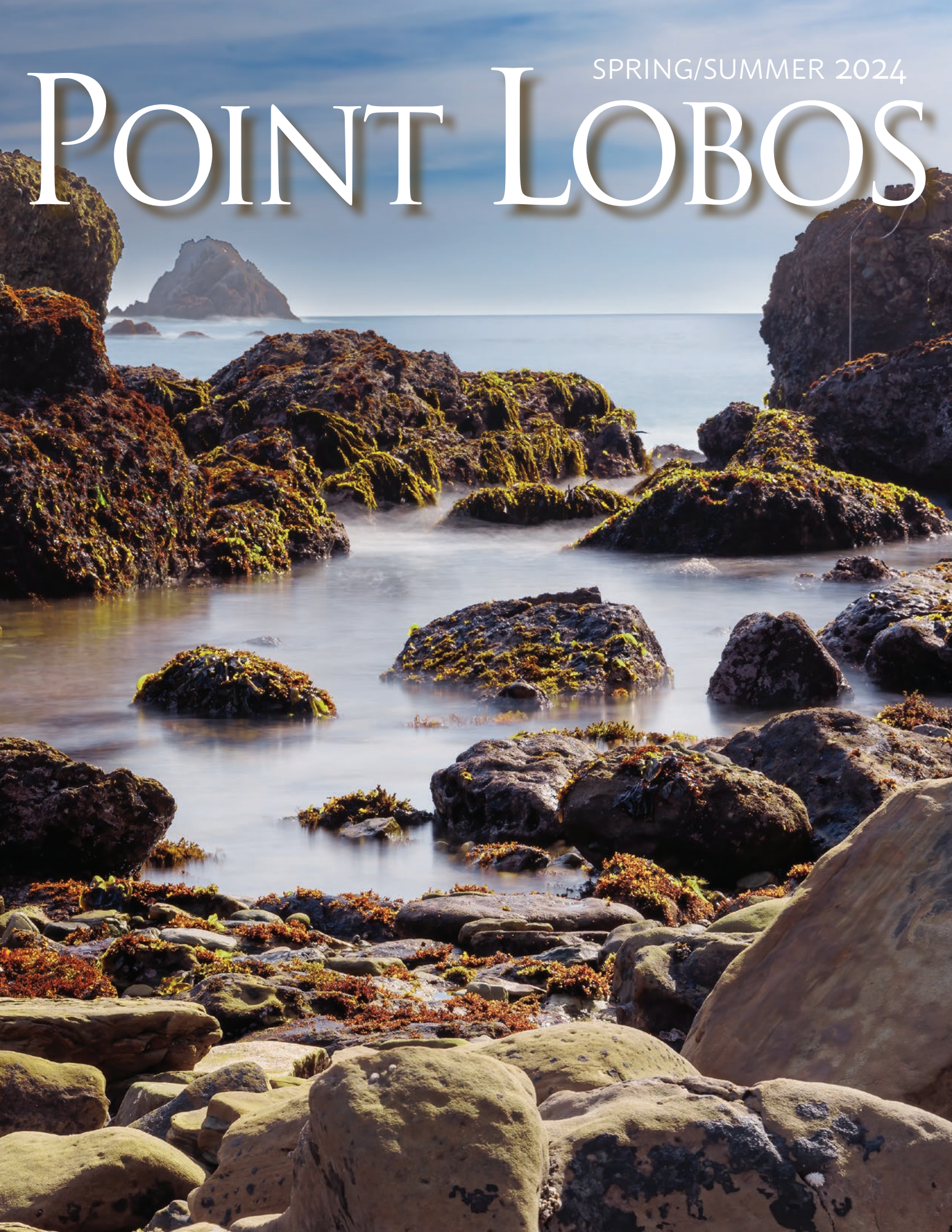


SPRING/SUMMER 2024

# POINT LOBOS







Our mission is to protect and nurture Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, to educate and inspire visitors to preserve its unique natural and cultural resources, and to strengthen the network of Carmel Area State Parks. [pointlobos.org](http://pointlobos.org)



A nudibranch or sea slug found in tide pools. Photo by Jerry Loomis.

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# Nature's brushstrokes

## Finding my way in a landscape to be loved

*by Steffanie Gamecho*

When I envision Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, I am struck by our greatest artists — time and nature. This unique canvas of rugged coastline, marine realm, coastal prairie, mixed pine and cypress painted into our little corner of the world makes it hard to differentiate between an artist's work and the actual natural beauty that is the Reserve.

Imagine with me millions of years painting this canvas; let's call it nature's brushstrokes.

Colors beyond a man's ability in the shifting sea, flora and sky. The texture of animal wildlife winding between trees and creating an entire universe in the ocean. Composition in the uniqueness of habitats, so many and so varied. Movement, ever-changing through major weather events. Complexity in the influences of diverse cultures and societies that have inhabited the Reserve for over 7,000 years. And depth, in the unpredictability of how these elements can collide but mostly are pure visual poetry.

As the incoming Executive Director of the Point Lobos Foundation, I've been pondering what connects people to this enchanting place beyond its obvious beauty. I feel it's nature's brushstrokes that captivate visitors and stewards alike, making them part of Point Lobos' unique narrative.

Much the same feeling of a landscape being painted has occurred for me as I've been welcomed into my new role at the Point Lobos Foundation — one of new experiences and one of brushstrokes of those who have come before me. The night I was voted in as Executive Director, each of the board members shared their personal

history with the Reserve — touching composition. I had the pleasure of meeting with two generous and long-time donors in the Reserve, learning of their ideas, history and connection to the land — vibrant color.

I've spent valuable time with our California State Parks partners and the Point Lobos Foundation staff who collectively have been with us for almost 20 years — depth. I met separately with an invaluable 14-year docent and a visionary former board member/strategist — complexity.

I've learned about the history of the foundation, the development, some of the bumps in our 46-year history, and the evolving vision — movement. I've thumbed through piles of archival materials dating back to hand-drawn maps from the 1930s — texture. Time and nature's brushstrokes have begun their work.

