

#### **Point Lobos Association**

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The mission of the Point Lobos Association is to support interpretive and educational programs that enhance the visitor's experience, and to assist California State Parks in preserving

Point Lobos State Reserve.

#### Point Lobos Magazine

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Judd Perry



s I write this letter, there Ais a terrible cloud hanging over the future of Point Lobos State Reserve and the California State Parks System itself. As you have undoubtedly heard, one of the proposed "solutions" to the current California budget crisis is to close as many as 220 of the existing 279 state parks, state beaches, and state reserves, and Point Lobos Reserve is included in the list to potentially be closed. While most people are aware of the terrible economic condition in which the State of California finds itself, the idea of closing virtually the entire State Parks System to save about 0.01% of the total State budget is folly of the first order.

The known facts are that for every \$1 paid out of the State General Fund for State Parks, \$2.35 is returned to the General Fund from entrance fees and increased spending directly related to the activity of visitors to state parks. So, instead of saving money by the shut-down, it will actually cost the General Fund more than twice what it is attempting to save.

And it is not just a revenue issue. Once closed, and without the presence of park rangers, the natural and cultural resources of our parks and reserves will be at dire

risk, subject to being vandalized and destroyed by people who will surely use and abuse them, if left unsupervised. The risk of a major forest fire from unregulated use will increase dramatically, and the cost of only one major fire would dwarf the amount sought to be save by the closings. Furthermore, once closed, the trails and other facilities left untended will deteriorate very rapidly, making it much more expensive to re-open a park or reserve, again making any "savings" from closure illusory.

Point Lobos Reserve and all of the other state parks, and reserves belong to the public, and it is up to the public to stop this political insanity. The decision of whether to close the 220 parks, beaches, and reserves (and not insignificantly, to lay-off thousands of state parks personnel) is expected to be made within the next two weeks (I am writing June 4th), so time is short.

Please contact your local State Assembly Representative, your State Senator, and Governor Schwartzenegger to demand that the General Fund money for State Parks not be cut and that all state parks, beaches, and reserves remain open and fully functioning. The most effective communication is through postal mail or FAX, but email is better than no contact at all. You can determine your local legislators by going to http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html and typing in your ZIP code. Contact information for the Governor's office can be found at http://www.ca.gov. Contact information is also available in the front portion of your telephone book.

This is perhaps the greatest crisis the State Parks System has ever faced. It is up to the public, for whose benefit the system exists, to rise up and shout to our government that we will not accept the closing of our parks, beaches, and reserves. As always, I would like to thank all of our PLA members for their staunch support, both through their annual membership, and in many cases, their tireless service as volunteer Docents. But at this crucial moment, I ask for support of our fragile State Park System in this hour of its great need.

Thank you. I hope to see you at Point Lobos Reserve for many years to come.

# NEWS!

Tt's not too late to sign your kids up for our upcoming ■Summer Outdoor Program presented by State Park Staff based out of Point Lobos State Reserve. Kids 9-15 years old will have the opportunity to experience California State Parks in a day camp setting.

#### **Session dates:**

June 22 thru July 3, 9:30–2:30 July 13 thru July 24, 9:30-2:30

**Tuition:** \$200.00

**Telephone:** 831-624-9423 for more

information or to reserve your child's spot.



## a night at the movies: July 10

The Point Lobos Association in cooperation with The Forest Theater Guild is sponsoring a night at the movies on Friday, July 10th at the Theater in the Forest in Carmel. The movie is *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*, with Peter Sellers. Tickets are \$7.00 each. The movie will commence at dusk. Theater goers may bring "stadium seats," and are welcome to bring their own appetizers, snacks, and beverages. Some even bring blankets. So come early to socialize and enjoy your food and drink prior to the show.

### Save the date: October 3!

## Point Lobos by Moonlight **Members Only Event**

Starting at about 6:30 pm. Entrance to the Reserve is FREE for members. A light supper will be provided free by the Point Lobos Association.

Point Lobos 75th Anniversary t-shirts, caps, and more can be found online here: http://www.cafepress.com/pointlobos75wc and http://www.cafepress.com/pointlobos75

#### Spring 2009 Errata

A production error created the misrepresentation of Ken Parker's photo on page 10 in the article Whispers of the Image; Words in Plien Air. We offer apologies to our readers and the artist.

