Chapter 13 - Plants and Animals

Index

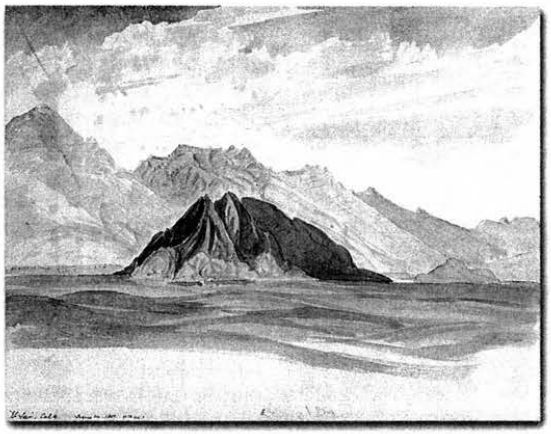
LIGHTHOUSE Quarterly
CENTRAL COAST LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS FALL 2005

Point Sur's Changing Landscape

by Carol O'Neil

While we know a great deal about Point Sur and its human story, the natural history has been more difficult to uncover. We know from written accounts that the "rock" was taller before the top was blasted off for the light station buildings, and that the sand area between the rock and the nearby hills often flooded. Aside from that, no photographic records have been found that precisely illustrate what it was like.

The first written record of Pt. Sur was in the log of Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo in 1542. He referred to it as a "moro" rock. The Spanish explorer, Sebastian Viscaino, followed 60 years later on a mapping expedition. His map of 1602 identifies Pt. Sur as "punta que parece isla" or "a point which appears as an island." The landmark formation was still un-named almost two centuries later when British explorer George Vancouver described it as a "small, high, rocky lump of land lying nearly half a mile from the shore."



James Madison Alden (1834–1922)
"El Sur, Cala., June 14, 1859 (1:00 p.m.), East," 1859,
from Sketchbook, 1858–59. Watercolor and graphite on paper.
California Historical Society, gift of Henry R. Wagner

California became a state in 1850 and the United States government suddenly found itself with a huge amount of territory 2,500 miles from the capital. With the increase in shipping (as a result of the Gold Rush) and the very long coastline, maritime concerns in the new territory became a priority. A naval expedition was ordered to survey the new coast and make a report. A map from an 1853 Navy Hydrographic Party was illustrated by sketches of some of the landmark formations along the coast. This was the first mention of the "moro" rock as "Pt. Sur" (a name probably taken from the surrounding Rancho El Sur). Pt. Sur was sketched from a southerly perspective and shows the sand spit connecting it to the mainland, the west face of the nearby hills and even the small formation known as "False Sur" (now covered with cypress trees near the old Naval Facility). In this view from the south, the top of the rock is somewhat rounded, but clearly shows the spine of the rock going from north to south. Lt. James Madison Alden, a crewmember on the 1853 expedition, and an accomplished watercolorist, returned to the West Coast on another expedition in 1859. He rendered a watercolor of Pt. Sur from the WNW; the rock with its steep sides and the narrow ridge at the top are clearly defined. The hills to the east look much as they do today. (Lt. Alden was a descendent of the "Mayflower" Aldens. His uncle was commanding officer of the 1853 survey expedition.)

Comparing the 1859 watercolor with current photographs, the most obvious change is the top, which was blasted down about 80 feet to provide a level surface on which to erect the light station buildings. We can see

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Changing Landscape continued from page 1

that the sides are still steep, but many of the deep indentations in the rock have softened, probably with fill dirt from the blasting.

The sand area that connects Pt. Sur to Highway One, a half mile to the east, has changed over the years. Grass has grown farther and farther west toward the rock. The acres of sand that used to be flat and almost at sea level have changed to an area of large dunes covered with vegetation, and are dry year round, except for winter pools that form among the dunes, especially north of the access road. In geology terms this sand spit is properly referred to as a "tombolo," defined on www.absoluteastronomy.com as: "a bar that forms an isthmus between an island or offshore rock and a mainland shore." It has changed, but "why" is a matter of speculation. Several theories have been proffered.

Grazing cattle on El Sur Ranch are often thought to be the catalyst for the changing landscape. Cattle have grazed along this stretch of coast since the 1830s, when Rancho El Sur was carved out as a Mexican land grant. The theory is that cattle eating grass in one area might "deposit" fertilized grass seeds in another area. However, photos from as late as the 1930s show little change in the acreage of flat sand, even after a century of cattle grazing. Another favorite theory is that quarries up the Little Sur River, to the north of Pt. Sur, have contributed extra silt and sand that was then deposited on the north,

U.S. Archives

1904 Photograph of Pt. Sur

or windward, side of the tombolo. While perhaps possible, it isn't considered probable—given the relatively small amount of quarry work involved.

European Beach Grass clings to the slopes of the dunes on Pt. Sur's tombolo, as does a variety of other native and non-native plants. These plants are part of the "chicken/egg" debate of which came first, the dune or the plants.

U.S. Coast Guard Archives

Sand spit—looking east from the Rock.

Another theory offered by former volunteer and landscape designer, Tom Deyerle, was that the road was cleared or plowed with the sand thrown up along the sides at a time that coincided with some non-flooding years and the dunes began to stabilize and grow. Tom's theory was just another competing speculation until volunteer Alan Rosen unearthed some long-forgotten photographs at the Coast Guard Archives in Washington, D.C. Several of the photographs show not only bulldozers moving dirt around on the tombolo during the 1930s, but evidence of sand being mined and fences erected along the access road to hold back the drifting sand.

While not definitive evidence, it is probably the best available. Once the sand was disturbed (i.e. stabilized), other forces went to work. European Beach Grass and other plants took hold; cattle roamed and fertilized; Mother Nature did her work with wind and rain. It is believed that the last time the tombolo flooded was in the early 1950s. A description of the flooded tombolo would be a welcome addition to Pt. Sur's archives, if there were an opportunity to interview anyone who saw it. The search continues for photographs and artwork of Pt. Sur that provide a "connecting picture" into the past. [*Editor's note: The Alden painting was located by Pt. Sur Volunteer, Don Nelson, in a collection at the California Historical Society, where he also volunteers.*]. ■

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Vernal Pools

Have you noticed the newly formed pools on the way out to the Lightstation? These are **vernal pools**, formed during the rainy season where a hard underground layer prevents rainwater from draining downward into the subsoils. Vernal pools may last several months or may dry up and form again with additional precipitation. They usually dry up completely during the summer and fall.

Numerous plants and animals, some listed as rare, threatened or endangered, have evolved to survive and thrive in these harsh conditions and are unique to these temporary pools. Many of these plants and animals spend the dry season when the ponds are dried up as seeds, eggs or cysts, sometimes for more than one year, then grow and reproduce once the ponds fill with water again.

Vernal pools are also important habitats for several other animals including egrets, ducks, hawks, frogs and other amphibians. They are important wetland habitats along the Pacific Flyway for migrating birds.

90% of California's vernal pools have been lost due to development. Vernal pools are now protected by state and federal laws.

Although the pools are not on park property, we are fortunate to be able to observe them on the way to and from on top of the rock. Watch for ducks and geese raising their young as well as egrets looking for food.