One individual whose brushstrokes for the Point Lobos Foundation are indelible is Kathleen Lee, our outgoing Executive Director. Kathleen's leadership has developed a strong and growing, mission-driven organization that has made a lasting difference for the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. We're grateful for your time here, Kathleen, and know your impact will continue in your new pursuit.

As a membership organization, we're thankful for our members' commitment and interest and generous giving. I invite you to share with me what resonates most deeply with you about the Reserve.



# Really awesome!

## Knowledge of nature helps us eclipse our troubles

by Reg Henry

*Reg Henry, a Point Lobos Docent, is editor of the Point Lobos Magazine. In a newspaper career of more than 35 years, he worked at the Courier-Mail in Brisbane, Australia, The Times of London, the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Post-Gazette, and The Herald in Monterey, where he was the editor from 1988 through 1993.*

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Last month, Americans in a broad swath of the country were enthralled to watch a full solar eclipse. This unusual event, heralded by unprecedented excitement, rescued the word “awesome” from its common meaning, if only for a day.

Awesome did not start out as just another description of somebody’s hamburger. The adjective awesome is a satellite of the noun awe and in its first meaning denotes something with a touch of the sublime, inspiring reverence, fear or wonder.

A hamburger, picky pedants like me will insist, is not awesome, unless arguably it contains bacon (some will say cheese). But there’s no doubting that the word awesome properly applies to erupting volcanoes on our planet or that giant mass of erupting volcanoes in our sky, which we call the sun.

We don’t pay close attention to the sun much of the time. We rejoice in sunny days, we thank the sun for fueling our plants, we bid it goodnight in late picnics at the beach, but largely it goes about its business and we go about ours.

It’s only when the sun occasionally does its extraordinary dance with our satellite, the moon, do we pay much attention and become excited enough to look up and say “awesome.”

What I wonder is why this solar eclipse, a grand performance of the natural world, generated an interest not lately seen this side of Taylor Swift. Because it’s a once-in-a-lifetime event? Maybe, but there’s another one in the United States in 20 years, and even I might live that long if the bacon and cheese let me.

TV commentators who covered the eclipse marveled at how it brought Americans together, an implicit recognition that united we do not stand, that our troubles and those of the world have put us on the dark side of the moon. Maybe a little sublimity, reverence and wonder is what the body politic craved to help mend itself.

We can help with that because Point Lobos State Natural Reserve is in the awe business. We missed the full solar eclipse, but every day ours is a place of marvels, no less so that they are not great celestial events. The little natural worlds we observe may be micro but they are miraculous.

And the natural world makes an impression. If you volunteer as a docent, as I do, you are often amazed by how nice the visitors are. Supposedly we live in a divided world but we rarely see a hint of that. Being in the presence of nature seems to be a balm for the soul.

In today’s issue of the Point Lobos Magazine, we take you into the tide pools at Weston Beach, where fascinating dramas play out with a cast of tiny creatures on a stage built by volcanoes and the movement of tectonic plates millenia ago.

Steve Webster, one of the founders of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, will explain this changing watery world and Elaine Gehrman, a docent, will guide you to it. In addition, former Ranger Chuck Bancroft will introduce you to those cunning dogs, the coyotes, and another docent, Susan Lambert, will give you a glimpse of our resident Great Blue Herons.

When you finish reading, I hope you will think it was really awesome.





Steve Webster grew up in San Mateo. After graduating from Stanford the first time, he taught biology and physical science at Mount Hermon School, Mass.

During summers he worked on a master's degree at Stanford, primarily at Hopkins Marine Station where he discovered scuba diving, kelp forests and a multitude of spineless creatures. That resulted in his spending another six years at Stanford working on his Ph.D.

While teaching at San Jose State University, Steve and a group of fellow biologists proposed the idea of an aquarium on the site of the old Holden Cannery next door to Hopkins. Steve became the first employee of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation in 1978. At the Aquarium's opening in 1984, he was first the education director, and finally senior marine biologist. He retired in 2004.

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# Weston Beach, a Petri dish of change

Abalone remain a witness to what has occurred

by Steve Webster

Change happens. As long as there has been climate it changes. Intertidal and shallow subtidal communities around the world change with climate, with seasons, with human activities, with decadal periodicities like El Niño and La Niña, with sea level rise. Seaweeds and animals react to these changes, and those we find at Weston Beach demonstrate examples of all of these.

Turn over a briefcase-size rock (remember to turn it back). You will find very few brittlestars, no synaptic sea cucumbers and likely few porcelain crabs. Yet 40 years ago these animals would have been found in abundance under the rocks. The southern limits of their ranges along the coast have moved north as the ocean has warmed.

Black turban snails have become smaller since the return of the southern sea otter to this region. Otters take the big snails first and don't bother with the small ones.

Abalone and sea urchin populations have also changed as they are favorite foods of the sea otters. Before the 1960s, a red abalone outside Weston Beach could grow to be 10 inches long and 30 to 50 (or more?) years old. This long life was due to the disappearance of the sea otter, one of the abalones' main predators. The industrial abalone fishery at Whalers Cove was made possible by the sea otter's absence.

With sea otters in the kelp forest ecosystem, abalones thrive in the cracks and crevices among the rocks and boulders, but once they outgrow



Banding on a red abalone due to change in diet.



Red abalone with foot raised to catch drifting algae. Photos of abalone by Steve Webster.



their nurseries/refuges they have to come out in the open and quickly fall prey to an otter.

It's common for people to define "nature" as what it was like when our grandfathers were alive. There is a shift of the perception of that baseline condition with every generation. Sea otters have been present in California kelp forests for thousands of years. They migrated south from Alaska near the close of the last Ice Age, 20,000 years ago, about the same time humans crossed the land bridge (or paddled kayaks?) and came to North America. So we might consider "nature" as the last 20,000 years when sea otters were keystone species eating abalones and sea urchins (and as many as 75 other invertebrate species). Otters, as hungry predators, allowed kelp forests to thrive.

