



I am writing in support of preserving the seal rookery at Casa Beach in LaJolla. It is appalling that there is even consideration of exiling these beautiful seals from this beach where for years they have given birth, nursed their young and taught them the skills to survive in the wild. As humans, we have increasingly encroached upon the habitat of all of our wildlife. It is imperative that, when at all possible, we provide safe haven for our marine mammals not just to survive, but to thrive in this world. I feel that at Casa Beach there is not only an opportunity to protect them, but a responsibility to do so as well.

Additionally, it is an incredible opportunity for both adults and children to learn about nature. Where else (except Ano Nuevo) can one stand so close to a marine mammal and observe them for hours in their natural habitat? It is a wondrous and exhilarating experience. I witnessed this firsthand in March when colleagues and I made a 2-day trip to LaJolla from Seattle specifically to visit the seal rookery. While there I also witnessed a breach of the rope barricade by a skindiver, flushing the entire seal population into the water---a clear violation of the MMPA. I strongly encourage you to make the beach off-limits to the public. There are excellent, close viewpoints from the seawall and from the sidewalk above as seen in these photos. Allowing onlookers on the beach within yards of the seals causes visibly stressful reactions in them.



It is heartbreaking to think that this cove will be dredged so that people can swim there--surely we have enough beaches for that purpose. It will be a sad legacy for the community of LaJolla (and indeed for our governing federal agencies) if the seals are driven from this cove. I urge you to please enforce the MMPA, requiring the public to remain at a respectable distance, and designate this a protected marine preserve.

Sincerely,

Robin Lindsey

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