

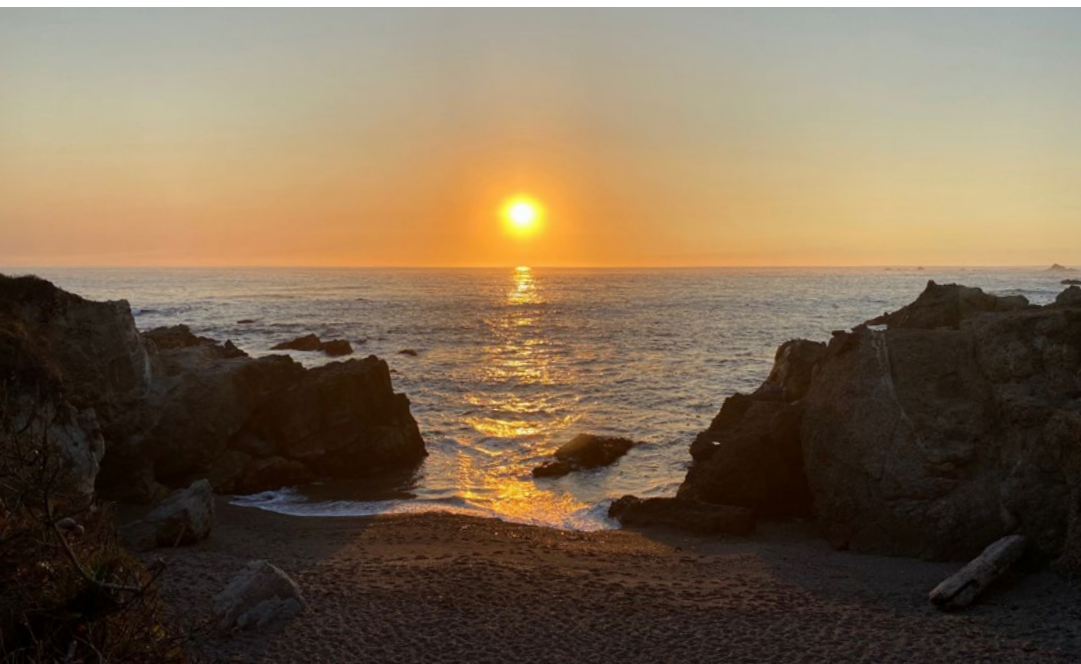
FALL/WINTER 2021

# 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)



Sunset at the Reserve. Photo by Cathie Lehrberg.

## Contents

2	A season of gratitude
3	Many a bird is on the wing at Point Lobos
4	Raptor rapture
8	How to spot an owl
9	A wonderful bird is the pelican!
13	Moonlight Walk
14	Monterey County Gives!
15	When is a pigeon not a pigeon?
17	Notes from the Docent Log
20	Puzzle
21	Acknowledgments

---

### Board of Directors

Karin Stratton  
President

Holly Carlin  
Treasurer

Jim Rurka  
Secretary

Betty Maurutto  
Docent Administrator

Donita Grace

Karen Max Kelly

Scott Kurteff

Ruth Rodriguez

Carol Rossi

Alan Shoebridge

---

### Staff

Kathleen Lee  
Executive Director

Tracy Gillette Ricci  
Development Director

Caitlin McMillen  
Finance Specialist

---

### State Parks Partners

Melissa Gobell  
Docent Coordinator &  
School Group Coordinator  
[melissa.gobell@parks.ca.gov](mailto:melissa.gobell@parks.ca.gov)

Sean James  
California State Parks Liaison  
[sean.james@parks.ca.gov](mailto:sean.james@parks.ca.gov)

---

### Publication

Reg Henry  
Point Lobos Magazine Editor  
[regwriter43@gmail.com](mailto:regwriter43@gmail.com)

Tracy Hopper  
Designer  
[tracy@hopperopolis.com](mailto:tracy@hopperopolis.com)

Front Cover:  
Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk.  
Photo by Chuck Bancroft.

Center Spread, pages 11-12.  
View of Headland Cove and  
Cypress Grove from the new  
lookout platform on the Sea Lion  
Point Trail. Photo by Manny  
Espinoza.





*Kathleen Lee is the executive director of the Point Lobos Foundation.*

*Her email address is [kathleen@pointlobos.org](mailto:kathleen@pointlobos.org)*

# A season of gratitude

## Multiple milestones to celebrate as 2021 draws to a close

*by Kathleen Lee*

The larger waves are crashing against the rocks, the air is crisper and the sightings of Peregrine Falcons are abundant. As we enjoy fall, my thoughts turn to another favorite season — a season of gratitude.

Looking back over the last year, I realize that there is much to be grateful for. Within the Reserve, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the wonderful docent program, the adoption of the Carmel Area State Parks General Plan, the opening of the Sea Lion Point Overlook, productive volunteer workdays removing invasive species from the Reserve, and we enjoyed one another's company during the spectacular Moonlight Walk. Each event is a major milestone made possible through the generous contributions of time, talent and funds from our dedicated members and donors.

Congratulations to Mary Beach, Norma Davis and Reid Woodward who were presented with engraved-glass mantel clocks for their 40 years of service as California State Parks docents. What a remarkable honor to have individuals like Mary, Norma and Reid so dedicated to the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve! The Point Lobos Foundation is proud to fund the work of the dynamic Docent Corps and appreciates the dedication and passion that docents bring to their volunteer work.

The Sea Lion Point Overlook was completed this summer and opened to the public. Docents have reported that this is a new favorite spot for scoping and interpretation. The habitat restoration efforts continue at the site.

Within the A.M. Allan Memorial Grove, volunteers remove invasive grasses with the goal of allowing the cypress seedlings to flourish. During a recent workday, I was struck by the camaraderie of the volunteers

and the many opportunities to answer questions from guests about the stewardship of the Reserve that is occurring during the hours spent pulling invasive species. There is never a lost opportunity for docents and volunteers to share their knowledge and inspire guests to do their part in restoring and protecting Point Lobos.

During the Moonlight Walk I met a couple who have been coming to the Reserve every year since their honeymoon in 1968. They go to Weston Beach to recreate a photo that they took during their honeymoon. We discussed how remarkable it is to be able to return to a place like Point Lobos and find it the same after so many decades. Now they are PLF members and their support funds the work to help protect Point Lobos for future generations.