For more information:

www.epa.gov › wetlands › vernal-pools

https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants/Vernal-Pools

From: https://chapters.cnps.org/montereybay/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/02/PlantList_PointSurStateHistoricPark_2012.pdf

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – VASCULAR PLANTS
POINT SUR LIGHTHOUSE PARK

Abronia latifolia - yellow sand verbena
Acmispon glaber - deerweed
Acmispon heermannii - Heermann's lotus
Acmispon strigosus - Bishop's lotus
Agoseris apargioides var. apargioides - sandhill dandelion
Ambrosia chamissonis var. chamissonis - beach bur
Anagallis arvensis - scarlet pimpernel
Arctostaphylos edmundsii - Little Sur manzanita
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi - bearberry
Armeria maritima ssp. californica - sea pink/Calif. thrift
Artemisia californica - California sagebrush
Artemisia pycnocephala - beach sagewort
Astragalus nuttallii - Gray's locoweed
Avena fatua - wild oat
Brassica rapa - field mustard
Bromus hordeaceus - soft chess
Cakile maritima - sea rocket
Calystegia macrostegia ssp. cyclostegia - coast morning-glory
Calystegia subacaulis - hill morning-glory
Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia - beach evening primrose
Cardamine oligosperma - bitter-cress
Carpobrotus chilensis - sea fig
Carpobrotus edulis - Hottentot fig
Castilleja latifolia - seaside painted cup
Ceanothus thyrsiflorus var. griseus - Carmel ceanothus
Cerastium glomeratum - mouse-ear chickweed
Chenopodium californicum - California goosefoot/soap plant
Cirsium occidentale - cobweb thistle
Cistus incanus - rock-rose
Clarkia lewisii - Lewis' clarkia
Claytonia perfoliata ssp. perfoliata - miner's lettuce
Conium maculatum - poison hemlock
Corethrogyne filaginifolia - common corethrogyne
Cotula australis - Australian cotula
Cotula coronopifolia - brass buttons
Crassula connata - sand pygmyweed
Daucus pusillus - rattlesnake weed
Delphinium patens - coast larkspur
Drymocallis glandulosa - sticky cinquefoil
Dudleya farinosa - bluff lettuce
Erigeron glaucus - seaside daisy
Eriogonum latifolium - coast buckwheat
Eriogonum parvifolium - dune buckwheat
Eriophyllum confertiflorum - golden yarrow
Eriophyllum staechadifolium - lizard tail
Erodium cicutarium - red-stemmed filaree
Erodium moschatum - white-stemmed filaree
Eschscholzia californica var. maritima - California/beach poppy
Festuca sp. - ryegrass
Fragaria chiloensis - beach strawberry
Fragaria vesca - wood strawberry
Gamochaeta ustulata - purple cudweed
Heliotropium curassavicum var. occulatum - Chinese pusley
Hesperocyparis macrocarpa - Monterey cypress
Hordeum sp. - barley
Horkelia californica - California horkelia
Horkelia cuneata var. cuneata - wedge-leaved horkelia
Iris douglasiana - Douglas iris
Lathyrus vestitus - common Pacific pea
Lobularia maritima - sweet alyssum
Lupinus arboreus - yellow bush/tree lupine
Malva parviflora - cheeseweed
Matthiola incana - stock
Medicago polymorpha - bur-clover
Melilotus indicus - Indian melilot
Mimulus aurantiacus var. aurantiacus - sticky monkey flower
Mimulus guttatus - common monkey flower
Nuttallanthus texanus - toad-flax
Orobanche californica - California broomrape
Oxalis pes-caprae - Bermuda-buttercup
Phacelia distans - wild heliotrope
Piperia unalascensis - Alaska rein-orchid
Plantago coronopus - cut-leaved plantain
Plantago lanceolata - buckhorn/English plantain
Plantago maritima - Pacific seaside plantain
Polypodium californicum - California polypody
Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum - weedy cudweed
Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens - western bracken fern
Pterostegia drymarioides - pterostegia
Rubus ursinus - California blackberry
Rumex acetosella - sheep sorrel
Rumex crispus - curly dock
Rumex salicifolius - willow dock
Salvia mellifera - black sage
Sanicula crassicaulis - gambleweed/Pacific sanicle
Senecio vulgaris - common groundsel
Silene gallica - windmill pink
Silybum marianum - milk thistle
Solanum douglasii - Douglas' nightshade
Sonchus oleraceus - common sow thistle
Spergularia macrotheca - large-flowered sand spurry
Stachys bullata - wood mint
Stellaria media - common chickweed
Tetragonia tetragonioides - New Zealand spinach
Toxicodendron diversilobum - poison oak
Trifolium variegatum var. variegatum - white-tipped clover
Vicia gigantea - giant vetch
Vinca major - periwinkle
Zantedeschia aethiopica - calla lily

Bracken — Pteridium aquilinum

No flower — ___ Dies off in Fall and returns in ___ Spring

It is fern with woody hairy root. The fronds are 12" to 18" long. **Located** along the fence on the North and East sides of the cistern.

Polypody — Polypody scouleri

No flower — ___ ___ None

It is fern with tongue-like fronds divided in to blunt segments which are 3" to 7" high. It has spoors on the underside of the leaf.
Located along the fence on the North and East sides of the cistern

Cutleaf Plantain — Plantago coronopus

Pale Yellow flower — ___ Blooms from April to ___ August

It has long leafless stems, deeply lobed basal leaves, 6" to 10" tall.
Located next to the fence West of the garage and along the path and road edges.

Pearly Everlasting — Anaphalis margaritacea

Pale Yellow and White flower — ___ Blooms from June to ___ September

It is 1' to 2' tall with narrow alternate leaves white woody stems, and flower cluster loosely compound, paper bracts around the flowers.
Located just north of the Barn.

Sow Thistle — Sonchus oleraceus

Small Yellow flower — ___ Blooms from April to ___ November

It has a base of spiny leaf which encompasses the spiny stem. It has a yellow flower with white or yellow center.
Located all over, to the West and at the base of the rock wall on the USCG road.

Deer Weed — Lotus scoparius

Small Yellow flower — ___ Blooms from April to ___ November

It is a low lying yellow flower with red tips about half a dime in size.

Located about 15 feet north of the power box at the top of the path to the lighthouse and sandy area near the parking lot.

Lupine Lupinus arboreus

Mostly Yellow blooms, does come in Purple as well but not many of these around the rock. Blooms from March to September

Grow 2 to 3 feet high, with rounded flowers on short spikes.
The leaves are a slivery green color.

Located in the field and the lower staircase at the lighthouse.

Field Mustard or Turnip Brassica rapa

Yellow four petal blooms, Blooms from March to September

Grow 1 to 3 feet high, with rounded flowers in clumps on long spikes.
The leaves are a green color.
It was introduced from Europe.
Located in the field.

Oxalis Oxalis pes-caprae

Yellow blooms, Blooms from March to September

Grow 1 to 1.5 feet high, with trumpet shaped flowers on long steams growing out of a clump of clover like greenery.
The leaves are a green color.

