





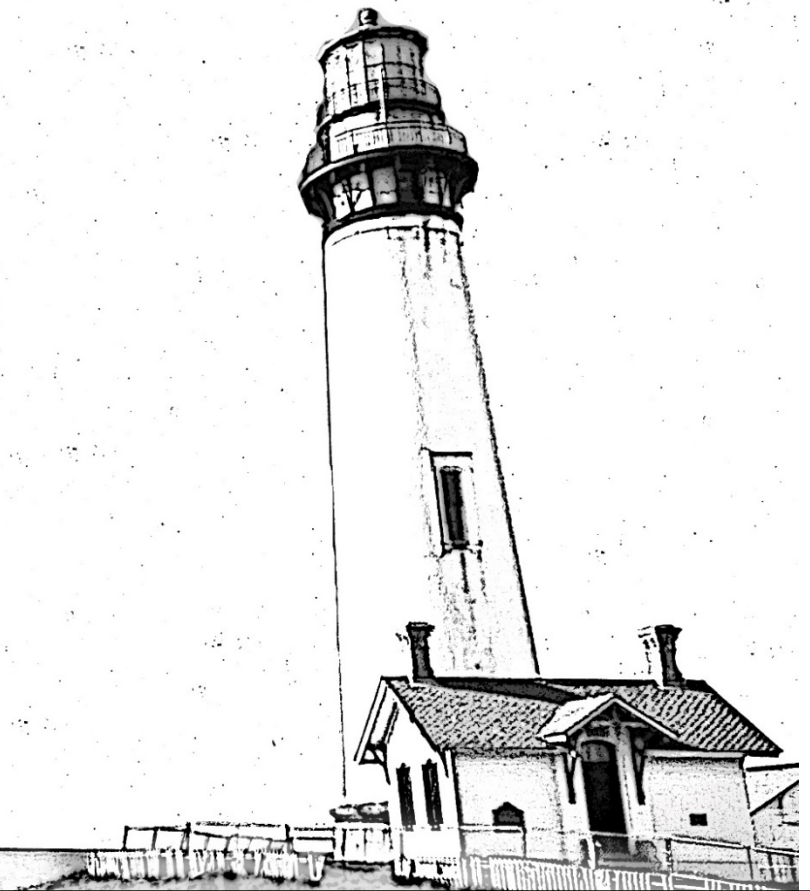


The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History has connected people to the wonders of nature for over 100 years. The Museum highlights the diverse plant, animal, and human communities found from the Santa Cruz mountains to the shorelines of Monterey Bay. Come and explore with us!