The Point Lobos Foundation is excited to be a participant in the 2021 Monterey County Gives! campaign, a community-wide fundraising effort where donations are boosted with a prorata matching fund. Monies raised during the Monterey County Gives! campaign provide year-round support for the projects and volunteer efforts within the Reserve.

This year, our goal is to raise \$50,000 for trail maintenance and restoration. The campaign kicks off Nov. 11 and runs through Dec. 31. I hope that you will consider a donation to the Point Lobos Foundation through the Monterey County Gives! campaign.

There are actions, large and small, that all knit together to preserve and protect Point Lobos for the next generation. So, in this season of gratitude, I want to convey the deep appreciation that the foundation has for all of those who fund our work and those who volunteer within the Reserve; we simply could not achieve our many accomplishments without you.



Reg Henry, a docent,  
is editor of the Point  
Lobos Magazine.

His email address is  
regwriter43@gmail.com

# Many a bird is on the wing at Point Lobos

by Reg Henry

Forgive the cliché but there's no better way to put it: This edition of the Point Lobos Magazine is for the birds.

Why the focus on birds? Because it's been four years since we looked at them in depth. And because birds are the ones that visitors are bound to see at the Reserve. They may miss seeing seals, sea otters, whales, wood rats, deer, rabbits, you name it, but they are absolutely guaranteed to find birds. The sky's the limit when it comes to birds.

Birds inhabit Point Lobos in greater numbers and in more variety than any other creature, excepting insects. Some stay all-year round, others come at different seasons.

The challenge for the magazine was to present an avian selection that would be the most appealing. While this edition may be for the birds, it's for the people on the ground too. Our readers had to be fed content that would make them burst into song, figuratively at least. We did not want to lay an egg by picking uninteresting birds.

For this subjective task, we enlisted the help of Stan Dryden, a former president of the Point Lobos Association, the bird of the same feather that molted to become today's Point Lobos Foundation.

Stan is a veteran docent and birder who can often be seen at the Reserve in his fading green jacket, binoculars at the ready, searching for the birds he loves.

This is the second time that Stan has been called upon to write a lead article in the magazine on birds. For the summer 2017 issue, he wrote about how the changing landscape of Point Lobos had altered the variety of birds that live there. This time he has a juicier subject — those assassins of the air, the raptors.

Hitmen (and hit-women) in the human species are the endless stuff of movies, books and video games. They are not exactly lovable, but they are fascinating. The same goes for their counterparts in the animal world but with a twist. Nature is notoriously red in tooth and claw, so we can't say that raptors are the bad guys; they are just doing their job.

In a sidebar to the lead article, John Drum, another docent and former PLF board member, tells you how you might search for those raptors who work the night shift, the owls. Please don't say you don't give a hoot.

But maybe your taste runs to seemingly more benign birds. Carol Greenstreet, long-time birder and docent, has written about the eye-catching Pigeon Guillemot. These birds appear almost comical with their bright red feet but, of course, they too have their prey, as fish would tell you if they could testify.

The last bird we feature is also an amusing big fish-eater — the Brown Pelican. This large bird scoops up fish by the bill-full and does it while looking a bit like a present-day Pterodactyl. Former Ranger Chuck Bancroft, who scooped up many of the beautiful photographs for this issue, tells us what a wonderful bird is the pelican.

Sorry, no room this time for nice little guys like Anna's Hummingbird or the White-crowned Sparrow but we will try to get to them — and perhaps sooner rather than later. For as the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam reminded us:

*"The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To fly – and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing."*



Stan Dryden, a winner of the 2017 Jud Vandevere award, has been a docent since 1999 and served on the board of the Point Lobos Association, now the Point Lobos Foundation, including two years as its president. He also served as docent administrator. In 2009, he published "Birding Lite, a Humorous How-to Guide for All who Enjoy Watching Birds" and was the author of the lead article on birds in this magazine in the summer 2017 edition.

# Raptor rapture

## What birds of prey hunt at Point Lobos?

by Stan Dryden

The very name "raptor" invokes fear and awe in people, as it connotes an animal that can mean quick death to its prey. Although the term can apply to many types of animals, including dinosaurs (velociraptors), the most common definition refers to birds — hawks, falcons, owls, eagles and vultures. Certainly, there can't be any of those at a peaceful place like Point Lobos, or can there?

The answer is yes. Falcons and hawks are often seen at the Reserve, owls usually only by those there in the evening, and eagles rarely.

Peregrine Falcons are perhaps the most interesting, due to their superlative skills. First of all, they are the fastest animals on earth. In their "stoop" they dive at over 200 miles per hour after folding themselves into the shape of a dart, smacking other birds in the air and killing them on impact. Then they usually

grab them before they reach the ground or water, and carry them to a scenic place to devour them. You sometimes can find them when they emit a blood-curdling scream lest you forget they are killers.

If their scenic place happens to be their nest with chicks waiting to be fed, problems abound. The nasty little buggers show their appreciation by attacking the parent, something that can be averted by dropping the prey to them. If the chicks have fledged, the parent drops it to them in flight to teach them how to hunt on their own.

A smaller and maybe prettier but less dramatic falcon is the American Kestrel. Both sexes sport a very attractive rusty-orange color. They are the most common falcons in North America. One of the names given to a group of kestrels is a "hover" – very appropriate since they often do just that.



Red-tailed Hawk. Photos by Chuck Bancroft unless indicated.





*Peregrine Falcon, the fastest animal on Earth.*

Four species of hawks are commonly seen at Point Lobos. The one easiest for people to identify is the Red-tailed Hawk, as the adults show off their red tails as they soar overhead. A lesser known but more spectacular looking bird is the Red-shouldered Hawk with its red-striped breast, multi-banded tail, and bright red patches where the shoulders would be if it had shoulders. Unlike the Red-tailed Hawk's single screech, this bird broadcasts multiple screeches at 1-2 second intervals. But be careful: the Steller's Jay is known to mimic that call.

The Osprey is also called a fish hawk or seahawk, but it has now been placed in a separate family of its own. That's too bad, because they feed exclusively on fish. Their feeding routine is fascinating and impressive! They hover over the water espying fish, then dive feet first just at the right place to scoop up one or more fish with their talons. If they capture a large fish, they turn it around to ride head-first to their aerie or nest. If you are a Facebook user, you can find a great video of an Osprey being a fish hawk by typing "osprey video" into the Search Facebook box and clicking on the "Wonderful footage..." video.

