



**Point Reyes**  
National Seashore Association

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Explore. Discover. Connect.



**Point Reyes**  
National Seashore Association

# Currents

Connecting you to Point Reyes

## PRNSA Nears Wetland Restoration Fundraising Goal!

Point Reyes National Seashore Association received word in January that had been awarded another \$1 million grant - this time from the National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The latest grant request was a joint effort of the Point Reyes National Seashore, the Coastal Conservancy, and the Point Reyes National Seashore Association and was 1 of only 25 projects nationwide that were selected for National Coastal Wetlands Grant funds.

With award of this latest grant, the Association has raised over \$5.2 million of the \$5.75 million fundraising goal for the Giacomini Wetland Restoration project. Other fund sources include the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Watershed Council of the State of California Water Control Board (Prop 50), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Northern California Restoration Grant.

The continuing success of the Association's fundraising campaign is the result of a tremendous effort by a team of people dedicated to preserving and restoring the ecological health of our environment. "It is remarkable to look back and appreciate the vision required to undertake this unprecedented effort," said Sally Bolger, Acting Executive Director. "Thanks to the leadership of Don Neubacher and Gary Knoblock, and the years of commitment of Association board and staff, park scientists, and all of the other partners who played vital roles, that vision is now about to become a reality."

Groundbreaking on the large-scale levy removal and restoration of the pasture on the east side of Tomales Bay is scheduled for late summer, pending successful completion of the EIR/EIS process. Restoration work will continue through October 2007 and will resume in summer 2008 when restoration of the west pasture will begin.

The Giacomini Wetland Restoration Project focuses on restoring natural hydrologic and ecological processes within the Giacomini Ranch and Olema Marsh. Some of the species



## State of California Considering Marine Protected Areas off of Point Reyes

The State of California is currently developing a statewide network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and will select the MPAs that will include Point Reyes by March 2008.

Less than 1 percent of the global ocean is effectively protected right now, including ocean national parks such as Point Reyes National Seashore. Most ocean parks, including Point Reyes National Seashore, are experiencing degradation, deterioration, and extirpation of species. Many ocean species in parks are endangered or declining, including several species of salmon and abalone.

**Point Reyes National Seashore has 80 miles of coastline and 22,000 acres of marine waters, yet Park protection extends only a quarter mile off shore.**

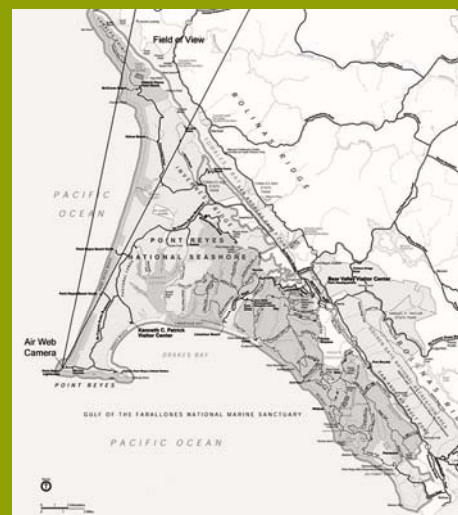
Choosing the scientifically-appropriate number, location, size, and distance between the MPAs established will have a profoundly positive effect on the long-term health of the park and adjacent marine sanctuaries. We encourage our members to learn about the health of our oceans and the issues involved in designating MPAs, and to participate in the Marine Life Protection Act planning process.