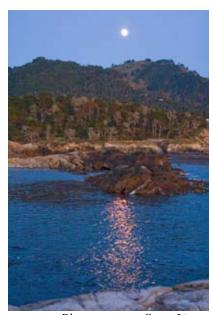


Photo courtesy Steve Ligas.



Tn February of 1848, Mexico and Lthe United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago, which ended the Mexican War and yielded a vast portion of the southwest, including present day California, to the United States.

In October of 1849 the first Constitution for California was written at Colton Hall in Monterey. During the Spanish and Mexican periods Monterey was the capital of Alta California. After a heated debate in the U.S. Congress arising from the slavery issue, California entered the Union as a free, non-slavery state by the Compromise of 1850.

California became the 31st state on September 9, 1850.

The First and Second Sessions of the Legislature, which were held in 1850 and 1851, convened at San Jose. A majority of the Senate Committee on Public Buildings reported a bill recommending the removal of the capital to the town of Vallejo, which passing both houses, was approved by the Governor on February 4, 1851. The Legislature passed a bill on February 4, 1853 ordering the seat of government to be moved instantly to the City of Benicia. Then on February 25th, 1854

Sacramento became the capital of California. For more detailed information about the how's and whys of moving the

capital, visit the website http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pdf/ caleg11.pdf.

For the next 38 years ownership of the lands called Point Lobos was uncertain.

1853 – February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Joe Castro filed a petition as claimant to the Ranch San Jose y Sur Chiquito to legally claim the land under the new government control. However, he would have a great deal of trouble in his quest owing to his opposition to the American invasion of Mexican California.

1855 - Before Castro had heard a decision from the Land Commission dealing with his rancho, he sold his land to Joseph S. Emery and Abner Bassett for \$750,000 on August 24th.

1855 - During this time granite was being quarried from Point Lobos. Granite was used as facing material for the San Francisco Mint, Colton Hall in Monterey, and later in the Point Sur Light Station. The business was quite successful at one time according to an article of the time: "Sailed from Carmel Bay yesterday, for San Francisco, the Brig John Dunlap, with 120 tons granite; for the

Ranger Chuck Bancroft Kaye Hill, with 80 tons.

On August 28th, the Board of Land Commissioners rendered a decree rejecting Castro's claim to the rancho, thus invalidating the original claim of 1839. Castro began to appeal this decision, which went to the United States District Court. Castro bowed out of this battle soon after the decision was made since he had sold his land. Now Emery and Bassett had to carry on the fight for their legal ownership of the land.

1859 - On March 12th the Abrego family sold a quit claim deed to a Mathew Ireland. However, the Abrego family had supposedly sold out their rights to the lands several years before. On March 25th all the heirs of Don Marcelineo Escobar agreed to give one-half of the rancho to Delos Ashley if he would get it back for them. This latest incident only managed to further complicate the ownership picture.

1860 - The don Marcelino heirs sold a portion of what land they claimed to Mathew Ireland without knowing if the land was really theirs. Ireland had earlier bought the quit claim deed from the Abrego family and was now becoming one of the more powerful land owners in the area.

1861 – The Don Marcelino Escobar heirs finished up their businesses with the sale of their part to Matthew Ireland.

In the next issue of the Magazine we will explore the convoluted path of ownership to its conclusion.





uring my years at Point Lobos I've occasionally been amazed by the incredible osprey. But never have I seen it stay in one place for such a long period of time. Generally the osprey is over by the river mouth, lagoon, and the restoration project at the old Odello artichoke field. In January, lifeguard Kevin Brady spotted the osprey fishing in Whalers Cove and later perching in the dead cypress on the south side of Coal Chute Point. Naturally, Ranger Chuck was told and with camera in hand was able to get some wonderful images. Found throughout California, the largest populations are found in the north, particularly along the rivers of the Coast Ranges from Marin to Del Norte Counties. The osprey feeds almost exclusively on fish and hunts by gliding and soaring, not too high, over water. It dives head first and then throws its feet forward. It can dive down to three feet, and then with powerful wing beats, rises up and finds a nice perch to have its meal. The osprey will also feed on frogs, turtles, and small mammals. The osprey stayed around the cove for several months and finally departed for other hunting grounds. The bird was seen in early April at Odello and at the mouth of San Jose Creek Canyon. According to several local birders it does have a fairly large territory to patrol. And now maybe it's looking for a mate.