The White-tailed Kite is a small hawk with pointed wings and a white tail, of course. Due to its black patches on the shoulders, some people call them Black-shouldered Kites. But a closely related and very similar species, the Black-shouldered Kite, occurs in the Eastern Hemisphere. Our kite hovers over the ground (like a toy kite on a string) and dives feet first to grab a small animal. They are best seen over grasslands like the meadow along the trail to Ichxenta Point.



*American Kestrel, the most common falcon in North America.*



*Long-eared Owl.*

Eagles are rarely seen at Point Lobos, though Golden Eagles are known to have nested a short distance away in Carmel Valley and I have seen juvenile Bald Eagles fly overhead.

Owls are covered in the sidebar, except for two very rare occurrences described below.

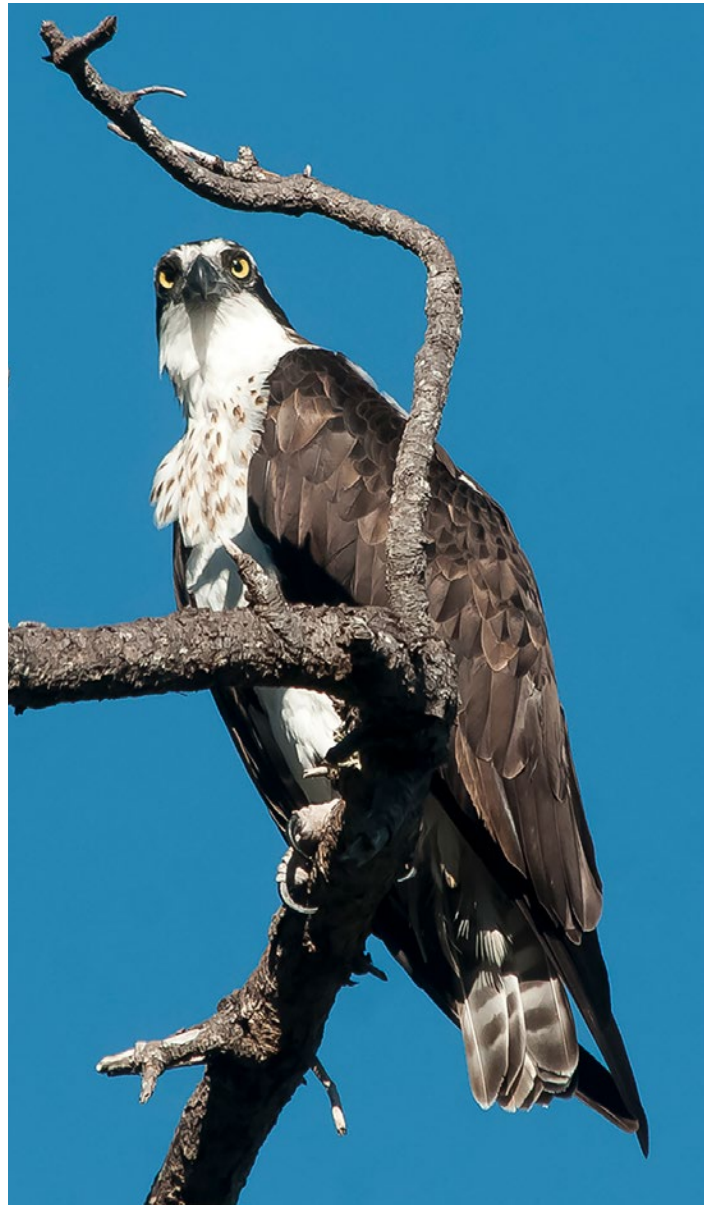
Several years ago, an interpreter from the Monterey Bay Aquarium was leading a group of docent trainees and suggested that walk leaders should stop and just look to see if there was anything interesting to see. One of the trainees pointed to a very cute face in a hole in a pine trunk. Fortunately, the interpreter recognized it as a Northern Saw-whet Owl, a bird that had never before been seen in Monterey County. The word went out to local birdwatchers, and it caused an invasion of mammoth proportions. People from all over came to get a look, photo, and/or video of it.



*Northern Saw-whet Owl. Photo by Paul Reps.*



*Red-shouldered Hawk, spectacular looking with its red-striped breast.*



*Osprey, also called a fish hawk.*



Oddly enough, the other rare owl sighting is credited to one of our docent wildflower experts, Art Muto. He was walking along the Pine Ridge Trail one day in 2010, with his nose to the ground looking for wildflowers, when he noticed a large spot made up of bird droppings. He paused his wildflower search and looked up to see the owl in the tree. He didn't know what kind of owl it was, so he called in reinforcements. The bird was identified as a Long-eared Owl, another rarity. It didn't look like it was ill, so the number of white spots suggested that it had been hanging out there for some time. This brought another invasion of visitors in search of this rarely seen owl.

One might think that carrion (aka smelly dead stuff) eaters like vultures and condors should not be called raptors since they don't kill their food. But the gods of ornithology beg to differ with that view by virtue of their hooked bill and carnivorous palate. So, Turkey Vultures and California Condors are obediently included here, although condors are rare visitors at Point Lobos.

They are both much larger than any other of the raptors you are likely to see at Point Lobos, with the condor's nine-and-a-half-foot wingspan easily besting the pack. But let's start with the one you are more likely to see, the Turkey Vulture. With its relatively puny wingspan of six feet and red head, some people hope that they are seeing a condor. When an animal — large or small — dies, the Point Lobos cleanup crew springs into action. Often if a swarm of vultures is in the air near shore, it's time to look for a dead marine mammal. They appear to have a strong pecking order, but you have to be a vulture to know how the priorities are set.

People, not including the author, have claimed to have seen California Condors, and are able to pass interrogation about their sighting. In addition to size, the underwing pattern — muddy white on the back edge of the vulture's vs. bright white on the front edge of the condor is obvious.

We hope you enjoy seeing our raptors soon.



*White-tailed Kites, often seen patrolling grasslands.*



# How to spot an owl

by John Drum

Although there have been reports of Long-eared and Saw-whet owls in Point Lobos, the most common resident owl in the Reserve is the Great Horned Owl.

