

A dramatic sunset over a rocky coastline. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and reflecting in a tide pool. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds, some illuminated by the setting sun. The foreground is dominated by large, dark, jagged rocks. The tide pool is a central feature, reflecting the colors of the sunset and the surrounding rocks. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

POINT LOBOS

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Point Lobos Foundation

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

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT PROPOSITION 21: A WAY OUT OF OUR FUNDING PROBLEM

Skip Flohr

In fiscal year 2010 Point Lobos State Reserve was threatened with closure or a severe reduction of services that would probably have included curtailed restroom and trail maintenance, a reduction in public safety services, a reduction in hours of operation, and an elimination of sorely needed deferred maintenance. Your Point Lobos Association (now Point Lobos Foundation) dug into reserves to keep such reductions to a minimum.

Other state parks were not so fortunate. Of 278 state parks, 150 were shut down part time or suffered deep service reductions because of budget cuts; more park closure proposals and budget cuts are expected this year.

THERE IS A SOLUTION. Proposition 21, slated for the November 2 statewide ballot, will create the State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund. The fund will provide a stable, reliable, and adequate source of funding for the state park system, for wildlife conservation, and for increased and equitable access to those resources for all Californians.

Prop. 21 will give California licensed vehicles free day-use admission to the state parks in exchange for a new \$18 vehicle license fee. The surcharge will apply to most California vehicles, including motorcycles and recreational vehicles. It will not apply to commercial vehicles subject to the Commercial Vehicle Registration Act, mobile homes, or permanent trailers. The \$18 equals about 5 cents a day per vehicle.

For Point Lobos this means:

- The Reserve will remain open.
- Restroom and trail maintenance will continue.
- Deferred maintenance will be undertaken.
- Public safety will be maintained.
- You will not have to park on Highway One to avoid a parking charge.

Passage of Prop. 21, the California State Parks Initiative, will ensure that California



State Parks remain open for our use and pleasure while releasing \$130,000,000 back to the State General Fund and generating \$2.35 in revenue for the California Treasury for every dollar spent on park-related visits.

It is also estimated that every park visit generates \$57.63 in revenue for our local economy.

Please vote for Prop. 21 and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same.

Much of the above information was taken from the "California State Parks Initiative" and other supportive web sites, including the Legislative Analyst.



UPCOMING EVENTS



One Day - Indigenous People - Many Ways: October 9, 2010

10 am-5 pm. Early indigenous people spent time at Point Lobos fishing, hunting, and collecting shellfish and plants. Join us as we explore their lives through dancing, storytelling, and games. Watch flint-knapping and acorn meal preparation. Make your own tule reed mats and boats. Fashion your own flutes from elderberry tree branches. Docent-led walks will highlight the use of plants and animals in the everyday lives of the indigenous peoples, and will show you remnants of their culture.

Moonlight Walk October 23, 2010

A not-to-be-missed annual Members Only Event

Entrance to the Reserve is free for Point Lobos Foundation members starting at 5 pm (reservation required).

A wonderful buffet, accompanied by Microtonic Harmonic's live bluegrass music and other moonlight magic, will be provided by the Point Lobos Foundation. Guests willing to join the PLF that night are also welcome.

Make your reservation no later than October 15 by calling (831) 625-1470.

Under My Brim:

Massacre at Bird Island

Ranger Chuck Bancroft

Tuesday morning, July 20. It was a calm, gray, overcast day. A whisper of wind ruffled my hair as I slowly patrolled the Reserve with my windows wide open to listen for the usual morning sounds: small waves caressing the rock forms of south shore, a juvenile red-tailed hawk calling for mom, the padded foot steps of little brush rabbits scurrying back into the brush, the cheep and call of quail chicks as they run swiftly after mom and dad.

Then Cathy Little, who is working the entrance station, calls me on the radio about a concerned visitor upset about all the dead birds on Bird Island. Cormorant chicks and adults lie motionless across their nests. The Western gulls and their gray-spotted gull chicks are motionless on the rock.

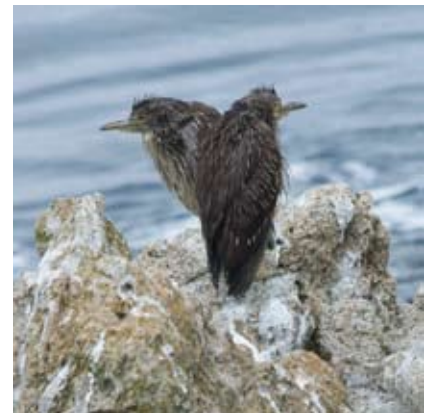
And what has him most upset are the missing black-crowned night herons and their chicks.

