

# Point Lobos

The background of the cover is a photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, a large, dark green, gnarled tree with a thick trunk and dense foliage dominates the lower-left and center. The tree's branches extend towards the right. Behind the tree, a calm blue bay or cove is visible, surrounded by rugged, grey and brown rock formations. The water is clear, showing some greenish-brown patches near the shore. In the distance, more rocky cliffs rise, partially covered with green vegetation. The sky is not clearly visible, appearing as a soft, hazy blue.

Vol. 29 \* Number 4

Winter 2006

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# Message from President Ed Clifton

The glorious days of late October and early November granted to us this year make winter seem far away. Yet, the first great waves from distant storms have already assaulted the rocky ramparts of the Reserve; before long, wind and rain will lash the coast. We are weeks from the first sightings of gray whales on their way to the warm lagoons of Mexico. Winter is an exciting time at Point Lobos.

It is also a time for change for the Point Lobos Association. Pam Armas, State Parks Superintendent of the Monterey Sector has accepted a new position as Superintendent of the Calaveras Sector. Pam's tenure in Monterey has been marked by a keen interest in our Association and an intense desire to facilitate communications between our organization and the State. We wish her the best in her new position.

This is my last column as President of the Association. Judd Perry, our current Secretary, has graciously agreed to stand for election by the Board of Directors at their January 6 meeting, and Joyce Olcese will take his place on the Executive Committee as Secretary.

It has been a privilege to serve the Association. I am proud of what we have achieved (see list elsewhere in this Quarterly), and I have greatly enjoyed working with the Board of Directors the past two years. I have received outstanding support from my fellow officers, Vice President Paul Wineman, Treasurer Kerstin Jones, and Secretary Judd Perry. It has also been a great pleasure working with the State Liaison personnel, Chuck Bancroft and Pam Armas, and the many Association members who have contributed their time and efforts. Chuck continues to be our guest editor for this issue of the Quarterly, as our regular editor, Jerry McCaffery, continues to recover from major surgery. We all wish Jerry the best and look forward to his return next year.

Now...Enjoy the winter!  
Ed



## Point Lobos Association

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**Brandi Katz**

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# Under My Brim

by Ranger Chuck Bancroft

My career at Point Lobos has been the most rewarding experience of my life. Well, next to being married to Sheryl.

I spend almost all my time at Point Lobos but we do like making trips to the various "hot spots" around the Monterey Peninsula. Just recently my sister-in-law was visiting with her good friend from Nashville, TN.

One fine day we drove out to the Carmel Valley to a spot Sheryl knows the yellow-billed magpies will be easily seen. And sure enough there they were. About a dozen birds were flying between the coffeeberry trees munching on freshly ripened berries. Camera in hand, I was able to get several good images of this beautiful bird.

We walked along the road and enjoyed the grasses in the pastures blowing in the wind, the huge acorns on the valley oaks just ripening and falling to the ground..and then looking up I spotted several Red-tailed hawks soaring on the rising air from the heat of the day...Sheryl, ever looking closer than my far and wide scanning, found several Smith's blue butterflies flitting from mustard to buckwheat. She called me from my acorn collecting and I photographed the butterfly on both plants.

On the next day we drove down the Big Sur Coast for breakfast and then on to Seven Pines to look for the

condors. We found the spot and sure enough there were several but they were flying sooooo high you couldn't get a good picture. Luckily Ranger Matt Buonaguidi had been down the coast earlier in the year and took a great photo of the Coastline and the Condor. (see the image with John Dotson' poetry on page 9)

On the third day we ventured north



naturalist provided a great narrative to the wonderful wildlife observed and

enjoyed. Lots and lots of California seal lions in the harbor...over 50 sea otters busily grooming and moving about in a huge raft...over 100 harbor seals at various locations on the banks of the slough...and 39 different species of birds.