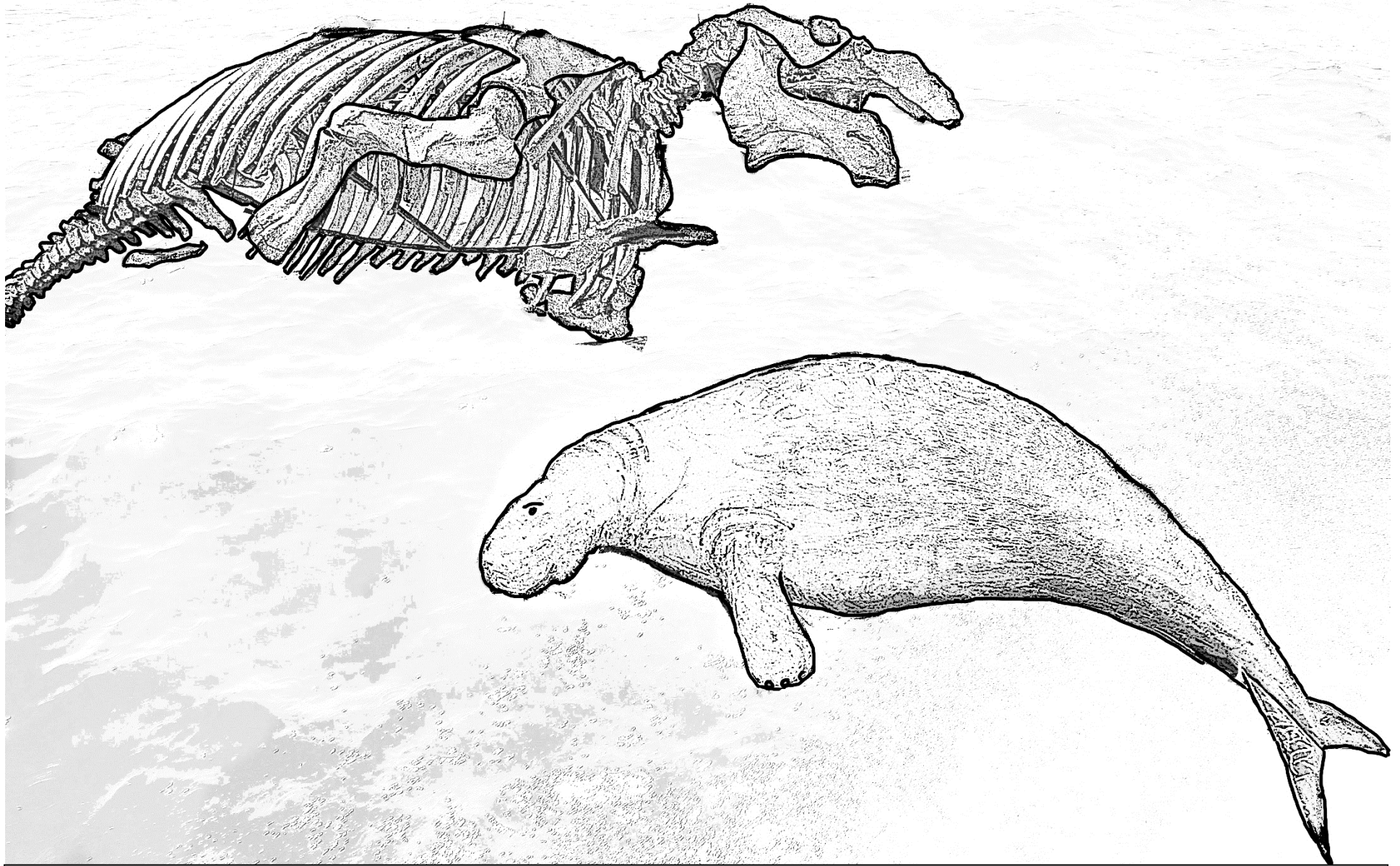




*Laura Hecox*

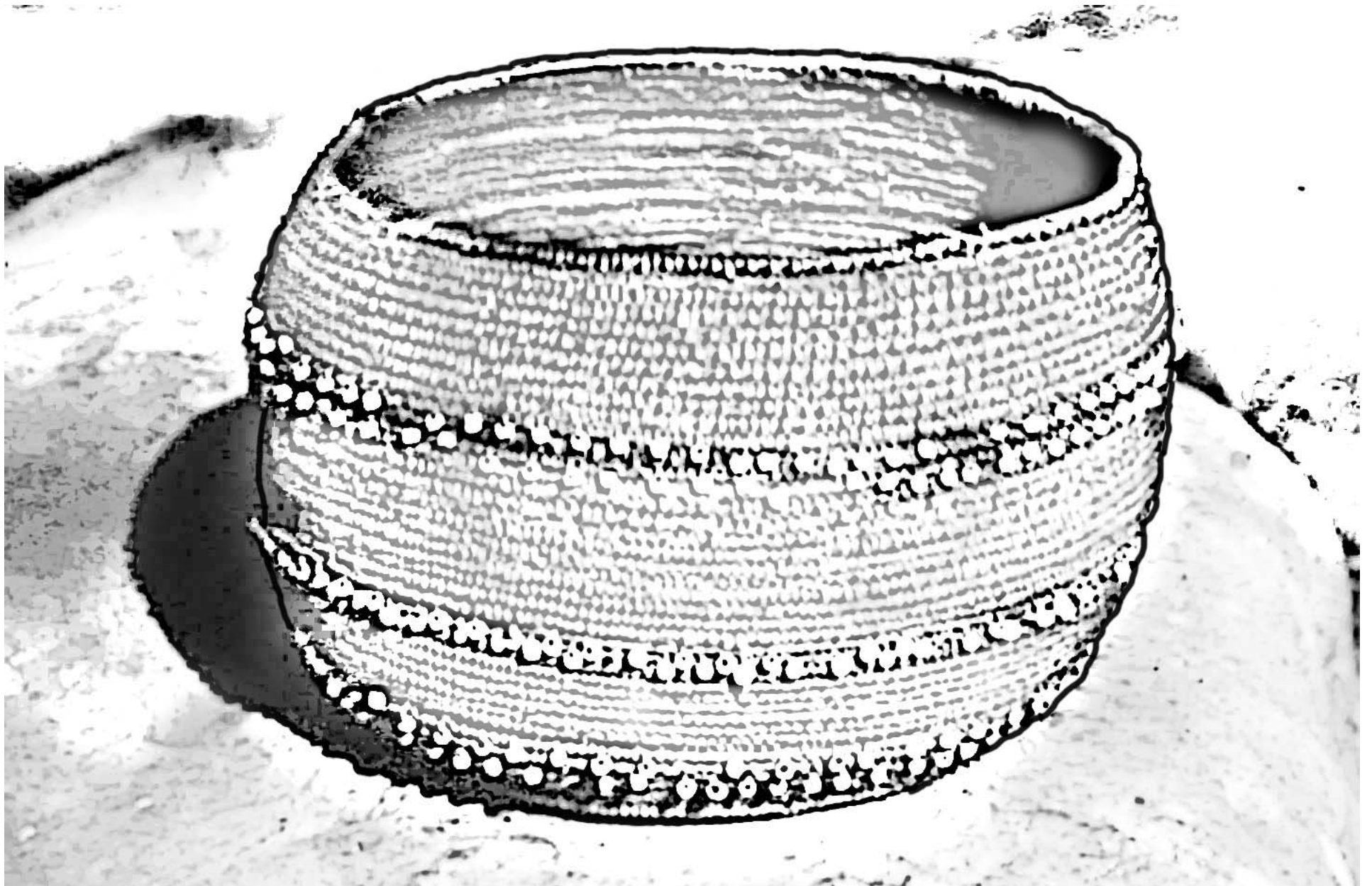


Laura Hecox grew up in Santa Cruz collecting seashells, minerals, fossils, and curios, turning her home in the lighthouse into her own natural history museum. Her collection became the Museum's beginning in 1904.