Our 10-inch abalone, therefore, was an artifact of the sea otter fur trade. She begins life as a fertilized egg (her mother contained as many as 12 million eggs, and spawned when she detected sperm in the water) drifting briefly and then settling to the bottom. Within five days she is a drifting larva beginning to build a tiny transparent shell. If she is lucky enough to survive planktonic life (99.999 percent of her brothers and sisters will be eaten by plankton-feeders) she will settle to the bottom and begin life as a tiny (1 mm) abalone, crawling about like the snail she is, grazing on microscopic algae on the rocks.

She will grow about an inch per year for her first five years, and then growth becomes much slower. And sporadic as is food availability. She will reach sexual maturity at age two and will spawn periodically after that. Taking up residence in a safe crack or crevice, she will depend largely on drift red or brown algae brought to her by wave surge and currents.

A diet of red algae will result in red pigments as she builds her growing shell. Hence the name "red abalone." However the shell may also become banded with green or even white as her diet may periodically change from brown to green algae, whatever happens to drift into her refuge.

It is likely she will outgrow her refuge at some point, and when she emerges into the open she will locate on a large boulder, often on a vertical surface in a surge channel. There she will remain in one place with the front half of her foot raised up off the rock in position to grab any seaweed pieces that drift by.

When I was free diving for abalone on the Sonoma County coast three or four decades ago I could find 9- to 10-inch abalones lined up like pie plates on the walls of surge channels. Removing one left a perfectly clean scar on the rock, indicating that the abalone had likely not moved in years (or decades). Returning to the same spot a few weeks later, I would find red coralline algae and bryozoans already claiming bare rock that was the scar. Rock surfaces do not remain bare for long in shallow marine environments.



*Abalone shell damaged by sea otter rock tool.  
Photo by Steve Webster.*



*Sea stars. Photo by Dave Evans.*



*Purple urchins. Photo by Dave Evans.*





*Turban snails. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.*

The ocean abhors bare rock!

With the return of sea otters to the Monterey Bay area in the 1960s our 10-inch abalone became dinner for a hungry otter, as did most abalones within the sea otters' diving depth. A graduate student at Hopkins Marine Station collected all the empty abalone shells in the Hopkins Marine Life Refuge (the area surrounding Hopkins) in a year's time. 400 shells per year. These were the abalones that had outgrown their refuges and had to crawl out in the open. Nature!

Intertidal red (and black) abalones are also taken by the otters on high tides, although some might survive only to be taken by human sport fishers. The black abalones still thrive in crevices large and deep enough to escape the probing front legs of the otters. Like the red abalones, they depend largely on drift seaweeds. They also graze the algae off each others' shells.

Abalones today are subject to challenges beyond otter predation. Young abalones are eaten by crabs, sea stars, cabezon and sheephead. Kelp forests in California have been disappearing due to ocean warming and sea urchin grazing — a result of the absence of the sea stars (mostly sun stars) that are predators on young urchins.

The huge loss of sea stars along the coast is due to sea star wasting disease which arrived in 2013, likely enabled by the warming ocean. Withering foot syndrome kills red abalones, probably another result from the warming ocean.



*Striped shore crab. Photo by Susan Lambert.*



*Hermit crabs. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.*

What will nature hold in store for the abalones? And otters? And kelps? As noted, there is nothing new about climate change. Or extinction of species (99 percent of all species that have ever lived on Earth are extinct).

Today, the pace of these changes is unprecedented. The question is, given our political and economic realities, and our propensity for greed, do we have the will (globally) to institute the painful measures that could slow the pace of climate change?

Your grandchildren will know the answer. They will be living it.





Elaine Gehrmann has a B.A. in Anthropology/ Sociology, and graduate degrees in Law, Divinity and Educational Policy Studies. She grew up in Pittsburgh, Pa., and has lived in New York, Germany, Illinois and California. She is co-minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula. She has been a Point Lobos Docent since 2018 and a volunteer at the Monterey Bay Aquarium since 2016. She completed the California Naturalist course in 2016, and is the coordinator of the Point Lobos Docent Tide Pool Interest Group. Her email address is [egehrmann@gmail.com](mailto:egehrmann@gmail.com)

# Exploring the tide pools

## Negative tides lead to positive experiences

by Elaine Gehrmann

Point Lobos is fortunate to have Weston Beach, which is an excellent location to explore tide pools. The best time to visit is at a negative low tide (when the low tide level is below 0 feet).

Weston Beach is relatively flat but the algae-covered rocks can be slippery, so it is important to wear shoes with good traction and consider using a hiking pole as an extra point of balance. Keep your knees slightly bent and your center of gravity low to the ground. You should never turn your back on the waves, and always keep an ear open for the sound of the occasional large sneaker wave.

While Weston Beach is the preferred and easiest place to visit, a smaller area of tide pools also exists at Moss Cove on the northeast side of the Reserve. However, Moss Cove is not accessible during the spring seal pupping weeks.

There are so many amazing forms of life at the tide pools, many of which are not always evident at first glance. Take your time and spend a few minutes gazing into a tide pool, or under a rocky ledge. You will start to see more and more creatures the longer you look.

It's helpful to understand that all the intertidal creatures at low tide are waiting for the water to return, and they each have unique adaptations to survive the several hours they

may be exposed to air, sun and predators. Limpets and chitons suction themselves tightly onto the rocks to retain their moisture, and often look like part of the rock or even like fossils. Aggregating anemones tuck in their tentacles and pull up their sides, covered with tiny bits of shell and sand to stay moist, and they often look like green gooey globs nestled in the rock crevices.

Lovely spiral-shaped turban snail shells might have a snail or a hermit crab living inside and stay clustered in the crevices and pools where water remains. Watch them for a few moments to see how they move — a slow glide is likely a snail, a skittering or scabbling movement done with little claws is probably one of our hundreds of hermit crabs.