Located in the field and along the road.

Sand Verbena Abronia latifolia

Cluster of small yellow flowers Blooms May to October

Grows close to the ground
It has fleshy green succulent oval leaves. Trumpet shaped flower and not petals. It is native to the Western Central Coast from Santa Barbara to British Columbia. **Located** near the parking lot.

Beach Primrose Camissionia cheiranthfollia

Four petal Yellow Flower Blooms most of the year.

It is a day blooming primrose.
Grows low to the ground with hairy leaves and several long stems. It can be found from Oregon to Baja California.
Located near the parking lot.

Dudleya or Bluff Lettuce Dudleya farinosa

Yellow flower Blooms from May to September

Succulent looking Rosetta of waxy or whitish triangular leaves.
Located along the road and the USCG road.

Iceplant – Sea Fig — Carpobrotus edulis

Yellow flower very to Magenta — Blooms from May to September

Flowers grow up to 4 inches on green Succulent looking leaves. It is not native and probably comes from South Africa.
Located along and above the main road.

California Poppy (Marine) — Eschscholtzia maritima

Yellow to Orange funnel shaped — Blooms year round

California State flower this variety has the gold and yellow colors reversed.
Leaves are Gray/Green and are feathery in appearance.
Located over most of the Rock, and specifically next to the barn.

Sticky Monkey Flower — Mimulus aurantiacus

Orange flower – sometimes it is yellowish — Blooms in March to August

The plant can grow 2 to 4 feet tall. It can be found for Oregon to the Central Coast of California.
Located along the road and east side of the top.

Lizard Tail Yarrow — Euiophyllum steachadi-folium

Yellow Flower — Blooms from April to November

Shrubby and grow 1 to 5 feet tall.
Located over most of the hill.

Brass Buttons — Cotula coronopifloia

Gold Flowers

Low growing plant with flowers just smaller than a dime, and found in saline or fresh water marshes.
The flower has a flat back and rounded face. It is not native, and was probably introduced from South Africa. There it is call "goosegrass" or "duckling plant".
Located on the north side of oil room building.

Scarlet Pimpernel — Anagallis arvensis

Salmon colored flower — Blooms from March to October

Low lying plant with dime size or smaller flowers.

Located between the cistern and the path to the lighthouse.
The plant was used as an acrid poison in ancient times. Used as a remedy for convulsions, the plague, gout, and hydrophobia.

Seaside Painted Cup Castilleja latifolia

Red Orange flower with a tinge of yellow Flowers from February until September

Low growing plant which is 4" to 6" inches tall. It has hairy leaves which are barely 3 lobed and spiky looking. Appears to grow on a stalk.
Located on most of the Rock. On the north facing slope of the cistern hill, where the USCG meets the main road

Seaside Daisy Erigeron glaucus

Violet colored flower Blooms from April to September

Flowers on 3 to 6 inch stems, violet in color fading to gold in the center.

Located over most of the rock, and USCG road to Lighthouse.

Aloe unknown

Reddish flower

Best known species is Aloe Vera, known for is medicinal uses for burns.
Located on the South East end of the Visitor's Center.

Thrift or Sea Pink Armeria maritima

Pinkish colored pom-poms Blooms from March to September

It has narrow leaves (1/16 of an inch) in a tuft. The flowers are on top of naked 3" to 10" stalks

Located over most of the rock, and at the base of the Oil Room building

Farewell to Spring Clarkia amoena

Pink to Violet colored four petal flower

This a low lying violet/pink and white flower with green fleshy leaves. The flowers sit a thin bare stems.
Located NE of the Triplex on bank of cliff side road.

Beach Aster Corethrogyne californica

Violet colored flower Blooms from May to November

White woolly leaves which diminish as they approach the flower.

Located over most of the rock, but also on the path to the lighthouse.

Little Sur Manzanita — Arctostaphylos edmundsii

Pink flower — Blooms from November to February

It is a small shrub, reddish bark, leathery leaves with small urn-like flowers, and small round fruit. Manzanita means little apple in Spanish.
Located above the USCG road to the lighthouse.

Coast Buckwheat — Eriogonum latifolium

Pinkish flower tending toward red — Flowers from June to October

It has fleshy green leaves and a woody base

Located over most on the top of the Rock, next to the stairway at the lighthouse.

Dune Buckwheat — Eriogonum parvifolium

Whitish/Pinkish Flowers — Blooms from June to October

Low shrubby woody plant

Located over most of the Rock, and the West facing slope of USCG road.

Western Morning Glory — Calystegia occidentalis

Whitish/Pinkish veined Flowers — Blooms from April to October

Trumpet-like flower, arrow shaped leaves, clinging as a vine among other shrubs and plants.

Located several places along the road.

Milk Thistle — Silybum marianum

Reddish Purple Flowers — Blooms from May to July

Flowers have large spiny head on a green spiny stock with green spiny leaves.
The seed head is down-like.
Located along the path and the road edges.

Old Fashioned Single Stock — Matthiola incana

Four Petal Purple colored flower

Located between the path to the lighthouse and the Cistern and along the edges of the road.

Sea Rocket Cakile maritima

Lavender Color flower Blooms from February to September

Four petal flower in a cross formation, deeply wooded leaves. Stands 1 to 3 feet tall.

Located west of the USCG road and near the parking lot.

Wild Lilac, Carmel Creeper Ceanothus

Pale Blue flowers Blooms from March to August

Fluffy blue flower.
Located along the path to the lighthouse and the fence line by cistern.

Sage (Black) Salvia mellifera

Pale Blue flowers Blooms from March to August

It is part of the mint family with dark blackish green leaves, flowers in whorls on a spike that has a somewhat square stem.

Located along the path to the lighthouse.

Gray Locoweed Austragalus leucopsis

Whitish Flower **Blooms in Summer**

Dreaded by ranchers for the narcotic effect on animals. It is also known as rattleweed.
Located near the parking lot and along the road.

Sweet Alyssum Sweet alyssum

White flower Blooms year round

It is 3 to 6 inches high, with fluffy looking spikes of white ball like flowers.

Located around the buildings and path edges.

Yarrow Achillea Borealis

White flower Blooms from June to September

This has a dense flat head of white flowers on a stalk or long stem.
Steeped in hot water and used to heal cuts and bruises and in Sweden it is used instead of hops in the brewing of beer.
Located along the top fence between the Cistern, the path to the lighthouse, and the base of the staircase.

Poison Hemlock Conium maculatum

White flower Blooms from April to July

It has umbrellas of white flowers with purple specks or streaks on stocks, known as "blood of Socrates" 2 to 10 feet tall. All parts are poisonous.

Douglas Nightshade Solanum douglasii

White flower Blooms most of the year

It is a sparse-looking shrub 2 to 3 feet high, flower petals curl back and hang to the side or upside down with yellow stamens and dark purple berries
Located on the upper part of the hill area of the cistern.

Blackberry Rubus Fruticosus.

White flower Blooms May to August

It is a climber vine-like on spiny branches, with edible black fruit.
Located on the upper hill north of the pump house.