And to make the

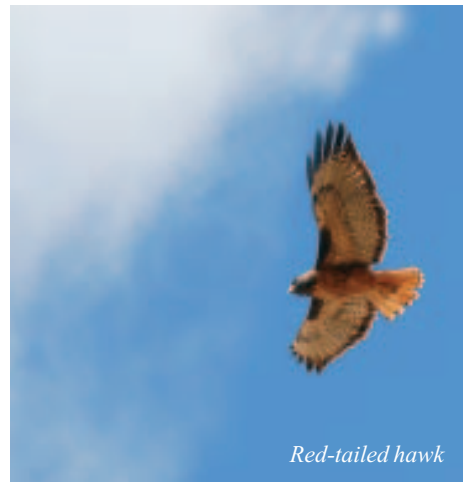
adventure even more special...the captain and his naturalist served creamy hot chocolate and cookies on the return trip.

Visitors from around the world visit Point Lobos to experience nature at its best. But don't forget those other wonders in this area. Take the time to see all that the Monterey peninsula and Big Sur offer. In a recent Monterey County Herald newspaper contest on the Seven Wonders of Monterey County, Point Lobos was voted #1, with the Monterey Bay Aquarium #2. For the complete listing and descriptions of all 26 destinations listed and a video presentation visit, the Herald's website at:

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/>



*Smith's blue butterfly (female)*



*Red-tailed hawk*



*Yellow-billed magpie*

to Elkhorn Slough for the 4:15 pm Safari up the slough with the captain and the naturalist. About twenty visitors boarded the flat bottom boat at Moss Landing Harbor for the slow journey up the slough. The captain has a great sense of humor and the

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# Annual Members Meeting of the Point Lobos Association

The meeting will be held on the morning of Saturday, January 6, 2007 in the Chapel on the Asilomar conference grounds in Pacific Grove (the same place as last year – see map). We will start with a Social Time at 9:00 a.m. during which coffee, tea, juice, and pastries will be available. At 9:30 we will begin our Annual Business Meeting, which will be followed by our guest speaker, Dr James Estes, a Research Scientist with the U. S. Geological Survey who is an internationally known expert on marine mammals and a specialist in the critical role of apex (top level) predators in the marine environment. Dr. Estes will speak on “The conservation and management of sea otters and coastal marine ecosystems”.

Parking is available on the streets around the conference center, or possibly, in the lots adjacent to the residences.

## Point Lobos Association Activities, 2006



2006 was another active year for the Association. We formally changed our name from “Point Lobos Natural History Association” to “Point Lobos Association,” completed a review of the Association’s Financial Records, and began the process of developing a Strategic Plan based on a shared vision of the Association and the State. This plan will include an assessment of our role in developing facilities on Point Lobos Ranch on the other side of Highway 1, a task that will be facilitated by the report submitted by an “ad hoc” committee in January.

The Association continued to support the many facets of the Point Lobos Docent Program: meeting space, audio-visual equipment, the monthly Docent Newsletter, the acquisition and maintenance of spotting scopes and binoculars and many other activities. We purchased a new computer and printer for the Docent office in May, and sponsored the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Point Lobos Docent Program. We contributed to an improvement to the case holding our pelts at the Information Station and are in the process of providing new pelts for that display.

We also provided funds for maintenance and operation of the Whalers Cabin and the Information Station and for the Reserve’s Education and Outreach program. The Board of Directors approved the publication of a brochure on the “Rocks of Point Lobos” which, when approved by the State, will be available at no charge to the Reserve’s visitors. We are also making plans for a “Community Day” at the Reserve next May, whereby access to the Reserve will be free to residents of Monterey County, who will be treated with a full slate of activities by the Docents and other experts.

We again supported restoration of the Reserve’s trails and contributed to the control of invasive plants in the Reserve. We provided a television set capable of offering closed captions to visitors in the Whalers Cabin, and installed dehumidifiers in the Whalers Cabin to prevent deterioration of historic photographs and in the space where our publications are stored. We established a new telephone line to the Reserve that is dedicated to the Association’s use.