Unpredictable! Don Roberson with Monterey

County Audubon Society called the long-eared owl an unpredictable resident. This image by Ranger Chuck was taken in a live oak tree on the Pine Ridge Trail back on March 20th. The owl was first spotted by docent Art Muto who passed on the information to docent Stan Dryden. Stan passed on Art's great directions to Don and Chuck who walked out to find the day time roost. The roost was easy to find. We just looked for the pine stump in the middle of the trail, walked another 50 yards, looked for the white-wash and the pellets on the ground. There was even the tail of a wood rat mixed in with the debris. They looked directly overhead and there it was. A week later the owl had moved further south on the trail and by the next week was gone Lucky for some of the photographers to be in the right place at the right time to capture this elusive bird with camera. The resident great horned owl is about 22" long with a bulky shape. It will take prey as big as skunks. The long eared owl reaches a length of about 15" and feeds on much smaller rodents. According to Don Roberson, author of Monterey Birds, their population in our area is thinly spread through the Santa Lucia Mountains and its foothills. In recent years long eared owls have inhabited territory stretching from Robinson Canyon to Fort Hunter-Liggett.



...means Point of Wolves, but it was not the gray robber of the forest that the Spaniards had in mind, but what they called sea wolves—lobos marinox—we call them sea lions. They were here when the Spaniards came; no doubt they were here 10,000 years ago, when the Indians came; they are still here, their long streamlined bodies playing in the surf under the rocks and their roaring and barking voices are heard off shore.

But the gnarled old cypress trees have been here a great deal longer. They are Monterey cypress —the last grim stand of the great forest that grew up and down the coast in geological times; now there are only a few acres of them left; except those that have been planted by human hands, for they flourish wherever there is damp air and not too much frost. But it is only here in their own place, growing old on the rock verge of the Pacific, that they take characteristic shapes, their trunks twisted and buttressed against storm, and the roots like ship's cables, winding far among the great rocks for anchorage. They are hung with Spanish moss and jeweled with red lichen; they look immensely cold, desolate, and enduring, like the ancient trees that Chinese artists love.

And the granite cliffs that they grow on are like the rocks in a Chinese painting. That was my impression of Point Lobos when I first saw it—it was Oriental, it did not belong to this country, but must've drifted like

a ship across the Pacific from the headlands of Asia – perhaps that is why the following story pleases me.

There was a ship wreck here in the eighteen-eighties, one of the many on this rough coast, and rolls of brightly colored Chinese silk were spilled into the sea when the ship broke up. Meanwhile a few cowbovs had come down from the hills to watch,

and they tied their spurs to the ends of the lassos and cast them across the unwinding rolls of color, and tangled them in it and dragged the bright stuff off ashore. I like to think of those dark-faced Spanish cowhands,

fishing for Chinese silk in this wild water below the old trees. It makes a picture.

There many other stories about Point Lobos, equally curious and better documented. Of its first ownership for instance. It was part of a great ranch granted in Mexican times to man named

Marcellino Escobar: a ranch that extended from the Carmel River to the Little Sur, some 20 miles of ocean frontage, and "as far east as the cattle would graze." Señor Escobar got this principality in 1839 and he lost it in 1841, all in one night, in a gambling game with 10 soldiers at the Monterey Presidio.Land was not so valuable in those days, and the stakes on the other side are not recorded but

has been used as a whaling station; men watched the sea from Whalers Knoll, and boiled blubber in the cove; and it has been used as a rock quarry; the San Francisco Mint, and Colton Hall in Monterey, were built of granite quarried here. It has been used as a port for shipping coal, which was mined in the canyon to the south. Latterly it has been a dairy farm; it supported an abalone

ROLLS OF BRIGHTLY COLORED CHINESE SPILLED INTO THE SEA

during the war it supported a radar installation. It is now a state park, visited by thousands of people every summer. And none of these vicissitudes has ever seriously marked it, or damaged the fantastic beauty of

cannery;

must've been an exciting evening. And presently one of the winners, a Captain Jose Castro, bought up or wangled the shares of the others—he was their ranking officer—and became the second owner of the place.

Since that time Point Lobos has passed many vicissitudes. It the place.

This piece, written in 1947 and apparently never published in full, came to me courtesy Dennis Renault and Robert Blaisdell, with permission to publish from Jeffers Literary Properties. -DK, Ed.