This is a very large owl similar in size to a Red-tailed Hawk with a four-and-a-half-foot wingspan. What is amazing is this bird weighs only three pounds yet has the capability of dispatching and flying off with prey weighing up to six times its body weight.

Owls are nocturnal and the best time to see and hear them is at dusk and dawn, unfortunately times when the Reserve is closed (although at certain times of the year, there's an opportunity when the Reserve closes near sunset). The challenge mostly is to find them where they roost during the daylight hours. The two spots where most have been seen in Point Lobos are along the Pine Ridge Trail and on Whalers Knoll.

To see owls requires a lot of patience. It is not unusual to spot one once every 10 times you try. However there are some things you can do to improve your chances.

1. Owls have extraordinary hearing and exceptional eyesight, therefore stealth is paramount. So it is necessary for no more than one person to be speaking in whispers, if at all.
2. Walking slowly and watching where you place your feet and avoiding stepping on branches on the trail will prevent flushing the bird.
3. Binoculars are required since you will be watching the owl from a distance, often in deep shade.
4. Wear clothing that will not be noisy, so leave those nylon jackets in the car.
5. The daytime perch is usually located in heavily forested areas in the Reserve. Owls are usually found resting close to the tree trunk 10 to 15 feet above the ground. You will not find them in the top of trees except after dark when they are hunting.
6. Perching sites can also be located by the gleaming white owl excrement known as whitewash on the ground and on the tree trunk. Owl pellets are a dead giveaway that you have located a perch. Owl pellets are regurgitated, indigestible feathers and bones from the prey that they consumed.



Great Horned Owl. Photo by John Drum.

7. Listen for crows and songbirds that are agitated since they regularly mob an owl once it is spotted.
8. To photograph an owl you will need a telephoto lens of at least 200 millimeters (400 mm is better). Since you will be shooting in low-light conditions, a tripod or monopod is suggested. The good news is owls don't move around when perched so a long exposure time is not a problem.
9. Above all, the bird's well-being is paramount, so keep your distance and try not to flush it.

Owls are an important resource in keeping our rodent population in check. As with most things in nature, once you know where to look and what to look for, your chance for success is greatly improved.



*John Drum has been an avid photographer and birder for many years. Originally from Pennsylvania, he spent more than 40 years in the medical imaging field and fell in love with Big Sur and Point Lobos on a business trip/vacation in 1975. After eventually retiring in Carmel, he served on the Point Lobos Foundation board and became a docent.*



Chuck Bancroft spent 31 years of his 35-year career as a State Parks Ranger at Point Lobos. In retirement, he still does programs and nature walks for members of the Point Lobos Foundation.

His email address is [sparkystarkweather@gmail.com](mailto:sparkystarkweather@gmail.com).

# A wonderful bird is the pelican!

by Chuck Bancroft

*A wonderful bird is the pelican,  
His bill will hold more than his belican,  
He can take in his beak  
Enough food for a week  
But I'm damned if I see how the helican!*

The famous limerick above was written by Dixon Lanier Merritt (1879–1972), an American poet and humorist who was a newspaper editor and columnist for the Tennessean in Nashville. It is said that the limerick was inspired by a postcard from Florida sent to him by a female reader. The lines are often attributed to Ogden Nash but that is incorrect, according to Wikipedia. Merritt wrote it in 1910.

Pelicans are found in Monterey year-round and can often be seen flying along the Pacific Coast in a long “V” pattern flapping and gliding in unison. Larger populations of Brown Pelicans inhabit the Monterey Peninsula during the summer, fall and winter (June through January) as many adult pelicans travel to nesting sites in Mexico and southern California each spring.

Although nesting is practically non-existent in our area, they did nest here for a time prior to the 1970s. The most successful nesting seasons recorded at Point Lobos were 1929 (79 young birds counted), 1936 (15 broods) and 1943 (41 young). The last year in which young were seen was 1959. Sporadic nest-building activity and some “incubating birds” were noted until 1966. This is according to [westernfieldornithologists.org/archive](http://westernfieldornithologists.org/archive).

Brown Pelicans nearly faced extinction in the 1960s and 1970s because of pesticides and hydrocarbons that led to the thinning of their eggshells and reproductive failure in many colonies. With the banning of DDT and other pesticides, populations have rebounded making the Brown Pelican an excellent ambassador of successful wildlife



Brown Pelican. All photos by Chuck Bancroft.



conservation. Pelicans were delisted from the endangered species list in 2009.

Brown Pelicans have an average wingspan of 6 feet 5 inches. They can hold three gallons of water (and fish!) in their pouches. Pelicans warm their eggs with their feet, essentially standing on the egg to keep it warm. The lifespan in the wild is 10 to 25 years or more. The oldest Brown Pelican on record was 43 years. My source for this information is the Pacific Grove Natural History Museum.

Brown Pelicans feed primarily on small schooling fish such as anchovies, sardines or mackerel. Brown Pelicans are the only pelican that dives for its food. Typical dives are from 10 to 30 feet above the water's surface, but these hunters can dive from up to 100 feet in the air.