We conducted a very successful Moonlight Walk Party for Association members at the Reserve in October – the reflection of moonlight in Whalers Cove was an unforgettable experience. We continue to explore the possibility of late closings of the Reserve for Association members. And this year, we welcomed our first corporate members to the Association.

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# *Dances with Coyotes*

*images by Patti Oglietti*

Patti Oglietti is our Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (and filling in when needed on the other days) park aid helping oversee the kiosk operation for the five park aids at the Reserve. The kiosk or entrance station is the most important job at the Reserve. Visitors from around the world arrive at Point Lobos to be greeted by our wonderful park aid staff. Patti or Fleecia or Richard or Alex or Matt might be the only uniformed state employee a visitor sees. Our docents are everywhere and very distinctive in their green jackets but the park aid is only at the kiosk to greet and meet our visitors.

Over the past few months we've had regular sightings of the coyote with and without her pups. It wasn't uncommon to see them out in the meadow in the morning even with cars driving up and down the south shore road. But she would scurry off with the



kids to wait out the day in the pine forest. The big male was much more secretive only being seen when no one was around (except by our early morning scout).

Now for the rest of the story about Patti. On her workdays she always arrives early to "scout" the Reserve and find the unique sightings to pass on to the docents and visitors and record her findings in the daily diary.

Just recently Patti, her digital camera always with her, was in the Reserve to scout for the unusual and the exciting. There was Coyote sitting on the side of the road, like the family dog ....very relaxed, surveying its territory, scratching behind the ears, stretching in the cool of the morning...and then sauntering off down the road and onto the trail to catch its morning meal. Oh Patti, I'm so jealous. I look for them all the time with my big expensive camera...and there you are with a great sense of timing and a wonderful rapport with the wildlife capturing our resident coyote for all to see.



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# Quotes from the Docent Log

Edited by Stan Dryden

**August 17**     **Connie Dallmann**

What a treat! I led a group of young Russians (here for a conference on the environment) on a walk on the Cypress Grove Trail. They were so enthusiastic and asked many questions. They presented me with a set of photos of their national park on the Volga.

**August 23**     **Bev Williams**

A visitor reported spending an hour on Gibson Beach watching a young bald eagle which circled the cove several times and then flew south.

**August 25**     **Jacolyn Harmer**

The visitor wrinkled her nose, looked down and said she had to report a horrible putrid smell at the south end of the Reserve. First we eliminated the obvious – the bathrooms were clean, she said. Then I suggested kelp on the beach, but couldn't recall any recent offshore storms. "Hmmm, nope." How about a dead sea lion or whale (less likely) – was the smell sweetish? "Not really." Then we figured out what it was when she mentioned a big white rock. "It must be the bird poop." Loathe to lower my standards, I said yes, it must be the guano. Sort of an acidic, sharp smell, not at all like a dead critter.

**August 29**     **Debbie Epperson**

Saw a coyote carrying a deer head and front leg as I drove into the Reserve.

**August 31**     **Joy Osborne**

Bird Island had a juvenile eagle on it. The cormorants flew up when the eagle landed and moved into the water – but not all of them. They seemed to

know the predator was not a real threat to them – just a youngster not sure how to prey.



*Juvenile bald eagle  
by Tadashi Tsuchida*

**September 2**     **Brandi Katz**

A busy and eventful start to the holiday weekend. A bad day to be a sea lion! The Marine Mammal Center workers were called out to rescue a sea lion with an injured flipper on the beach at



*Raft of otters  
by Chuck Bancroft*

Sea Lion Cove. If the fight the little guy put up was any indication of overall strength and health, this sea lion will be ready for release in no time. He left 6 burly MMC volunteers worn out and breathing hard by the time he made it to the truck. Could the injury

be from a shark bite? A docent with a telescope did report that the raft of sea otters off the point had been dispersed several times today as if panicked by something, and there have been lots of shark warnings along the coast.