More information can be found at:

California Department of Fish and Game: [www.dfg.ca.gov/MRD/mlpa/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/MRD/mlpa/)

Natural Resources Defense Council: [www.nrdc.org/wildlife/fish/acaleg.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/wildlife/fish/acaleg.asp)

Ocean Conservancy: [www.oceanconservancy.org/site/News2?abbr=issues\\_&page=NewsArticle&id=8703](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/site/News2?abbr=issues_&page=NewsArticle&id=8703)



### Point Reyes National Seashore Webcam

Need some help deciding whether to go for a hike in the woods, a picnic at the beach, or try to catch a glimpse of a passing whale? You can check the current weather conditions at the Lighthouse with the new Point Reyes National Seashore Webcam: <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/air/webcams/parks/porecam/porecam.cfm>

Photo: Kim Hilsmann



*In December, the Seashore Association completed the revegetation of native species around the enhanced freshwater marsh for the red-legged frogs and the new high tide refuge for California black rails that were created in October. Frogs have already moved back in and are being monitored.*

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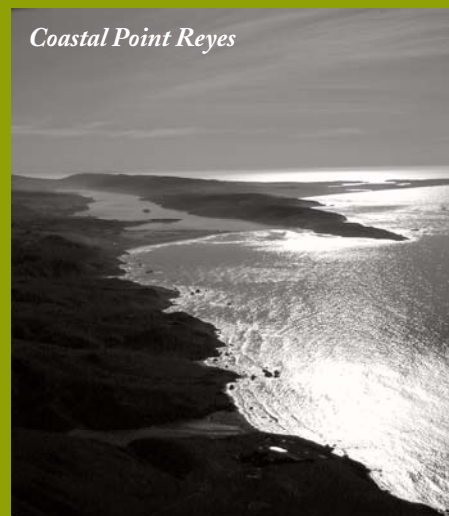


Photo: Aerial photo, Kim Hilsmann

expected to benefit from this project include the federally endangered central California coast Coho salmon and tidewater goby, the federally and state endangered California clapper rail, the federally threatened central California coastal steelhead trout, the state threatened California black rail, and other species of concern such as the saltmarsh common yellowthroat and the southwestern river otter.

## Your Visit to Point Reyes



Park Grant - This project is supported by your Seashore Association membership

### On Your Own

#### Museum, Archive and Collection

During a visit to the Point Reyes National Seashore did you ever wonder how this landscape escaped development and came to be protected? What ship wreck artifacts have been found? Who lived here and what was life like 25, 50, 100 years ago?

#### Here's how you can find out!

Nestled inside the historic Red Barn is an important information resource center containing a museum, archive and library collection. The park's collections contain the Point Reyes National Seashore public records including maps, drawings and photographs. These records trace the legislative history and planning documents of the park, beginning in the late 1950's and the administrative, environmental, and resource management of the Seashore since its establishment in 1962.

A special collections research library of books, historic documents and oral history interviews tell stories of local people and subjects related to the layers of cultural and natural history of the area. There are nearly 20,000 images that date back to the 1860's depicting development of local towns and ranch families, maritime history and the great 1906 earthquake. Landscape and aerial photos from all periods show the change in the environment over time, including the

renewal of vegetation following the Vision Fire.

The museum catalog currently holds information on thousands of mammals, bird, invertebrate, insect, and fossil specimens as well as an herbarium of native and rare plants. Artifacts include thousands of examples of cultural materials produced by the prehistoric ancestors of the Coast Miwok including arrow points, bone, stone and obsidian tools; shell beads and stone mortars. The collection also include rare examples of 16th century Ming Dynasty blue and white porcelain sherds from the cargo of the Manila Galleon San Agustin which sank in Drakes Bay in 1595.

The facility is staffed by a professional Curator and Archivist. The collections are open to the public for research by appointment. Please contact the park museum staff with any questions or to make an appointment at 415-464-5218 or 415-464-5125.

The NPS collection is housed in the state-of-the-art collections facility which opened inside the historic Red Barn in 2002, located at the Bear Valley entrance.

Photo credit: PRNSA staff



### Adult male Snowy Plover



Photo: Callie Bowdish

Snowy Plovers have best season in more than ten years

Point Reyes National Seashore is an important nesting and wintering area

for the federally threatened western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*). However, the population has declined over the past thirty years largely due to loss of habitat by encroachment of non-native vegetation, predation pressure, and disturbance from recreational use of beaches.