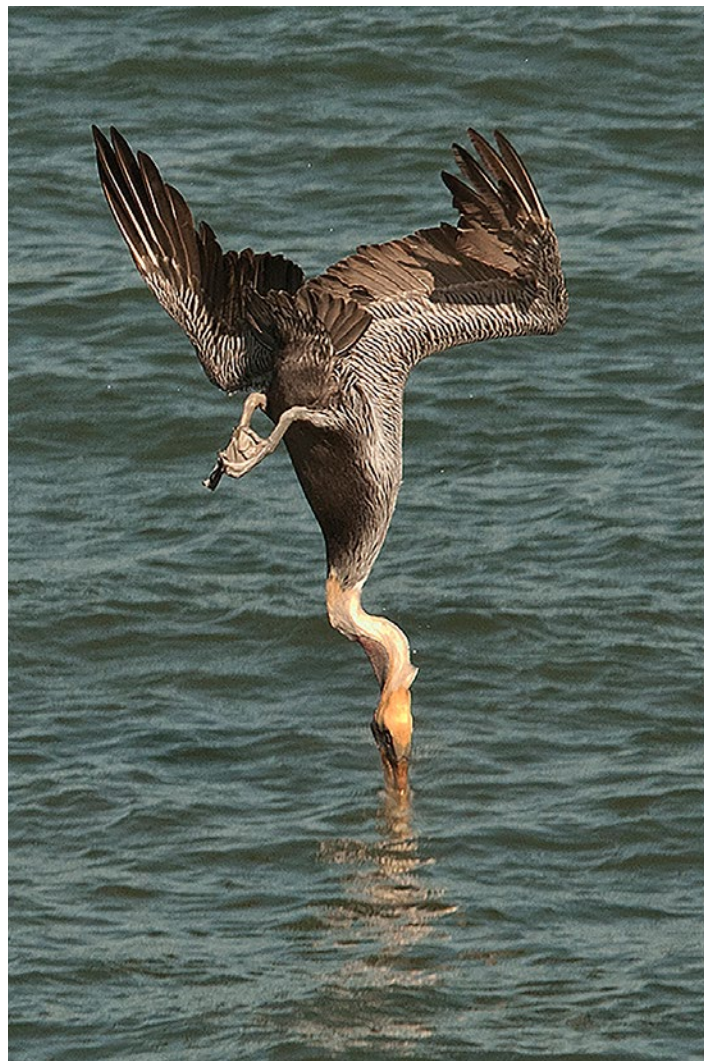
When diving, pelicans turn their bodies to the left to protect the trachea and esophagus located on the right side of their neck. Pelicans also have air sacs throughout their body to help cushion their internal organs from impact. Diving pelicans hit the water's surface with enough force to stun small fish as much as six feet below the water's surface; they then scoop up the water (and fish) into their pouches. Once at the surface, the pelican tosses its head forward to drain water from the pouch and then tips its head backwards to position the fish head first and swallows.

In the fall, pelicans can be seen in great numbers at Point Lobos. Sometimes they sit atop the Cypress trees in the Allan Memorial Grove, Whalers Cove or Weston Beach when the bait fish are in close waters. They also gather in large numbers at the Carmel River Lagoon and Wetlands Natural Preserve to bathe in the lagoon.

The pelican is truly a wonderful bird!



*Pelicans in a Cypress tree.*



*A pelican makes its entrance.*



*Brown Pelicans in tandem.*













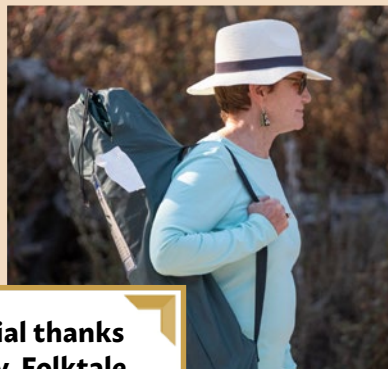
## Moonlight Walk 2021

POINT LOBOS  
FOUNDATION

The Point Lobos Foundation hosted its annual Moonlight Walk event on Sept. 20, 2021. Under warm, clear skies, Foundation members were treated to an unforgettable evening at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. The Point Lobos docent organization's Easy Access and MINT programs were on full display during this exclusive event and the music of local jazz trio, Andrea's Fault, created the perfect backdrop for the full-moon night.



*Photos by  
Manny Espinoza.*



**We offer a very special thanks to Bernardus Winery, Folktale Winery & Vineyards, Ford Ord Brewing, and Scheid Vineyards for donating refreshments for the event and to Rombauer Vineyards, Andaz Napa, and 65° Magazine for their sponsorship of the raffle!**



# MONTEREY COUNTY **GIVES!**

Joining Together for Big Ideas



*Photo by Chuck Bancroft..*

**Support the Point Lobos Foundation through the Monterey County Gives! campaign, and increase your year-end gift with the campaign's pro rata match!**

**November 11 through midnight December 31, 2021.**

Our Big Idea is quite simple: provide ongoing maintenance to trails, keep trails clear of vegetation and poison oak, restore damaged trails and ensure safe and level ADA-compliant trails. High visitation requires ongoing maintenance to ensure the safety of visitors and to protect against environmental damage occurring as a result of trail degradation.

**Donate today at [www.mcgives.com/lobos](http://www.mcgives.com/lobos)**

*Monterey County Gives! is a philanthropy-inspiring partnership between the Monterey County Weekly, the Community Foundation for Monterey County, and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation. @Montereycountyweekly @cfmco @montereypeninsulafoundation @MontereyCountyGives.*

## **REAP THE BENEFITS OF MAKING A QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION FROM YOUR IRA!**

**Retirees age 70½ and older can donate to charity from their individual retirement accounts with a qualified charitable distribution to meet their required minimum distribution and reduce their taxable income.**

**Consult your financial advisor to see if a gift to the Point Lobos Foundation from your IRA is right for you.**



Support Park IT! to help build a safer, greener, easier way to access the parklands and vistas of the Highway 1 corridor – Carmel to Big Sur. Park IT! offers the only solution to congestion along Highway 1 while increasing access to area parklands. Our strategy will improve public safety, protect natural resources, and optimize visitor experience.

- **Create SAFER off-highway solutions for parking**
- **Create GREENER accessible solutions for transportation**
- **Create EASIER parklands access for ALL**

Learn more at [ParkItForParks.com](http://ParkItForParks.com).

Email [ParkItForParks@gmail.com](mailto:ParkItForParks@gmail.com) to show support for the project!





*Carol Greenstreet has been a full-time Pacific Grove resident since 2008. She retired from IBM in 2012 and was an active volunteer with the Pacific Grove Public Library and the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, and now for Point Lobos. A hiker and skier from an early age, since moving to the Monterey Peninsula she has become an enthusiastic birder, book club leader, and devotee of sketchbook and nature journaling.*

# When is a pigeon not a pigeon?

The answer is an auk with a Daffy Duck appearance

*by Carol Greenstreet*

A visitor to Point Lobos once asked to see “the French bird.” I knew immediately that he meant the Pigeon Guillemot, which is not a pigeon but a stunning member of the auk family.

This adorable diving dynamo endears itself to its admirers with its Daffy Duck appearance, with a white wing wedge dramatically offset from its iridescent black plumage and contrasting with crimson legs and feet. With its legs splayed while flying, it careens close to the water like a movie fighter pilot.

One cannot help but be enchanted. I chuckle at their seemingly ungainly process of launching themselves into the air with help from their feet splashing along the surface.