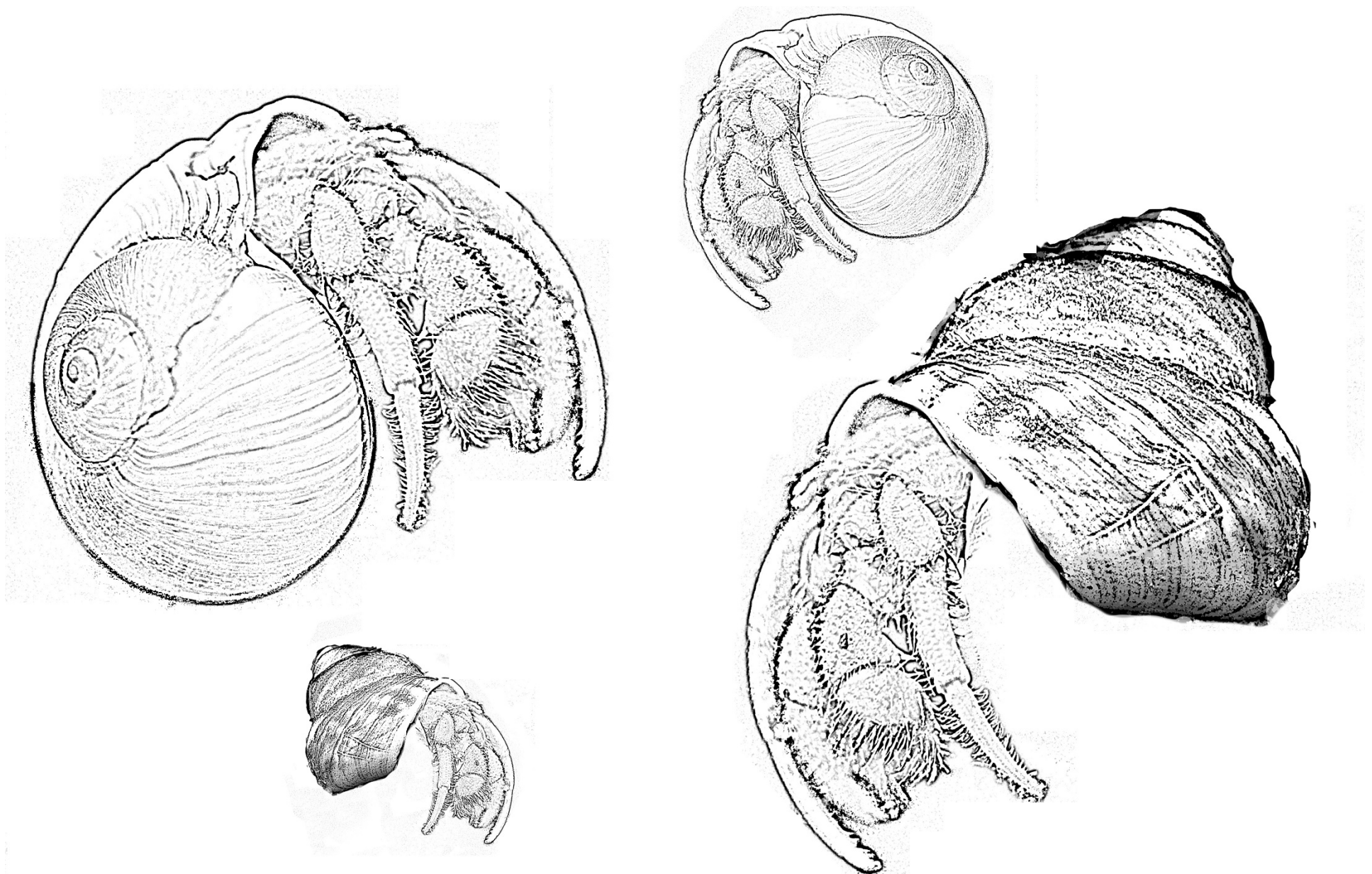
Dugongs, or sea cows are related to manatees. The type of dugong this skeleton belongs to is extinct and used to swim in nearby waters! What sort of things can you learn about an animal by looking at its skeleton?





