



# CONSERVATION AREA AND TRAIL SYSTEM

**Dana Point Nature Interpretive Center**  
 34558 Scenic Drive, Dana Point, California 92629  
 (949) 248-3527

**Center for Natural Lands Management**  
 27258 Via Industria Suite B, Temecula, CA 92590  
 (760) 731-7790 / info@cnlm.org / www.cnlm.org



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Photo: Dee Dee Gollitzer

## Conservation Area

# The Dana Point Headlands

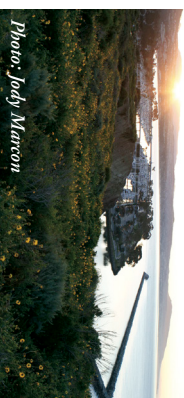
The Dana Point Headlands is a coastal promontory rising from the Pacific Ocean, with Dana Point Harbor to the south and Strand Beach to the north. The combination of the mild southern California climate, ocean influence, unique geology, coastal sages, and coastal bluff scrub plant communities creates a unique habitat that is home to rare and endangered plants and animals.

The Dana Point Headlands Conservation Area encompasses approximately 60 acres and is comprised of:

- Harbor Point Conservation Park, with a trail that overlooks the Dana Point Harbor and includes the Nature Interpretive Center
- Hilltop Conservation Park, south of Pacific Coast Highway, providing trails with scenic panoramas of the City of Dana Point
- South Strand Conservation Park, with a trail winding down the hillside overlooking the Strand Beach & Pacific Ocean
- CNLM Dana Point Preserve, 29.4 acres of preserved native habitat owned and managed by the Center for Natural Lands Management for the protection of rare and endangered species



Dana Point Headlands



Harbor Point Conservation Park



CNLM Dana Point Preserve



Hilltop Conservation Park Trail



Photo: Julie Komdor

## City of Dana Point NATURE INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The Nature Interpretive Center is an educational, management, and operational facility run by the City of Dana Point. It provides information about the local habitat—terrestrial and marine—and the history of Dana Point in an informal visitor center setting.

Docent-guided tours are offered regularly and school programs and docent guided tours are available upon request.

The Nature Center is open to the public Tuesday – Sunday 10 am – 4 pm. (closed on Monday)

If you are interested in docent or volunteer work please contact the Center.

### Trail Rules of Use

- No hiking off designated trails
- No dogs or pets because their presence can harm endangered species on-site
- No bicycles or skateboards
- No littering
- No alcohol or glass
- No removal or collecting of natural materials
- No camping or fires
- No smoking

### Trail Hours

All trails are open daily from 7 am – sunset.

Parking and restrooms are available at the Nature Interpretive Center from 7 am – sunset.

## Protecting What Remains

The plant communities at the Dana Point Headlands provide examples of native southern California wilderness. The coastal sage scrub plant community is sometimes referred to as soft chaparral because the plants are mostly low growing, flexible, and have soft leaves. Coastal sage scrub plants are adapted to cool wet winters and warm dry summers, thrive on the ocean influence (fog/humidity) and support a diverse number of organisms. Dominant plants of this community are the Coastal Sagebrush and Flat Topped Buckwheat.

A second plant community found on-site is coastal bluff scrub. This community is located along the unstable slopes of the cliffs, often found on vertical substrate and taking advantage of the rich marine influence. Dominant plants of this community are Cliff Spurge and California Boxthorn.



Photo: USFWS



Photo: Dee Dee Gollitzer

– Fifteen plant species are on the California Native Plant Society rare plant inventory

– Two animal species are on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened and Endangered Species List

- Over 175 animals species

**To date the habitat has been identified to support:**

- Approximately 110 native plants species

1542	1789	1776	1822	1824	1834	1835	1848	1864	1870s	1884	1924	1925	1926	1939	1940	1957	1993	1998	2004	2005	2010
Headlands reference in ship's log of Juan Caballo	Porola pass through Capistrano Valley	Mission San Juan Capistrano founded. Dana Point Headlands part of Mission land	Mexican independence from Spain	Large ranches founded	R.H. Dana visits California and the cliffs of San Juan	Church was ordered to give up mission lands by Mexican government including Dana Point	Alta California becomes US territory	President Lincoln returns mission lands to Dutch. Dana Point homesteaded by US government. \$1.25 an acre per acre	Hilltop of the first homesteaders of Laguna Beach purchased Headlands for \$1175	Judge Fean gives portion of "Dana Point" on US Coast Survey	Laguna Beach Real Estate entrepreneurs, including Anna Walters, buy much of modern day Dana Point	Anna Walters builds garbho and blue lambert foundn. rains street for colored people Portland \$1000 sold for \$1,000	Snyder continues development of Dana Point \$25	Lot in Dana Point available at auction, starting at \$25	Sherman and Chandler acquire much of Headlands area	Chandler family opens Strands mobile home park	Pacific pocket mouse rediscovered on-site (previously thought to be extinct)	Chandler family sells Headlands Reserve LLC	Coswell Commission approves plans for Headlands development	Harry and Grace Steele Foundation donate money for CNLM to purchase the Dana Point Reserve	City of Dana parks and trail system

