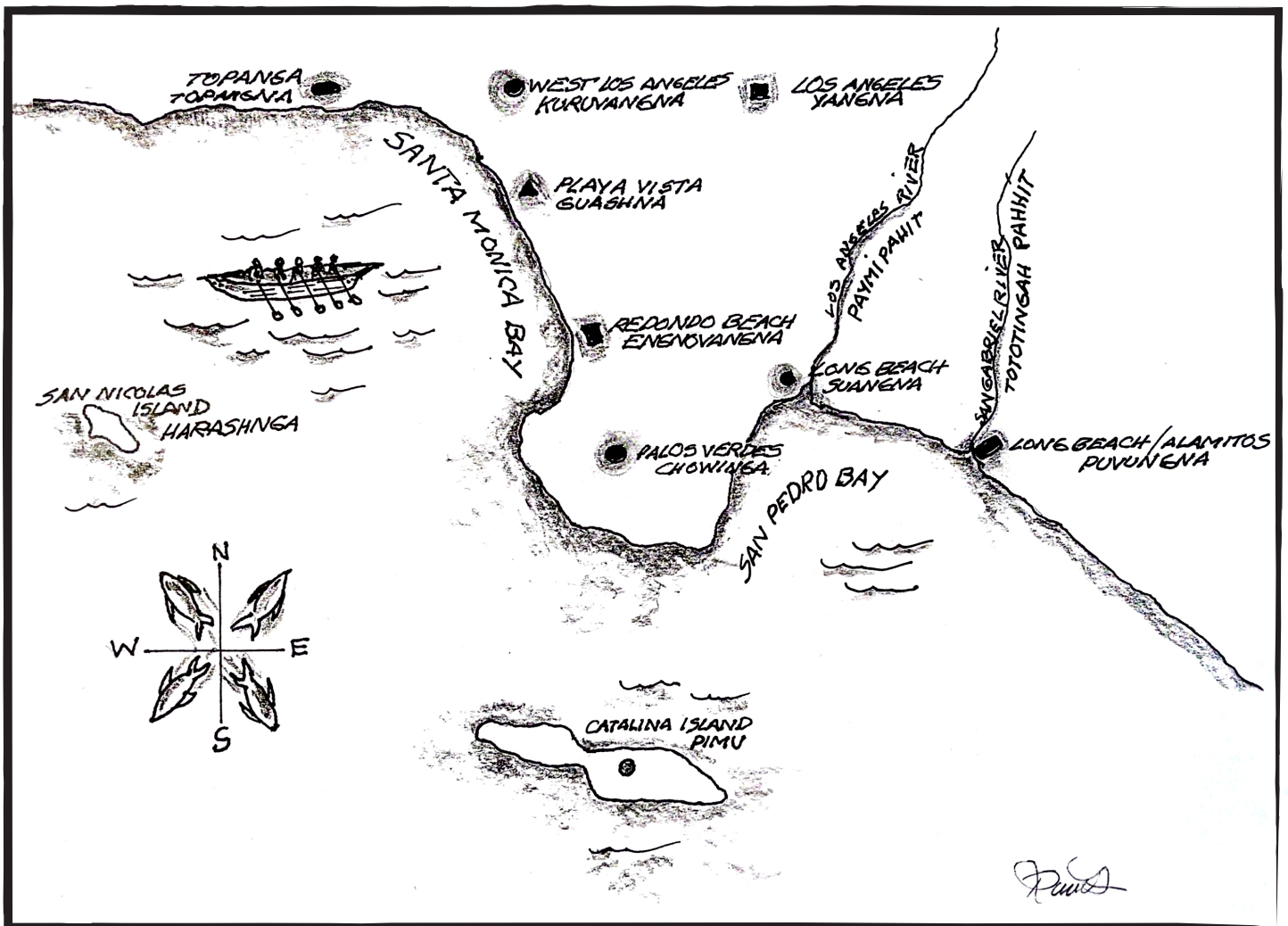




# Gabrielino-Tongva and Ballona Wetlands

The Gabrielino-Tongva are the original people of Tovaangar (greater Los Angeles County, and parts of Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties). Historically, more than 70+ villages could be found from the local islands, along the coast, and inland. The people of the village of Guashna, present-day Playa Vista, were able to utilize the biodiversity of both the land and sea to build a thriving community. Discover the unique resources and special connection the Tongva have to the land we now call Ballona Wetlands.