While the rescue was going on, I was left to keep the holiday crowds away from another recently rescued but terrified sea lion in the back of the MMC truck. I guess he didn't know we humans were helping! Lots of concerned children can check on the progress of rescued animals on the MMC web site, and they will be happy to know that both were looking good for full recovery.

**September 12**     **Dione Dawson**

The otter count for September was 31 adults and no pups, a similar count to previous Septembers. We felt fortunate that we were able to complete the count as the fog was so

dense at 9:00 a.m. it didn't seem possible that it would ever clear. It appeared to be just over Point Lobos blowing in from the south, but with a bit of patience we started off and it turned out to be a gorgeous day. What was quite overwhelming was the

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number of pelicans, gulls, cormorants, etc. in a feeding frenzy almost everywhere they collected. There must have been good runs of



*Brown pelicans by Chuck Bancroft*

anchovies as it was a delight to watch all sorts of groupings of birds flying in, feeding, resting, taking off for other spots and certainly gave a lot of life to Carmel Bay. And we saw two or three humpback whales cruising through the bay heading for the open ocean.

### **September 22 Jacolyn Harmer**

Today was a clear, warm, breezy afternoon at Sea Lion Point. Visitors from Poland, France, and Kentucky. Meanwhile, a red-tailed hawk was offering a fabulous display between the InfoStation and Whalers Knoll – hovering, swooshing this way and that to reveal its lighter underbelly and its bright, rusty-red tail. Two turkey vultures swooped in to see what the hawk was observing so intently on the ground. The hawk withdrew but when they left he came back and continued to scrutinize the hill.

### **September 24 Rosemary Foster**

Humpbacks! Two humpbacks have been hanging around for a long visit.

### **September 29 Jacolyn Harmer**

Lots of reports of lots of humpbacks, sighted in Carmel Bay from Whalers Knoll. Two visitors had gone out on a

whale watching trip this morning and saw loads of them. I must be the only person in the Reserve who hasn't seen them.



### **September 26 Marty Renault**

A group of a dozen or so young cancer researchers on a retreat at Asilomar chose to come to Point Lobos on their free afternoon. I bumped into them at Cannery Point and asked if they'd come to see the humpback whales, which were spouting and diving right in



*Humpbacks in Carmel Bay by Chuck Bancroft*

front of us in Carmel Bay. They were surprised and absolutely delighted, passing my binoculars from one to the other with exclamations in Chinese and several other languages – it was a cosmopolitan group. Only one had seen a whale before, a fellow who had

spent all morning on a boat out of Seattle and seen only a single spout in the far distance. I explained that there must be a huge school of bait fish in the area, as the whales had been here several days, and the birds were also in a feeding frenzy. About that time a flock of gulls swarmed into Whaler's Cove, flying low and dipping in and out of the water over 6 or 7 harbor seals, who must have been trailing crumbs from their feast.

### **October 1 Terry Tellep**

Illegal gambling taking place at the Whalers' Cabin today — a gentleman put some bills in the donation box. His friend followed suit and said, "I'll see you and I'll raise you one".

### **October 10 Dione Dawson**

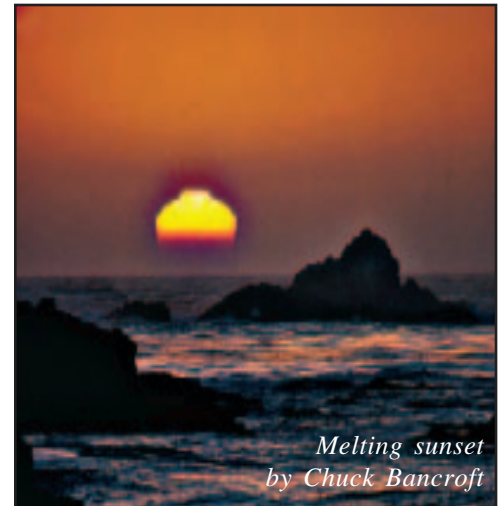
The otter count for October was 34 adults and no pups with the largest concentration being south of Sea Lion Rocks. It was a perfect day with plenty of sunshine providing warmth with no wind whatsoever. The sea was flat enough to be able to see for miles

and our optimistic wishes for whales, dolphins, and all wonders of nature never materialized. There was a peregrine falcon seen at China Cove and an abundance of egrets of all sizes and great blue herons. Nevertheless it was a wonderful day to be at Point Lobos.