Lined and purple shore crabs may peek out from beneath rock ledges and then quickly crawl sideways back into hiding, sometimes “bubbling” to keep their gills moist. Small camouflaged fish called sculpins are often found in the pools, well-disguised until they dart quickly away.

Weston Beach is home to thousands of purple sea urchins and many of them are found nestled into holes they have made in the soft sedimentary rock. Using their five pointy teeth and rotating their sharp spines, they carve out depressions in the shale where they can remain in their own tiny pool of water,

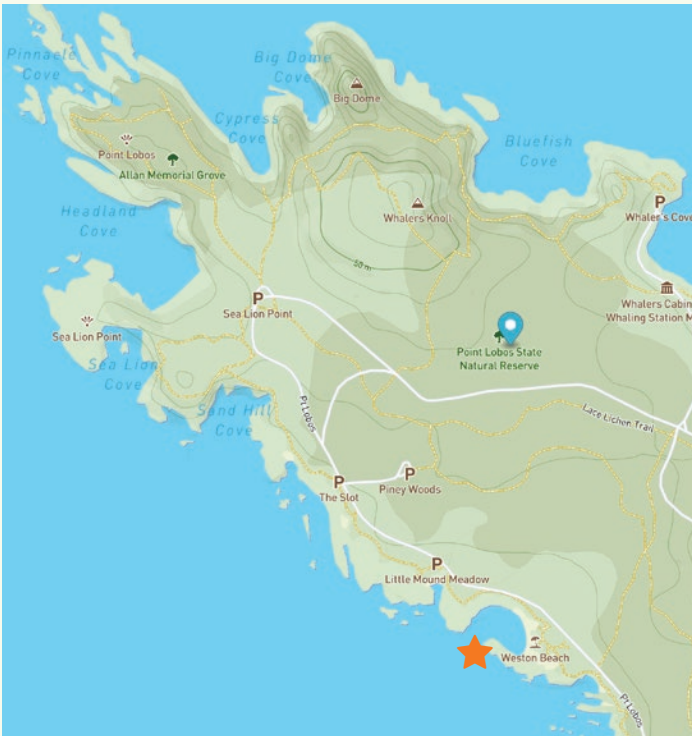


Chiton. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.



Aggregating anemones. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.





Star marks the location of Weston Beach.  
Map from Point Lobos Foundation.



Ochre star. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.

often holding a shell or stone on top like a sun hat. Over time, long rows of urchin “condominiums” have populated the lower intertidal zone.

And if you’re lucky, you may get to see one of our two most typical types of sea stars — the colorful bat star or the large mussel-eating maroon or orange ochre star. These carnivorous predators are able to be out of the water for some time during low tide, often under rock ledges or in crevices.

We ask that you not pick up or move any of the creatures at the tide pools, but if you are careful you may use a very gentle two-finger touch to see what they feel like, always remembering that they are vulnerable living animals who need our care and protection.

In addition to all of the amazing animals you can encounter at the tide pools, don’t forget to admire all of the gorgeous algae and seaweeds. We have a multitude of differing species of aquatic plants, from bright green surf grass, to long feather boa kelp, and the ubiquitous pink coralline algae, which is often bleached white from the sun. Green spongy codium (usually called “dead man’s fingers”) and cellophane-like sea lettuce are common, as is the lovely and aptly-named iridescent algae.

There may be a green-jacketed Point Lobos Docent around who will be happy to answer any of your questions and to admire the cool discoveries you make! You can also pick up a free tide pool brochure at the Information Station.

The Point Lobos tide pools are incredibly interesting to people of all ages, and the creatures you find will likely be different every time — it’s like a big treasure hunt, only we make sure to leave all the “treasures” in place for the next group of explorers to find.



White-spotted rose anemone. Photo by Dave Evans.



Bat star. Photo by Elaine Gehrmann.





*Chuck Bancroft spent 31 years of his 35-year career as a State Park Ranger at Point Lobos and, in retirement, has led programs and nature walks for the Point Lobos Foundation.*

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# The coyote in legend and reality

## No dogs allowed in Reserve but a wild one prowls there

*by Chuck Bancroft*

Legend and Native American tales tell us the coyote is not quite an animal nor quite human. The coyote is a magical critter from ancient times. It is also a trickster, a clown, a hero or a bad villain. The coyote is also known for its many adventures with other critters.

The coyote, whose name comes to us from the Aztec coyotl, is found from Alaska southward into Central America. The coyote stands about 24 inches at the shoulder, weighs about 20-50 pounds, and is about 3.3-4.3 feet long. The fur is long and coarse and is generally grizzled buff above and whitish below, reddish on the legs, and bushy on the black-tipped tail.

Coyotes are territorial, and both members of a breeding pair defend the territory against other coyotes. Territories are marked with urine and feces. Most territories range from 4 to 15 square miles.

The coyote is a very smart animal with a reputation for cunning and swiftness. Competitors for food include foxes and bobcats. Coyotes feed on a variety of critters including deer, rabbits, hares, rodents, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. They will even take small pets when left unattended outside homes. Wherever or whenever prey is unavailable or hard to obtain, coyotes eat large quantities of wild berries and fruits.

Coyotes mate between January and March, and females give birth to four to seven pups after a gestation of 58-65 days. Births occur in an underground burrow, usually a hole dug by the parents.



*A coyote at the Reserve.  
All photos by Chuck Bancroft.*





*A coyote in full howl.*



*Walking through the sea pink.*

Like most mammals, the young are born blind and helpless. Pups start emerging from the den to play after several weeks. Weaning occurs at five to seven weeks. Both parents feed and care for the pups until they are fully grown at six to nine months. Young typically disperse in the fall, but some older siblings will help raise younger offspring, and family groups may remain together and form packs during winter.

Years ago before digital cameras, I was shooting Kodachrome 64 with my Nikon camera and a 105 macro lens. I heard and spotted a coyote in the Reserve's Big Mound Meadow and it was howling and howling. I wasn't sure if it was defending territory, communicating with other coyotes or maybe a female calling for its young. It was way at the back of the meadow and I did take one decent image. I sat and listened to its pitiful howl until it gave up and walked back into the forest.

