

## **Marine Biology at the Point Arena Field Station of Mendocino College**

The mission of the Mendocino College Marine Biology program is to instruct students in the methods and techniques used in field research. Student research projects have primarily concentrated on biodiversity. Biodiversity may be one of the most important considerations utilized to understand environmental stability and damage. Students observe intertidal benthic organisms and planktonic organisms first learning the basic phylogeny. Once they are comfortable with the phylogeny, they conduct biodiversity studies and analyze their results by designing and conducting chemical studies related to organism health and success. Historical information is also included in their analysis such as the impact of opening the Stornetta Ranch to the public. Having a somewhat isolated, pristine study area has been helpful because it provides a good baseline for comparisons with other less protected study sites. Our students not only learn about marine ecology but they learn to critically analyze information.