How I wish that I could witness their magnificent below-the-surface ballet! Their

wings are adapted for underwater propelled pursuit of prey, using partially opened wings to maneuver. Using their feet as rudders and for propulsion underwater, they prefer foraging in rocky marine environments 50 to 70 feet deep to feed on small fish and invertebrates close to the sea floor. Dense waterproof plumage allows this auk to live much of its life at sea. It forages in shallow waters usually within a half mile of shore, coming ashore only to breed, where it delights us with its courtship.

I struggle to answer when asked to name my favorite bird, but I would have to place the lovely and dynamic Pigeon Guillemot near the top of the list. I try to seek them out on my Point Lobos adventures, listening for their high-pitched trills alerting me to their presence. This very vocal avian communicates with its mate and with the colony with trills and calls.



*Pigeon Guillemot. Photo by Jerry Loomis.*





*Pigeon Guillemot showing off its red feet. Photo by Chuck Bancroft.*

In summer, I often see and hear them from the Bird Island and Sea Lion Point trails, since they nest in rock crevices and burrows, and the geology of those two sites provides structures that have eroded to yield convenient rookeries.

I was surprised one day while admiring a guillemot perched in a small nook across from the Bird Island viewing platform. Suddenly a guillemot head popped out from a hidden crevice, indicating the presence of a crack in the rock face which was invisible to me. I was thrilled to discover their secret, secure spot, possibly their nesting site. Guillemots form long-term pair bonds, and often return to the same nesting site. A pair will have a clutch of one to two eggs, and both parents will incubate the eggs and help feed the hatched chicks with small fish. Now I know to watch that particular perch which appears to be the entrance to a reliable nest site. Maybe I will spot a nestling on one of my forays.

Watching closely, one may witness them scaling the nearby rock cliffs to reach their roost, flapping their wings, and gripping the granite face with the sharp claws on their feet. They can be spotted communing on rocky slabs visible from higher trails during a break in their diurnal feeding cycle.

In the fall, I lament the dispersal of the flock and the loss of their high-pitched conversations. I incorrectly assumed that they followed many of their avian cousins south to warmer locales. Not so. Many Pigeon Guillemots reverse direction and go north to Pacific coastal waters. Guillemots

of this species can be found from California to Alaska and Siberia, and range to the northern Japanese islands.

Our California-born guillemots are probably not going all the way across the Bering Strait but wintering from northern California through to British Columbia. The rich protected marine environments in these areas offer a wealth of invertebrates which sustain them in winter months.

Recently I saw a report of a wintering guillemot at Point Lobos, so searched the shoreline for my favorite black-and-white bird with its distinctive crimson feet and white wing patch.

It wasn't until after failing my quest that I pulled out a field guide and discovered that I had been using the wrong mental search image. I needed to recalibrate for a white-and-black bird, better suited to the northern winters!

I hadn't considered the fact that since many bird species have alternate plumage for the non-breeding cycle, replacing their feathers for wear and tear and for better camouflage, this auk's appearance would substantially change. This approximate black/white to white/black switch is understandable given that it will be wintering in sheltered northern inshore waters and needs to stay less visible to predators.

Listen to the sounds of Point Lobos on your next visit. The pebbles on the beach murmur with each crash of the waves along the shoreline. The trill of the guillemots will soon join them again. I will be there waiting for them.



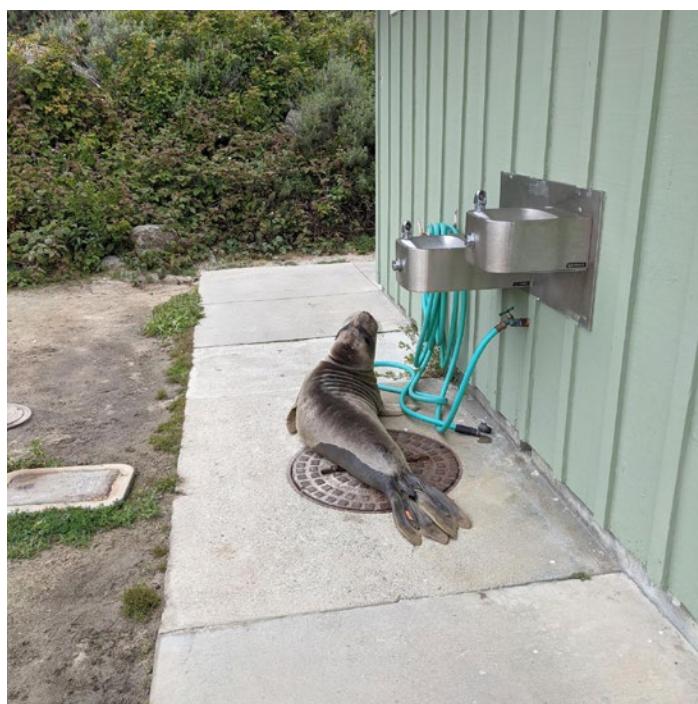
# Notes from the Docent Log

*Compiled by Beth Kurzava*

**P**ark Aide Connie Speer did a heroic job yesterday and today when one of the elephant seals released a few days ago decided to return to the Whalers Cove ramp. He clearly enjoys human company and the free fish he received during his first rescue. Yesterday he carried out a careful inspection of the Whalers parking lot before Marine Mammal Center arrived and persuaded him to return to the water. But no sooner had the Marine Mammal rescuers left than the seal was back! Connie spent most of the day watching over him, and her delightful photos are attached. Yup, he was still there this morning, and imagine a visitor's surprise when they came face-to-face with said seal in the Whalers restroom! So Marine Mammal returned today and took the little guy back to Marin where he will receive more free fish. Next time he'll be released further away from humans and their fascinating parking lots and restrooms!

**Trisha Bennett Mayer**, 05/12/2021

*Photos by Connie Speer.*





So, maybe I see humor where none is intended. But I do so enjoy the unexpected interchanges that arise as a docent at Point Lobos. Today I saw a man standing on the path about 40 feet ahead of me overlooking Sand Hill Cove. He appeared to be swinging his right arm swiftly and in circles over his head. As I got closer, I could see a leather-like sling from which he let loose a rock. Calmly, I asked him what he was doing. "I'm letting rocks fly with my 'David Sling,'" he stated. Down below in the cove a languid harbor seal was draped over a low rock and a pair of nesting birds were just below the man on the cliff side. "I've always wanted a David Sling," he explained. "It's biblical, you know." I said I understood, but didn't see Goliath anywhere. I went on to explain that we don't throw rocks at the Reserve nor do we take rocks out of the Reserve. "Yes," he said, "but you have such great rocks." By then his wife had joined us and I explained again the Reserve concept. They were visiting from Florida.

