

Heisler Park

AREA OF SPECIAL BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

HIGH LEVEL OF HIGH THREAT DISCHARGE

Area of Special Biological Significance = Zero Pollution Discharge

In the 1970s, to preserve biologically unique and sensitive marine ecosystems for future generations, California designated 34 regions along the coast as Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). These areas support an unusual variety of aquatic life, and are important building blocks for a sustainable, resilient coastal environment and economy. Although the State Water Board's Ocean Plan prohibits all waste discharges into these areas, pollution continues to damage these important habitats.

With YOUR help, California Coastkeeper Alliance is working to ensure important marine ecosystems are protected from pollution.



Heisler Park boasts impressive tidepooling opportunities, giving visitors an up-close look at marine life like these ochre sea stars. This reserve is a popular tidepooling area and can suffer from scavenging by beach visitors.

Heisler Park borders a half mile of coastline and covers 32 acres of ocean habitat in Orange County. Despite its compact size, this ASBS bursts with exquisitely bejeweled wildlife along the shore and underwater. Black-bellied plovers winter at the beach as gulls swoop down looking for food. Low tide reveals a treasure trove of marine gems resting in tide pools including pink clonal anemones, two-spotted octopi, violet sea slugs, bat stars and knobby and ochre sea stars. In deeper water, black-crested gobies, rainbow perch and bright orange Garibaldi's dart above cobalt blue sponges, hairy hermit crabs and endangered pink and black abalone.



Overlooking Heisler Park.

Pollution

The State Water Board has determined that despite protection under California law, the Heisler Park ASBS is contaminated with trash, sediment, indicator bacteria and pathogens from stormwater runoff, urban runoff and irrigation runoff. These contaminants threaten water quality and can harm fish and wildlife.

One Threat and Solution: Stormwater Runoff

One pollution source that particularly threatens the Heisler Park ASBS is polluted stormwater. Rainwater, irrigation systems and other water sources flow over streets and yards, picking up pollutants and dumping them into storm drains that flow to local waterways. Stormwater carries trash, oil, pesticides and other pollutants into natural waterways, potentially poisoning aquatic plants and animals, particularly in sensitive marine ecosystems like ASBSs.

The City of Laguna Beach can reduce stormwater runoff by incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) techniques into constructed surfaces such as rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians. These design elements work with nature to filter polluted stormwater. For example, parking lots and streetscapes can be constructed to funnel stormwater into landscaped elements called bio-swales that capture and filter rainwater before reaching local waterways. Stormwater filtration devices can also be inserted into storm drains for added protection.

Learn More

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_map.shtml

<http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/programs/clean-abundant/stormwater-runoff>

<http://www.sdcoastkeeper.org/content/programs/asbs/overview.htm>

Pollution Threats At A Glance

- **Number of High Threat Discharges:** 14
- **State Board Identified Contaminants:** Trash, Sediment, Indicator Bacteria and Pathogens
- **Pollution Sources:** Stormwater runoff, urban runoff and irrigation runoff