California Sage Brush Artemesia californica

Light Greenish-White Flower Blooms from August to October

It grows up to 4 feet high, grey/beige foliage, inconspicuous flowers on spikes, sage smell. fragrant.

Located over most of the rock and South West corner of the Barn.

New Zealand Spinach Tetragonia expansa

Greenish flower Flowers from April until September

Low growing bush which is 3" to 5" inches tall. The leaves are fleshy and somewhat triangular in shape. Appears to grow on a long steam.

The leaves are edible, but tastes bitter. It was introduced by early keepers.

Located on most of the Rock. On the main road where it meets the USCG road, and around the parking lot.

Beach Sagewort Artemesia pycnocephala

Needle like, bluish, no flagrance

This is a woody shrub that is 1 to 2 feet high with grayish woolly leaves, a sage smell and tall spikes of inconspicuous flowers.

Located on path to the lighthouse.

Beware . . .
Poison Oak is out there!

Leave of 3, let it be
If it's hairy, it's a berry

Not everyone gets Poison Oak rash/reactions.

40+ year old poison oak plant half way up lightstation hill between hill gate and Macon point. Much smaller than poison oak in more protected areas such as Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and inland due to high winds and limited soil and water.

Typical Poison Oak rash

If exposed, wash skin with soap and water or Tecnu as soon as possible. Once rash appears, use calamine lotion or other over the counter itch medications.

Seek medical attention if excessive blistering, swelling or itching occurs, eyes become swollen, you are experiencing a fever, rash covers large portion of skin or is long lasting, or blisters become infected.

If exposed, wash clothes including shoe laces.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Trusted Source recommends applying topical OTC medications, such as calamine lotion, to relieve itching caused by poisonous plants such as poison oak.

Trentepohlia

Did you know:

From https://www.pointlobos.org/encyclopedia/plants-and-geology

The trees closest to the direct salt spray are often covered with a bright orange growth: Trentepohlia, a green alga rich in beta carotene, which gives it its orange color. It too is non-parasitic and is also found growing on rocks and downed wood along the trail. Both the alga and the lichen condense moisture from the fog; it drips down into the root zone of the trees and provides extra water during the dry season.

Another great resource for identifying plants, animals and other organisms: https://www.inaturalist.org/check_lists/5738-Point-Lobos-State-Reserve-Check-List?page=16

Audubon Society Bird Count at Pt. Sur Lightstation and Naval Facility - December 19, 2021

Here are the bird lists from the count on December 19. Busy place.
Richard Ruh

Thank you, Richard, for providing the information.

Click on the links below for larger sized list. You can click on each species once on their website and learn more about each species including photos.

Species	Count
American Kestrel	1
American Pipit (rubescens Group)	1
Bewick's Wren (spilurus Group)	2
Black Oystercatcher	5
Black Phoebe	2
Black-vented Shearwater	17
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (obscura Group)	1
Brandt's Cormorant	250
Brewer's Blackbird	1
Brown Pelican (California)	33
California Condor	1
California Gull	282
Common Loon	1
Common Murre	6
Double-crested Cormorant	1
Eared Grebe	1
Glaucous-winged Gull	5
Great Egret	2
Heermann's Gull	270
House Finch	38
Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Northern Fulmar	6
Pacific Loon	57
Pelagic Cormorant	5
Peregrine Falcon (North American)	1
Red-tailed Hawk (calurus/alascensis)	1
Red-throated Loon	4
Rhinoceros Auklet	5
Savannah Sparrow (Savannah)	1
Song Sparrow (heermanni Group)	2
Surf Scoter	20
Tricolored Blackbird	34
Turkey Vulture	3
Western Gull	132
Western Meadowlark	12
Whimbrel (Hudsonian)	1
White-crowned Sparrow (nuttalli)	4
White-crowned Sparrow (pugetensis)	30
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)	8

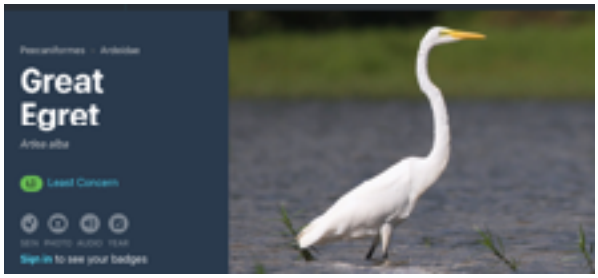
Pt Sur 39 species
https://ebird.org/checklist/S99137615

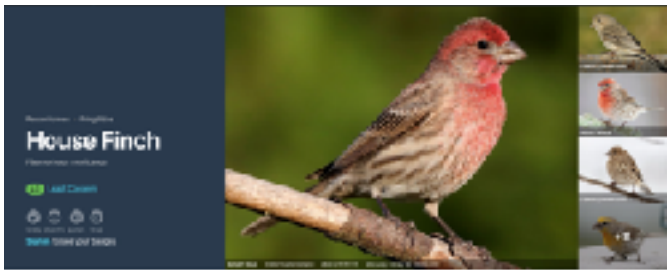
NavFac 12 species. They saw 2 Condors but they were far away, high in the sky.
https://ebird.org/ checklist/S99137614

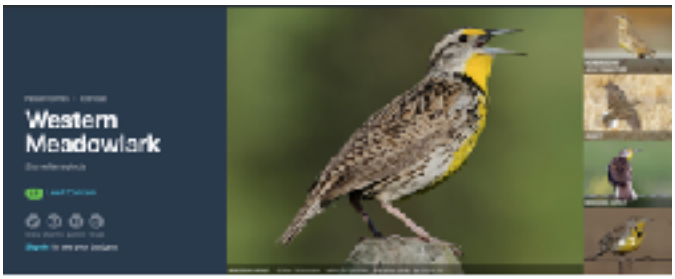
Turkey Vulture	3
Western Gull	132
Western Meadowlark	12
Whimbrel (Hudsonian)	1
White-crowned Sparrow (nuttalli)	4
White-crowned Sparrow (pugetensis)	30
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)	8

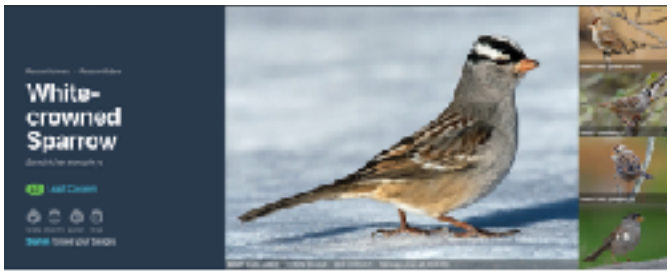
Birds Found at Pt. Sur

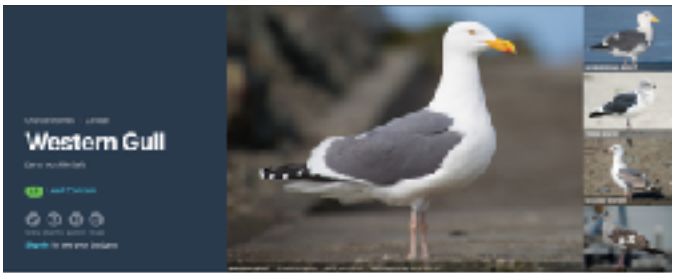
See Audubon Society Bird Count links above for more information