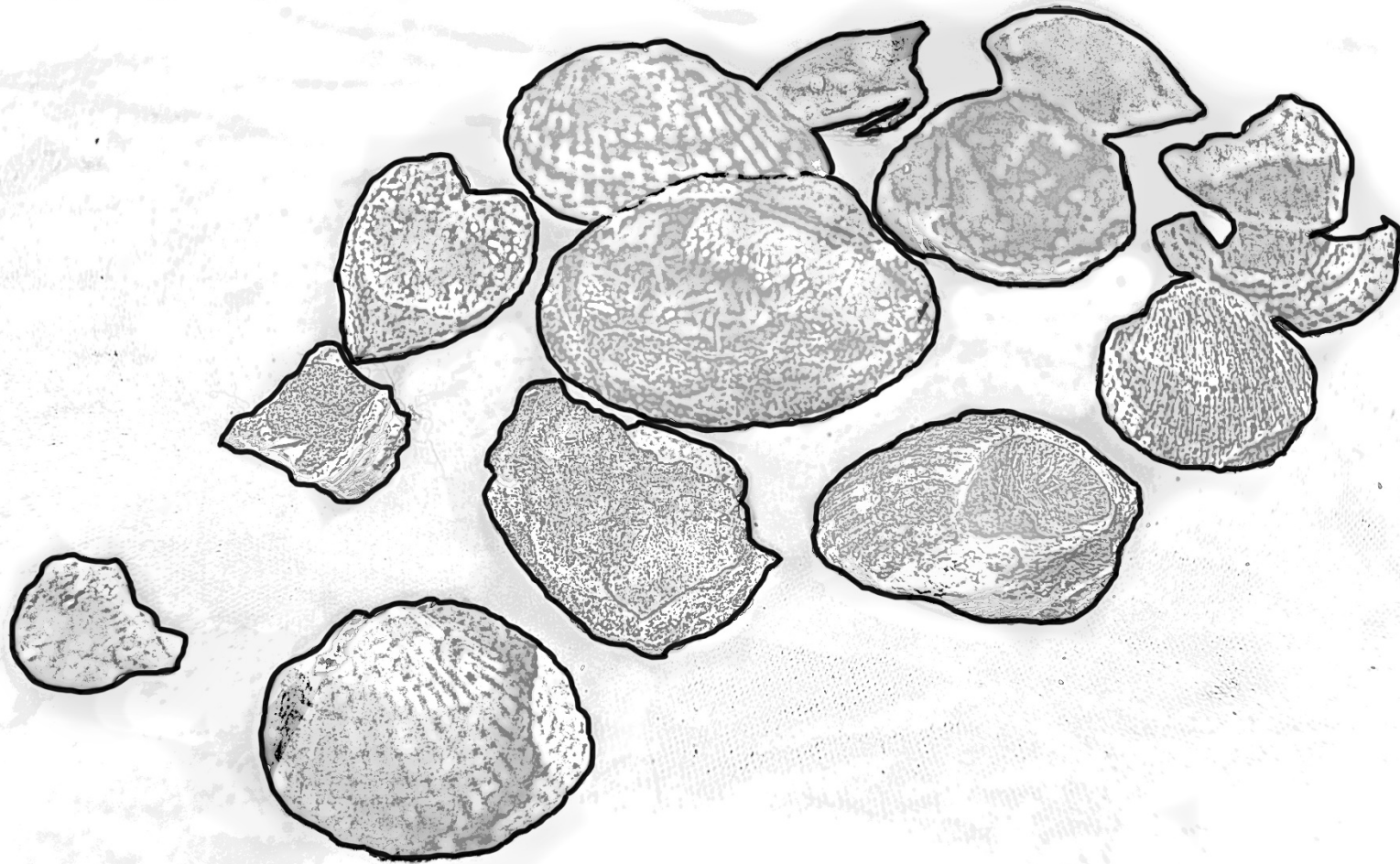
"Ohlone" refers to many different Native people from Central California. The Awaswas people lived in the Santa Cruz area and made brightly colored baskets from carefully woven plant materials. How long do you think it would take to weave a basket like this?