This has been an El Niño year. Warmer water has caused a lack of food for the birds, resulting in failures in the nesting season. Some Brandt's cormorants have tried to continue with nesting and some have succeeded. The gulls are opportunistic feeders and appeared to be successful; many nests and threesomes of chicks were all over the inner island. The black-crowned night heron pair on the front face of the inner island had three chicks doing well. Several of us were able to get some fantastic images of the three, who looked like tiny pterodactyls with punk hairdos. Some of the little birds made it to juvenile stage and eventually fledged and flew to the outer islands.

My initial thought about the dead birds was "the peregrine falcons are back."

We have peregrines at the south end of the Reserve at times and another pair that work the north side and across the bay all the way to Odello West.

I continued my rounds and was flagged down by a visitor. He came up to the truck and said, "Can I ask you a stupid question?" I replied of course, but questions are never stupid.



Top: Dead cormorants. Bottom, lft. to rt: Western gull chicks, black-crowned night heron chicks with parent, fledgling black-crowned night herons. All photographs courtesy Chuck Bancroft.

He asked me if we had cats in the park. I said bobcats are usually seen in the very early morning or early evening hours. Sometimes they can be seen during the day in very quiet areas sleeping on rocky outcroppings or hiding in the tall grasses. We often see lots of scat in the Reserve. He said, "I just saw a cat on the island at Bird Rock chasing after gulls."

WOW! I've been a ranger at Point Lobos for 29 years 7 months as of this report. I've heard of the possibility that a cat or weasel could get over to the inner island. But in all my years I've never seen it happen. And although I've seen many bobcats in the Reserve, they've all turned tail when seeing me; it seemed now was finally my opportunity get a good picture of a bobcat.

I grabbed my camera and tripod, went out on the trail and found the cat, sleeping like a big orange tabby on the side of the island face. I was thrilled! Finally I was able to photograph a bobcat. But... radio call from dispatch... a young boy had been climbing on rocks at Moss Cove,



fell, and may have broken his foot. Lifeguard Kevin Brady responded to the call and was first on scene. I got to the trail head at the entrance station and walked out to Moss Cove. There was a lot of help from Cal Fire and lifeguard Kevin Escalante, Public Safety Superintendent Lifeguard Eric Abma, and Monterey Sector Superintendent Dana Jones. After a successful rescue, the young man was

sent off to the hospital for further evaluation and treatment, and we finally got back to the office.

I was just about to go off duty. Abma and Jones wanted to look for the cat and had gone out to Bird Island. I got a cell phone call from Jones asking for directions to the cat when all of a sudden she got very excited. They found the cat and it was feeding on a bird. I didn't even change out of my uniform. I called my wife to tell her what was up and went out to Bird Island. I waited for over an hour while the over-fed cat just slept. Then it woke up and provided some spectacular photographic opportunities. Then it found another cozy spot and went to sleep. It was past 5 o'clock and I was really hungry. Time to go home.

Bright and early the next morning I went back out to the island and the bobcat was gone.

The very low tide must have created an opportunity for it to cross the narrow channel and come back to the mainland. On my way back to my truck I did see lots of footprints in the dirt and fresh scat along the trail.

What caused this cat to cross over at super low tide to the inner island? Why attack all the birds? Was it a feeding frenzy? Was it a female with a den and little ones to feed? Was it thinking it was trapped and wanted to secure enough food for an extended period? For me, this was a once-in-a-career sighting. Or was it? Will the bobcat remember what it took to get to the inner island? Will it want another feast next season? It will certainly be something to watch for. I'm glad I was there to document this unusual occurrence.



A photograph of a red kayak on turquoise water with a rocky coastline in the background. The kayak is in the foreground, pointing towards the center of the frame. The water is a vibrant turquoise color with white foam from the waves. The background shows a rocky coastline with some vegetation.

A SPECTACLE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

BY MATT BUONAGUIDI

Close to shore is where the magic happens, where the marine reserve meets the terrestrial reserve. It's an elaborate and whimsical meeting of circumstance and the natural world . . .

