

COASTAL NATURAL HISTORY

Group Contract, Summer 1979 (Second half)

Peter B. Taylor, Faculty Sponsor

This group study program was about the seashore life of Washington's marine coasts. A variety of organisms, including algae, vascular plants, invertebrate animals, fishes, birds, and mammals, were observed in the field and laboratory. Representative habitats of the ocean coast and Puget Sound were visited. The development of observational skills, supported by rigorous field and laboratory notes, was stressed. Coastal ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest, and their importance to people, were examined through the field trips and through reading, discussion, lectures, and films.

Texts

The principal texts were: (1) Carefoot, T. 1977. Pacific Seashores: A Guide to Intertidal Ecology, (2) Kozloff, E.N. 1973. Seashore Life of Puget Sound, the Strait of Georgia, and the San Juan Archipelago, and (3) Snively, G. 1978. Exploring the Seashore in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. Several other texts were recommended as field and laboratory references for identification of coastal organisms.

Lectures and Films

The Faculty Sponsor presented an introduction to the geography, geological history and habitats of the Washington coast. Films shown were: The Beach - A River of Sand, Signals For Survival (communication and behavior in gulls), and Life of the Sockeye Salmon.

Seminars

Weekly sessions featured discussion of reading in Pacific Seashores, review of past field trips and preview of forthcoming field trips.

Field Trips

Field trips were made to: Blakely Harbor (one day--protected rocky intertidal-Puget Sound), TESC beach (protected beach, mixed materials-Puget Sound), Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula (three days--salt marsh, bay sandflats, ocean beach, coastal dunes), Rialto Beach (three days--ocean beach and rocky headland-Olympic Peninsula), and The Seattle Aquarium.

Field Notes and Species Resumes

A system for recording field observations was prescribed, employing a Field Journal and separate Species Accounts. Also assigned were "Species Resumes," summarizing natural history information compiled from published references for 50 species with certain taxa specified.

Individual Field Study

A final assignment was a field study, carried out individually or in small groups, to examine and report on a specific seashore site or habitat. The results were presented in the Field Journal and Species Accounts and in written and oral summary reports.