One day I was walking along the South Shore and scanning the area for possible images when I looked left to Little Mound Meadow and, coming directly toward me, a slender female was walking through a field of sea pink, also known as seathrift. I captured one image before she saw me and high-tailed it back into the pine forest.

My most memorable encounter was at Point Lobos just after I acquired my first digital camera. I was on patrol leaving Sea Lion Point going down the road when I spotted a pup in the bushes. I got out with my camera and snapped a quick picture. Unfortunately, I was on manual focus and, as you can see, the image was blurry. And yet I love the image of this adorable creature. It quickly disappeared back into the bushes.

On my photographic adventures, I have enjoyed many encounters with coyotes during my career, continuing into retirement. I've seen them numerous times at the Santa Lucia Preserve and at September Ranch on Carmel Valley Road. I still marvel at their beauty, even if I don't get a picture.

I still wander open areas and visit previous locations hoping to see this remarkable critter and take more pictures. Maybe even another pup someday.



*A fuzzy photo, but loved by the author.*













*Susan Lambert is a Northern California native. Having visited Point Lobos since she was 6, she is grateful to be able to spend so much time at the place she has loved from such a young age. Since joining the docents, she's been gratified to indulge her interests in learning about other cultures, natural history and sharing the wonder of this stunning place with the public. Her other passions are photography, glass art, hiking, travel and dog rescue.*

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# Great big birds

## Love is in the air for herons at Point Lobos

*by Susan Lambert*

What might visitors see through the spotting scope in front of Whalers Cabin in the spring? Southern sea otters are a crowd favorite, as are harbor seals, but an engaging spectacle at this time of year are the nesting Great Blue Herons. Docents and visitors alike are immediately taken with the size of these graceful, beautiful birds, standing about 4 feet tall and with a 6-foot wingspan.

But to see so many of them, all in a Monterey pine on Coal Chute Point, inspires us to explore further, asking why so many have gathered in just one tree. Luckily, docents can offer a wealth of useful information to satisfy our fortunate visitors' curiosity.

Great Blue Herons are always a common sight scattered throughout Point Lobos. As solitary hunters during most of the year, they are easily observed stalking their

prey with almost infinite patience. Either by standing still or walking very slowly, herons will spear a fish or other prey with lightning-fast speed, using their dagger-like yellow bills. Whether hunting on land in our meadows or from floating logs around our coves and inlets, they seem equally at ease in any type of coastal habitat.

As supremely successful predators, they could be eating fish, their main food source, or rodents, birds, amphibians, reptiles, crustaceans, maybe even insects. Once in a while, they are seen in the Reserve impaling a hapless pocket gopher, a favorite food item that they easily swallow whole.

In spring their habits change; as March approaches they begin to gather to breed. That's when Whalers Cove becomes a focal point in Point Lobos for Great Blue Heron activity.



*Aloft on a 6-foot wingspan.*





*A nest can be crowded.*

First, the males arrive in the pine tree at Coal Chute Point to choose their nest. The same birds come back each year to nest here, but they don't choose the same nest or the same mate. Males then do courtship displays and flights to woo females, who arrive in the nest to be presented with sticks so they may arrange the nest to their liking.

While it's difficult to see the eggs for the four weeks it takes them to hatch, both parents will take turns incubating them while the other goes foraging. The best time to observe the nests, therefore, is when the chicks arrive. Both parents will feed their hatchlings but the oldest chick can be aggressive towards the younger ones, leading to competition for food and attention.

After about six to eight weeks, the chicks are ready to fledge, after which they can come back for two to three weeks to be fed. The fledglings, slightly smaller than the adults and identified by their plain gray plumage, will keep returning in the hope that the parents will continue feeding them, before the parents resolutely appear to indicate that they should henceforth be on their own.

The end of the spectacle at Whalers Cove is sometime in late May or early June when the nesting season ends. The fledged herons are visible throughout the Reserve in their juvenile plumage, learning to fly and fish as successfully as their parents do. After about four to six months they have fully developed their flying abilities, and two years later they mature.

The outlook for these magnificent birds depends on how we protect the ecosystems they rely upon. While they are seemingly prevalent and resilient, they are still vulnerable to habitat loss or degradation and their future is not guaranteed. At Point Lobos we are so lucky to be able to enjoy watching them in their natural habitat and to inspire others to preserve their environment.