Kayaking within the newly expanded Point Lobos State Marine Reserve can be very simple and rewarding. It can also be very dangerous. Point Lobos can get groundswells of up to 20 feet during a strong winter storm. Rough days churn the water like a meat grinder as deep ocean swells are forced up against, over, and around islets, submerged pinnacles, and blocks of stone. This flooding of the bay and cove, plus the waves' own reflections off the unsentimental cliffs, make the surface of the water look like meringue.

Three-, four-, and five-sided waves point to the heavens, and tremble briefly in place, as if electrified by the challenge of trying to find stillness in the surging chaos. Wind-whipped waves and sea foam frost the scene according to their bearing. Sometimes these large ocean swells coincide with dead calm wind conditions, creating "holy rollers." These massive mirror-smooth swells discharge the last of their Aleutian fury on the dozing coastline, silently and effortlessly lifting and setting down anything that floats in their way.

While kayaking, I often imagine a whale strung up to be flensed¹ at the boat ramp, large floating wooden crates filled with abalone, and a steamship pulling up to Coal Chute Point. I hear that there are submerged sea caves under this point, and two large eye-bolts stuck in the rock waiting for the U.S. army to return.² Whalers

1 *Flensing* is the process in which the skin and blubber of the whale is stripped.

2 For more information about the military presence at Point Lobos, read the Cultural History section of www.PointLobos.org

Knoll is bald except for a silhouette and a small flag quickly being raised. Thick black smoke rises from the parking lot. In my imagination, the cannery is still in full production. Where the bathrooms now are, they are quarrying granite and mining gravel by the truckload out of the Pit. I wonder if that really is a birthing rock on top of Granite Point, as I've been told.

It is stunning what nature and time have done with what was once a very industrial place.

The deep water surrounding Point Lobos can



provide ideal conditions for getting up close and personal with the marine environment. Whalers Cove is the only place where you may enter and exit the water (there is a \$5 launch fee as of this writing). The cove is generally well-

protected in all but the worst conditions, and much of the local cultural history is centered on this tiny deep and still "doghole port." After launching, harbor seals often follow you around like sea dogs or lie low doing surveillance under kelp cover.

Carmel Bay is small, but deep. It is periodically and seasonally very mighty. You begin to get a taste of the open ocean conditions as you enter Carmel Bay just outside of Whalers Cove. Humpback whales are sometimes seen feeding above the deep canyon that bisects the bay. Shoals of small fish are sometimes "herded" into tight bunches by larger fish, sea lions, and dolphins. Once these bait balls are forced up against the shore or near the surface, pelicans,

gulls, and cormorants dig in to get their fill. Birds “stuffed to the gills” can be seen waiting nearby for their digestive systems to make room so they can make another dive into the silvery feast.

An extremely rich intertidal zone that includes the same species of cyanobacteria that gave the earth most of its oxygen, surrounds the Reserve like a bathtub ring. Close to shore is where the magic happens, where the marine reserve meets the terrestrial reserve. It’s an elaborate and whimsical meeting of circumstance and the

natural world. On calm days, at low tide, you can float near a cliff and see the entire intertidal zone without taking a step. I call it “vertical tide pooling.”

Windless days turn the water to glass and the mirrored reflections on the

surface make you think that you’ve stumbled into the Point Lobos “funhouse.” Common, familiar sights turn into serpentine impressions on the silvery water. Images dance to the beat of the incoming swells and shimmer under the puffs and hushed exhalations of the breeze. Trees appear to grow and shrink and wiggle like sidewinders in the endless, slow rolling, undulations. The silence speaks volumes and any sound takes on a singularity that is both comforting and haunting. Oystercatchers laugh. Small fish jump and sound as if they are tearing fabric as they flick the water with their tails and dive back in. Cormorants squeak by in flight.

But, they all sound old, as if somehow they are not getting enough oil in their food. Blowholes and sea caves, using gravity as a diaphragm,

groan and whoosh. I’m not sure if these are the sad gasps of a suffocating planet, or simply joyous and mysterious as the sound of an aboriginal didgeridoo. The sound of a million tiny popping bubbles is startlingly loud—bacon frying in the sea—as a hundred cubic meters of seawater are super-infused with oxygen while they cascade off the ragged rocks. Often, I feel as if I’m paddling in a glass of freshly poured Caribbean green champagne. The sky is perfectly reflected on these still days. Mild vertigo pulls me toward the



vanishing point on the horizon and tempts me to flip over, especially when there is a mixed sky. Sky above, sky below. Am I paddling on the surface of the water or am I somehow upside down, stuck to the sky? I want to fall up.