Hermissenda crassicornis

Thile carefully measuring my steps on the slippery ramp in Whalers Cove at the end of a dive, non-diving visitors often approach me with questions like "What did you see?" "What is down

there?" They admire the beauty of the landscape, the birds, and the occasional seals and otters, but the grayish green tint of the



Ildiko Frank, photos courtesy Ian Sayers

water laden with bunched-up kelp gives them no hint of what is hidden beneath the surface. Out of breath and with salt water dripping from my nose, I find myself short of words to describe the enchanted underwater world I just left. It is hard to convey the grandeur of walls and pinnacles, the colorful tapestry of creatures covering every square inch, the graceful glide of a huge sheephead, and

the delicate details of the tiny slugs. The splendor of Point Lobos continues below the surface, beyond the edge of the cliffs, beyond the last visible rocks.

The landscape is just as dramatic under water as

above. On both sides of Whalers Cove walls drop 20 to 70 feet deep while just outside the cove, still within swimming distance, large pinnacles emerge from the sandy bottom. The middle reef, a maze of rocky crevices filled with life, lies in the center of the cove surrounded

by sand channels. But rocks and sand are not the only habitat here; it is the kelp that makes diving at Point Lobos truly unique. The largest of all kelps, appropriately called giant kelp (Macrocystis pyrifera), grabs onto the rocks as far down as 100 –130 feet with its root-like structure, the holdfast, and its blades spread like forest canopy on the surface. Gliding weightlessly among these giants while the

sun is shining through in scintillating rays is truly a spiritual experience. Bull kelp (Nereocystis luetkeana), a long light brown whip with a large bulb at the end (frequently mistaken for the head of a sea otter-Ed.), is another common kelp often found coiled up on the beach like a giant snake. These two are just the most conspicuous in the forest of ocean plants, marine algae called seaweeds. Some are delicate and flower-like, while others grow as a thick crust over rocky surfaces with colors ranging from light green to iridescent purple and deep red.

Many years ago, as a novice diver, I was primarily looking for fish; the bigger the better. My favorites were the red ones, and the ones with bright yellow speckles. Eventually, I learned that both are rockfish, the most common fish found in our waters. The species names of rockfish reflect their wide range of colors: blue, black, olive, vermilion, black-and-yellow, rosy, copper, brown, and canary. Most rockfish, as expected, hide between rocks, but some hang out around the kelp or even in the open water column. They live a long life, some over a hundred years. Perch, another frequent visitor, swims in schools; a troop of shiny silvery bodies is quite a

sight. In contrast to most fish, they are viviparous (give live birth), birthing several dozen juveniles at once in some species, a spectacle that I witnessed a few weeks ago at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The largest fish around here, not including the occasional shark or ray, is the lingcod. A few months ago we almost landed on one of these striking grayish-blue giants, about five feet long; local divers have given it the nickname "lingzilla." Lingcods are easily approachable as they bravely defend their rock, especially when the male is guarding the eggs. Another favorite of mine is the California sheephead. Originally confined to warmer southern waters, in recent El Niño years they have shown up here and have stayed in good numbers. All sheepheads are born females but around the age of seven they change into males; this peculiarity, called sequential hermaphroditism, is found in several other species as well. Adult females are dusky pink, while males are more notable with a prominent bump on their head and a wide orange stripe in the middle of their dark rectangular body.

For several months it became the ritual of my dive buddy and myself to visit a wolf eel couple

> that settled down on the middle reef. We always found them in the same den, with just their heads sticking out, flashing their big canine teeth. Unlike most, they mate for life; what a heartwarming example of devotion!

Fish are the dominant, but not necessarily the most fascinating creatures we encounter. Invertebrates, in fact, rule the underwater world. Their beauty is hard to imagine based on their familiar insect and snail backyard counterparts. Large and small, mobile and sessile, they come in



Eye to eye with a lingcod.

every possible color and shape. Some can be seen from afar, while others blend in seamlessly with their surroundings to become invisible to both predator and diver alike. Many organisms contain powerful toxins to protect themselves or to catch their prey; bright colors are warning signs of such danger. Ongoing research, focused on the wide range of chemicals produced by marine invertebrates,

is continuously discovering potential sources of anti-cancer, antiinflammatory, and anti-bacterial medicines.