Thanks to current park programs, the 2006 nesting season was the most successful since 1995. An estimated 24 nests were protected with exclosures and 51 eggs hatched out of 69 laid. Of the chicks hatched, 23 fledged. Your membership dollars support the snowy plover docent program every summer and PRNSA is working to identify additional sources of funding to sustain the park's protection, monitoring, and restoration programs until the Recovery Plan target of a population of 64 breeding birds producing at least 1.0 fledged chick per male annually is reached. *Edited by Jessica Taylor*

### Your BookStore

When planning your next adventure to the Point Reyes National Seashore stop into one of PRNSA's Bookstores (located at the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Drake's Beach Visitor Center, or the Lighthouse Visitor Center), to further enhance your experience of this amazing landscape.

We purvey educational materials that will provide context to your trip. Essential to any Point Reyes journey are the following; A Point Reyes National Seashore Trail Map (either, Tom Harrison \$8.99 or Wilderness Press \$9.99), "The Natural History of Point Reyes" by Jules Evens \$16.99. Try all of our field checklists; from A Field Checklist of Birds for Point Reyes \$2.50, next A Plant Checklist for the Point Reyes National Seashore \$3.99, Mammal Checklist \$2.50 to our Butterfly Checklist \$1.99.

Don't forget a Tidechart 2007, 25¢ to complete a cursory overview of your National Seashore. Remember your purchases fund important interpretive and educational projects throughout the park. Plan your next visit with our materials!

## Seasonal Highlights: Spring & Summer



### Explore. Discover. Connect.

As spring gives way to summer and summer gives way to fall, the Point Reyes peninsula experiences a multitude of changes – both subtle and grand. One of the most rewarding things that visitors can do is chose a favorite trail and hike it every few weeks May through October and observe the changes first hand. Another way to deepen your connection to Point Reyes is to join a Field Seminar and deepen your understanding of this special place with experts who love Point Reyes as much as you do.

### May and June

The months of May and June play host to an ever changing palette of wild flowers such as douglas iris, bush lupine, gold fields, and indian paintbrush. Early in May, the coastal hikes offer a glimpse of mother and calf pairs of California gray whales close to shore. Explore the early morning low-tide on Sunday May 20 with the whole family on the "Adventures with Tidepools" Family Fun Field Seminar.

In June keep an eye out for the Brown Pelican's return. Discover the many habitats and diversity of bird species within the park at "A Bird's Eye View of Habitat" on June 16. Enjoy the magic of Point Reyes by the full moon on Saturday June 30 - bring a flashlight in case the fog rolls in.

### July and August

During the summer months of July and August the hues of the grass land shift as grasses are moistened by summer fogs, produce their seeds, and slowly dry as they wait for the winter rains. Harbor seal pupping season ends July 1, and Drakes Estero opens again for exploration by kayak or canoe – plan you trip carefully in accordance with the tides. Sign up for the "Amphibians and Reptiles of Point Reyes" on July 15 and discover the roles they play in the ecosystems and the environmental clues they give us.

Photos: Doreen Smith

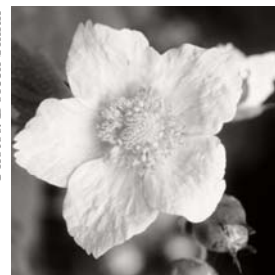


Photo: Ernie Braun

In late August the ripening berries start to add color to the trail side. Take the family on the perfect outing: bike the Bear Valley Trail, lock the bikes at the bike rack, and walk the rest of the way out to see the glorious view of the coast at Arch Rock, then pedal back to the perfect picnic spot - the enjoyable Divide Meadow. Learn how to recognize the woody plants that can be found in the various ecosystems of Point Reyes at the "Native Trees & Shrubs" seminar August 25.

