DOHENY STATE BEACH
INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION
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CRITTERS OF DOHENY

A compilation of the tide pool inhabitants, ocean swimmers, birds and land animals that make their homes in and around Doheny State Beach.

UPDATED: JUNE 1, 2013

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TIDE POOL CRITTERS

Abalone	***California Sea Hair***	***Rock Louse***
Barnacles	***Chestnut Cowrie***	***Sea Urchin***
Bat Stars	***Chiton***	***Soft Coral***
Black Turbine Snail	***Goose Neck Barnacle***	***Solitary Anemones***
Blue Banded Hermit Crab	***Keyhole Limpet***	***Striped Shore Crabs***
California Mussels	***Ochre Sea Star***	***Wavy Top Turban***

OCEAN CRITTERS

California Sea Lions	**Garibaldi**	**Gray Whales**
California Spiny Lobster	**Giant Sea Kelp**	**Orcas**
Dolphins	**Blue Whales**	**Spotted & Yellow Fin Croakers**

BIRD CRITTERS

American Avocets	**Black Oystercatcher**	**Great Blue Heron**
Black-Crowned Night Heron	**California Brown Pelican**	**Mallard Duck**
	Egrets	

LAND CRITTERS

Audubon Cotton Tails and Brush Rabitts

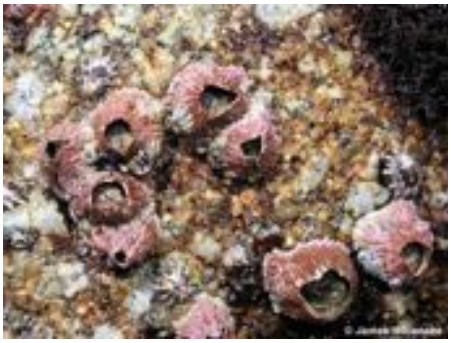
Ground Squirrels	**Melaleluca Tree**	**Monarch Butterfly**
	Striped Skunk	

TIDE POOL CRITTERS

Abalone are mollusks having one-piece shells. They once abounded along the southern California coast, but were over hunted by humans in the 1950's - 1970's and decimated by Withering Foot Syndrome in the 1980's - 1990's. Long time coastal residents will often have abalone shells around their homes, inside and out, and will tell you of delicious abalone dinners. Visit the following two websites for information about "abs"and the history of California abalone and potential future. FYI, amazingly, a live black "ab" was found on the in-shore rock reef off the Dana Point headlands in December of 2009.

http://seafood.ucdavis.edu/pubs/abalone.htm
http://www.cadivingnews.com/marinelife/282/Southern-California-Abalone:-Past,-Present-and-Future

Barnacles are actually part of the same group of animals, called crustaceans, as crabs, lobster, and shrimp. Adult barnacles look very different from their crustacean relatives. After birth, barnacle larvae look just like larvae of other crustaceans; however, when a barnacle metamorphoses, it attaches it self to a hard surface head first and creates a cone around its body made of calcium. Its modified legs, called cirri, filter water for plankton and detritus like little nets.



These organisms are the highest living intertidal marine species. Most species can easily spend half of their lives out of water. Some species only need to be wetted with ocean spray making them well adapted for life along California's rocky, wave swept shoreline. Since these organisms are sessile, males may become female and vice versa in some species in order to reproduce.

Some of the species found at Doheny are the common **Acorn Barnacle** (*Balanus glandus*), **Red Thatched Barnacles**, **Little Brown Barnacles**, **Red Striped Acorn Barnacle** (*Balanus pacificus*), **White-Ribbed Barnacle** (*Megabalanus californicus*). http://seanet.stanford.edu/RockyShore/Barnacles/index.html

Bat Stars sightings have been occurring more and more in our tide pools. The Bat Star is approximately 10 cm across, has webbing between its arms, and comes in variable colors: mottled or solid red, yellow, brown, purple or green. The exterior of the animal is an exoskeleton, protecting it from predators. They prey on other sea stars, seaweed, and tunicates (a group of underwater saclike filter feeders with incurrent and excurrent siphons.

