## 4 LIFE ON THE ROCKS

Tidepool life adapts to survive from high tide to low tide. Imagine living among these rocks. You would spend half your life trying not to wash away in the pounding waves and the other half trying not to dry out. Predators could threaten you at any time from land, sea and air. Do you think you could survive? Despite these challenges, many "tough guys of the tidepools" do survive—even thrive—in these conditions.

Sarah Lenz

Anemones, barnacles, mussels, algae and seastars (pictured) cling to rocks.

Ryan Huber

Crabs have flattened bodies which allow them to crawl into crevices.

Sarah Lenz

Sea urchins (pictured), and some limpets and chitons carve homes into the rock.

**Tidepool life has not adapted to rough handling by humans.** Please observe with your eyes and leave creatures, rocks and shells where you find them.

*Continue down the beach until you reach a stairway. Climb the stairs and read the signs at the landing. Turn left at the top of the stairs and look for bare soil at the base of any nearby tree.*

**www.fitzgeraldreserve.org**

## 5 HUMAN LIFE ON THE EDGE

The bounty of marine life now protected in Fitzgerald Marine Reserve has drawn humans to this edge for centuries. Do you see any pieces of shell in the soil? An Ohlone person may have left it here more than 200 years ago! For centuries members of an Ohlone tribe harvested shellfish from the tidepools below and cooked them in an open hearth here on the bluff.


Linda Ciotti

*Walk toward the palm trees.*

Behind these palm trees, you will find the remains of a house foundation. Several families made their homes on this site from the late 19th century until the early 1970s. As you continue through a cypress forest planted over a century ago, you'll come to an open marine terrace. Along the fence, you'll find interpretive signs describing marine life beyond the marine reserve. From here, you'll see the tidepools and possibly the harbor seals resting on the beach or the rocks.

The volunteers of the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve work together with San Mateo County Parks to ensure that this unique meeting of land and sea remains a healthy home for marine life and a healthy part of our human community.

*Background sea anemone photo: Sarah Nuehring*

*Welcome to*

# FITZGERALD MARINE RESERVE

Mary DeLong

## *... where marine life makes a home on the edge.*

Please use this self-guided walking tour to find marine life making homes where land, air and sea all come together. Plants, algae and animals adopt diverse strategies to survive in an environment that changes with the tides, the seasons and the ages. **These creatures need us, as visitors to their homes, to adapt our behavior to this unique environment.** With our help, these creatures will continue to inspire generations of future human visitors. **Please do not collect, disturb or remove anything from this California Marine Protected Area (MPA).**

*Open to begin your visit!*

FRIENDS OF FITZGERALD MARINE RESERVE

*Published by the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve*

# 1 VISITOR CENTER

**Before you explore life on the edge at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, are you prepared to:**

- spend at least 45 minutes?
- climb up and down stairs?
- keep your balance on wet, slippery surfaces?

If you answered "yes" to all of these questions, **and you have checked the Visitor Center's tide chart to see if the tide will dip below 1.0',** you can probably follow the route described here.


Map by Joseph Carr Ritchie

*Cross the road at the corner of North Lake Street and Nevada Avenue. Please stop and read the signs as you continue toward the ocean. Stop at the bench above the beach and face the ocean.*

# 2 BENCH WITH A VIEW

**Earth-shaping forces create the edges where marine life makes a home.** To your left, San Vicente Creek runs down a trace of the Seal Cove Fault. This fault continues beneath the waves toward Point Reyes (visible on clear days). East of the fault, earthquakes push the cliffs upward, while storm waves during extreme high tides wear away their bases. West of the fault, these earthquakes lift soft rocks from the deep sea floor to sea level. As waves pound the former sea floor, they wear away the softest materials. Retreating tides leave the low areas full of seawater. These tidepools and the surrounding rocks provide homes for organisms tough enough to withstand stresses from both land and sea.

Sarah Lenz

*Go down the stairs and cross the creek. Stay 100 yards/92 meters—the length of a football field—from any seals or other marine mammals. Federal law prohibits disturbing marine mammals. Stop and read 3 before proceeding down the beach.*

# 3 HARBOR SEALS

Sarah Lenz

**Marine mammals seek these shores for safety.** Harbor seals find plenty of food in the cold Northern Pacific Ocean, but the harbor seals can become food themselves for sharks and other large predators in the open water. "Safe harbors" like Fitzgerald Marine Reserve allow harbor seals to haul out of the water, rest and warm up any time of year. Harbor seals may also use these rocks as nurseries, giving birth and nursing their pups in the spring.

One of the greatest threats to marine mammals comes from the land. Humans hunted many marine mammal species to the brink of extinction. Federal law now protects marine mammals as their populations recover. **Please do your part: observe harbor seals from a safe distance (100 yards/92 meters) to allow them to rest.**

*If you can continue without disturbing the seals, walk down the beach and out onto the rocks.*

Please abide by the following "good tidepooler rules" to help protect and preserve this Marine Protected Area (MPA). **Observe the marine life–do not touch it!**

- Never remove plants, animals, shells, feathers, rocks or driftwood.
- Never pickup or move any plant or animal.
- Never feed any animal.
- Never pick up or turn over rocks.
- Walk gently, taking care not to step on plants or animals.
- Do not walk through the tidepools.
- Do not disturb harbor seals. Stay a safe distance away from them. If orange cones are present on the beach or reef, do not cross or walk between the cones. Stay on the beach side of the cones.