

How to help the seals . . .

To volunteer with our coalition, please contact Ellen Shively at ellenshively@sbcglobal.net. There are many organizations in the area that work to conserve the Casa Beach rookery, and that offer a variety of volunteer opportunities:

Animal Protection and Rescue League Seal Campaign

<http://www.aprl.org/seals.php>

--APRL needs volunteers to help with a booth at Casa Beach designed to educate visitors and raise funds to protect the seals. Volunteers are also needed for the SealWatch program. These volunteers educate visitors on the recommended distance for enjoying the seals without disturbing them.

La Jolla Friends of the Seals

<http://www.lajollaseals.com>

--LJFS needs volunteer docents to educate visitors about the seals at Casa Beach. For more information, please call (619) 687-3588 or email Jane92040@yahoo.com

San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club Conservation Action Network

<http://sandiego.sierraclub.org/alerts/>

--This group of citizens contacts law and policy makers to encourage conservation of natural resources in San Diego County. For more information, please contact the Chapter's office at (619) 299-1743..

**Without your help, this rookery
may be abandoned. Please help
preserve it for future generations**

**San Diego Coastal Habitat Coalition
c/o San Diego Chap., Sierra Club
3820 Ray St., San Diego, CA 92104
<http://www.sdcoastalhabitat.net>**

San Diego Coastal Habitat Coalition



**. . . working to preserve
our
natural future.**

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Where is the rookery?

The rookery is located at Casa Beach at 850 Coast Blvd. in La Jolla. This area provides a living laboratory to children today and could continue to provide educational opportunities in the future, provided we take steps now to preserve it. Harbor seals have been living in this area for many years. Each month, thousands of visitors and residents have enjoyed viewing these docile creatures in their natural environment. Harbor seals need to haul-out on land to rest, conserve energy, nurse and give birth.

What about “shared use”?

Scientists have found that the harbor seal has evolved into a timid creature, probably due to past experiences with predators. Unlike sea lions, harbor seals do not have as much agility on land. Disturbances from humans, which the seals perceive as predators, can cause the seals to escape into the water. Mothers and pups can become separated, usually resulting in the pups dying of starvation.

With repeated disturbances, harbor seals have been known to abandon their haul-out sites. This situation happened in the Bay Area at Strawberry Spit. In the 1970s, this area was teeming with approximately 100 seals. During the 1980s, the area experienced rapid development, and humans and dogs began disturbing the seals on a regular basis. By the late 1980s, the harbor seals abandoned this site.

The same thing could happen to our treasured seal colony in La Jolla. We can, however, enjoy the seals from a distance that is safe for both of us. NOAA in Seattle recommends a minimum approach distance of 100 yards; however, this recommendation is not currently heeded at Casa Beach.

A small group of people want to drive away the seals, claiming that shared use is possible. Studies of harbor seal behavior, however, indicate that shared use is not possible. Nonetheless, people continue to harass the seals in violation of federal, state, and municipal law.

What about sharks?

In reality, studies have shown that the shark population has declined rapidly. According to the International Shark Attack File of the Florida Natural History Museum, from 1926 through 2004, there have been only 10 shark attacks with only one fatality in San Diego County. That fatality occurred in 1956, long before the seals began to use the area as a haul-out site.

What about pollution?

The harbor seals are an essential part of the ecosystem. Nutrients from their wastes help feed the kelp forest, which in turn, benefits other species in the ecosystem. Sources of pollution created by humans—such as agricultural runoff, oil discharges, dumped trash, and air pollution particulates—pose a greater threat to the health of the world’s oceans.

What can be done?

Contact law-makers to ensure that they work to preserve this harbor seal colony.

Federal:

- Rep. Susan Davis (<http://www.house.gov/susandavis/>)
- Sen. Barbara Boxer (<http://boxer.senate.gov/>)
- Sen. Dianne Feinstein (<http://feinstein.senate.gov/>)
- National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Regional Office (<http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/>).

State:

- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (<http://gov.ca.gov/>)
- California Coastal Commission (<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/address.html>)

Local:

- Mayor Jerry Sanders (<http://www.sandiego.gov/mayor/>)
- San Diego City Council (<http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/>).

Check our web site at www.sdcoastalhabitat.net for current campaigns and activities.