http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/AnimalDetails.aspx?enc=n3f4wmcSJaNnnX8nSkDntQ==

The Black Turban Snail. The Black Turban Snail is a small snail that lives in the intertidal zone. It hangs on with its strong foot. Like land snails, this snail has its mouth in its foot. As it slides along, it scrapes bits of algae into its mouth. It is prey to sea otters, crabs and sea stars. If you see a Turban Snail shell moving along quickly and in a funny way, there's probably be a hermit crab inside, wearing an empty Turban shell for protection. And be respectful of your elders.

http://www.wallawalla.edu/academics/departments/biology/rosario/inverts/Mollusca/Gastropoda/Prosobranchia/Order_Archaegastropoda/Suborder_Trochina/Trochidae/Tegula_funebralis.html

Blue Banded Hermit Crab – (*Pagurus samuelis*): The bright blue bands on their walking legs easily identify these little hermit crabs. They also have bright red antennae. They live in abandoned black turban (see below) and striped dog winkle shells, which is why shells should not be collected. Hermit crabs move into larger shells as they grow—fighting with other hermit crabs for the shells if necessary—but they don't harm healthy snails. They are strictly an outer coast species found in the rocky high intertidal areas. Blue Banded Hermit Crabs have compound eyes that adapt to both day and night. These crabs feed at night on brown algae and dead animals. Pile Perch, Sheephead, and Kelpfish love to eat them.

http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/invertebrates/crustacean/Hermitcrab.shtml

California Mussels Layers of interwoven mussel shells look lifeless when exposed to air, but under water they come alive. The shells open slightly and tiny hairs, or cilia, beat rhythmically to draw in water carrying tiny particles of food. They filter about two to three quarts of water an hour when feeding. Where waves pound the rocks, mussels out-compete other animals and plants for space. Besides humans who both eat and use mussels for fishing bait, other predators include lobsters, crabs and sea stars. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_mussel

Harvesting of mussels for human consumption is quarantined in California from May 1st to October 31st. During these months, mussels can eat a lot of *Gonyaulax catanella* (the cause of red tide), a toxic plankton that can cause paralysis and death in humans.

The California Sea Hair (A. californica), also know as a sea slug, is a fun find in our local tide pools, and an interesting one too. When threatened by predators, they release a dark purple fluid in defense. The ink gets its purple color from a pigment in the red alga that makes up part of the sea hare's diet. It changes its sex every other day during part of its life cycle (now wouldn't that drive you crazy?). Here's a web page full of great information you can share with our visitors. http://www.squidoo.com/sea-hare

Chestnut Cowrie: A beautiful shell often found in southern California tide pools is that of the Chestnut Cowrie, a mollusk related to the snail that crawls around your plants at home. This beautiful shell has attracted the attention of humans for hundreds of years and has found many uses. I remember my mom giving me one when I was a young boy and saying, "Hold it up to your ear, you can hear the ocean." Great photos can be found at http://nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/Molluscs/Cypraea.htm

Chitons (ki/tons)**,** sometimes called "sea cradles," are mollusks with an 8 part calcareous shell embedded in a leathery skin known as the girdle. Using a large flat foot that acts as a large suction disc, they attach firmly to rocks. Their gills are set in a deep groove that lies on both sides of the foot and their anus is near the posterior end. A chiton's head lacks eyes and tentacles, but does have a mouth equipped with rows of chitinous teeth on a long radula. The radula is used to rasp plant material from rocks and browse on bits of seaweed. (From Life Between the Tides; Jeffrey L Brandon and Frank J. Rokop)
http://home.inreach.com/burghart/wcoast.html

