

# L.A. HABITATS

**CONCRETE JUNGLE OR  
BIODIVERSITY HAVEN?**



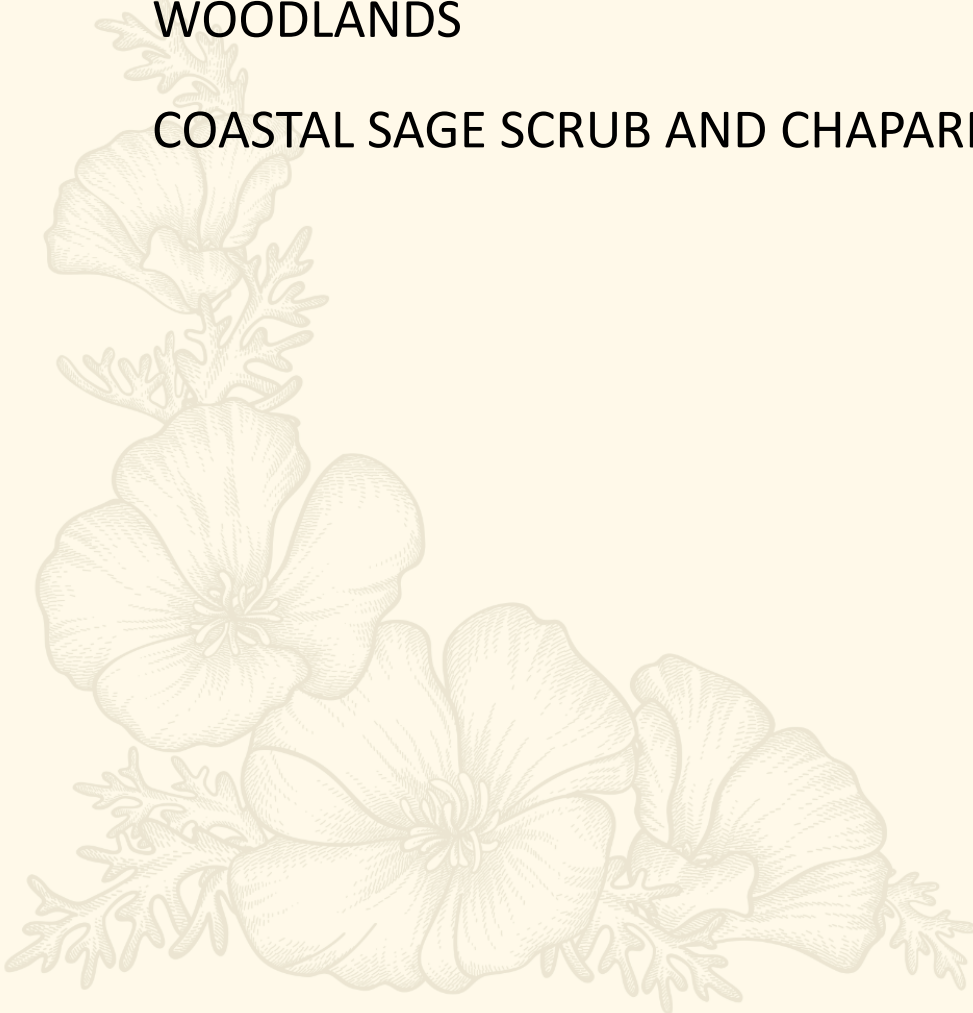
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## HABITATS IN LOS ANGELES

The City of Los Angeles resides within the California Floristic Province, a biodiversity hotspot along the Pacific coast. Biodiversity hotspots are defined by having at least 1,500 endemic plant species, or species which can be found nowhere else, and at least 70% of its native vegetation under severe threat of loss or degradation. The California Floristic province specifically has almost 3,500 unique plant species, with over half of these being endemic. California's mediterranean type climate system with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters as well as its unique geological formations are ideal conditions for rich amounts of biodiversity. However, habitats within California are at high risk of degradation by factors such as urban sprawl, greenhouse gas emissions, and invasive species to name a few. As such, Californians are in a unique position to both experience an amazing variety of different ecosystems and to also encourage stewardship of these lands.

**Los Angeles County contains miles of beaches, offshore islands, a coastal mountain range, inland valleys surrounded by hills and mountains that reach 10,000 feet above sea level on Mount Baldy, and the western-most part of the Mojave Desert.**

**-Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning**

## COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

### About

California's coastal habitats are characterized by the narrow bands where the land meets the sea. There is over 75 miles of coastline within Los Angeles County, with about a third of this extent being publicly managed.



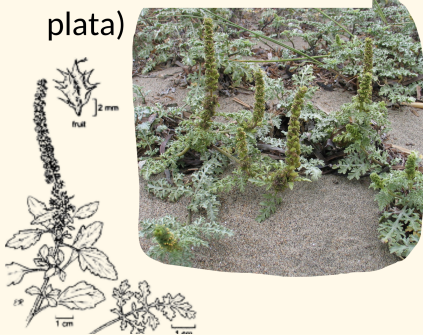
*Eriogonum parvifolium*

(Seacliff buckwheat / Trigo sarraceno de las dunas)

### Plant Communities

Plants within the Coastal Strand community thrive along the shore immediately above the high tide line. These species are adapted to relatively harsh conditions such as high winds, frequent salt sprays, and low levels of nutrients within their loose, sandy substrate.