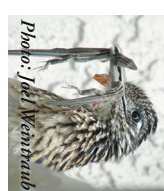
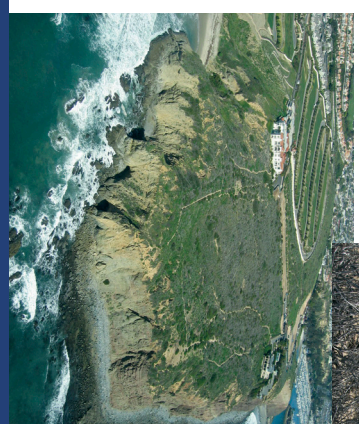
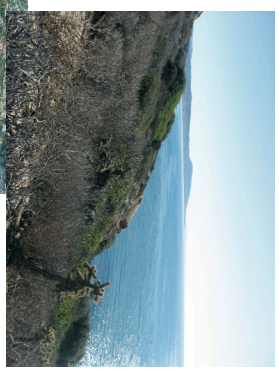


Photo: Joel Weintraub



## Plant Identification Walk AT HARBOR POINT PARK (Plants images are inside foldout)

1. Coastal Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*)
2. Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)
3. Coastal Prickly Pear (*Opuntia littoralis*)
4. Coyote Bush (*Baccharis pilularis*)
5. Chalk Dudleya (*Dudleya puberulenta*)
6. Lemonade Berry (*Rhus integrifolia*)
7. Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*)
8. Flat-Topped Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)
9. Lance-leaf Dudleya (*Dudleya lanceolata*)
10. California Boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*)

## HARBOR POINT TRAIL

### DANA POINT HARBOR



- The Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that manages more than 60 natural areas in California. It owns the 29.4 acre CNLM Dana Point Preserve thanks to a generous donation by the Harry and Grace Steele Foundation, which also provided an endowment to manage the property in perpetuity. CNLM manages these funds and gratefully accepts tax deductible donations.
- The Center for Natural Lands Management:**
  - Conducts biological monitoring and maintenance activities
  - Ensures the conservation values of the 29.4 acre CNLM Dana Point Preserve are not degraded
  - Works with the City of Dana Point to ensure that the public enjoys the trails while understanding the importance of conserving rare habitat

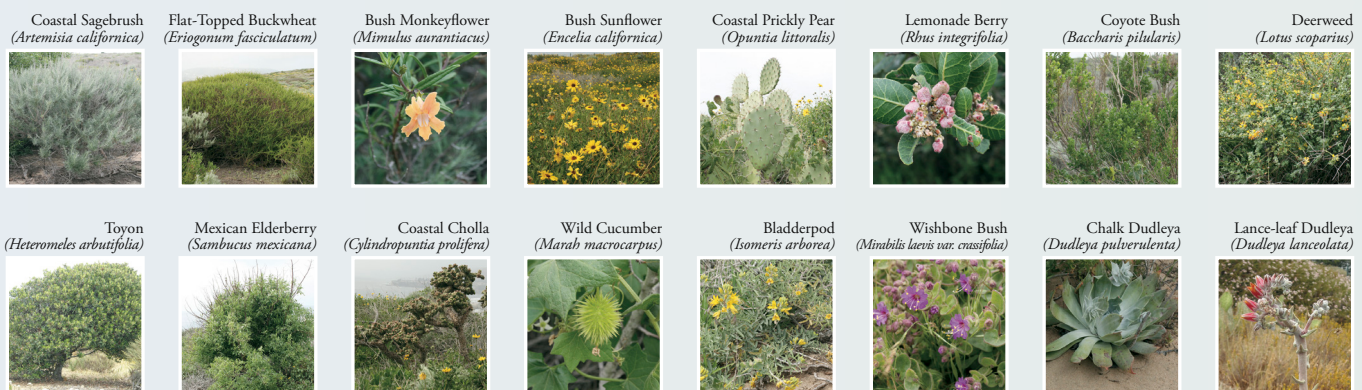
## Birds



## Pacific Pocket Mouse

The Pacific Pocket Mouse (*Paragnathus longimembris pacificus*) was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered at the Dana Point Headlands in 1993. It is now Federally Endangered and known to have three other populations that reside at Marine Corp Base Camp Pendleton. It is one of the smallest rodents in North America and is active only at night. It eats seeds and stores them in its furry external cheek pouches (pockets). Pocket mice burrow and hibernate most of the winter.

## Native Plants



## Rare Plants



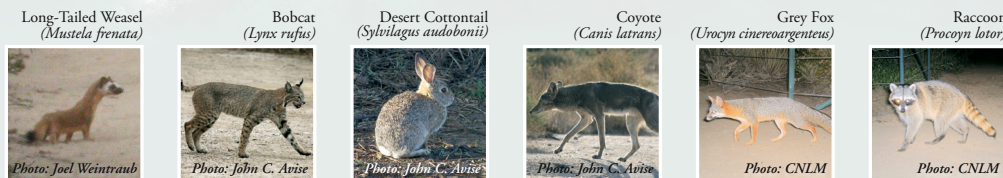
## Coastal California Gnatcatcher

The Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila californica californica*) is a federally threatened songbird found only in coastal sage scrub vegetation from Ventura County to Baja California, Mexico. Its call is similar to a kitten's mew. Nesting season for this species occurs between February 15 – August 31. Ten to Thirteen breeding pairs occur in the Headlands Conservation Area native habitat.

## Reptiles



## Mammals



## LEGEND



## NO DOGS ALLOWED

### IN or ON:

- Conservation Parks
- CNLM Dana Point Preserve
- Strand Beach
- Strand Revetment Trail