**Village Map** - Map depicting some of the known historic village sites and names with their present day names as drawn by Robert Dorame, Tribal Chair/Most Likely Descendant, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California.





## Land Resources

The coastal dunes and inland habitats of Ballona Wetlands would have provided their own wealth of resources for survival. The diversity of plants were used as food, medicine, and elements of tools. Chia was a rich food source, salt grass was medicine, willow was medicine and the backbone of the traditional housing structure, the mah-mah-har-ke<sup>ch</sup>, or kiiy.



**Mah-mah-har-ke<sup>ch</sup> (kiiy)** - the traditional home of the Gabrielino-Tongva, built of willow sticks and covered in layers of tule, a local freshwater plant.

The nearby sources of freshwater would have provided the plant tule, a primary component of the home. Tule was also used to make reed canoes for use in shallow water as well as some women's skirts. Plants also provided the raw materials for the variety of baskets made. Native grasses, rushes, and willow shoots were used to craft baskets for: carrying items, as seed beaters, for ceremonial purposes and to hold drinking water.

Faunal resources of the land included rabbit, deer, birds, and more. Hunting wildlife used many tools, including spears, bow and arrow, throwing sticks, nets, and clubs. As with sea resources, the meat of these animals were consumed and the pelts and other parts, including bones and sinew, were used to craft blankets, musical instruments and cordage.

## Tongva Today

For thousands of years, the Gabrielino-Tongva hunted, gathered, and enjoyed a close connection to this land. When people from different lands began to move into this area, changes occurred rapidly. The land was changed to ranching and farming, making it hard to hunt and gather in the traditional ways. The incoming people coaxed and forced the Gabrielino-Tongva into new ways of life. Introduced disease and racism killed far too many. But throughout it all, the Gabrielino-Tongva people endure and continue to have a close connection to this land and maintain their cultural values.

As we look to a shared future, the connection and respect for Ballona Wetlands is something we can all strive for.

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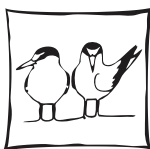
## Special Thanks

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Friends of Ballona Wetlands wish to thank the following organization and people for making this information guide possible.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Special thanks to Robert Dorame, Tribal Chair/Most Likely Descendant, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California, for the information provided in this pamphlet



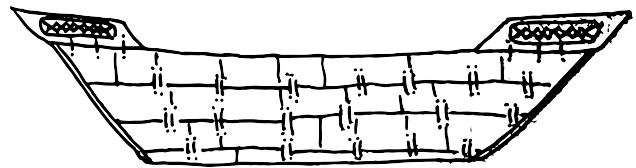
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## Sea Resources

The village name of Guashna can mean "place of mud" which points to its deep connection to the wetlands. While the village was close to the freshwater source from nearby Centinela Creek and Ballona Creek, the resources of the wetlands and nearby ocean would have aided in their survival and ability to trade.

With plank canoes called ti'ats, the Tongva would have been able to fish offshore for bonito, sea bass, yellowfin, and more. Hunting for sea mammals from the ti'at was also done, especially for sea otter whose meat and pelts were used. These canoes would have also enabled travel up and down the coast and out to the local islands, including Pimu (Catalina Island), to trade for resources not found at Ballona Wetlands, like soapstone.



**Ti'at** - the traditional boat of the Gabrielino-Tongva

Closer to shore and within the wetlands, shellfish such as clam, oyster, abalone, and more would have been routinely gathered for food. Then the shells would have been crafted into other materials like fish hooks, currency, and decoration.