The **Gooseneck Barnacle,** so called because of its resemblance to a goose's neck and head. In medieval times they were named goose barnacles by "naturalists" who believed geese hatched from them. The gooseneck barnacle forms dense colonies in crevices on rocky shores with strong waves. Barnacles anchor themselves to rocks by a tough, flexible stalk (peduncle), which also contains the ovaries. This is actually their "head" end. Once the gooseneck barnacle has attached itself to an object, it secretes a series of pale plates at the end of its stalk, forming a shell around its featherlike legs, which comb through the water for food. The legs face away from the sea, enabling the barnacle to feed by filtering out particles of detritus from returning tidal water as it funnels past them through cracks in the rocks. Gooseneck barnacles become sexually mature at about five years of age and may live for up to 20 years. The larval stage is free-living but depends on sea currents for its transport and survival. Colonies of gooseneck barnacles are susceptible to the damaging effects of oil pollution and they recover only slowly from disturbance. They are eatable and are starting to show up in elite seafood eateries, having a taste sweeter and more tender than spiny lobster.
http://oceana.org/en/explore/marine-wildlife/gooseneck-barnacle

The **Keyhole Limpet** is a primitive snail closely related to the abalone (it is edible, known as "the poor man's abalone"). It has a single hole at the top of its cap-like shell. A keyhole limpet draws water in under the front end of its shell, passes the water over a pair of gills to extract oxygen / release carbon dioxide, and expels it from the "keyhole". Fecal pellets and liquid wastes are also expelled through the hole. The animal can be 3 times or more larger than its shell (which can be 4 inches long). It eats algae that grow on the rocks. Their main predators are sea stars. Two very common Keyhole Limpets in California tide pools are Giant Key Limpets and Fissurella Volcano Limpets. Interesting (humorus?) observations and comments at: http://www.starthrower.org/products/DDDB/DDDB_050-099/DDDB_084%20giant%20keyhole%20limpet.htm

Ochre Sea Stars: Distinguished by the dense, web-like pattern formed by its small white spines, the ochre sea star grows to lengths of 6-12 inches and is usually brown, orange, or purple. Adult ochre sea stars appear to have few enemies and are considered the top predator in the tide pools. Some, however, are eaten by sea otters and sea gulls. Capable of clinging to rocks in the intertidal to depths of 300 feet from Alaska to Baja California, they feed on attached or slow-moving prey like mussels, barnacles, snails, limpets and chitons. Feeding is accomplished by utilizing tube feet to pry mussel shells slightly apart and inserting its muscular stomach into slits as narrow as 0.1 mm. Digestion actually occurs inside the shells. Ochre sea stars may live for more than 20 years. Not documented but observed in our tide pools is that these critters are hard to find during summer months, but abundant in the winter. Might be that our tides are lower in the winter daylight hours.

http://www.marinebio.net/marinescience/03ecology/tpmid.htm

The **Rock Louse** [Ligia (Megaligia) occidentalis Dana] Certainly not one of the more attractive residence of the tide pools, but it carries out a most important task as one of nature's final decomposers. **How to Distinguish from Similar Species:** Does not get as large as *Ligia pallasii*, plus the very long uropods (trail out of the picture above) are nearly half as long as the body, while in *L. pallassi* they are much shorter. **Geographical Range:** Sonoma County, CA to Central America. **Depth Range:** Intertidal **Habitat:** Rock crevices or under stranded *Louse Macrocystis* algae in the high intertidal during high tides; ranges through intertidal at evening, especially at low tide. **Biology/Natural History:** Hides most of the day in crevices or under stones just above the high tide line. At night and at low tides in cool weather, forages throughout the intertidal zone. Is a scavenger, plus feeds on microscopic algae. This species is nearly terrestrial--it must keep its gills moist (by dipping the back of its abdomen into the water) but will drown if forced to stay underwater. This species is very tolerant to water loss. They are paler at night than during the day due to clustering and dispersal of chromatophores. Animals on dark backgrounds remain darker than do those on light backgrounds. Ovigerous females have been observed at Monterey Bay in March, May, and June.