A portion of the recently expanded Point Lobos State Marine

Reserve will have been protected continuously for 50 years next year. Over time, comparative studies within Point Lobos Marine Reserve and similar habitats nearby have clearly illustrated the natural, cultural, and scientific benefits of protecting marine environments. Beginning in the fall of 2007, California began designating a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) along the entire coast. The intention is that someday there will be a network of MPAs along the coast of the whole country, including appropriate protected areas in major lakes and river systems. The results within these protected areas are not terribly surprising. There are significant increases in quantity, quality, and size of a wide variety of marine plants and animals. Much like protected and undeveloped areas on land,

marine environments and ecosystems thrive when left undisturbed. We have been slow to recognize the necessity and benefits of protecting portions of the aquatic habitats on the planet.

Water so dominates the surface of the planet (71%) that it's hard to feel connected to the rest of the world when walking on land. It's easier to get a sense of a single global habitat when you are paddling on the "rest of the world." There's an unsurpassed sense of global connectedness while on the water that is impossible to match on land, at least for me. Somehow, floating in this Marine Reserve, skimming over the top of lush kelp forests and verdant rock gardens, over the tops of submerged mountains and along towering granite cliffs and secluded coves covered in pine and cypress, it seems certain that I would somehow notice if a stone were thrown into the sea by a curious child half a world away.

There's a lot of room for the curious and the adventurous to explore a place of indescribable beauty that delights the senses, renews the spirit,

and refreshes the soul. The Marine Reserve here is an endless and ever-changing ballet, on a stage both stark and lush, in a theater of rock, water, and sky. Exploring this great meeting of land and sea by kayak is a fantastic way to see the show. But, a word of caution: when looking for adventure, it can be too easy to find. After all, the ocean is "the last of man's great unchained beasts."³

Matt Buonaguidi is a State Park Ranger and has worked closely with the Point Lobos Docent program for eight years.

3 From "The Mariner's Song" by Michael Timmins. Lyrics by Margo Timmins, lead vocalist. THE COWBOY JUNKIES, "The Caution Horses."





verify the identity and share the sounds that it makes. We stood there for another ten minutes observing it, as it continued to stare down at us. It was a thrill!

May 18: Rick Pettit

On this sunny afternoon many of us were transfixed by the sight of perhaps a hundred Risso's dolphins cavorting in the calm waters just outside the mouth of Whalers Cove. Ranger Chuck was excited enough to jog (yes!) back to get his camera. Visitors stood on Cannery Point delightedly watching

Quotes from the Docent Log

Creatures Great and Small: Colorful Skinks, A Curious Otter, Great Whales, Seldom-Seen Owls... and An Extraordinary Bobcat

May 2: Ann Muto

What a miraculous place Point Lobos is. Based on that thought, I tried out something new for our public walk. I usually say I hope that our visitors will find something "incredible" during our walk together. What I added this time was that I'd ask them what it was at the end of the walk. Here is some of what they noticed: How even in the small area covered by the walk, microclimates existed (i.e., the cool breezy area of the *Trentepohlia*). The absolute uniqueness of the *Trentepohlia* attaching itself to the unique species of cypress tree. How the male wood rat built his nest in

a tree. We never know just what visitors find intriguing—at least for these visitors, we found out.

May 15: Eileen Fukunaga

We were on an interpretive walk on the Carmelo Meadow Trail. The leader had us take twenty steps, then stop to discuss what we saw. At one of these stops, I moved just beyond a dead pine to make room for the rest of the class. I happened to look up at a hole in the tree, and saw something move. Our leader immediately identified it as a northern saw-whet owl. Most of us watched it through binoculars. Others pulled out their iPhones to

the scene: scores of dorsal fins slicing through the calm waters, with the exuberant punctuation of spectacular leaps.

**May Otter Count:
Lynne McCammon**

There hasn't been very much kelp, so the large raft of otters is nonexistent. The majority of otters were feeders so it had everyone checking the slightest movement. The final count was 31 adults and 3 pups. There was a lot of activity when we reached Bird Island. Some Brandt's cormorants were doing the courting rituals, while



others were building nests. It has been reported that there are four black-crowned night heron nests in the area, but we only spotted two nests with birds on them. One strange note was a small sea lion that was hauled out and resting with the cormorants just above the waterline on Bird Island.