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# *By the Light of the Moon*

Those PLA members who attended the Moonlight Walk Party at Point Lobos Reserve in October enjoyed a special night to remember. Over 120 members attended the after-hours party, held at the Bird Island picnic grounds. The Reserve closed early and then reopened at 6:30 p.m. to allow the party-goers free gate access. The sun was just setting over the horizon as the festivities got under way. Hot chili and a buffet spread of sandwiches, salads and deserts was provided by the Association as a heartfelt "Thank You" to our members for their support of the Association, the Docent program and the Reserve itself. After enjoying the picnic, most revelers grabbed their flashlights and headed for the trails. On Bird Island Trail, just beyond the Gibson Beach stairs, the great orb of the full moon could be seen rising over the eastern hills. It was a thrilling and magical experience. Don't miss this opportunity to venture around the Reserve after dark and to enjoy the great company of other PLA members next year. Mark your calendar now for the 2007 Moonlight Walk Party on October 13. We can't guarantee the moon, but we can promise you a wonderful evening.



*Melting sunset  
by Chuck Bancroft*

## *A Moonlit Walk on Sand Hill Trail*

*We gaze at the moon's disk glowing light  
and the white haze veiling the mountains,  
then stroll through the sage  
toward insistent barks  
bellowed by wild sea lions.*

by

**Laura C. Newmark**

"Because the 2006 PLA Members Moonlight Party and the 2006 Robinson Jeffers Fall Festival coincided on October 7, a group of seven of us from the Jeffers event were able to enjoy the moonlight walk in the reserve. As a nature poet inspired by the natural beauty of the Monterey Coast, I regularly contribute poems to the *Tor House Newsletter*. Since the enclosed poem "*A Moonlight Walk on Sand Hill Trail*" was made possible by the PLA - sponsored event, I would like to submit *it* to your fine newsletter."



*Basking sea lions  
by Chuck Bancroft*

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# *Love Has Wings*

by **John Dotson**

*more and more i am sure of it  
like butterfly wings  
out of chrysalis*

*like moth wings  
out of pupa*

*like warbler wings  
and also sings*

*i know it is true  
i have listened*

*belted kingfisher wings  
hawk wings*

*probably these too*

*condor wings  
pterodactyl wings*

*angel wings*

*hummingbird  
and raven wings*

*definitely  
or most likely i do say*

*these things  
so infinitely near and  
far beyond*

*my province*



*Belted Kingfisher in flight  
by Chuck Bancroft*



*California Condor  
by Matt Buonaguidi*

for my dear Mario Kamentzky who died today

Editor's note:  
John Dotson has been contributing  
poems to the *Quarterly*  
for over 15 years.

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# More Quotes

**October 18 Noradele Veronis**

Was doing Trail Watch with a friend on the Bird Island Trail. I had explained that I was carrying a plastic bag and wearing a plastic glove to pick up trash, but I usually find very little to pick up – never very interesting stuff. Shortly into our walk I saw something pink in branches to my right. I couldn't believe what I was seeing! I was glad to have the glove when I reached over to pick up a thong. No – not the kind that is worn on a foot. This one was a 4-inch triangle of pink net attached to three strings. We got a good laugh out of this definitely non-boring collection. I don't want to guess how the thong ended up in this location.

**October 24 Martha Dennis**

Entrance to the reserve was slowed at opening time by a juvenile coyote meandering almost the full length of the entrance road, undaunted by the three cars following her. She stopped for interesting sniffs and twice to mark her territory, then turned left (against the One Way sign) down toward the South Shore.