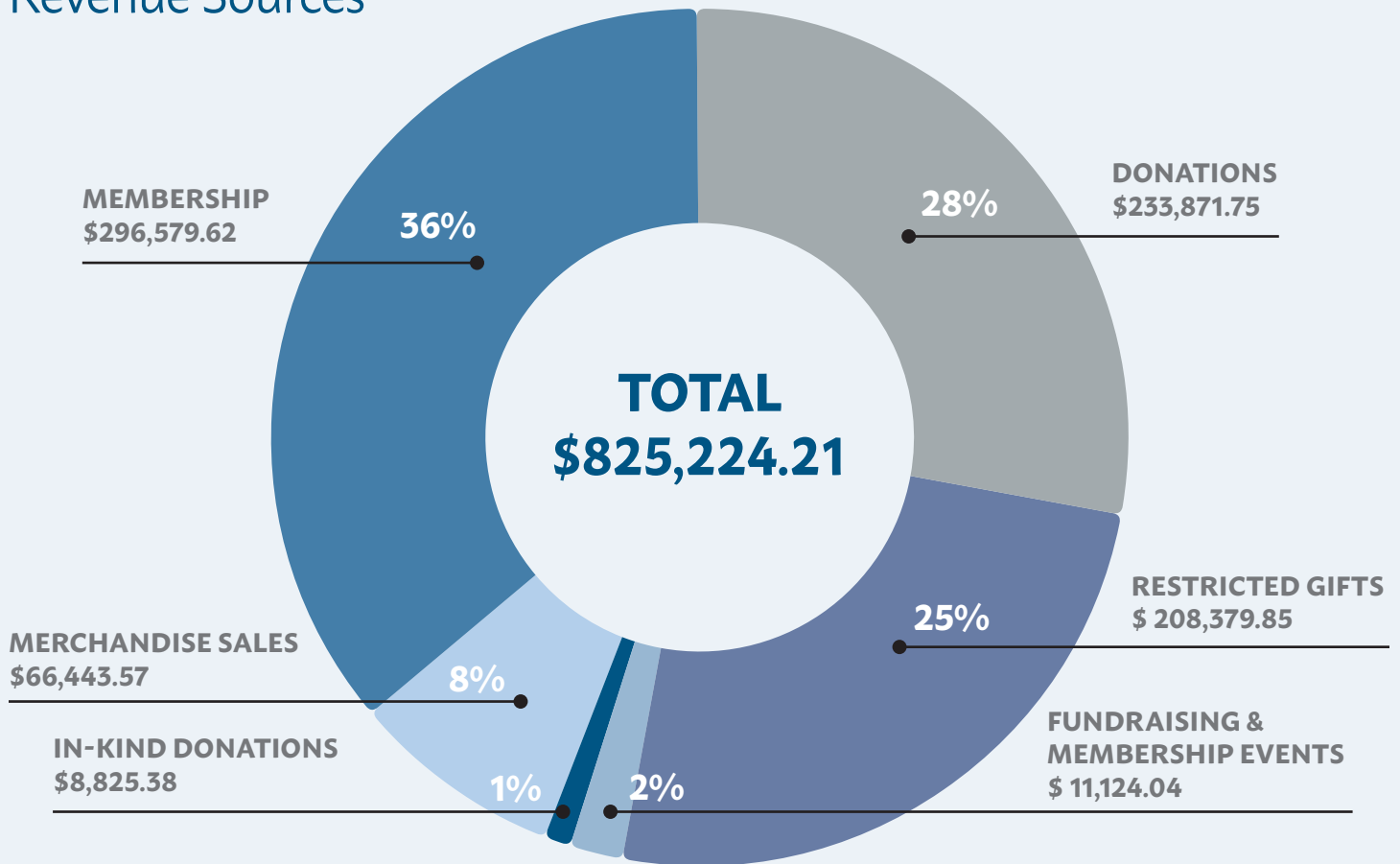
*Hérons hunt in rivers too.*



*Standing tall on the seashore. All photos by Susan Lambert.*



## Revenue Sources



## Revenue by Category

**MEMBERSHIP** revenue includes membership dues, both annual and monthly donations. Gifts to the Monterey County Gives campaign for membership renewal are also included.

**DONATION** revenue includes non-member donations, unrestricted grant donations, non-member tribute gifts. Non-member donations are made by individuals by mail, to fundraising campaigns like the Monterey County Gives campaign, for docent-led group walks, or at donations boxes at PLSNR.

**RESTRICTED GIFT** revenue includes grants from individuals, foundations, and other sources that are given for a specific use.

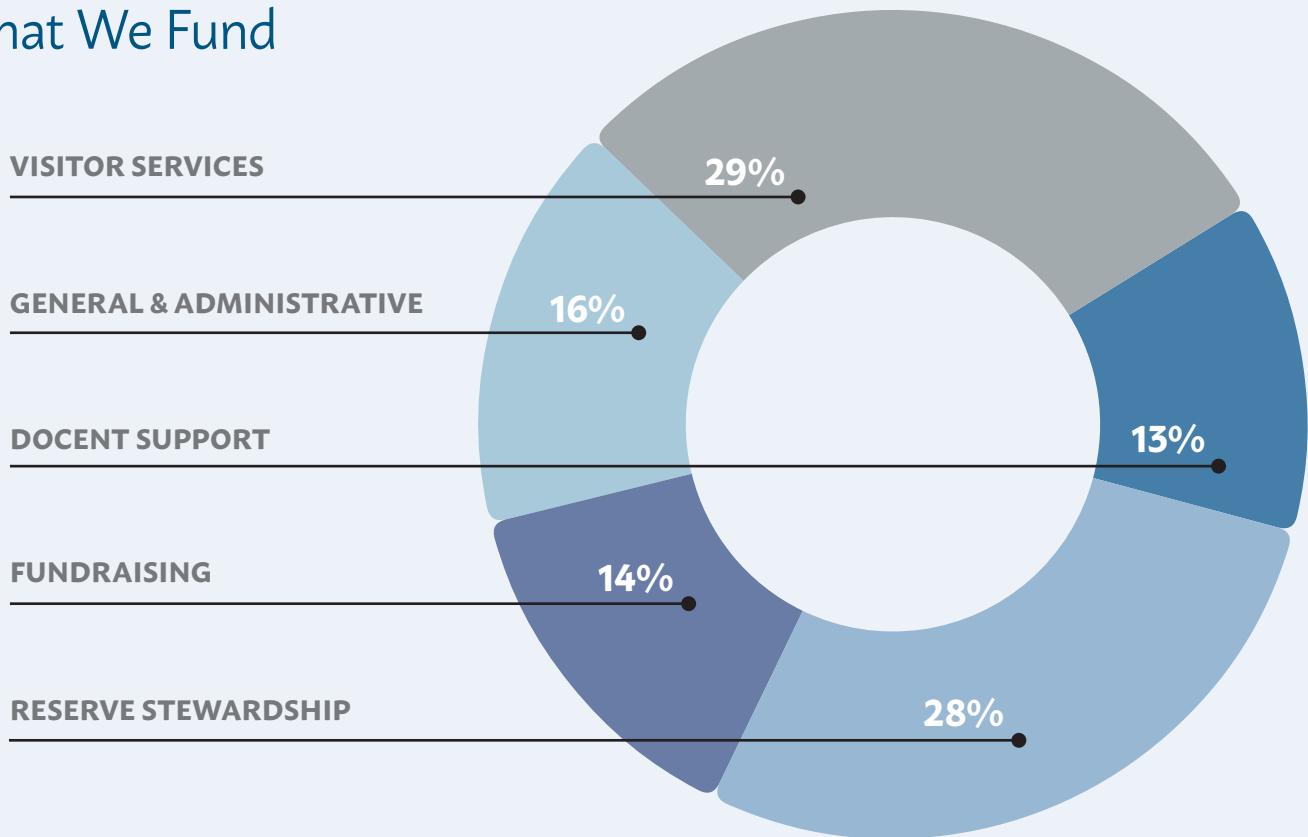
**FUNDRAISING AND MEMBERSHIP EVENT** revenue includes ticketed events, raffle sales, and merchandise sold at an event.

