Beautiful and the Beach

Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda offers exciting opportunities for understanding the forms of life in and around San Francisco Bay.

Beachcombing or a leisurely stroll along the 2.5-mile shoreline will help you to appreciate the importance of this urban beach. From the shore you can see across the Bay to San Francisco.

The beach is enjoyed by school groups, joggers, runners, swimmers, sunbathers, fishing enthusiasts, birdwatchers, sandcastle architects and other lovers of the outdoors.

Before Crown Beach

Shoreline recreation was thriving on Alameda Island as early as 1878. Establishments such as Neptune and Croll’s Gardens, Terrace Baths, Sunset Beach and Green Arbor were among the amusing ancestors of Crown Beach.

Thousands came to Neptune Beach to enjoy the roller coaster, merry-go-round and other “thill” rides. A large swimming pool was also available for those who dared not risk the waters of the Bay. The park served as a training school for such famous boxers as “Gentleman Jim” Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons. During World War II the federal government purchased the land and developed it into a training facility for maritime officers.

In 1959 the beach became a state park. It was dedicated in 1967 as Alameda Memorial State and Regional Beaches, and later renamed to honor the late California Assemblyman Robert W. Crown.

Crown Beach is now operated by the East Bay Regional Park District.

Go With the Tide

Beach activities are influenced by the tides. During the fall and winter months, high tide is the best time to observe sea birds like loons, grebes and various ducks close to shore. Low tides are best for observing shorebirds and intertidal organisms that live in the rocky and mudflat areas. At low tide their habitat is exposed. Tide tables are available at the Crab Cove Visitor Center at the northwest end of the shoreline park, or search online for “tide tables, Alameda California”.

Help Protect the “Locals”

Help us to protect the creatures of Crown Beach and San Francisco Bay for all those who will follow you. All along the coast of California, once-flourishing tidepool areas are suffering extensive damage at the hands of collectors. Please leave behind the things you see along the shoreline and in the sea. The beach is host to a diverse array of life forms. While they may seem to be attractive to beachcombers or bird watchers, they are also important examples of the work of the Exhibit Lab staff.

The Visitor Center

The Visitor Center opened in 1980. It is open to the public from March through November, Wednesdays through Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The center, which contains the Old Wharf Classroom, interprets the history of Crown Beach and offers an introduction to Bay ecology. Interpretive programs, led by Park District naturalists, are featured for the public on weekends, and on weekdays by reservation.

Crown Beach is also the home of the Park District’s Exhibit Lab, where interpretive displays are prepared for Visitor Centers throughout the two-county park district. The displays housed in Crab Cove Visitor Center are fine examples of the work of the Exhibit Lab staff.

Bringing a School Group to the Beach?

Interpretive programs for school groups are offered by reservation. For information, phone (510) 521-6887. Most weekend programs do require reservations. An Educator’s Guide will help you to prepare your class for an enjoyable and educational day at Crown Beach. The guide is available at Crab Cove Visitor Center.