### September and October

There is no finer time in Point Reyes than September and October. The days turn sunny and warm, and there is a spectacular change of color to the marsh land as the pickleweed glows red in the marsh land and the big leaf maple adds its yellow to the forest canopy. Have a fun photography weekend at the Clem Miller Environmental Education Center learning the "Exposures A-Z: the Ins and Outs of Metering" September 7-9 or spend a glorious fall weekend October 27 - 28 at the historic Lifeboat Station learning "How to Draw & Paint a Landscape" (and oh, what a landscape it is!)

### Trail Updates

The Seashore is planning to restore hydrologic function to 20 miles of streams throughout the park. Work schedule has not yet been finalized, but please check with the Bear Valley Visitors Center for up-to-date information on trail closures and re-routes.

**Business Sponsors 2007**

Please support the businesses that support the park!

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- Inverness Secret Garden Cottage
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- The Old Point Reyes Schoolhouse Compound

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- Cowgirl Creamery
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- The Station House Café

**Retail Stores**

- Cabaline Country Emporium & Saddlery

**Grants Received 2007**

Many, many thanks to these foundations and corporations for doing so much to help us preserve Point Reyes!

**Grants Received 2006-2007**

**Marine Spill Response**

\$1,000 for protecting coastal Point Reyes

**Santa Rosa Sunrise Rotary**

\$1,000 for Environmental Education Scholarships

**Marin Charitable Association**

\$2,000 for Environmental Education Scholarships

**B.T. Rocca Jr. Foundation**

\$2,000 to preserve Point Reyes

**Kingfisher Foundation**

\$10,000 for Giacomini Wetlands Restoration

**National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program of the Fish & Wildlife Service**

\$1 million for Giacomini Wetlands Restoration

# 2007

## PRNSA is gearing up for Summer Camp!

*Kids and camp staff alike love to get down and dirty looking for the residents of the salt marsh of Limantour Estero! Frolic on the giant sand dunes of Abbotts Lagoon and observe wading birds! Embark on an overnight backpack trip to Coastal Camp and sleep under the stars!*

We are excited to offer these dynamic activities at Point Reyes Summer Camp 2007. Sessions have been filling up quickly since January and we can't wait to offer **Nature Science Camp** again this year.

If you know any kids who like to look under rocks, they can join 50 campers ages 7-12 to explore and discover the magic of Point Reyes. A wide range of dynamic adventures combines the best of environmental education, stewardship, science, and traditional summer camp activities. During our five-day overnight sessions, campers participate in six 3-hour adventures. At night, they gather around a campfire to hear tales of old, sing songs, perform skits, or go on a dusk hike in search of owls.

Teenagers love our **Adventure Camp!**

This 6-day camp provides a unique opportunity for teens to interact with their peers without all of the social pressure common at this age. The core of this session is a 4-day backpacking trip into the heart of the Seashore wilderness where they will encounter sweeping vistas, lush forests, rich tidepools, and expansive beaches. While campers gain independence, they also learn teamwork, backpacking skills, and the natural history of the Point Reyes peninsula. Most importantly, the friendships they make will last a lifetime.

PRNSA is busy carefully screening staff and programs to provide a safe and caring environment. Our 3.5:1 camper to staff ratio helps ensure emotional and physical safety of our campers as a top priority.



*Sing-along at the evening campfire*



*Embarking on an overnight backpack trip*

Camp is also committed to **sustainability and stewardship**. Some of our electricity and hot water is produced using solar panels. Campers compost their food waste, learn leave-no-trace ethics while in the field, and have opportunities to participate in habitat restoration projects. Campers also pitch in with daily chores such as cabin clean up and an all-camp clean up at the end of the week.

If you would like to be added to our Summer Camp mailing list, please email [summercamp@ptreyes.org](mailto:summercamp@ptreyes.org) or call (415) 663-1224. **Register Online: [www.ptreyes.org](http://www.ptreyes.org) See you this summer!**



All Photos: PRNSA

**Come fall PRNSA will again be hosting classes from all over Northern California**

Get students excited about science and the environment through experiential education! Located in beautiful Point Reyes National Seashore, the Clem Miller Environmental Education Center is a nine-building, green facility that provides a low cost opportunity for you and your students to step outside the traditional classroom and have fun exploring nature's classroom. Classes stay for three to five days.