May 25: Fred Brown

I took three visitors out the Carmelo Meadow Trail to Granite Point. The saw-whet owls had left their nesting place and were nowhere to be seen. However, we saw four otters; one a female sleeping in the kelp in Whalers Cove. A blue heron was standing on a log and keeping perfectly still gazing into the waters. The wildflowers on the west side of

Granite Point were spectacular. The view back toward Big Dome on a very clear calm day took everyone by surprise, and we spent a good deal of time just hanging out there.

May 29: Jeff Johnson

What a spectacular time I had scoping on the Bird Island trail today! I saw my first black-crowned night heron chick. There are three other nesting pairs that I am aware of, one directly opposite Pelican Point. There are scores of nesting Brandt's cormorants. There are several nesting Western gulls, and one or two Canada geese. Several harbor seals basked on the rocks. Finally, walking back along China Cove, I saw two otters with

pups snoozing on their chests. Is this place fantastic, or what?

June 11: Ed Clifton

An alert visitor saw a blue-tailed lizard, 6-8 inches long, June 8, on Cannery Point. I tentatively identified it as a skink and, after checking with Ranger Chuck and resources in our library, learned it was a juvenile Western skink. It will lose the blue coloration as it matures. I also learned that they are rarely seen in daylight and that they lay eggs in June and July that hatch in August. That would indicate that the little lizard was part of last year's generation and about 10 months old. [*Ed. note: Read about yet another skink sighting, and see a photo of one, at the end of this month's log.*]

June 15: Celie Placzek

I came to the Reserve early today under a blanket of fog. I wanted to explore with my camera the mystery and magic that has drawn me here through the years. I slowed down at the gate – a good way to begin, then slowly made my way through the forest still dripping with dew. What could be finer... my friend Anna and I, and Weston Beach all to ourselves! First we checked out the cove to the south. At a minus 1.2 tide, the cove looked like a cleft of kelp glowing in the diffused light. The water was so far out, I could only hear it sloshing about on the rocks around the corner. We spent the next few hours wandering through the rocks, inspired by their colors and patterns and abstract designs. It was better than being lost in a chocolate factory.

June 17: Paul Reps

Docent Log readers will remember that a tremendous storm ravaged the coast this spring, hitting us with furious rains and devastating winds. It was the winds that destroyed two great blue heron nests that were built in the Monterey pine at Coal Chute Point; the tree snapped and crashed to the ground. Both nests were a

total loss. But within the next few days, the herons started the arduous task of rebuilding what was lost in the storm. The herons produced another three eggs, and tended them, while we all anxiously awaited for positive results. Today, at the end of my shift, I went out to see what was happening and sure enough, mom heron was in the tree next to the nest watching her three

chicks carefully - the croaking sound of the young herons could be heard above the surf.

June Otter Count: Lynne McCammon

The trail along Headland Cove to the Sand Hill area has such a beautiful arrangement of flowers - the hills are covered with many beautiful colors. The long-awaited rains have had a hand in this. The kelp has finally come back, so our otter friends can take a rest. We are seeing more and more rafts. The final count for June was 30 adults and 5 pups. And I observed a sea lion perched on top of a high rock close to where our black-crowned night heron is nesting. At first we thought it was dead, but a few moments later he waved one of his flippers at us.

June 19: Mary Beach

I was walking out to Sea Lion Point and saw several whale spouts, some right beyond the outer rocks, and a few to the south. My immediate thought was that they were blue whales because of the height of the blows. I did not have binoculars necessary to study their backs for the characteristic small dorsal fin. Fortunately I managed to find a photographer with an incredibly long lens who was taking photos of the otters in Sandhill Cove. I said that if he wanted to film a rare sight of whales just off the rocks, he should come with me. We watched the spouts; we did not see either a large dorsal fin on the back or the actions typical of humpbacks, but we did see the long steel gray backs that



Weston Beach close-up photo courtesy Celie Placzek.



indicate blues. We talked as he clicked away for about forty minutes. When I had to leave, I asked if he would send me a few photos to verify that my identification was correct, and he very kindly did so.

June 24: Fred Brown

The Junior Lifeguards, ages 9 through 13, enjoyed an extensive lifeguard training program beginning today. Staging took place at Whalers Cove parking area, where the local fire department took them through the basics in CPR and other rescue techniques. They rotated through snorkeling, tours of Whalers Cabin, and a nature hike. Point Lobos docents were out in force to help and encourage them to explore the many facets of the Reserve. The cultural history and artifacts in the cabin held their attention, and a good hike around the cove or

over the North Shore Trail brought them in contact with the many summer wildflowers, sea otters, blue herons, deer, and the ever popular poison oak.