**Maureen Mason**, 05/24/2021



*Photo by Peter Fletcher.*

China Cove had no seals on the beach late this afternoon, but it more than made up for it in other ways, including a group of three sea otters who had come much further into the Cove than usual. They were putting on quite a show for the visitors, and they were visible from all around the cove, but visitors could get quite close to them on the lower part of the trail on the southern side. In my experience it was one of the best (and closest) sightings I have ever seen of sea otters right next to a trail. Really a spectacular close-up view!

**Peter Fletcher**, 7/19/2021

I was trail watching yesterday and stopped at the new Sea Lion Point viewing platform. And then it happened; I was there for more than two hours helping visitors understand the difference between sea lions and harbor seals, as well as answering questions on the raft of otters that seemed to be 50-plus strong — why they were there and what were they feeding on? There were so many visitors with questions, asking for trail recommendations, and where are the wolves? The time just flew by!

I am going to start to do this more often as this was a truly enjoyable experience to help visitors enjoy the Reserve in the best way possible. Is this a new docent interpretation station?

**Paul Reys**, 07/17/2021



*Ceanothus silk moth caterpillar and Ceanothus cocoon.  
Photos by Chris Wagner.*

Eagle-eyed Docent Karen Wagner spotted a lovely Ceanothus silk moth caterpillar munching away on the same bush on which we spotted the moths mating last April. A 100 yards down the trail we also spotted a cocoon — seemingly 'new' — but who knows!

**Chris Wagner**, 09/12/2021

Overcast end-of-summer morning. Marine layer stubbornly defying the indication of September on the calendar. The North Shore trailside is sere, dark, almost somber, but is enlivened by flowering coyote brush, and by a fleeting glimpse of a Rufous-sided Towhee behind the tangled scrim of bare stems. A woman walks toward me holding a half-eaten rose hip. Measuring my mild docent frown, she murmurs, in a strong, charming accent, "Bad Russian habit." Assured that this is not a Gulag-level offense, she moves on. As do I. Before long, a vision! Cinematically, a springy young man approaches. As he passes me, I cannot help but turn and marvel at the sight, vibrating against the backdrop of gray granite cliffs, of this notably attired trail walker: peacock-blue jacket and tights, international orange knee-length shorts, and canary-yellow tennies. Oo bop a whoo dop wow!

**Rick Pettit**, 09/19/2021





*Egg and its location. Photos by Dave Evans.*

A Canada Goose egg? It's the right location — island top just off Granite Point Trail — for a Canada Goose “nest.” But it sure isn't March or April, which is when the books I have say they nest. Any other ideas? Or stick with a randy fall goose?

**Dave Evans**, 09/30/2021



*Photo by Castel Ortiz.*

This is a belated report that we saw two mountain lion cubs cross the Rat Hill road on Monday, at about 10 a.m. They were quite big (bigger than a bobcat) and we did not see the mom but assume she was in the lead. Just to let you know for everyone's safety.

**Katherine Spitz**, 08/25/2021

Granite Point morning with amazing luminous light.  
**Castel Ortiz**, 10/01/2021

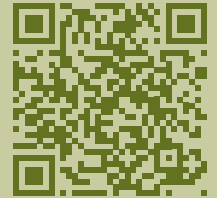




Docent Jana Schilling helps a young visitor look at the sights at the new Sea Lion Point Overlook. Photo by John Drum.

## Do you have a question about Point Lobos?

Visit our virtual bulletin board and "Ask a volunteer Docent" your question. You will get a response within a few days.



[www.padlet.com/pointlobos1/bookmarks](http://www.padlet.com/pointlobos1/bookmarks)

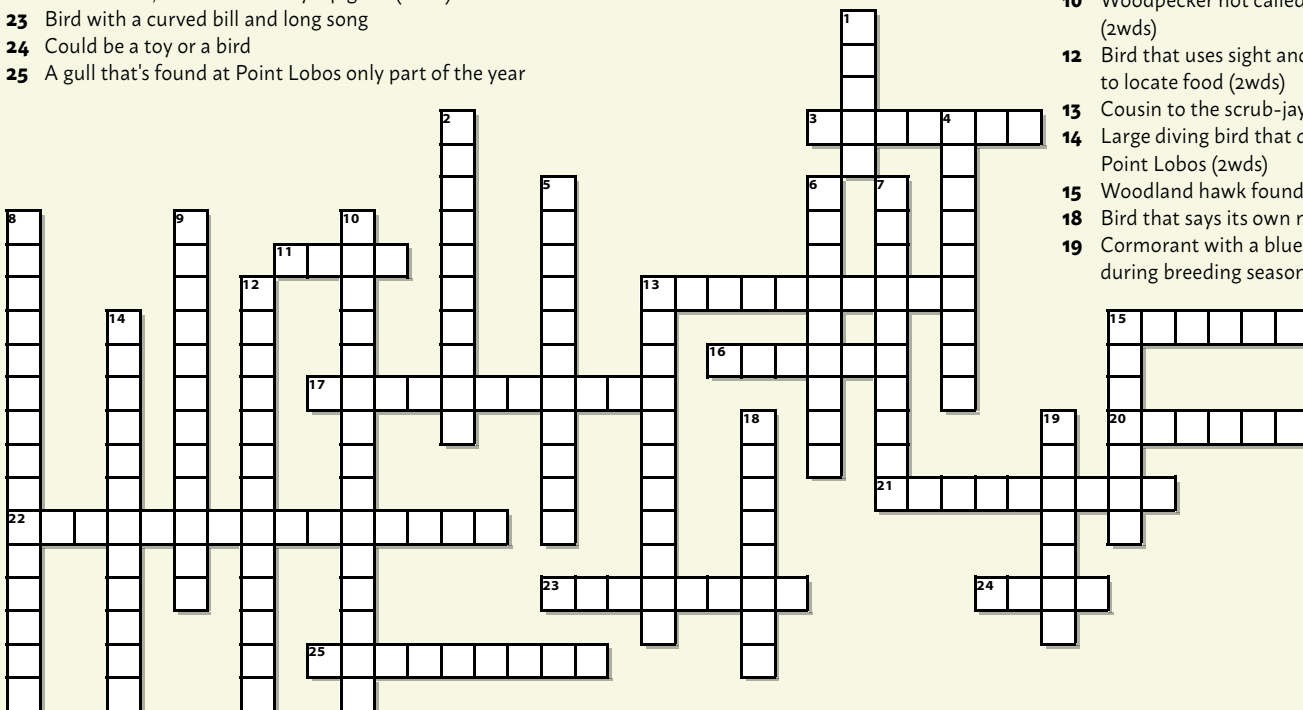
## Puzzle: For the Birds by Ann Pendleton