A Dana Point Rock

Sea Urchins live in the mid-level or low-level of a tide pool. They eat algae, seaweed, other plants and small animals. Sea urchins have hundreds of tiny, tubed feet. They have five teeth in the middle of their back-side. Sea urchins use these teeth to pull, tear and rip off algae on the rocks.

http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/invertebrates/echinoderm/Seaurchin.shtml

Soft Coral or Gorgonians : Well, if you live right, you learn something new everyday. I had always been told there was no coral in our waters because it's too cold. Thanks to Sean, I've been corrected. There are no hard corals, but we have plenty of **soft corals** and some of them wash up in our tide pools and on our beaches.
http://www.starthrower.org/products/DDDB/DDDB_000-049/DDDB_040%20soft%20corals.htm

Solitary (Starburst or Sunburst) Anemones, recognized by their flower-like shape, have stinging cells on their tentacles. Like their cousin the jellyfish, anemones paralyze their prey and draw them into their mouths to be digested. Anemones are carnivores and will eat just about any animal that comes close enough to be caught by its tentacles. Giant green anemones eat crabs, sea stars, mussels, limpets and fish. The smaller anemones eat small fish, shrimp and even plankton.

Anemones have soft, jelly-like bodies that absorb the impact of battering waves. Most anemones, like barnacles, remain in one place for their entire lives. Anemones attach to the rocks with strong suction cups. Sometimes if food is scarce, they will let go and pump water through their hollow body (like the jellyfish) to move to a more suitable home.

When the tide retreats, anemones close up their soft bodies, folding their tentacles inside to preserve moisture. Take care not to crush anemones when tidepooling. They can be well camouflaged with small pieces of rocks and shells attached to their outside, which also help to reflect sunlight and heat.

A few of our tide pool guests enjoy poking our anemones to watch them squirt water or fold up to "grab" their fingers. It seems to "impress" our guests to tell them about the needles on the end of the anemones legs and that they are injecting a paralyzing poison when their legs wrap around their fingers. I tell the guests that the needles don't penetrate their skin and enter their bodies, but the toxin does remain in their skin for a while. **"Eww, poison in my body!"**

Striped Shore Crab: (*Pachygrapsus crassipes*): These green to red or purple crabs with black stripes are active during daylight hours. They are so well adapted to liv ing out of water that they spend at least half of the time that way. They have excellent eyesight that adapts well to both day and night. For the most part, these crabs feed on land on diatoms and algae. Occasionally they will prey on hermit crabs and Black Turban snails, and they've even been observed capturing kelp flies with their very dexterous claws. Seagulls, raccoons, and octopus love to prey on these crabs. Because they are well adapted to life on land, Striped Shore Crabs will be found in the rocks along the jetty. But be careful; these crabs may pinch when handled, so avoid picking them up. Never place them in a container as they will die and then smell.

Although these crabs are native to Western North America, scientists believe they may have been introduced to the Orient in the 1890's in merchant ships' hulls. These hulls may have contained the swimming planktonic form of this crab in the trapped seawater found in them.
http://montereybay.noaa.gov/visitor/TidePool/VRTidepool/Gen_Critters/Shorecrab/ShCrab.html

Two-Spotted Octopus:. These are the most intelligent critters in the tide pools, with great vision. Learn more at this website and check out the YouTube video.

http://jaffeweb.ucsd.edu/node/twospottedoctopus
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtfBpbp4L-A&NR=1&feature=endscreen

Wavy Top Turbans: This is the largest snail found in our tide pools; its shell can measure 10" in diameter (haven't see one that big around here) and be 4 inches in height. It generally lives in deeper waters but is washed up on shore by storms and large surf. Turbans are found from Point Conception south to central Baja and on the northern and southern Channel Islands. When alive, it may be covered with algae and/or smaller snails. It has an operculum on the base of its foot (think of it as a bony door) that will close up when it retreats into its shell. This protects the turban from drying up when out of the water, and from predators. Wavys are vegetarians eating algae and sea grasses. These snails can live up to 100 years.