July 2: Celie Placzek

Along the trail above Whalers Cove today I met a family who had seen lots of lizards, a deer, and even a snake. The mother went on to report finding three red ticks on her pant leg. Gosh, I thought to myself, I see the tick warning sign

at the entry station each time I pass by, but I never pay it much attention. Now, perhaps I should. Later as I neared Moss Cove, an athletic young man jogged toward me along the trail returning from the far end by the fence. He stopped to tell me about being chased by a turkey. His eyes got big reporting how the wild turkey rose up out of the grass and ran toward

him. "It lowered its head" the jogger said, "like a javelina, and raced toward me! Although I knew it could outrun me, I kept going as fast as I could. The next time I turned around – it was gone." The young man paused, sighed and then continued on. Humph, I thought to myself. I hope that old bird is too tired to chase me should we two meet upon this trail.

July 10: Paul Reps

While doing a trail watch at Bird Island, and photographing the black-crowned night herons nesting on Pelican Point, I happened to befriend a couple from Warrington, England. I pointed out to them the nesting heron chicks. They were astonished at how camouflaged the birds were .

July Otter Count: Lynne McCammon

The otter count for the month of July was a solid 31 adults, but





with no pups sighted. And Bird Rock was the most exciting with all the new birds learning to take flight! There were Western gull chicks, black-crowned night herons, and pigeon guillemots.

July 20: Connie Dallmann

I led a walk for eight visitors to Bird Island Wednesday, July 21 and was dismayed to find the island off Pelican Point littered with corpses of gulls and cormorants. It seems a wily bobcat had visited the afternoon before and taken advantage of the flightless nestlings and also took out some of the adult gulls trying to defend their offspring. Certainly not what I had hoped to share with our guests, but something we'll all long remember. [Ed. note: See "Under My Brim" for more about this incident.]

July 20: Sharon Hoffmann

I found a baby bat hanging in the bedroom of the Whalers Cabin. Towards the end of my shift, I had a chance to sit down for a moment, and whooosh! out of the bedroom, flying into the main room, came either its

mommy or daddy. I called for assistance and got out of there. Ranger Chuck and I could not find the adult bat so the cabin was closed. The baby bat was relocated – we could not find the adult. Meanwhile at Bird Island, the bobcat was wreaking havoc. Ranger Chuck certainly had his hands full that day.

July 31: Marty Renault

Our visitors sometimes have wonderful stories. At the Information Station today a quite elderly lady with a walker reminisced about a hike she took here some forty years ago. She had stopped to rest at a spot near the water, took out

her harmonica and started to play. Suddenly an otter popped up near by, and stared at her the whole time she played. She was convinced he was listening to the music. I wonder if the otters are as fascinated with us as we are with them?

August 2: Stan Dryden

While giving a bird walk to some friends we came upon this remarkable lizard next to the North Shore Trail, and one friend immediately recognized it as a blue-tailed skink. What an amazing animal! Yes, that is really the color of the tail! Oh yes: we did see some nice birds, too. A young great blue heron was hanging around a nest over Coal Chute Point, trying to act like a human return-to-nester. Another nest, seen only from Granite Point, appeared to have some pre-flight youngsters in it. We also saw two hairy woodpeckers, several black oystercatchers, some black turnstones, pigeon guillemots, and a belted kingfisher, among others. Thanks for asking!



Skink photo courtesy Stan Dryden.

Point Lobos Foundation



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Docenting Under the Influence

My time as a trainee:
Blood surging through lethargic brain cells –
Scheduling requirements,
Creating a project,
Collaborating with classmates.
Mind expanding!

Seeing the world with eyes “wider” open
Noticing, savoring –
Slaking a thirst
I never knew I had.

The monochrome of green exploded
Into hundreds of species,
Thousands of leaves, petals, sepals, bracts.

What were once just birds differentiated
Into gulls – western and Heermann’s,
Cormorants – Brandt’s and pelagic,
Spotted towhees, brown pelicans,
An occasional long-eared owl.

Rocks claimed their identities
As granodiorite or conglomerate,
Each with its separate tectonic tale,
Continuing their trek northward.

Being with new trainees
Is to be swept up
In a high intensity rush – 200 proof –
Of intoxicating enthusiasm
For DUI
“Docenting” Under the
Influence of Point Lobos.

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Docent class 25