### ACROSS

- 3 State bird of California, (abbr & 2wds)
- 11 What is the official e-bird abbreviation for Black Oystercatcher?
- 13 Bird that dabbles its feet in tide pools to stir up prey (2wds)
- 15 Largest flying bird in western hemisphere
- 16 A bird some call a "fish hawk"?
- 17 Gull that nests at Point Lobos (2wds)
- 20 Very busy flycatcher
- 21 Scientists think birds evolved from \_\_\_\_\_
- 22 Found in PL, but it's not really a pigeon (2wds)
- 23 Bird with a curved bill and long song
- 24 Could be a toy or a bird
- 25 A gull that's found at Point Lobos only part of the year

### DOWN

- 1 Most common hummingbird in Point Lobos
- 2 Bird found in Point Lobos related to the Kookaburra
- 4 Smallest and most common falcon in N. America, (abbr & 2wds)
- 5 What "Canadian" bird is often called by the wrong name (2wds)
- 6 Fastest animal in the known universe
- 7 Avian name for helicopter
- 8 A bird known for its clown face (2wds)
- 9 Best way to help birds in your neighborhood (2wds)
- 10 Woodpecker not called a woodpecker? (2wds)
- 12 Bird that uses sight and scent to locate food (2wds)
- 13 Cousin to the scrub-jay? (2wds)
- 14 Large diving bird that doesn't nest at Point Lobos (2wds)
- 15 Woodland hawk found in Point Lobos
- 18 Bird that says its own name
- 19 Cormorant with a blue throat patch during breeding season





# Acknowledgments

Memorials, tributes and grants April 16, 2021 - October 15, 2021

## BIRTHDAYS

For the birthday of Ruth Carter  
*Mary and Tim Conway*

For the birthday of Lucas Dominic  
Scrafano Williamson  
*Rosa Beth and Terry Gibson*

For the birthday of Andrew S. Gordon  
*Cathy Gordon*

For the birthday of Anna Bielecki  
*Robert and Donita Grace*

For the birthday of Leanne Barsotti  
*Ken Lippi*

For the birthday of Carol Rossi  
*Glenn and Carole Schweitzer*

For the birthday of  
Cameron Martin Young  
*Gregory T. Young*

## IN HONOR

In celebration of Kaitlin & Colin Reidy  
Wedding  
*Mariana P. Avalos-Feehan*

In honor of Maureen Mason  
*Debby Beck*

In honor of Pat Harper  
*Paula Hansen*

In honor of Randy May's  
Whalers Cabin Guided Walk  
*Ludwig Mayer*

In honor of Bre and Noah  
*Becky Monson*

In honor of Karen Parker  
*Christina Petersen*

In honor of Carol Rossi  
*Carolyn Simon*  
*Paul and Marie Simpson*

## IN MEMORIAM

In memory of Gayle Blum  
*Antoinette Blum*

In memory of Max and Jean Bell  
*Bell Family Charitable*

In memory of Donald Williamson  
*Ms. Nan Borreson and Mr. Fred Terman*

In memory of Dr. Ralph E. Hertz  
*Beatrice Mary Hertz Cleary*  
*and Philip Cleary*

In memory of Betsy DeLong  
*Miles DeLong*

In memory of Richard M. Jacobs  
*Linda R. Jacobs*

In memory of Raymond K. Jennings  
*Jon and Donna Jennings*

In memory of Joan Kamrar  
- a Point Lobos docent for 25 years!  
*Jim Kamrar*

In memory of Nancy Kocher  
*Edward Kocher*

In memory of Jackie White  
*Terry Kosaka*

In memory of Walter and  
Rosemarie Massion  
*Birgit Massion*

In memory of Ronald McNay  
*Marylou McNay*

In memory of Scott Douglas Vasilios  
Wennergren  
*Kim Olsen*  
*James Flannery*

In memory of Donald Williamson  
*Stella Rabaut*

In memory of Claire Louise Reordan  
*Nancy Spear*

In memory of Doug Winans  
*Catherine Winans*

In memory of Joyce Zarubin  
*David Zarubin*



## GRANTS

---

Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks  
*School Outreach Program*

Chapman Foundation

Harden Foundation  
*Experience Point Lobos*

Pebble Beach Company Foundation  
*Discover Point Lobos*

Yellow Brick Road  
*Experience Point Lobos*

## SISTER ANNA VOSS FUND

---

Donations made to the Sister Anna Voss Memorial Fund, and the income generated by it, are restricted to the education and direct support of the Point Lobos Docent Program and the school education outreach programs.

*Mary Barrett*  
*Susan Bass*  
*Connie Dallmann*  
*Joyce Elaine Dawson*  
*Kim Fraser*  
*Stephanie Gatto*  
*Molly Hammerstrom*  
*Werner W. Ju and Deborah Shoub Ju*  
*Lorna Lindsay*  
*Paul J. Mason*  
*Barbara Nicholson*  
*William Gonda and Sally Sehring Family*  
*Charitable Fund*  
*Robert and Brenda Superko*  
*Brenda Wolber*  
*Carol Voss*





80 Garden Court  
Suite 106  
Monterey, CA 93940  
866.338.7227  
pointlobos.org

Presorted First-Class  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
All American  
Mailing



*Give that special someone  
a gift that gives back!*



Your purchase helps to  
fund trail and facility  
maintenance, educational  
programs, and the volunteer  
docent program at Point  
Lobos State Natural Reserve.

**SHOP.POINTLOBOS.ORG**