

# Coast to Cactus Glossary

## Coast

**Adaptation:** Physical structures, characteristics or behaviors that allow an organism to survive and reproduce in its environment.

**Algae:** Any of a group of chiefly aquatic, non-vascular plants such as seaweed, pond scum, with chlorophyll often masked by a brown or red pigment.

**Altricial:** A young bird or other animal hatched or born in an undeveloped state and requiring care and feeding by the parents.

**Biodiversity:** Variety of animal and plant life on earth, generally counted by species.

**Burrows:** A hole or tunnel dug into the ground by an animal to create a space suitable for habitation.

**Coastal sage:** Vegetation dominated by shrubs and small trees.

**Condensation:** Change of water from its vapor state to liquid.

**Crustaceans:** Any of a large class of mostly aquatic arthropods with chitinous exoskeleton such a lobster, shrimp, crab, wood lice, water fleas and barnacles.

**Cryptic Coloration:** Camouflage; concealment through disruption of outline.

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**Dew:** Moisture on a surface that appears on surfaces especially after a cool night.

**Diurnal:** Active during the day.

**Ecosystem:** A community of plants and animals and their interrelated physical and chemical environments.

**Endemic:** Plant or animal native to a particular region.

**Estuary:** Partly enclosed body of water where salt water from the ocean mixes with freshwater from rivers and streams.

**Fog:** Condensed water vapor that forms a cloud low to the ground and limits visibility.

**Forage:** To wander in search of food.

**Habitat:** The natural area where an animal lives.

**Hatchling:** Newly hatched birds.

**Lagoon:** An area of shallow water separated by low banks.

**Midden:** Large nests out of twigs, sticks, leaves, and other objects. Some middens can be hundreds of years old.

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**Migrate:** To move from one region or habitat to another according to the seasons.

**Migratory:** When an animal migrates.

**Mudflat:** A stretch of muddy land left uncovered at low tide.

**Native:** Plants and animals endemic or naturalized to a given area or region.

**Non-Native Plants:** A species living outside its native range.

**Non-Migratory:** Animals living in one area throughout the year.

**Predator:** An animal that hunts and kills other animals.

**Prey:** An animal hunted or caught for food.

**Radula:** Specialized tongue-like organ found in most mollusks that is used for gathering food by scraping, cutting, or drilling.

**Raptor:** Bird of prey.

**Saltgrass:** Grass growing in salt marshes.

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**Species:** A group of related animals or plants.

**Succulent:** A plant that has specialized areas in stem, root, or leaf for storing water.

**Tides:** Rise and fall of the sea level.

**Torrey Pine:** A rare pine species growing only in the Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, coastal northern San Diego county, and on Santa Rosa Island.

**Wetlands:** Low lying areas where water covers the soil for varying periods of time.