

# Harbor Terrace Biological Resources

## Biological Resource Protection

Special-status species are plants and wildlife that are afforded protection under local, county, state, and/or federal regulations. Most notably, the California and federal Endangered Species Acts (CESA, ESA) aim to protect and recover imperiled species and ecosystems. In addition, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) afford protections to native avian and marine mammal species. Many special-status species are extremely rare or may have a limited range. Others are dependent on specific habitat types that may be impacted by development or other disturbances. To protect special-status plants and wildlife, as well as the habitats they depend on, **please stay on established trails** and within designated areas. **Avoid the creation of spur trails** and, whenever any wildlife is encountered, leave it alone and avoid disturbing it. This will protect you and the natural habitats on site.

## Native Habitats

**Coastal scrub** is a shrub-dominated habitat that is commonly found along the coast. Shrubs found in coastal scrub habitat often have flexible branches and aromatic leaves, such as California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*). This habitat supports a variety of common and special-status plants and wildlife.

Needle grasses are bunch grasses that form dense tussocks up to three feet tall. Purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*) is the state grass, and a common species in coastal areas. **Needle grass grasslands** have been heavily impacted throughout California, especially in coastal areas, and are therefore considered a sensitive natural community.

\*\*Both of these communities have been replanted on the property at a 2:1 ratio.



**Oak woodland** habitat is an iconic part of the California landscape. Oak trees may live to be several hundred years old and provide extremely valuable habitat for numerous wildlife species. Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is the most common oak species in coastal areas of California and may form a dense woodland along riparian corridors or on upland slopes.



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## Special-status Wildlife

San Luis Bay and the surrounding hillsides support a wide diversity of wildlife species. Some special-status species that may be encountered in the area are described below.

**California red-legged frog** (CRLF; *Rana draytonii*) is listed as federal threatened and a California Species of Special Concern (CSC). CRLF inhabit streams, lakes, and ponds, and may disperse up to two miles from aquatic habitat. Adults are about 5 inches long.

**American badger** (*Taxidea taxus*) is state-listed CSC. It prefers dry, open habitats such as grasslands, scrub, and chaparral. This species digs and occupies large dens and have a distinctive white stripe from their snout to their back.

**San Diego desert woodrat** (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*) is state-listed CSC. This species can be found in a variety of habitats, including coastal scrub and oak woodland. Woodrat nests are constructed of sticks and other materials and can reach 6 feet tall.

**Coast horned lizard** (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) is state-listed CSC. This species inhabits various habitats with open patches of loose, sandy soil. The coast horned lizard has a wide, flat body and enlarged, pointed scales scattered on the upper body and tail.

**Northern California legless lizard** (*Anniella pulchra*) is state-listed CSC. This species is a small, slender lizard with no legs and a blunt tail. It requires moist, loose soils and shelters in leaf litter and under bushes, rocks, or detritus like logs and driftwood.

All native **avian species**, from large birds of prey to smaller passerines, are protected under the MBTA. Some species are further protected under state and federal regulations. Avian species are most active – and most sensitive to disturbance – during their nesting period (approximately February through August). Special-status birds that may be seen around San Luis Bay include: brant, American white pelican, California brown pelican, double-crested cormorant, Common loon, and American peregrine falcon. Burrowing owls may also be seen overwintering along the coast.

In addition to terrestrial species, all **marine mammals** are protected under the MMPA. Marine mammals common to San Luis Bay include southern sea otter, CA sea lion, harbor seal, Steller sea lion, and northern fur seal.



Peregrine falcon



Great horned owl nesting



American robin nest



Coast horned lizard



Legless lizard



Woodrat nest



California red-legged frog



American badger