

Maric Ivan-MGI2811 wrote:

Hello,

I would like to bring to your attention harassment practices that are happening at Children's Pool in La Jolla: Yesterday, 7/15/2009 around 11pm, me and my sister, who is visiting from Europe, stopped by Children's Pool to see the seals/sea lions. As soon as we got out of the car and walked towards the stairs (for the beach) a guy got out of the white sedan (licence plates removed) and started following us. At that time there was nobody at and around the beach. This person told us " we recommend that people watch seals from upper wall". I politely told him "thank you" and that we would like to really see the seals (it's dark so nothing much can be seen from the wall), and that we will not disturb them. And we went down to the beach, kept the safe distance and not disturb the seals. This person made a phone call, gave us a few more "recommendations" and soon there was another person "giving recommendations". Some other regular citizens came by in the meantime, they got the same harassment from those two. A couple with a kid showed up, they got into an argument with those self-proclaimed seals' protectors. They also went down to the beach, made a few photos. Then another two guys came in the hurry, and started giving me and others "recommendations" while this women pointed flashlight to my face. Only when I said that I'm going to call the police if they don't back off, they stopped doing it, and sort-of left us alone. But they were following us, and others around; even when we climbed up the stairs and went to the west wall.

Not only that these self-proclaimed seal's protectors verbally harass people, they also perform "scare tactics", and as you well know, this is a recipe for an incident and confrontation.

I've been coming to Children's Pool for last 15 years, I was always enjoying marine life in a way that animals don't mind, and I've never seen anybody doing harm to them. There is a federal law protecting them from disturbance, teasing etc, etc. I don't think there should be a group of people, practically living on that beach or on the parking lot, who should be harassing visitors in any way. Things like this shouldn't happened in La Jolla.