I am partial to sponges, which

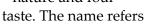
paint the rocks bright blue, yellow, orange, and red. This ancient group of animals, which have been around for more than 600 million years, represents a link between unicellular and multicellular organisms. Lacking tissues and organs, sponges are a mere aggregate of communicating cells. Such simplicity has its advantages though; they possess an amazing regenerative ability. If you break up a sponge through a sieve or blender the cells can reorganize themselves and thrive again. These animals do not have muscles or nerves, they simply pump an enormous amount of water through their bodies and filter out microscopic organisms, like bacteria, for food.

Another very simple group of invertebrates, the cnidarians, includes jellyfish and anemones. The former are the largest animals in the plankton, the drifters of the ocean, while the latter decorate the ocean floor like flowers. A weapon common to all cnidarians is the nematocyst, a stinging, venomous structure concentrated on the tentacles. It is not only used in catching prey but also in defense from predators and competitors. Many of these

creatures are harmless to humans, unlike the lethal box jellyfish, which fortunately does not inhabit our waters. So, do not worry about touching a moon jelly, a big white gelatinous ball occasionally washed up on the beaches, or a green anemone you might come across in tide pools.

The creatures that often generate the most buzz among divers are the tiny marine slugs, called nudi-

branchs. There are dozens of different species in our waters. Although barely visible because of their size (typically one half to three inches long) and perfectly camouflaged, they dazzle us with their brilliant color patterns and striking shapes. Just as with sponges, the bright colors are warning signs of their toxic nature and foul



to the exposed, "naked" gill, the most delicate, beautiful structure of the animal. Like their relatives, the marine snails and chitons, nudibranchs use radula, a file-like structure, to scrape food off the rocks. They are highly specialized in their diet. Some gorge on sponges, others munch on bryozoans or are partial to tunicates. The ones that eat anemones or hydroids are not only immune to the nematocysts, but are also able to store and use the stinging structure for their own defense. Rhinophores, the conspicuous organs resembling tiny horns, are used to taste and smell the environment as they search for food as well as mates.

I recently learned that the colorful sea stars, the prickly sea urchins, and the fragile sea cucumbers are related. This group of animals, the echinoderms, is found only in the ocean. Their body is organized in pentaradial (i.e., five part) symmetry without a head, but they can sense light and "smell" prey or predators in the water. The ochre star is a vicious predator in the intertidal area keeping the snail, mussel, and barnacle populations under control. The



Wolf eel couple hiding in Middle Reef.



for the images I recall from my many dives at Point Lobos. Some of us explore the underwater landscape while speeding through with scooters; some go hunting with cameras to capture the moment in pictures, or to share an exciting encounter on video. Others, like me, descend just to enjoy the weightlessness, the silence, and the magic of this world. We are aliens here, our time is quite limited. Awkward equipment enables us to breath and helps our unfit bodies cope with the pressure, dark, and cold. Yet we are drawn to this unfamiliar world, bewitched by its beauty, and cannot wait to return.

Ildiko Frank is a local dive master and technical diver with over 200 dives at Point Lobos State Reserve, a volunteer guide at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and a student at Monterey Peninsula College where she studies marine biology and oceanography. For more information visit Ildiko and Ian's website at http://www.pt-lobos.com

Left: Sunflower star chasing lunch on kelp.. Below: Anemones fighting over a tasty moon jelly.

giant sunflower star, which can grow up to three feet in diameter, hunts crabs, abalone, urchins, sea cucumbers, and other stars using its thousands of tube feet protruding from more than 20 arms. Other examples of the colorful tapestry of life down under include crabs hanging by the dozen from rocks and kelp, purple and pink hydrocorals branching like tropical reef corals, and abalones and scallops hiding in crevices.

Words are a poor substitute

# Quotes from the Docent Rog

# edited by Stan Dryden

#### Feb. 3: Sharon Hoffman

Visitors reported seeing a leopard shark in Whalers Cove today. They were able to keep apace of it while it swam close to shore.

#### Feb. 5: Don Trout

I was finishing up my one to three shift at Info. It had been a beautiful day with great visitors. The deer had been seen on both trails plus fawns, and an otter was in sea lion cove for everyone to see. An older gentleman seemed transfixed and approached me after taking the Cypress Grove Trail. His remarks were so completely sincere. "That was the most beautiful and inspiring walk I have ever taken!"

At three, I was relieved by Doris Gerace, who said, "I'm a little tired; I just celebrated my ninetith birthday!" I stayed on for awhile because I enjoyed talking to Doris. Around 4 o'clock, there was great excitement in the parking lot because a pod of whales was going by so close they were easily seen from the Info Station, including bodies, flukes, and blowings. Doris said she never seen whales so close. End of a perfect day.

