

## COASTAL SAGE SCRUB VEGETATION COMMUNITY



Coastal sage scrub consists predominantly of low growing, aromatic and generally soft-leaved shrubs. During spring, this is the community that gives the hills around the inland valleys their soft, gray-green color. During periods of dryness, including summer and extended drought, many of the shrubs will lose their leaves entirely only to regenerate them when rain returns. Coastal Sage Scrub is found mostly on south and west facing slopes from Camp Pendleton to the lower slopes of Palomar Mountain and around Escondido, the San Pasqual Valley, El Cajon and Jamul to the area surrounding Otay Mountain. While approximately 264,000 acres of Coastal sage scrub remains, it was originally the dominant vegetation in San Diego County and once grew where the majority of urban and agricultural development has taken place. Nearly 70% of its original area has been lost and much of what remains exists in small patches of isolated habitat.

When Coastal Sage Scrub is preserved, it helps to protect specific plant and animal species. The dominant shrub species in this habitat community are: sweet scented California sage, a low shrub with gray-green, feathery leaves, Flat-topped buckwheat, a shrub with short dark green, needlelike leaves, Black sage, a shrub with a strong odor, bright green leaves and lavender flowers, the descriptively named Saw-tooth golden bush, Laurel sumac, a large shrub with canoe shaped leaves, Bladderpod sage with its unique, inflated pods, and the San Diego sunflower. A number of animal species also make this community their home including: the California gnatcatcher, a small insect-eating songbird with a cat-like call, the brown colored California towhee, Rufous crowned sparrow and California thrasher.

The Orange throated whiptail lizard, San Diego horned lizard, Banded gecko, Black tailed jackrabbit, Audubon's cottontail and deer mice also use the Coastal sage scrub habitat. Packrats often form middens (wooden nests) in these habitats. Coyotes are common predators in this community and Mule deer may occasionally be seen.



Courtesy of the County of San Diego  
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