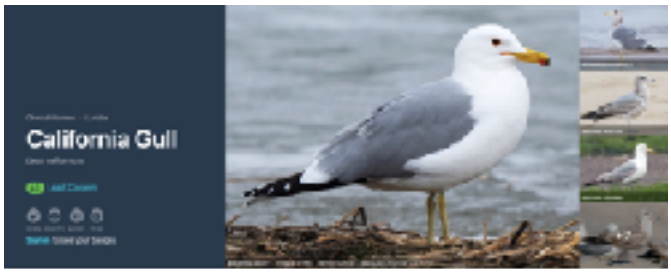


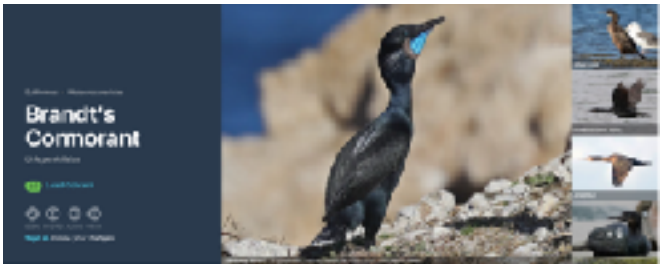


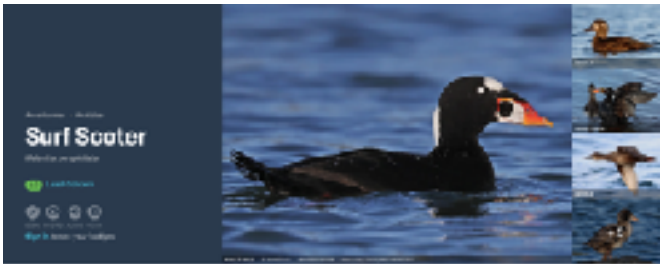


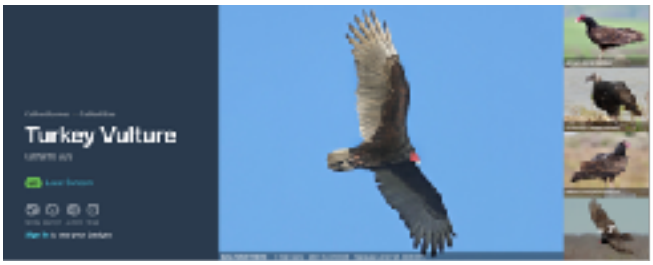


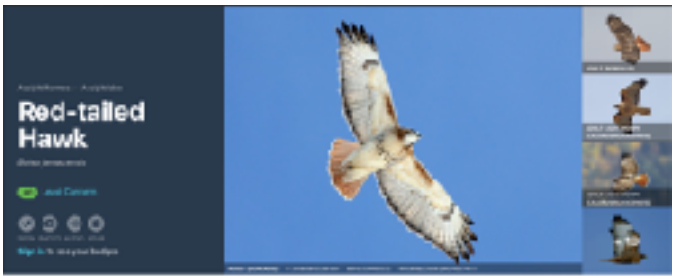


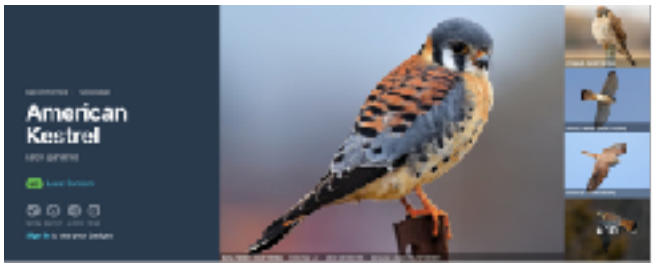


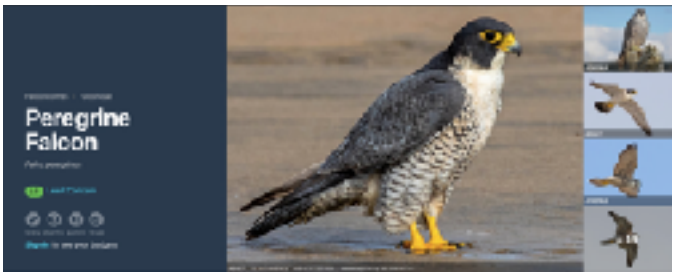












Northern Harrier (previously known as a Marsh Hawk)

- Found on the flats between the highway and Pt. Sur rock
- Distinctive white rump patch
- Used to be called Marsh Hawks

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Snow Plover Season is Here!

It's official! The first Western Snowy Plover nests with eggs have been spotted along California's beaches.

Plover nests are like works of beach art. The eggs are camouflaged to look like sand and many nests are right out on the open sand!

Plovers also nest near kelp or driftwood and might adorn their nests with shells or pebbles - a beautiful sight to behold.

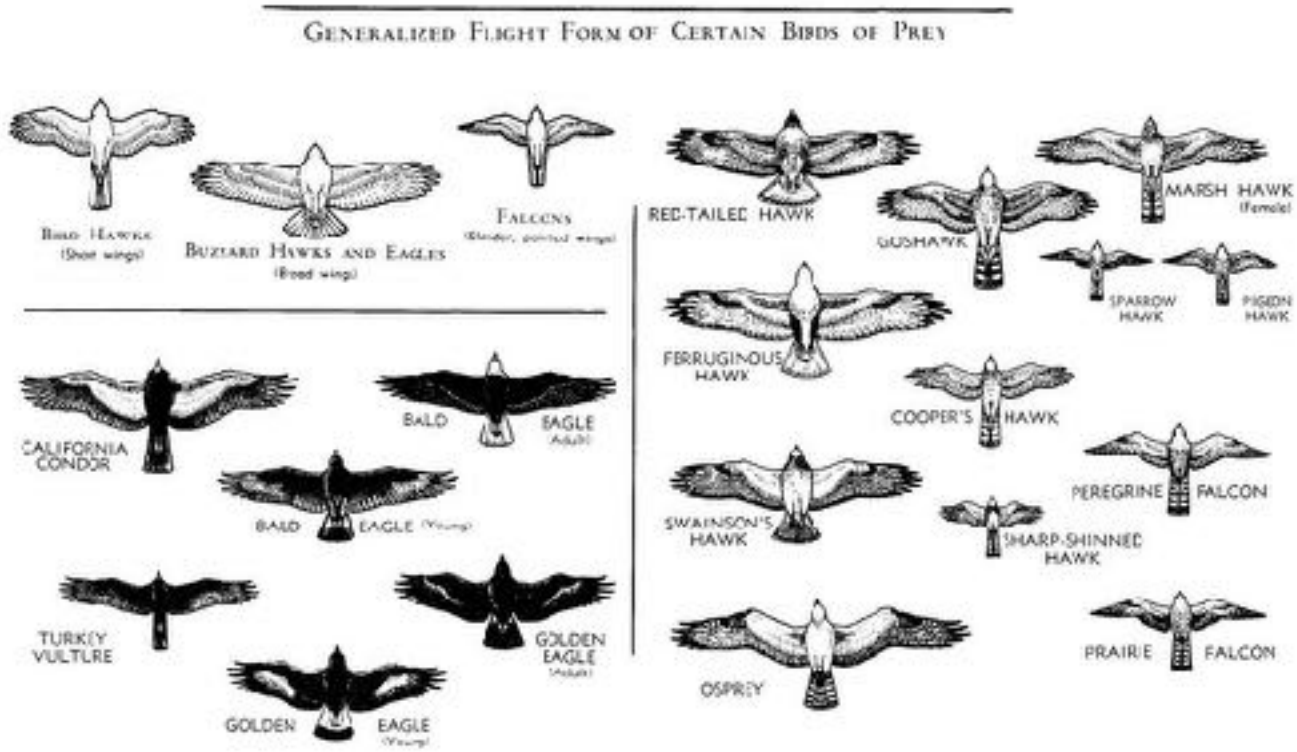
There are typically three eggs in each nest. Each one is critical to the recovery of this Threatened species.