OCEAN CRITTERS

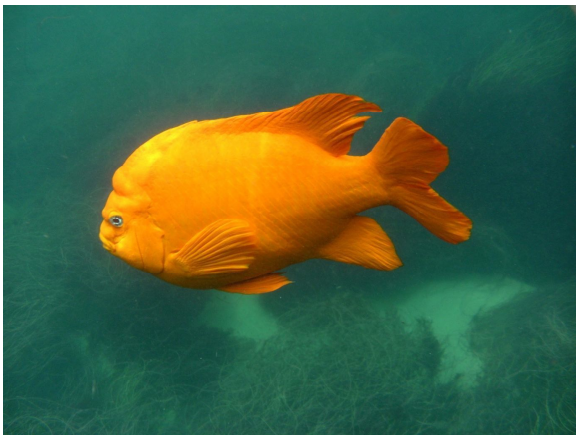
Blue Whales: We be sing'n da blues this summer, **blue whales** that is. These gigantors of the deep are the biggest animals ever to live on the planet. In recent years, they have taken up summer residence off the southern California coastline, May through October. They usually live in deep water a few miles off shore, but this year have been spotted from the beach at Doheny and off the Dana Point headlands. Here's a short, close up video of a blue spotted just off our coastline taken from a Dana Wharf Sports Fishing whale watch boat.

http://www.youtube.com/user/DANAPOINTWHALEWATCH#p/a/u/1/WYDLOeHqbJQ .
Also see the blue whale fact sheet at http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/whales/species/Bluewhale.shtml . Here's a great BBC clip on blues. http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://new-brunswick.net/new-brunswick/whales/images/finback4.jpg&imgrefurl=http://new-brunswick.net/new-brunswick/whales/finback.html&h=326&w=500&sz=49&tbnid=oF3ji4tEvG51_M:&tbnh=85&tbnw=130&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dfinback%2Bwhale%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=finback+whale&usg=__4CBsvEDG-nDsNjpyTI56V_9WVqo=&sa=X&ei=XjJRTo2EE5CssAKzxeDHBg&ved=0CEIQ9QEwBA

Dolphin or Porpoise, What's the difference? I had often heard the words "dolphin" and "porpoise" were interchangeable, referring to the same animal. AH HA, not so!! Two different critters but in the same family, just like our sea lions and seals. F.Y.I., what we have around here are mostly dolphin. Here's one good URL, but Google "dolphin porpoise difference" and you'll find many more.

http://www.dolphinworld.org/stories/dolphins-vs-porpoises-story.htm

Garibaldi: Occasionally in the tide pools, we'll spot orange **Garibaldi** swimming in the reefs. Their geographical range is the warm, rocky, near-shore shallow water of central and southern California, the Channel Islands and Baja California. They are members of the Damselfish family and are not related to gold fish. Garibaldi are solitary in nature and do not "school". The adult is about 12 to 14 inches in length and is fiercely territorial, often attacking larger animals that threaten its young. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4c3-AxPV8k . Garibaldi life expectancy is 12 years, with some reaching the age of 17. The bright orange color may ward off potential predators. In 1995, the garibaldi became the official California Marine Fish and is now protected from commercial and private aquarium collectors who were seriously depleting the stock. Find out more information about these beautiful fish at http://www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/full_description/garabaldi/



Giant Kelp: Not a critter this month, but an important ecosystem just off the coast that helps sustain the life of our tide pool inhabitants (as well as the oxygen supply of the planet). The **kelp** ecosystem provides food and habitat for a variety of fish and other species. **Giant Kelp** is the fastest growing alga, growing as much as 0.6m (2 feet) per day.

http://www8.nos.noaa.gov/onms/park/Parks/SpeciesCard.aspx?refID=5&CreatureID=110&pID=3#

Gray Whales: December through April is when you'll find **Gray Whale** migrating along our coast. Beach-walkers, open-ocean SUPers, kayakers and boaters will often see our seasonal guests just off shore. The report from official whale counters is that the current number of whales heading south far exceeds the number seen in past years. To learn more about these great migrators, visit http://www.dickrussell.org/graywhale/physiology.html.