On a Kuala Lumpur International School walk we saw only one otter, off Cypress Cove. We also saw a peregrine falcon on the Pinnacle having a post-breakfast wash and preening.

**October 24 Jacolyn Harmer**

I was in one of the 3 cars following the pretty coyote. I have been increasingly anxious about people speeding in the reserve – I have followed one car barreling along at 40 MPH – and wonder if there is any way of persuading the coyote to join the effort to slow drivers down.

**October 24 Hope Hale**

Before starting my 3:00-5:00 pm shift at the Whaler's Cabin, docent Marty Renault told me I was in for a treat, because the grandchildren of A. M. Allan and their families would be gathering at the Cabin. With that, I walked John Hudson and Mary Riley Whistler, then Mary's sister and Allan Hudson along with others. We all awaited the arrival of a stretch limo with Helen Burnett Morris and her family who are from Los Altos. I felt as if Suzie Wood and Monica Hudson's book\* opened and these revered Allan family members tumbled out.



In the midst of this joyful reunion, an Asian gentleman walked in. I asked if he was part of this celebration. He shook his head, but asked if that was Mary Whistler standing over there. Once I said, "yes," he walked over and they embraced. By coincidence, Gennosuke Kodani's son Eugene from Oakland with his daughter Kimi Kodani Hill and a young woman from Japan, an Obata scholar, were visiting Point Lobos. This was beyond incredible! I am so grateful Ranger Chuck was there. He knew almost everyone and before they left was able to take photographs.

My favorite anecdote: As the stretch limo was about to leave, one of Helen Burnett Morris' sons raced back and said his daughter wanted to know if she could buy Point Lobos back from the State.

*\* Images of America: Point Lobos, published by Arcadia Publishing. This book of historic photographs is sold at the Information Station and on the [pointlobos.org](http://pointlobos.org) web site.*

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*“I just wish I could put this place in my pocket and take it home with me.”*

This visitor’s thought is something all of us have felt at one time or another when visiting Point Lobos. The Point Lobos Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was formed to enhance the public’s awareness of the unique qualities of Point Lobos State Reserve. Our membership fees are reinvested in public education and service activities, such as developing and supporting docent training, publishing and distributing interpretive materials, conducting school and public nature walk programs, and maintaining interpretive centers like the Information station, the Whalers Cabin, and the Whaling Station Museum. All contributions are tax deductible. Membership benefits include:

- \* Point Lobos Association Quarterly
- \* 20 % discount on all items sold by the association
- \* Voting privileges in the association
- \* Participation in association meetings and special programs

Please join us. Return our application with your check or credit card information.

**Membership Application: Return to PLA, Route 1, Box 62, Carmel, CA 93923**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

___ Individual	\$20.00	___ California Sea Lion	\$100.00
___ Family	\$30.00	___ Life Member	\$1000.00
___ Sea Otter	\$50.00	___ Donation	(\$ _____ )

**Payment Method:** \_\_\_ Check \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ Am/Ex

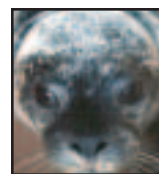
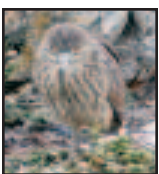
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**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to PLA. Many companies match employee contributions to nonprofit organizations. Check with your personnel office. If you have any questions about our Association..give us a call..our number is 831-624-1470.

## Observations: Faces

*by Sparky Starkweather, State Park Squirrel*



Did you identify all these faces?

Immature Black-crowned night heron; Coyote; California ground squirrel; Pocket gopher; Canada goose gosling;

Harbor seal; Tree frog; Band-tailed pigeon



*Bluefish Cove and beyond to Palo Corona Ranch and the Monastery. Image by Chuck Bancroft*



*The image above is by*  
***Lisa Kramer***

*I mistakenly gave credit in the last  
issue to the wrong person.  
My deepest apologies to Lisa.*

*Cover image of Bluefish Cove  
by Chuck Bancroft*

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