Let's create a successful plover nesting season! The nests are vulnerable to predators and trampling by beach visitors and dogs. Remember to Share the Shore by respecting nesting fences and keeping dogs on leash.

To learn more about Western Snowy Plovers in California, visit: https://ca.audubon.org/westernsnowyplover

The Pt. Sur State Park beach area is closed all year due for Snowy Plover protection.

Birds of prey you may see at Pt. Sur State Historic Park



SIMILAR SPECIES

California Condors are unmistakable when seen well. At a distance, they might be confused with the common Turkey Vultures, which are much smaller and do not show the prominent white triangles from below on the leading edge of the wings. Eagles are also slightly smaller and do not show the same pattern on the wings.

from: https://www.ventanaws.org/condors.html

If you see a condor, find out more about the bird by using the tag color and number at:
https:///www.condorspotter.com/

Common Mammals of Point Sur

Brush Rabbit
Sylvilagus audubonii

Pocket Gopher
Thomomys bottae

California Ground Squirrel
Spermophilus beecheyi

Mouse
Peromyscus or Mus

Gray Fox
Urocyon cinereoargenteus

Coyote
Canis latrans

Raccoon
Procyon lotor

Striped Skunk
Mephitis mephitis

Mountain Lion
Felis concolor

Bobcat
Lynx rufus

Black-tailed Deer
Odocoileus hemionus columbines

California Sea Lion
Zalophus californians

Southern Sea Otter
Enhydra lutris nereis

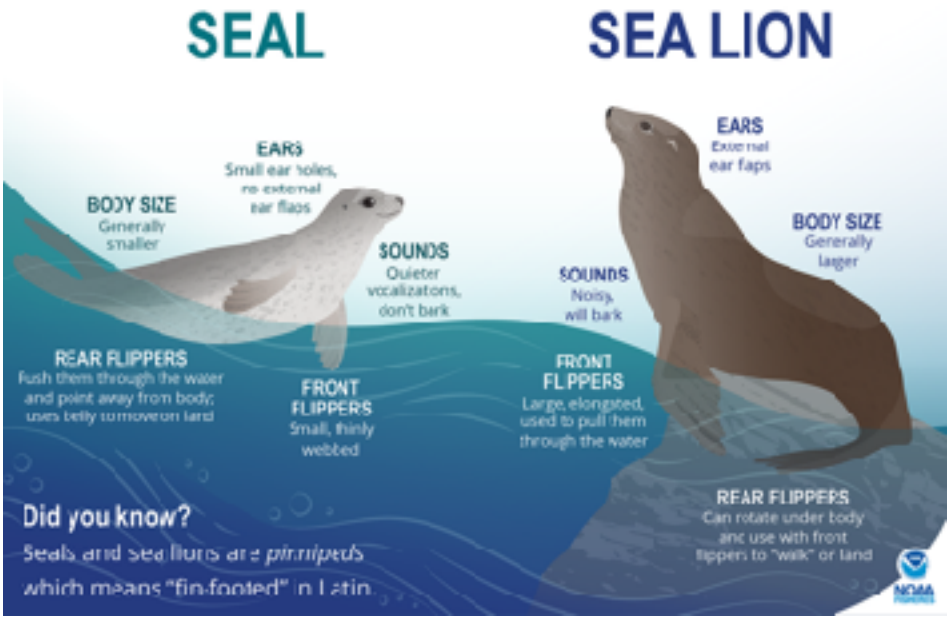
Gray Whale
Eschrichtius robustus

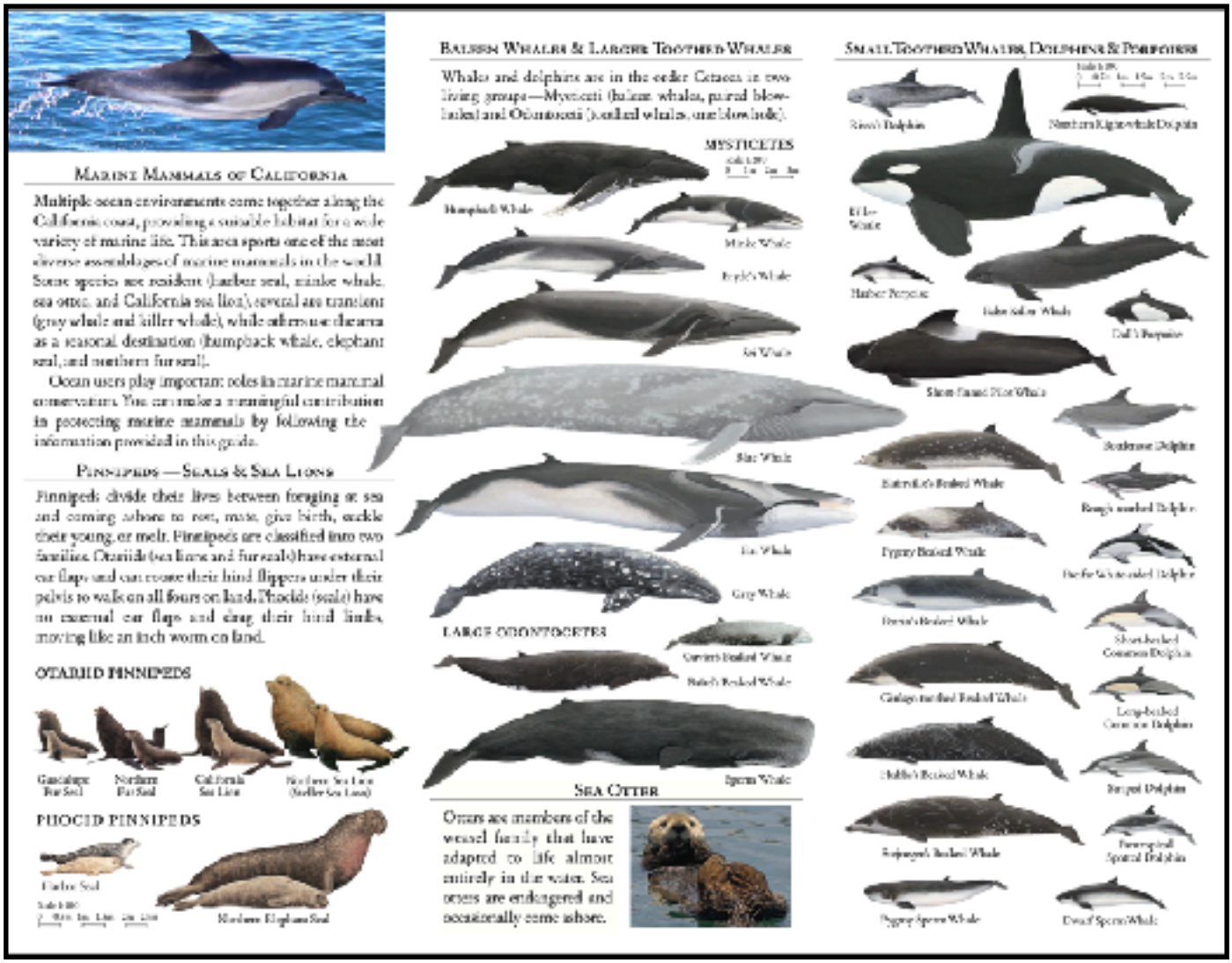
Orca
Orcinus orca

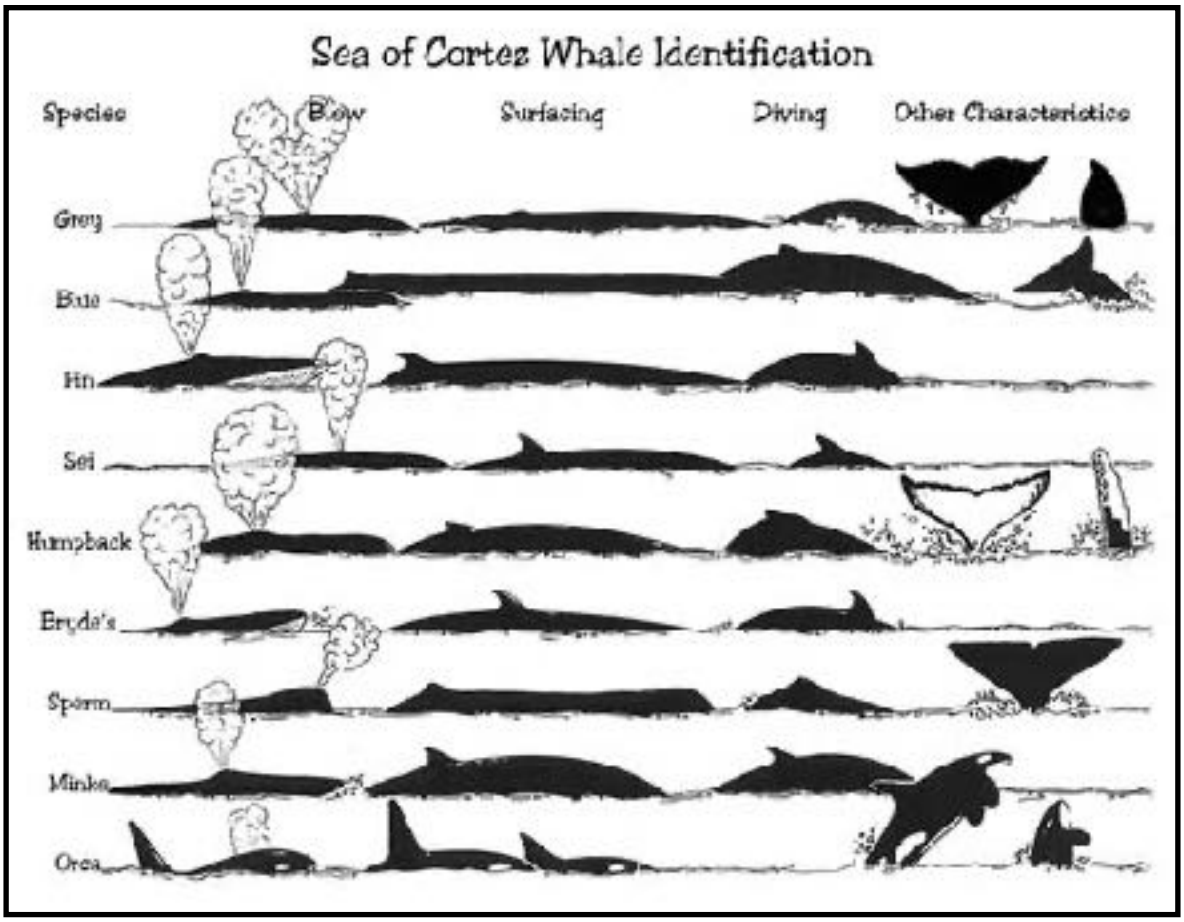
Humpback Whale
Megaptera novaeangliae

Risso's Dolphin.
Grampus griseus

Pacific White Sided Dolphin
Lagenorhynchus obliquidens


SEAL
SEA LION
EARS
Small ear holes, no external ear flaps
BODY SIZE
Generally smaller
SOUNDS
Quieter vocalizations, don't bark
REAR FLIPPERS
Rush them through the water and point away from body; uses belly to move on land
FRONT FLIPPERS
Small, thinly webbed
EARS
External ear flaps
BODY SIZE
Generally larger
SOUNDS
Noisy, will bark
FRONT FLIPPERS
Large, elongated, used to pull them through the water
REAR FLIPPERS
Can rotate under body and use with front flippers to "walk" or land
Did you know?
Seals and sea lions are pinnipeds which means "fin-footed" in Latin