Opaleye Perch: *GIRELLA NIGRICAN:* Opaleye Perch are one of two common fish species found in our local tidepools (the other being sculpin). Their total geographic range is from Oregon to Cabo San Lucas. They are a blue-green color and have a white spot on either side of their dorsal. The fish's name comes from its blue eyes. The intertidal is the opaleye's nursery, the shallow areas providing a protective breeding ground until juveniles reach about 8" (2 years of age) when they head to the subtidal zone. Juvenile opaleye can breathe air when a tidepool is completely exposed. Adult opaleye eat algae while juveniles are known to be carnivorous, feeding on small invertebrates in the tidepools.

Orcas: Join (by video) a pod of Orcas feeding off our coastline. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENfbNEp5MLE&feature=player_embedded#! The **Orca, or Killer Whale**, with its striking black and white coloring, is one of the best known of all the cetaceans. It has been extensively studied in the wild and is often the main attraction at many sea parks and aquaria. An odontocete, or toothed whale, the orca is known for being a carnivorous, fast and skillful hunter, with a complex social structure and a cosmopolitan distribution (orcas are found in all the oceans of the world). Sometimes called "the wolf of the sea", the orca can be a fierce hunter with well-organized hunting techniques, although there are no documented cases of killer whales attacking a human in the wild.

http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://marinebio.org/upload/Orcinus-orca/10.jpg&imgrefurl=http://marinebio.org/species.asp%3Fid%3D84&h=301&w=450&sz=85&tbnid=rsZjSw1rK7nqXM:&tbnh=85&tbnw=127&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dorcas%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=orcas&usg=__ko87NP1RH6f6H9_SVeepfebJXN0=&sa=X&ei=k9IIT__5OsmC2wXS-ImtAg&ved=0CCsQ9QEwBA

Sea Lions: Doho visitors will often see California Sea Lions playfully swimming offshore. The red harbor buoy off main beach and the end of the outside breakwater are popular hangouts for these critters. Don't call them seals, there's a difference. To learn more about California Sea Lions, visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/pinnipeds/californiasealion.htm

Spotted and Yellow Fin Croakers: Fishing from the beach is a popular past time for many of our park visitors, and the **spotted and yellow fin croakers** are two of the most caught fish along the Doheny shoreline. The best bait is clam, but they will also bite on ghost shrimp, fresh mussels, bloodworms and innkeeper worms. Best tackle is a high/low leader with number 6 or 4 hooks. The best time for fishing is late summer to fall. These critters will follow the tides, so fishermen should do the same. Fish two hours before and after a high tide, especially a late afternoon or evening tide. Late evening and night is the best time to catch a croaker. Remember, you need a valid CA fishing license!

http://www7.taosnet.com/platinum/data/species/croaker.html

BIRD CRITTERS

American Avocets are primed and ready to begin their migrations to the east and north. Sharp-eyed bird watchers may still catch a glimpse of the tardy travelers in the Doheny estuary, but they'll be gone before the first of the "school's out" vacationers hit the beach. http://birding.about.com/od/birdprofiles/p/americanavocet.htm

Black-Crowned Night Herons: are familiar avian residents of the park. You can nearly always see and hear them in and around the trees by the snack stand, in the creek, and in the "poop-tree" at the end of the breakwater. For more information on these Doheny locals, visit http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/Birds/Facts/FactSheets/fact-blknightheron.cfm , and/or read the great article by Doheny Park Ranger Brad Barker that's in the Summer 2013 issue of South Swell. You'll find it on this website under Publications.

(You'll always have a grunion-hunting friend at Doho!)