#### Feb. 8: Stan Dryden

A stately osprey perched at the top of a pine tree on Coal Chute Point overlooking the Pit. I was checking to see if the herons had started to build their nests, and this bird was beautifully silhouetted against the sky instead.

It was there as I passed on my way out to Moss Cove and Granite Point, and still there on my way back. It was my privilege to point it out to some visitors who



had been unaware of its presence.

#### Feb. 10: Lynne McCammon

Our day to count the otters was a cold crisp day. The group called it a three-layer day. The ocean was quite turbulent. Photographers were out in force trying to catch the magnificence of the crashing waves. Parts of the ocean looked like a gigantic jacuzzi. This made counting a little difficult! The final count was 20 adults and 3 pups. The otters were evenly distributed on both the North and South trails. Bird Island had a few cormorants and pelicans. At the very top sat the peregrine falcon. Apparently he didn't bother the other birds. Great blue herons were seen flying around Moss Cove, possibly scouting out nesting sites.

#### Feb. 12: Jean Grace

Under a dark, cold, damp sky

it was almost time to close Whalers Cabin. In came a couple who happily reported seeing "a bunch of otters" just below the cliffs. Pleased but skeptical, I got the binoculars, as we walked down the road I told them that they had probably seen harbor seals—or possibly just bull kelp floats, a common visitor mistake. But there below us was a real

feast for the eyes —two seals, a great egret and great blue heron, and, yes, an otter with its pup and five other adult otters.

#### Feb. 16: Sue Miller

I saw a mountain lion run across the exit road today at 11 a.m. Earlier I had seen 4 deer in a nearby area.

A couple came into Whalers Cabin asking to see any Machado memorabilia. It turned out that the girl was the great, great granddaughter of one of the gentlemen in the large photograph of the abalone fishing operation. Mr. Machado is the man in the boat at the far right of the photo. She said that her brother had the same facial structure.

#### Feb. 22: Stan Dryden

A strong southerly wind and intermittent showers dictated that the door to the Informa-

tion Station needed to stay closed today. This freed me up to wander the parking lot and greet the few visitors who were there. One group of four arrived and seemed to know where they wanted to go. Later, they returned, and a man from Michigan, a PLA member, recognized my name from the docent log section of the Point Lobo Magazine. He mentioned that he particularly looks forward to that feature each quarter, as it fills him in on what is happening at Point

He was very pleased to report that the bench recently constructed near Whalers Cove in honor of his father was very handsome and sturdy looking. He had come here many times with his parents, and seeing the bench for the first time gave him many pleasant memories.

Lobos on a daily basis.

#### Feb. 23: Don Trout

I was at the Whalers Cabin from 3-5. Visitors were few. I like to set up the telescope in the doorway. During my last three 3-5 shifts, I have always found an otter. Today the tide was very low.

A rock straight out was covered by 4 or 5 seals that I enjoyed watching and showing visitors. The rock reached about 6 feet out of the water. It was very warm and calm. Among

the seals I spotted a brown fuzzy object. Yes, it was an otter! I watched for about an hour. It seemed so completely relaxed,



enjoying the company of the seals and the warm sun.

#### Feb. 27: Connie Dallmann

I had the nicest group of 11year-old boys from Tuolomne County. It was a beautiful day, and we were able to track a mother and baby gray whale going north as we walked the Cypress Grove Trail.

#### March 15: Carol Bloner

A family from Germany visited Point Lobos and left a question on a card. As most folks do, the family thanked me for the answer. They wrote: "...we absolutely will come back to enjoy the (Point Lobos) scenery. Most likely we will return to Germany this summer but will take home a lot of wonderful experiences and impressions." Nice to know Point Lobos contributed to their learning and their pleasure.

#### March 20: Pat Sinclair

Was walking with friends on Granite Point trail, and as we pointed out the great blue herons

> preparing their nests we excitedly spied an osprev overhead. Within seconds, we witnessed a most exciting aerial event when the osprey began swooping down and around the herons' nesting areas. We've never witnessed such an incredible display. The three herons left their nests and gave chase, making deep, hoarse croaking sounds as they tried to keep the osprey away. Most astonishing, though,

was the contingent of herons that joined the three original ones. We saw at least a half dozen in the air vying for space with the osprey, and two more that appeared to be watching the scene from a cliff-side spot. Eventually, the osprey left the scene and we didn't see it any more that day. But what a day, what a show, and what a reminder that nature presents us with some of our most memorable experiences!