Marine Mammals of California
Multiple ocean environments come together along the California coast, providing a suitable habitat for a wide variety of marine life. This area sports one of the most diverse assemblages of marine mammals in the world. Some species are resident (harbor seal, minke whale, sea otter, and California sea lion); several are transient (gray whale and killer whale); while others use the area as a seasonal destination (humpback whale, elephant seal, and northern fur seal).
Ocean users play important roles in marine mammal conservation. You can make a meaningful contribution in protecting marine mammals by following the information provided in this guide.
Pinnipeds — Seals & Sea Lions
Pinnipeds divide their lives between foraging at sea and coming ashore to rest, molt, give birth, suckle their young, or mate. Pinnipeds are classified into two families. Otariids (sea lions and fur seals) have external ear flaps and can rotate their hind flippers under their pelvis to walk on all fours on land. Phocids (seals) have no external ear flaps and drag their hind limbs, moving like an inch worm on land.
Otariid Pinnipeds
Guadalupe Fur Seal
Northern Fur Seal
California Sea Lion
Northern Sea Lion (Steller Sea Lion)
Phocid Pinnipeds
Harbor Seal
Northern Elephant Seal
Baleen Whales & Larger Toothed Whales
Whales and dolphins are in the order Cetacea in two living groups—Mysticeti (baleen whales, paired blowholes) and Odontoceti (toothed whales, one blowhole).
Mysticetes
Humpback Whale
Minke Whale
Bryde's Whale
Sei Whale
Blue Whale
Fin Whale
Gray Whale
Large Odontocetes
Cuvier's Beaked Whale
Baird's Beaked Whale
Sperm Whale
Sea Otter
Otters are members of the weasel family that have adapted to life almost entirely in the water. Sea otters are endangered and occasionally come ashore.
Small Toothed Whales, Dolphins & Porpoises
Risso's Dolphin
Northern Right Whale Dolphin
Killer Whale
Harbor Porpoise
False Killer Whale
Dall's Porpoise
Short-finned Pilot Whale
Striped Dolphin
Mesoplodont Beaked Whale
Rough-toothed Dolphin
Pygmy Beaked Whale
Pacific White-sided Dolphin
Dwarf Sperm Whale
Short-beaked Common Dolphin
Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale
Long-beaked Common Dolphin
Hubbs' Beaked Whale
Bottlenose Dolphin
Pygmy Sperm Whale