**IN-KIND DONATION** revenue records the value of the donation or goods or services given to Point Lobos Foundation for fundraising efforts.

**MERCHANDISE SALE** revenue includes merchandise sold through the PLF online store and merchandise sold at PLSNR.



# What We Fund



## Highlights



- Trails maintenance and restoration.
- Restroom lift station improvements and repairs.
- Archival of historical items to an online database.
- Removal of invasive species, habitat restoration, and research.
- Installation of wildlife-proof trash and recycling receptacles at Carmel River State Beach.
- Supplies for volunteer work at Carmel River State Beach.



- Full funding for the Point Lobos Docent Program: administrative and program support costs, continuing education, training.
- Funded Interpretive materials and maintenance of Whalers Cabin, Information Station, and MINT Van.
- School outreach program interpretive materials and equipment for virtual and in-person learning.



- Transportation and Reserve entrance fee for Title 1 and CHISPA students.
- Support for Park-IT!
- Funding support for Summer Adventures.
- Supported public walks led by California State Parks staff at Ishxenta State Park.
- Publication of the Point Lobos Magazine.
- Membership events including virtual programs and the annual Moonlight Walk.





# Notes from the Docent Log

Compiled by Emily Hull-Parsons

Emily Hull-Parsons, originally from Illinois, arrived on the Monterey Peninsula over 40 years ago. During those years she ran an active consulting practice in the areas of management and philanthropy. Now retired, she has found time to enjoy serving as a Point Lobos Docent and has become an avid landscape artist, as well as a very enthusiastic grandparent.



Photo by Don Blohowiak.

Large sandstone shelves at the south end of Weston Beach have broken and fallen down with the recent rains. Large boulders also can be seen strewn about in the aftermath of the winter storms. These shifts in the landscape have opened a new pathway to the rocks to the west, previously inaccessible. In times of rising waters and sneaker waves, we should pay attention to visitors wandering out to this area exposed to high surf, and not very visible from the trail.

**Don Blohowiak, 01/23/2024**

It's amazing what you see when you look closely. Yesterday, armed with a macro lens on my camera, I set out to photograph the sheep moth caterpillars I had seen earlier in the week. I walked from the Bird Island parking lot to just over the bridge at Gibson Beach, examining all the plants along the way. I spotted more than 20 different species of bugs! Most fascinating of all were the goldenrod crab spiders. Not only can they walk sideways (hence the name), but they can also change color to match the flower or plant they are on. Even though, to our eyes, the bright yellow or white appears to stand out, apparently to an arthropod's eye they blend in with the background. Well, I never!

**Sara Courtneidge, 03/29/2024**

Bird and beasts: Two otters were seen in the cove off Bird Island today, then Docent Yvonne Wright and I saw a Great Blue Heron posing close to the Pelican Point trail.

**Stan Dryden, 01/17/2024**



Photo by Sara Courtneidge.





*Photo by Fred Brown.*

It's the most wonderful time of the year ... at the Reserve. The mycorrhizal fungus network with their tiny mycelium threads are rearing their heads on the forest floor and producing the magic of mushrooms.

**Fred Brown, 01/06/2024**

Rainwater sheeting everywhere this morning. Major puddles to navigate. Many rain-flushed, stranded earthworms...hmmm...rescue or let be? Meanwhile, untroubled by such questions, an opportunistic crow was celebrating his lucky day.

**Rick Pettit, 03/03/2024**

The State Department's premier professional exchange program, the International Visitors Leadership Program, brought leaders studying the "blue economy" to the United States for three weeks. Participants from the South Pacific (Cook Islands, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere) visited Whalers Cabin before heading home. They were astonished by the size of the abalone shells.

**Susan Bjerre, 03/28/2024**

I just spoke with The Marine Mammal Center, asking for news of the little elephant seal pup rescued from Gibson Beach on March 28. She is doing fine! They have named her Ebrake (not sure why). She has gained 4 kg since she was rescued, and is sharing her pen with five other pups of the same age. She had a wound on her right side but it is superficial and healing well. The little sweetie!

**Trisha Bennett Mayer, 04/04/2024**



*Photo by Chris Wagner.*

This Ceanothus bush along Bird Island trail has offered great caterpillar viewing for a few years. If history repeats, the ones that survive will be either the western tussock moth or the western sheep moth.

**Chris Wagner, 02/24/2024**



*Photo by David Laws.*

Jane Goodall borrowed my binoculars! She visited the Reserve today accompanied by John Hiles, California State Parks Monterey Sector Manager, and Charles Knowles, co-founder of the Wildlife Conservation Network.

**David Laws, 03/22/2024**

Visitors were delighted to witness the birth of a beautiful, healthy harbor seal pup on eclipse day. Gulls quickly came in to do their midwifery duties and many turkey vultures were attracted to the event as well.

**Lorna Claerbout, 04/09/2024**



# MONTEREY COUNTY GIVES!

Joining Together for Big Ideas

Monterey County Gives! is an annual year-end campaign inspiring giving and philanthropy. The Point Lobos Foundation was honored to participate again in 2023. We raised \$88,633.46 directly and at total of \$10,845.40

with the campaign match. 270 donors supported the campaign from twelve states in the continental US, Hawaii, and England. This campaign is made possible by the Monterey County Weekly, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Community Foundation for Monterey County. Thank you to all of you who supported the Point Lobos Foundation through the 2023 MCGives! campaign!

