec.	45 (C)	53(B-)	33 (D)	42 (C)	T	3.7	0.05
Jan.'25	44 (C)	49 (C+)	32 (D)	40 (C)	T	3.8	0.00
Feb.	49 (C+)	68 (B)	50 (B-)	53 (B-)	WW	27	1.00
March	59 (B)	68 (B)	48 (C+)	57 (B)	WW	55	2.40
April	45 (C)	65 (B)	33 (D)	44 (C)	T	16	0.08
May	38 (C-)	48 (C+)	23 (E+)	33 (D)	T	6.7	0.23
June	27 (D)	35 (D)	24 (E+)	26 (D-)	DW	2.7	0.00
July	22 (E)	22 (E)	17 (E)	19 (E)	DW	1.4	0.00
Aug.'25	19 (E)	15 (E)	18 (E)	17 (E)	DW	1.3	0.01
Sept	26 (D-)	16 (E)	10 (F)	17 (E)	DW	2.2	0.05
Oct.	18 (E)	48 (C+)	19 (E)	23 (E+)	T	4.2	0.10
Nov.	34(D)	61(B)	28(D)	37(D+)	WW	18	2.90
Dec.	41(C)	56(B)	27(D-)	38(C-)	WW	15	0.15
Jan. '26	53 (B-)	64 (B)	44 (C)	52 (B-)	WW	81	4.19
Feb	46 (C)	60 (B)	50 (B-)	51 (B-)	WW	36	2.11
March	42 (C)	61 (B)	30 (D)	41 (C)	T	19	0.00
April	35 (D)	52 (B-)	26 (D-)	35 (D)	T	5.7	0.15
May	30 (D-)	49 (C+)	21 (E)	30 (D)	T	5.2	0.31
June	17 (E)	35 (D)	20 (E)	21 (E)	DW	2.0	0.01
July	22 (E)	17 (E)	11 (F)	16 (E)	DW	1.1	0.00
Aug.'26	20 (E)	3 (F)	7 (F)	11 (F)	DW	1.0	0.00

The **cover page** of this report presents monthly WQI values and range (high/low) for the Lower San Diego River watershed over the past 22 years. Each year's values are expressed as color-shaded bars; **blue (50 or >) A-B/Good**, **green (38-49) C/Fair**, **yellow (25-37) D/Marginal**, **brown (13-24) E/Poor**, and **pink (12 or <) F/Very Poor**. Running average index values for the LSDR (distance weighted averages of all sites) are shown as a heavy black line. Running averages for the consistently highest (best) quality section of the river (Mission Gorge) are shown as a 'blue' line, while the consistently lowest (poorest) reach (Upper Santee Basin) is shown in 'red'. The dashed lines represent overall trends for the highest, lowest and average of all sites. This month's overall value of 11 (F Very Poor) is typically associated with the lowest quality reach (Upper Santee Basin) encompassing sites 13E and 14. The Mission Gorge (blue line) section, extending from Old Mission Dam through Mission Trails, however demonstrate the greatest change in index values over the last month. Index values experienced over both wet weather and transitional months of this year have in general declined due to hot and dry weather. Overall WY26 index values are expected to be significantly below highs experienced during the previous two water years.

WQI values extending from Sept.'05 thru Aug. '26 are presented in **Chart 1** (next page) together with 12-mo. running averages for each of the five reaches and overall (i.e., LSDR) for the entire lower river watershed. The current running average WQI of 31.0 is 6.8% below of the long-range norm of 33.3. The running average low for August of 23 (32% below norm) occurred in 2014. The previous highest running average WQI for the month of 40 (22% above norm) occurred in 2024. All eastern sites (8-15) monitored this month exhibited noticeable declines in water quality from last month, whereas several of the western sites (1&5) showed slight increases in index value.

Monthly and 12-mo. running average WQI values for the commonly 'lowest' (Upper Santee Basin) and typically "highest" (Mission Gorge) reaches of the lower watershed are presented in **Chart 2**. The greatest downward trends (**red-dashed line**) over time have been associated with the lowest quality reach (Upper Santee Basin) encompassing sites 13E and 14. The Mission Gorge (**blue line**) section, extending from Old Mission Dam through Mission Trails, continues to demonstrate the least change in index values over time. Overall index values this year are expected to be well below highs experienced during the previous two water years.

Spatial WQI values determined over the last three months, expressed in order of location upstream, are shown in **Charts 3, 4 and 5** on page 6. This month's results (color bars w/values in bold black shown on Chart 5) are noticeably lower than last month (middle bar) at all but two monitoring western monitoring sites (1&5). This month; only two sites were found Marginal (D), four Poor (E) and the remaining ten Very Poor (F). Last month three sites were Marginal, eight Poor and five Very Poor F. During the previous month (June) five sites were Marginal, five more Poor and the remaining six Very Poor. Index values are expected to improve marginally over the next month as water (and air) temperatures decline. It is quite likely that this year's overall water quality values, compared to the last several water years, will be lower due to below normal rainfall, less runoff/lower streamflow, elevated temperatures and higher specific conductivities combined with depressed dissolved oxygen levels occurring throughout the lower portions of the river.

jck (8/31/26)