*Ambrosia chamissonis*  
(Silver beachweed / Ambrosía de rebaba de plata)



### Wildlife

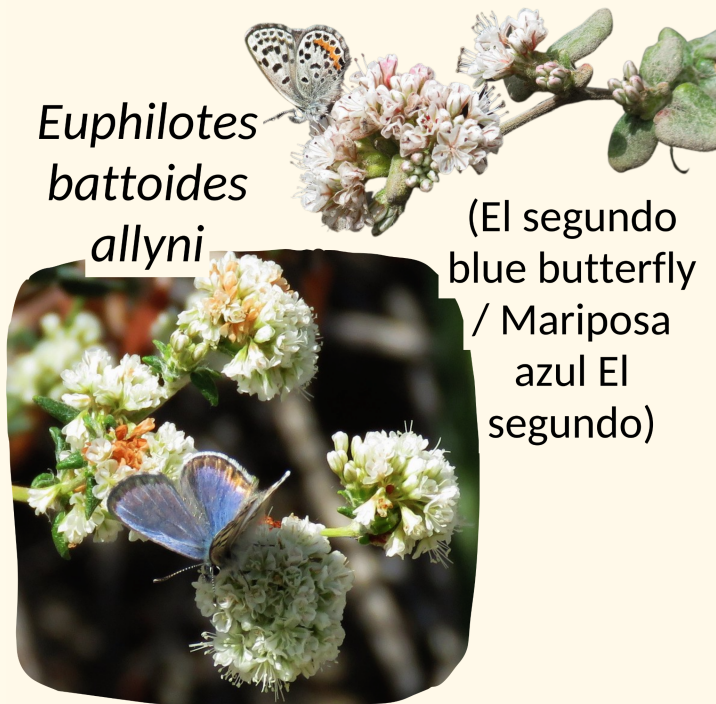
Coastal habitats within Los Angeles are home to a variety of wildlife, including a number of threatened or endangered species. Specifically, the coast's sandy beaches and proximity to ocean resources provide ideal habitat for nesting or marine birds. Coastal plant communities, with their unique adaptations, additionally provide habitat for invertebrate biodiversity.

*Sternula antillarum brownii*



(California least tern / Charrancito americano californiano)

*Euphilotes battoides allyni*



(El segundo blue butterfly / Mariposa azul El segundo)



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## WHERE TO VISIT

[LA County "Find a Beach" Resource](#)

Venice Beach Least Tern Colony

Vía Marina, Venice, CA 90292

33.96607687284728, -118.45526476850384

**Access:** Close proximity to the 108 Metro Bus

Will Rogers State Beach

Los Angeles, CA 90272

34.03484594418355, -118.53510490506329

**Access:** Close proximity to the 534 Metro Bus





## INTERTIDAL ZONES

### About

Intertidal zones are the areas that are submerged during high tide, and exposed during low tide. These areas are characterized by vertically arranged wildlife composed mostly of invertebrates. From bottom to top, the distinct regions of the intertidal zone are as follows: low intertidal zone, mid intertidal zone, high intertidal zone, and the spray zone. LA County has a variety of these habitats you can visit, from Malibu to San Pedro.

### Plants

Plants that thrive in the intertidal zone are typically marine plants or algae. These plants must be adapted to the changing water conditions, and they usually reside in the lowermost regions of the tidal pool due to the relatively consistent water levels. Several plant species in the tidal zone are foragable have several traditional ecological uses.

### Wildlife

Wildlife in the intertidal zone is characteristically vertically arranged. These organisms are adapted for the changing moisture levels of their environments. For example, bivalves, snails, and crabs, have rigid outer shells in order to prevent themselves from drying out.

*Mytilus californicus* (California mussel / Mejillón californiano)



*Phyllospadix scouleri*



(Scouler's Surfgrass / Pasto marino)

*Corallina officinalis*



(Common coralline / Alga coralina)

*Aplysia californica* (California sea hare / Liebre de mar californiana)





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## WHERE TO VISIT

[LA County "Find a Beach" Resource](#)

[Compilation of Tide Pools in Los Angeles](#)

White Point Beach

Los Angeles, CA 90731

33.71606016096345, -118.31355179799093

**Access:** Roughly 1 mile from the nearest public transit stop.

Leo Carrillo State Park

35000 Pacific Coast Hwy, Malibu, CA 90265

34.04338656005891, -118.93693033699451

**Access:** Very far from Los Angeles public transit routes. [Helpful Resource](#) for planning a trip.



## WETLANDS

### About

Wetland habitats are inundated with water near or at the same elevation as the land, either permanently or seasonally. Prior to colonization, California had an estimated 4 million acres of wetland habitats. Only about 10% of California's native wetland habitats are preserved today.

### *Schoenoplectus americanus*



(American three-square bulrush / Totora)

### Plants

Wetland plants are adapted to growing in close proximity to permanent or seasonal water bodies. For example, these plants tend to have specialized roots which are either shallow or adventitious in order to create ideal conditions to uptake water and nutrients.