Sea of Cortez Whale Identification
Species
Blow
Surfacing
Diving
Other Characteristics
Grey
Blue
Fin
Sei
Humpback
Bryde's
Sperm
Minke
Orca

Common Snakes Found at Pt. Sur

Rattlesnake: Rattle on tail, no stripes from tail to head, head triangular shape

Rarely found at the Lightstation.
Found at the Naval Facility.

Gopher snake: No rattle, no stripes from tail to head, head not triangular shape

Often found at the Lightstation and Naval Facility.

Garter Snake: Stripes from tail to head lengthwise, head not triangular shape

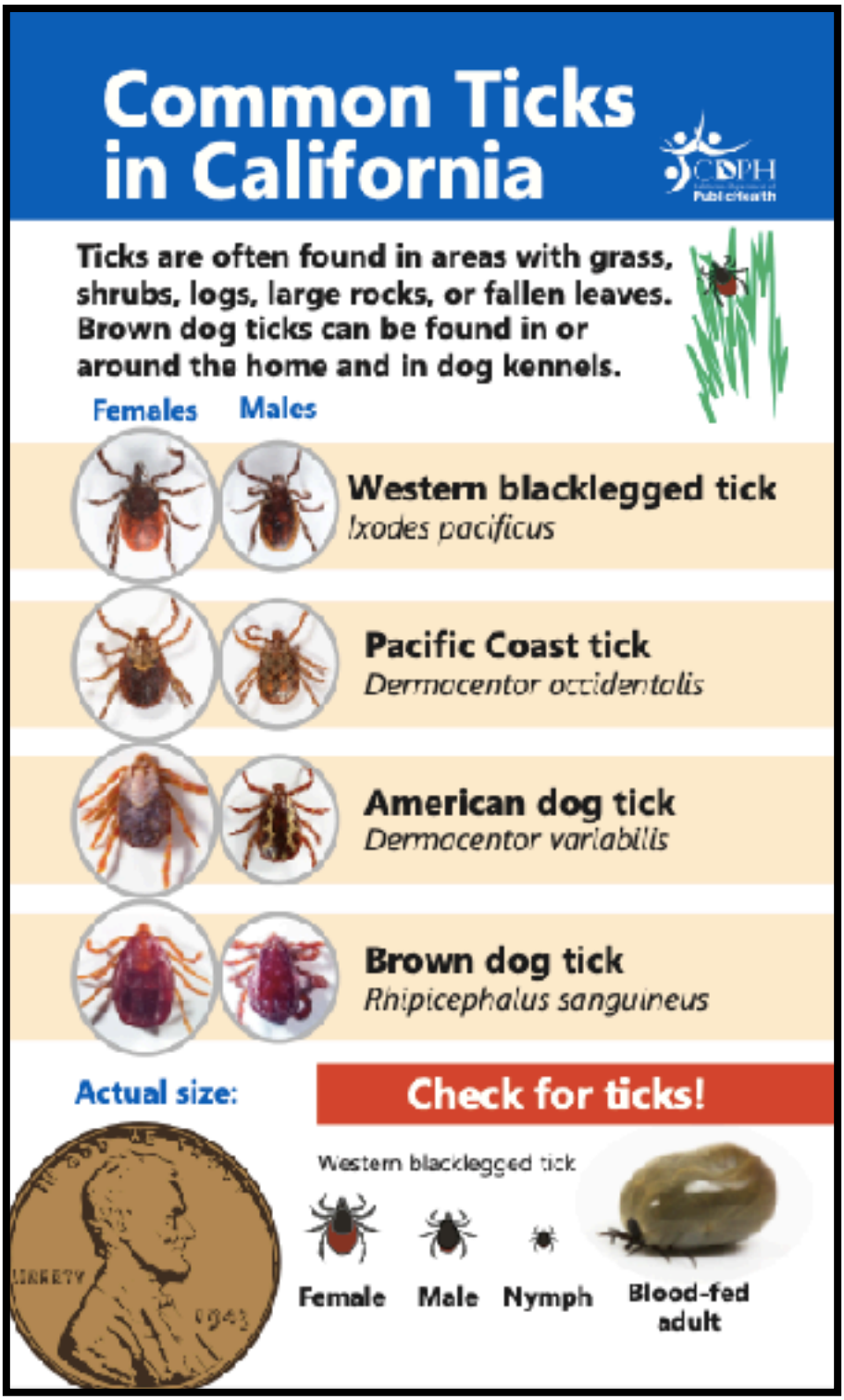
Often found at the Lightstation and Naval Facility.

Why are snakes beneficial?

Snakes maintain balance in the ecosystem and food web.
Snakes are a natural form of pest control. They eat mice, rats and insects.
Snakes are secondary seed dispersers.
Snakes can reduce disease including Lyme disease.
Snakes are cool!

Western Fence Lizard
Or Blue Belly

Holds the cure for Lye disease in its blood.
Often seen doing “push ups” on the fences, trails and road
Only males have electric blue patches on their throats and bellies.


Common Ticks in California
CDPH
Public Health
Ticks are often found in areas with grass, shrubs, logs, large rocks, or fallen leaves. Brown dog ticks can be found in or around the home and in dog kennels.
Females
Males
Western blacklegged tick
Ixodes pacificus
Pacific Coast tick
Dermacentor occidentalis
American dog tick
Dermacentor variabilis
Brown dog tick
Rhipicephalus sanguineus
Actual size:
Check for ticks!
Western blacklegged tick
Female
Male
Nymph
Blood-fed adult

Ticks can spread disease!

Western blacklegged tick	→	Lyme disease, anaplasmosis
Pacific Coast tick	→	spotted fever, tularemia
Dog ticks	→	spotted fever

Find a tick on you?
Brush it off

Is the tick attached to your skin?
Remove it right away

1. **Use tweezers to grab the tick as close to your skin as possible.**
2. **Pull the tick firmly, straight out, and away from your skin** (DO NOT twist, burn, or smother the tick).
3. **Wash your hands and the bite area with soap and water after the tick is removed, and apply an antiseptic to the bite area.**
4. **See your doctor if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms within 30 days after a tick bite.**

Learn more: www.cdph.ca.gov

Questions? Call (916) 552-9730 or contact your local vector control or public health agency