#### March 22: Chris Stone

What started out as a cold, blustery, gray morning evolved into a spectacular sunny, crisp afternoon. The aqua blue and greens and deep slate colors of the Pacific were dramatically evident in Whalers Cove. I watched as two Brandt's cormorants fought against the whipping wind to finally land on the rock in the cove near Whalers Cabin, then plant



themselves firmly down and open their wings to dry.

The Cove was full of divers, and harbor seals abounded, keeping a watchful eye on their diving companions, only to slip quickly beneath the surface when startled. Another beautiful day in paradise.

#### March 23: Bill Miles

I was at the cabin to open this morning, and was treated to an hour and a half of solitary silence, followed by the excitement of the arrival of the season's first Point Lobos seal pup on the beach below the road down to the parking lot. When I left, the road was full of visitor/observers as the little creature discovered mom and the world of seals; the beach was full of adults as the tide went out.

#### **April 1: Sally Sikes**

I was in the Whalers Cabin for my regular shift with several visitors. I was remarking to one of them that there were still descendants of the men photographed in the mural photo of the abalone divers living in this area, when another man gestured to his companion and said she was a Kodani. She was the granddaughter of Gennosuke's brother. I learned that her

father, a photographer, had taken the photo we use of Gennosuke. She also commented about some of the abalone jewelry and other items that she had. I was able to take them over to the ranger office so she could talk with Ranger Chuck. Then we walked to the Coal Chute Point to see where the Kodani Village had been and also see the great blue herons' nests.

#### April 13: Stan Dryden

Baby day at Point Lobos! My perfectly enjoyable birding walk was hijacked as I came to the China Cove overlook and saw many harbor seal moms, pups,

and moms-tobe down on the beach. One was looking like birth was imminent, and while I had the scope trained on her and had gathered a group of four Englishmen, one of them said, "It's giving birth!" His buddies all said, "Naaah", but then I looked at the seal next to the one we were staring at and saw blood on the sand and the pup that had just come out into the world. By then a steady stream of people starting walking by and shared in the excitement of seeing a brand new pup, five or six others that appeared to have been born within the last two days, and two more adults that looked ready to add to the population today. What a great time to be a docent!

I later walked around the hill and saw a mother ofter and her sleepy pup in the cove off of Gibson Beach. The pup appeared to be fast asleep while the mom foraged. Since there was no sharing or mooching of the goodies, I'm guessing that the pup was still nursing. I was lucky enough to share this sight with many of the same visitors who had enjoyed the seal show earlier.

#### April 14: Lynne McCammon

I must commend the crew of docents who went out to do the otter count. We had heard the forecast for windy conditions, but being the group we are, that didn't cancel the activity. As



we proceeded and the wind was picking up we began to question our decision to do the count. The final count was 12 adults and 6 pups. The rest must have been further out to escape the rough crashing waves. One interesting point was that most of the pups were very small, but the mothers were taking very good care of them. The north shore crew observed that the great blue herons were setting up housekeeping above Coal Chute Point. The wildflowers are exploding around the Reserve. And last but not least, the harbor seals are giving birth on the sandy beaches.

#### **April 24: Joy Osborne**

I have been at Point Lobos a long time, but this was the first harbor seal birth I have witnessed. As I returned from a nature walk. I looked from the trail over China

Cove beach. This area is cordoned off seasonally to keep visitors from bothering the animals as they come out to pup in April and May.

The baby was protruding from the mother as I arrived at the overlook. The birth took a while as the mother raised her rear flippers during contractions. Then all of a sudden the baby shot out. The pup started away from the mother rather quickly and the mother was after it, removing the "sausage casing." Only the umbilical cord remained as the precocious pup, after a little nosing and bonding, went into the water. Mom followed. The visitors were awed by the relative size of the baby—and after the birth Mom still looked like a blimp! I did not see an afterbirth. The gulls were waiting for it.

Two other pups were on that beach-- one had been there for hours, I was told, and the other

was a comparative midget, looking for its mom, which had not returned. This pup went after the new mom, which was not at all gracious about the intruder.



Photo courtesy Doug VanOmmeran.

# Point Lobos Association



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