### Wildlife

Due to the abundance of water, plants, and other resources or ecosystem services, wetlands are teeming with wildlife. Specifically, there is a large amount of bird species which thrive within wetland habitats.



*Salicornia pacifica* (Pacific glasswort / *Salicornia pacífica*)



*Ardea herodias*  
(Great blue heron/Garza azulada)







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## WHERE TO VISIT

Ballona Wetlands  
303 Culver Boulevard Playa del Rey, CA,  
90293  
33.959778360666924,  
-118.4478984885026  
**Access:** Close proximity to 115 Metro Bus.  
Wetland area is only open to volunteers  
during restoration events, [linked here.](#)

South Los Angeles Wetlands Park  
5413 S Avalon Blvd, Los Angeles, CA  
90011  
33.99295675992312,  
-118.26619814432246  
**Access:** Very close to several metro bus  
stops.



## RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

### About

Riparian corridors are typically found in temperate climates. In Southern California, they can be found within Mediterranean type climates. These communities are always adjacent to a moving body of water (streams, rivers, creeks, etc.), and usually along canyon and valley bottoms, where water settles.



### Plants

Abundant water in the riparian zone enables trees to form relatively open canopies, with shrubs and herbs residing below. Riparian plants are adapted to common fluctuations in water levels ranging from dry to flooded conditions.

### Wildlife

Due to the great biodiversity in the plant community and the abundant resources from the adjacent water bodies, riparian corridors support large amounts of wildlife. Invertebrates, mammals, birds, and amphibians would all be abundant here.

*Plucialis fulva* (Pacific golden-plover / Chorlito dorado asiático)



*Tringa semipalmata*





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## WHERE TO VISIT

Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path

[Map and Additional Resources Available Here](#)

Los Angeles River Greenway

[Map and Additional Resources Available Here](#)





## WOODLANDS

### About

Woodlands are typically found on north facing slopes. In Southern California, these communities are usually found within Mediterranean type climates, typically occurring across valleys or canyons and along streams.

### *Quercus agrifolia*



(Coast live oak / Roble californiano)

### Plants

Woodlands are defined as areas with abundant trees comprising a relatively open canopy, with shrubs and herbaceous plants present in the understory. Woodlands are named for the most dominant tree species, like Oak Woodlands or Sycamore Riparian Woodlands for example.

*Buteo jamaicensis*  
(Red tailed hawk / Ratonero de cola roja)



*Sceloporus occidentalis*  
(Western Fence Lizard / Lagartija de cerca occidental)



### *Platanus racemosa*



(Western sycamore / Sicómoro californiano)

### Wildlife

Woodland habitats, especially Oak woodlands, provide huge amounts of habitat for wildlife due to all of the ecosystem services provided by the abundant trees. Invertebrates, mammals, birds, and reptiles would all be abundant here.



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## WHERE TO VISIT

Temescal Gateway Park

[Map and Additional Resources Here](#)

Franklin Canyon Park

[Map and Additional Resources Here](#)





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## COASTAL SAGE SCRUB & CHAPARRAL

### About

Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) and Chaparral plant communities are found in Mediterranean type climate systems, usually below 5,000 feet in elevation and along the coasts. Coastal Sage Scrub is often cited as the most endangered ecosystem in the world, under threat of urban sprawl.

### Plants

Chaparral habitats are dominated by dense stands of summer-drought-tolerant shrubs with hard sclerophyllous, evergreen leaves. Conversely, CSS communities are dominated by lower-growing (typically around waist height), fragrant, drought deciduous shrubs and are much less dense than chaparral communities. However, these two plant communities are closely related and share many of the same species.

*Adenostoma fasciculatum*  
(Chamise/Chamise)



California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)



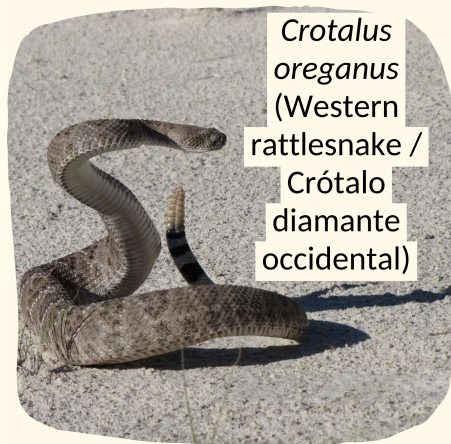
### Wildlife

With the warmer and drier conditions within both the CSS and chaparral, larger organisms are not as abundant as in other habitats. A few exceptions include larger mammals such as coyotes, mule deer, or mountain lions. As is the case in most habitats within biodiversity hotspots, these regions support plentiful wildlife communities.

*Canis latrans*  
(Coyote / Coyote)



*Crotalus oreganus*  
(Western rattlesnake / Crótalo diamante occidental)







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## LUGARES DE VISITA

LA Tuna Canyon Park

[Map and Additional Resources](#)

Westridge-Canyonback Wilderness Park

[Map and Additional Resources](#)