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# LINCOLN PARK TO ZOO

## SPECIES: AMERICAN DUNE GRASS

### AMERICAN DUNE GRASS – *Elymus mollis* ssp.

Get tough! (When the going gets tough...)  
American Dune Grass (*Elymus mollis* ssp.) belongs to the 'foredune grassland' ecosystem, forming a narrow margin right along the coast, where plants can withstand salt spray, salty sand, little to no fresh water, unstable soils, occasional inundation during storms, low nutrient levels, and abrasion by wind and water. This grass is native across coastlines in Asia, Russia, Iceland, Greenland as well as North America and Canada. Humans have found myriad uses for American Dune Grass. Thick bunches of roots were used to scrub the body while bathing; and leaves were woven into mats, baskets, hats, bags, ropes and were used for sewing and tying. The leaves were also used to prepare food: to line cooking pots or lay out under drying fruits.

#### RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

#### KEY HABITAT FEATURES

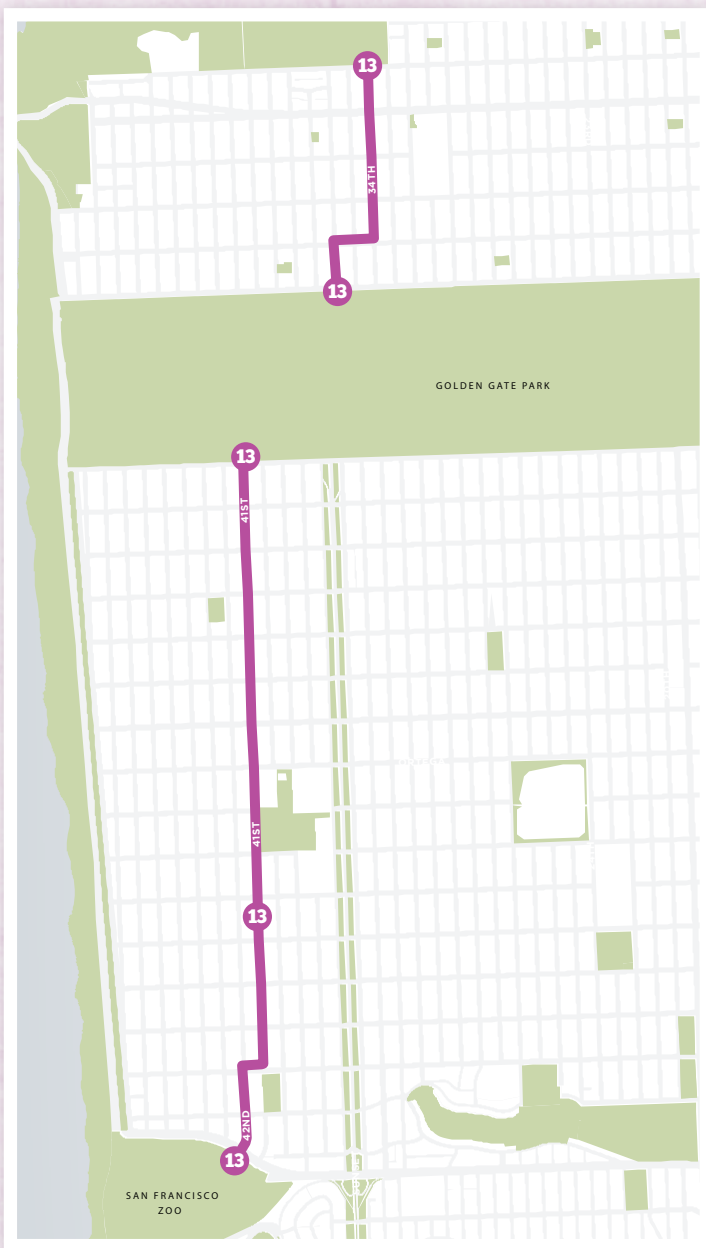
Found in "foredune grassland" that occurs only on dunes of the Pacific Coast of North America. Foredune grasslands are so called because *Leymus mollis* is generally confined to the upper beach and the first rise, or "foredune." Typically, foredune grassland is found on relatively high-energy sandy coastlines, on ocean beaches."

#### ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

*Yellow Sand Verbena* – *Abronia latifolia*, "*Coast Buckwheat* – *Eriogonum latifolium*," *Dune Tansy* – *Tanacetum camphoratum*, *Mock Heather* – *Ericameria ericoides*

#### NESTING INFORMATION

This grass has had a number of other human uses. The Makah, Nitinaht, and Quileute used bunches of the thick roots to rub the body during bathing. The Eskimo used the leaves to make mats, baskets, bags, and ropes for hanging fish to dry. The Hesquiat wove the leaves into handles for sacks. The Kwakiutl made baskets and hats from the leaves, and used them to line the boxes in which they cooked lupine roots. The Nitinaht used the pointed leaves to sew and tie. The Haisla and Hanaksiala used the grass to line pits in which they prepared the oil of the eulachon fish. The Quinault placed salal fruits on a bed of the leaves to dry.



#### ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » Lincoln Park, Golden Gate Park, Holy Name of Jesus School, Sunset Elementary School, Ulloa Elementary School, South Sunset Playground, San Francisco Zoo



Credit: Wikimedia Commons