Teachers take the lead. We provide the support and teaching resources. The result is an enriching outdoor learning experience that everyone enjoys. For over 30 years, the School Program has been a gateway for students and teachers to immerse themselves in a hands-on-science-learning environment and to develop an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the natural world.

For more information visit [www.ptreyes.org](http://www.ptreyes.org), email [fiona@ptreyes.org](mailto:fiona@ptreyes.org), or call (415) 663-1224.



**POINT REYES  
SUMMER  
CAMP  
2007**

*Sandy Curth, 6th grade, writes: The Point Reyes Science and Nature Camp is a great place. It is in the middle of the Point Reyes National Seashore surrounded by thousands of acres of woods, meadows, beaches and wildlife.*

*Their food is great. They have spaghetti, pancakes, grilled cheese sandwiches, and many other wonderful things to eat. There are also a variety of really fun activities such as going to the Marvelous Marsh where you can jump in a pit of mud two feet deep or go backpacking to Coast Camp. You can also roll down sand dunes and go canoeing.*

*All the people at the camp have cool nature names like Tsunami Scott, Willet, and Buzzard. The cabins are all wood and are out in a meadow. The kids sleep in wooden bunk beds and I didn't have to change my socks for a week but I did have to take a shower. The Point Reyes Summer Camp is a very interesting place. I think everyone should go there.*

*I have been to the camp three times. Each time I go there I learn many new things. Kids not only have fun, they also learn about nature. I have really enjoyed the camp and I am looking forward to going back this summer. I think any kid who likes to learn would like the Point Reyes Summer Camp.*

*Great Blue Heron holding a rough-skinned newt in its bill. A single heron was observed eating as many as three newts in 45 min!*



Photo: PRNSA

## Great Blue Heron survives eating a rough-skinned newt!

Rough-skinned newts are one of six kinds of salamanders found at Point Reyes National Seashore, and are well-known for their toxicity. Tetrodotoxin, a powerful neurotoxin, is found in both the skin secretions and in the eggs of all three species of newt that live in California. Although newts and other amphibians are quite safe to handle as long as you rinse your hands afterwards, as little as 0.0002cc of newt skin is sufficient to kill a white mouse in less than 10 min. In one study, the tail of a rough-skinned newt was placed in the mouth of a Great Blue Heron; the heron was unable to stand upright after 90 seconds, and was dead after 120 seconds.

On 6 Aug 2006, two park scientists observed an immature Great Blue Heron catch and swallow an adult rough-skinned newt at a pond near Abbott's Lagoon. The heron was seen catching the newt, holding the newt in its bill, moving to a shallower part of the pond, and then repeatedly dunking the newt in the pond. The heron also dropped the newt a few times, only to pick it back up and continue to dunk it in the water. After 5-8 minutes of dunking the newt, the heron tilted its head back and swallowed the newt whole!

The scientists continued to watch the heron for 10 minutes, but the heron showed no signs of distress. Intrigued, the scientists returned to the pond throughout August and observed the same behavior on several occasions. On one occasion, a Great Blue Heron was observed eating three newts over a forty-five minute period, suggesting that not only the heron survived eating the newts, but that it continued to include the newts as part of its diet.

It has been found that newt toxicity, both within populations and between populations, is highly variable. The rough-skinned newts near Abbotts Lagoon almost certainly have low toxicity. This suggests that the apparent washing behavior observed might be effective at reducing the toxin on the skin of the newts to a level safe for the heron to consume.

Gary M. Fellers  
Jessica Taylor  
Susan Farrar

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Named in honor of Senator Peter Behr, who was instrumental in the creation of the park, these Peter Behr Circle members are continuing the tradition of protecting Point Reyes. For information about the Peter Behr Circle, contact Sally Bolger, Acting Executive Director, at 415-663-1835 or [sallyb@ptreyes.org](mailto:sallyb@ptreyes.org).

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