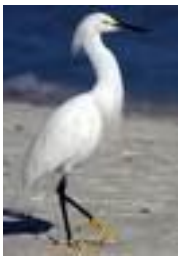
Black Oystercatcher: Here's another bird success story. Black Oystercatchers (known as BLOYs) use to be abundant along the local coast. Then they disappeared from the area about 30 ago. Five years ago, a pair of BLOYS were spotted living on Dana breakwater and feeding out in the Dana tidepools. A few volunteers started keeping track of them with regular passes by their cave/home on the breakwater. The following year, 6 pairs of BLOYs arrived to spend their summer in Dana Point. Last year, 8 pairs were counted and a few even were spotted feeding in the Doheny tide pools. Interesting birds. They mate for life and have a very unique call. Learn more about BLOYs at the Audubon website.
http://www.audubon2.org/watchlist/viewSpecies.jsp?id=36

California Brown Pelicans can be seen soaring through the skies above Doheny, diving into the sea for their dinner, or floating just beyond the surf line. They're a beautiful species and a true success story in their recovery from near extinction.
http://bss.sfsu.edu/holzman/courses/fall01%20projects/bpelican1.htm

Great Blue Heron: The Great Blue Heron is the largest and most common of the North American Herons. These beautiful and stately birds can be found in the San Juan Creek estuary, in the tide pools at low tide, and often in our park's trees. Kayak and stand-up board paddlers will see them along the breakwaters. Learn more about these members of the Doheny avian community at
http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/great-blue-heron/

Mallard Ducks are year round residence in the San Juan Creek estuary at Doheny. They're dabbling, or surface feeders because they eat by tipping underwater for food – head down, feet and tail in the air, rather than diving.
http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/mallard-duck/#

The **Snowy Egret and Great Snowy Egret** are, to some of us, the most beautiful birds to be found in and around our tide pools. The egret is a patient hunter, standing statue-still in the tide pool, then striking forward to capture the hopeful meal that swam into the target zone. The "Snowies" are about 2 feet tall with yellow feet. The "Greats" are taller with black feet. Learn more about these Doheny residents at
http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/snowyegret.htm .



LAND CRITTERS

Audubon Cottontails and **Brush Rabbits:** **Doheny Beach Bunnies?** Well, actually the rabbits you see around our park are **Audubon Cottontails** and **Brush Rabbits**. They are both in the Genus ***Sylvilagus*** so look very similar. Here are a couple links to learn more about these furry critters.
http://naturebytesvideo.com/bytes_A-B/audubon_cottontail_rabbit.html
http://www.birdsamore.com/critters/rabbits.htm

California (Beechy) Ground Squirrels can be seen and heard all over Doheny State Beach campgrounds and park. Although they live in communal colonies under the ground, each squirrel has its own entrance into the maze of tunnels. Maybe that's why grounds keepers are less than happy with these little guys, too many "doors". As cute as they are, visitors should not feed these critters or attempt to touch them. They bite and can carry disease that pass on to humans. To learn more, visit http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/californiagroundsquirrel.htm

Melaleluca Tree: Actually, it's a critter home, a **Melaleluca Tree**. Also known as paperbark tree, punk tree, cajeput tree, and white bottlebrush tree, it is a subtropical tree in the eucalyptus family native to Australia, New Guinea and New Caledonia. It has spongy, white, paper-like bark and can grow to 50 feet in height. The 1-2 inch long, gray-green, oval leaves of melaleluca tree are arranged alternately along the stem and smell of camphor when crushed. Flowers are white, brush-like spikes and the fruits are small, woody, button-like seed capsules. http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/mequ1.htm

The Doheny Melaleluca trees by the snack stand provide a nesting spot for snowy egrets and black-crowned night herons. Nesting begins in late February, about the same time as the first grunion runs. Related occurrences? You betcha!

Monarch Butterfly: Every fall, a magical event takes place in the animal world; the annual monarch butterfly migration to Mexico. By instinct alone, these butterflies go to the same mountains that their ancestors left the previous spring. Somehow, they find a place in Mexico that they've never seen before. Lucky us, they stop in our Doheny Butterfly Garden on their way south. Learn more at:
http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/monarch_butterfly.htm

Striped Skunk: One of the night time critters you might see at Doheny is the **striped skunk**, our own batch of Pepe le Pue look-alikes. Find out about these cute, but stinky characters at http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/striped_skunk.htm .