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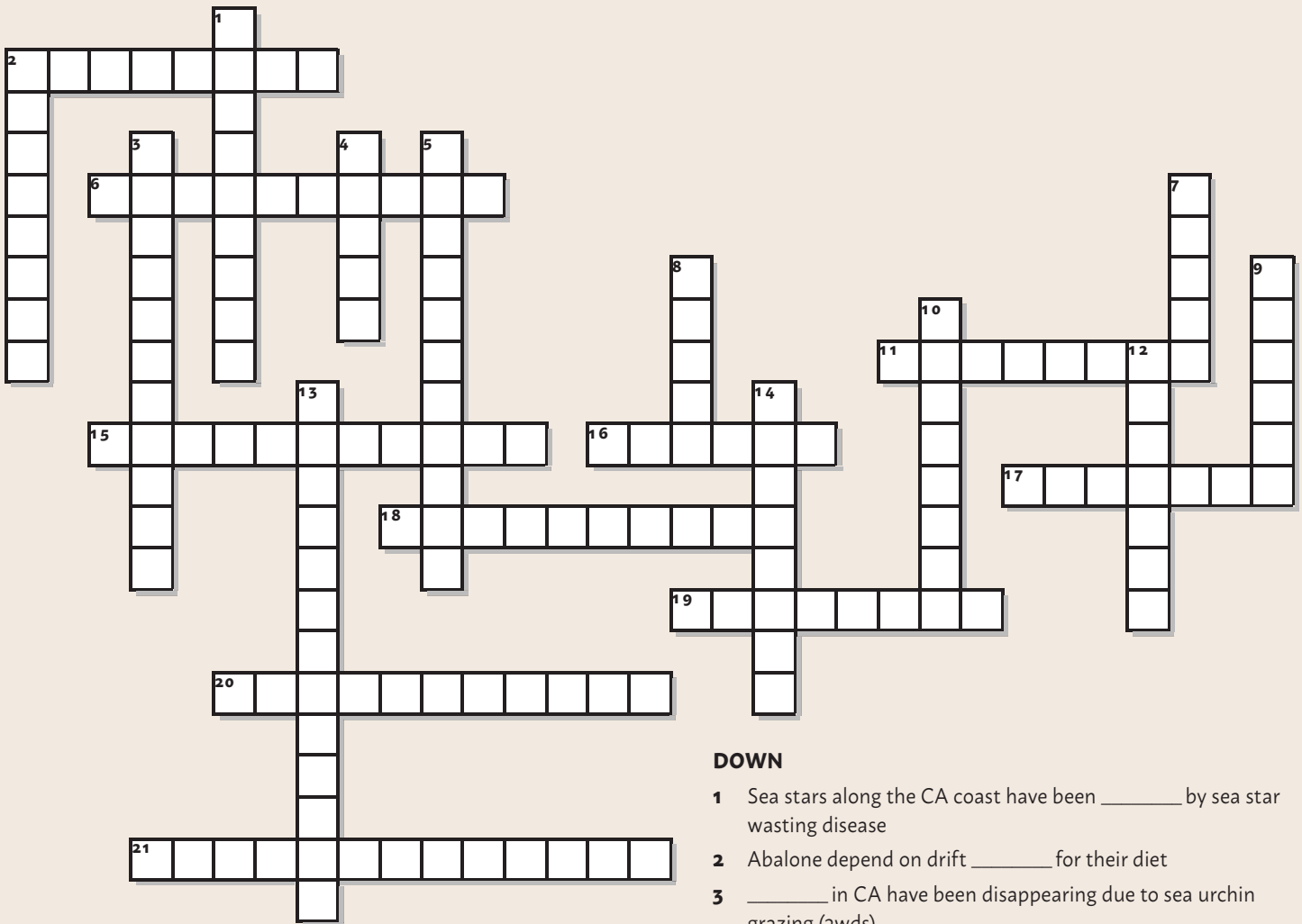
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# Puzzle: Tide Pooling in Point Lobos

by Ann Pendleton



## ACROSS

- 2 Algae-covered rocks can be \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Turban snail shells might have a snail or \_\_\_\_\_ living inside (2wds)
- 11 A diet of \_\_\_\_\_ will result in red pigment for the abalone (2wds)
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_ is a great place to tide pool while in Point Lobos during low tide (2wds)
- 16 Brittle stars have moved their southern limits as the ocean waters have \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ chitons suction themselves tightly to rocks
- 18 Purple \_\_\_\_\_ are sometimes found in self-made depressions (2wds)
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ thrive in cracks and crevices among rocks and boulders

## DOWN

- 1 Sea stars along the CA coast have been \_\_\_\_\_ by sea star wasting disease
- 2 Abalone depend on drift \_\_\_\_\_ for their diet
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ in CA have been disappearing due to sea urchin grazing (2wds)
- 4 When near the \_\_\_\_\_, don't ever turn your back to the waves
- 5 Sculpins are small, \_\_\_\_\_ fish found at Point Lobos tide pools
- 7 The kelp and much of the other plant-looking material found while tide pooling is \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Intertidal creatures at low tide are waiting for \_\_\_\_\_ to return
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ like to eat invertebrates like snails, abalone, crabs, mussels, urchins
- 10 Sea Otters are considered a \_\_\_\_\_ species
- 12 Intertidal creatures have \_\_\_\_\_ to being submerged in water and exposed completely to air, sun and predators
- 13 The pace of changes in our climate is \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 While tide pooling look for the two most common \_\_\_\_\_: bat star and ochre star (2wds)
- 20 While \_\_\_\_\_, please remember to leave everything behind and don't disrupt the habitat (2wds)
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_ syndrome kills red abalones (2wds)

Answers at [pointlobos.org/crossword](http://pointlobos.org/crossword)



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Rest in Peace Mom & Dad!*

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