DOGS IN COASTAL PARKS

“The Dirty Dozen”

Yes, that’s a Felis catus
General/Localized Impact of Dogs on Wildlife

- Dogs are direct descendants (subspecies) of gray wolves (99.96% similarity in DNA sequencing) and are perceived by wildlife as predators.
- The presence of dogs creates predator-induced stress, causing animals such as birds to flee and to increase vigilance behavior. This stress reduces time and energy necessary for birds to forage and find shelter. Disturbances by dogs during breeding season can cause nest abandonment and increase risk of nest predation. (Stress factors: chasing behavior & scent*)
- Indirect (disease transmission) & Direct (loose dogs - killing wildlife)
- Also risk of disease transmission to people (zoonotic) and pets
- Studies: Reduction in wildlife numbers/diversity
- Potentially impacted wildlife at Bodega Head and Salmon Creek Beaches: (federally protected) Western Snowy Plover and other shore birds; Harbor Seals (particularly at locations where they are likely to “haul out”, such as Goat Rock & Doran Reg. Park**)
Interacting With Dog Owners

- Offer reasons for No-Dogs-On-Beach/Trails policy:
  - ** Threats to wildlife
  - ** Safety/Health concerns for visitors
- Provide dog-permitted beaches/trails maps and handouts
- Even where they are permitted, all dogs (even legitimate service dogs) MUST be on a leash; *possible* exception: beaches w/o visitors
- Last resort: If dog owners are non-compliant, then let them know that a ranger can/will be contacted ... and that citations can be issued
- Dog owners’ professed justifications: “... under perfect voice command”, “... never bitten anyone”, etc.
- Even with difficult dog-owners, best to try to make good lasting impression. Remember that you are representing California S.P.
Recommended Volunteer Patrol/Docent Attire, Accessories, Miscellany

• Required: California SP Volunteer Vest: “Look the Part”
• Recommended:

  *Long Sleeve Solid Color Shirt
  *Cell phone w/Cal State Park Dispatch/Ranger Nos.
  *Misc. Maps/Brochures, e.g. Permitted Fishing Locations
  *Binocs
  *Camera
  *Jumper Cables (public assistance patrol)
  *Rangers’ Mobile Radio - possible option (location dependent)

** Become acquainted with rangers
**Dog Permissible/Non-Permissible Beaches & Trails**

**Sonoma Coast State Park Dog Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dogs Allowed on Leash</th>
<th>No Dogs Allowed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Gulch</td>
<td>North Jenner Beach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmet Beach</td>
<td>Goat Rock Beach*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schoolhouse Beach</td>
<td>Arch Rock Beach</td>
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<td>Portuguese Beach</td>
<td>Coleman Beach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duncan’s Cove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wright’s Beach</td>
<td>North/South Salmon Creek Beaches*</td>
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<td>Furlong Gulch</td>
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<td>Shell Beach</td>
<td>Campbell Cove*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blind Beach</td>
<td>Bodega Head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian Gulch</td>
<td>Kortum Trail*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Some visitors are intimidated by dogs ... even friendly ones.*

**Dogs Allowed On-Leash @ Coastal Regional Parks:**

- Doran Regional Park, 201 Doran Beach Rd., Bodega Bay
- Pinnacle Gulch Coastal Access Trail, 20600 Mockingbird Rd., Bodega Bay
- Birdwalk Coastal Access Trail, 355 Hwy. 1, Bodega Bay
- Coastal Prairie Trail (CA-1, entrance to Bodega Dunes Campground)
- Jenner Headlands Preserve, 12001 CA-1, Jenner (*Great Alternative to KT)
- Stillwater Cove Regional Park (north of Fort Ross), 22455 CA-1, Jenner
- Gualala Point Regional Park, 42400 Leeward Rd. Sea Ranch

**Dog Allowed Off-Leash @ Coastal Park**

- Dillon Beach (Private), 1 Beach Ave., Dillon Beach
The Assistive Animal Divarication: ESA Incursion Conundrum

• Proliferation of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) has resulted in increase in dogs misrepresented as service dogs
• Differences between ESAs and Service Dogs: ESAs are “comfort” animals; Service dogs have been trained to provide a service relating to their owner’s disability (physical or psychiatric)
• Service dogs allowed in all places owner is allowed, NOT so with ESAs
• According to the Americans for Disability Act (ADA), if someone has doubt regarding a dog’s assistive status, they can only ask two questions:
  #1: Is the dog required because of a disability?
  #2: What work/tasks is it trained to perform?
ESAs vs. Service Dogs

• Service Dogs must NOT exhibit aggressive behavior!

• Communicating concerns about questionable service dog status with dog owners:

1. Two-way: Discussion (my preference)
2. One-way: Reading statement (following slide)
3. Written: Present dog owner with hand-out, explaining differences between ESAs and trained Service Dogs
“Distinguishing ESAs from Service Dogs”
Proposed Statement

• In lieu of a two-way conversation with questionable Service Dog Owners, consider reading the following statement (or something similar):

  “I’d like to briefly talk with you about your dog. I understand that there’s often confusion about whether an assistive animal is an emotional support animal (ESA) or an actual service dog. Service dogs are trained to provide a service relating to an owner’s disability - a fact that distinguishes them from ESAs. However, ESAs are not provided all of the protections that service dogs are entitled to and are not allowed on prohibited trails/beaches. I’ll trust you to make the proper decision; I can say that the presence of dogs has a potentially harmful effect on resident wildlife and pose safety/health risks to visitors.”

• By making a statement in this fashion, you won’t have to ask any questions. After making the statement, you have the option of just walking away ...
To help clear up confusion about Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) and Service Dogs, the following ADA/State of California regulations/rules are presented:

• Generally, trained “service dogs” are allowed to accompany their owner everywhere that the public is allowed. However, “California law, like federal law, doesn’t require that ‘emotional support animals’ be allowed in public places”. California law allows persons with disabilities to bring trained service/psychiatric dogs, but not emotional support animals, to all public places.

• The Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) requires reasonable accommodations by public entities for “service animals” (any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.) However, this accommodation explicitly does not apply to “emotional support animals”. 28 C.F.R. & & 35.104, 36.104, 35.136 (i) (2010)

• “Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) do not qualify as service animals under the ADA, the California Unruh Civil Rights Act nor the Disabled Persons Act”.

• According to the ADA, if someone has doubt regarding a dog’s assistive status, they can only ask two questions:
  #1: Is the dog required because of a disability?
  #2: What work/tasks is it trained to perform?

• Service Dog documentation or proof of certification or licensing cannot be requested. 28 C.F.R. & 35.136(f) (2010)

• California State Law: Makes falsely claiming an animal to be a service animal a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for six months or a fine up to $1000, or both. California Penal Code & 365.7 (1994), California Food and Agricultural Code & 30850(b) (2004)
A 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Solution to the Dog vs. Wildlife/Visitor Dilemma:

Introducing *Canis familiaris* Version 2.0

Advantages of *Canis familiaris* 2.0:

- Does not chase wildlife
- Does not produce scent
- Does not bite
- Does not bark (unless programmed)
- Does not require 5:00 AM walks
- Does not transmit disease - except occasional “virus”
- Does not drink from toilet bowl
- DOES actually respond to voice commands

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