

4/10/55

## Harbor Seal Is Mournful-Looking Mammal



To obtain this closeup of a harbor seal, caught on one of his favorite rocks at Carmel, the naturalist-author of the accompanying article spent six months and stalked the wary mammal 20 times. The seal was sunning himself, and no doubt dreaming of some fish heaven where finny specimens could be taken with no effort, when he was surprised by the click of the camera.

## Along The Trail

by

## ken legg

There are many places along the coast where certain islands are known as Seal Rock. Santa Cruz has its Seal Rock, as do the 17-mile drive and San Francisco, among other places. There are trained seals in the circus and most people refer to our most conspicuous marine mammal as a seal.

Correctly speaking these are not seals at all but sea lions. And for the skeptic who may say, "What's the difference," you can no more call a sea lion a seal than you can call a cow a horse.

Certain differences separate the two animals. Scientists believe seals and sea lions were once land animals. From an evolutionary standpoint sea lions have not lived in the ocean as long as the seals and are not as well adapted to their watery surroundings.

Oddly enough the young of sea lions must be born on land, must be taught to swim and at birth are more helpless in the water than many land animals. Young seals are born in the water and can swim immediately.

Seals do not haul out of the water and "climb" high rocks as do sea lions. The rear flippers of a sea lion can be turned under and forward and used for locomotion on land. The flippers of seals are fixed in a backward-pointing position and can be used only for swimming.

Sea lions number in the thousands in California waters. Our most common seal, the harbor seal, has a population in the hun-

dreds. Harbor seals are cigar-shaped animals, usually gray, and mottled. Often they stand motionless in the water surveying their surroundings with only their funny faces showing. This grey head and face reminds me of a comic old man of the sea.

Doubtless harbor seals occur at Santa Cruz but their more conspicuous neighbors, the sea lions, steal the show from them.