Hermit crabs like the ones in the Museum's tidepool do not make their own shells. They recycle empty shells to call their home. As they grow, they move to larger shells. If you had to carry your home on your back, what would it look like?





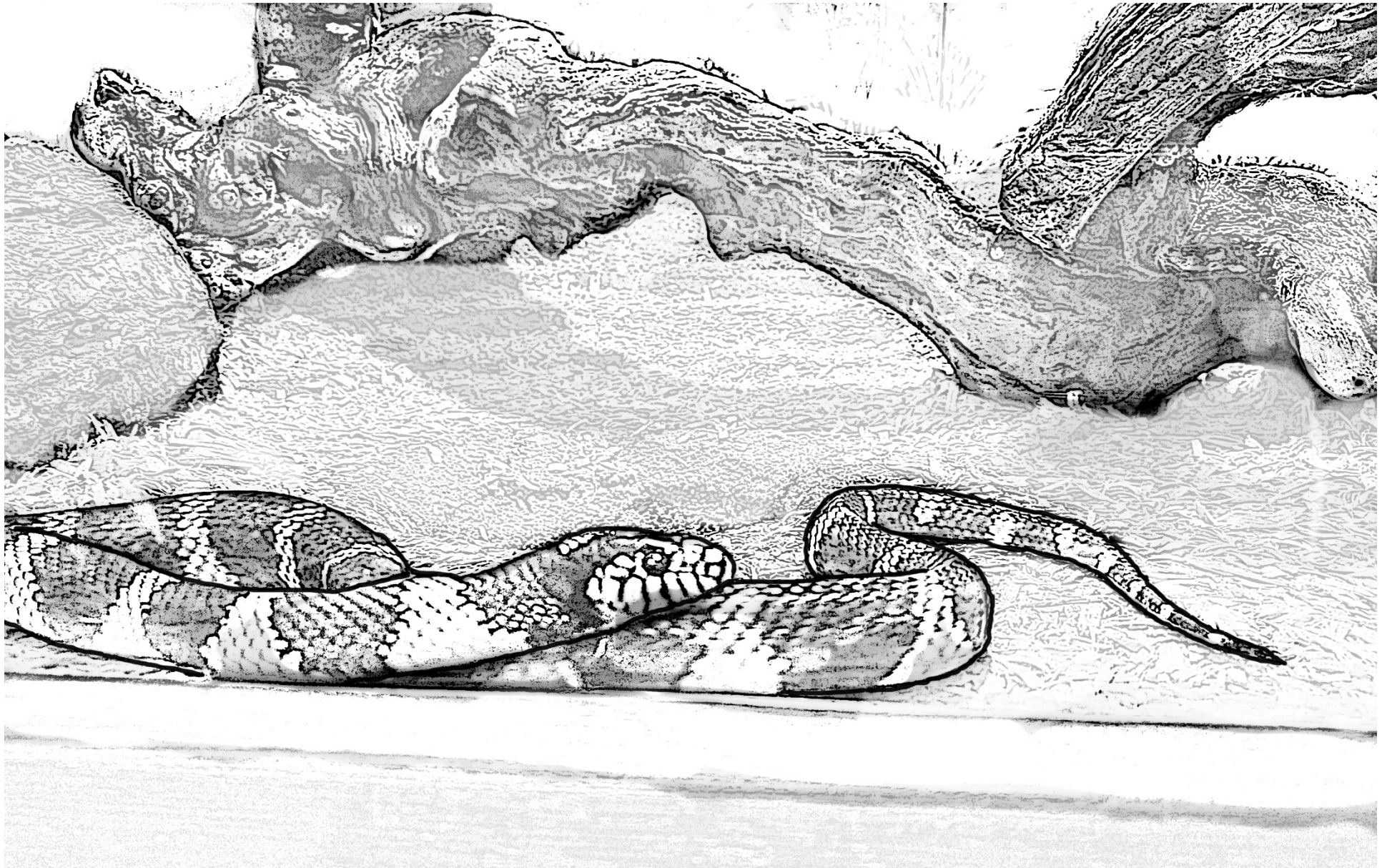
These are the fossil remains of shells from thousands of years ago. Do any of these fossils look like shells you may have found on a beach? How do they compare?





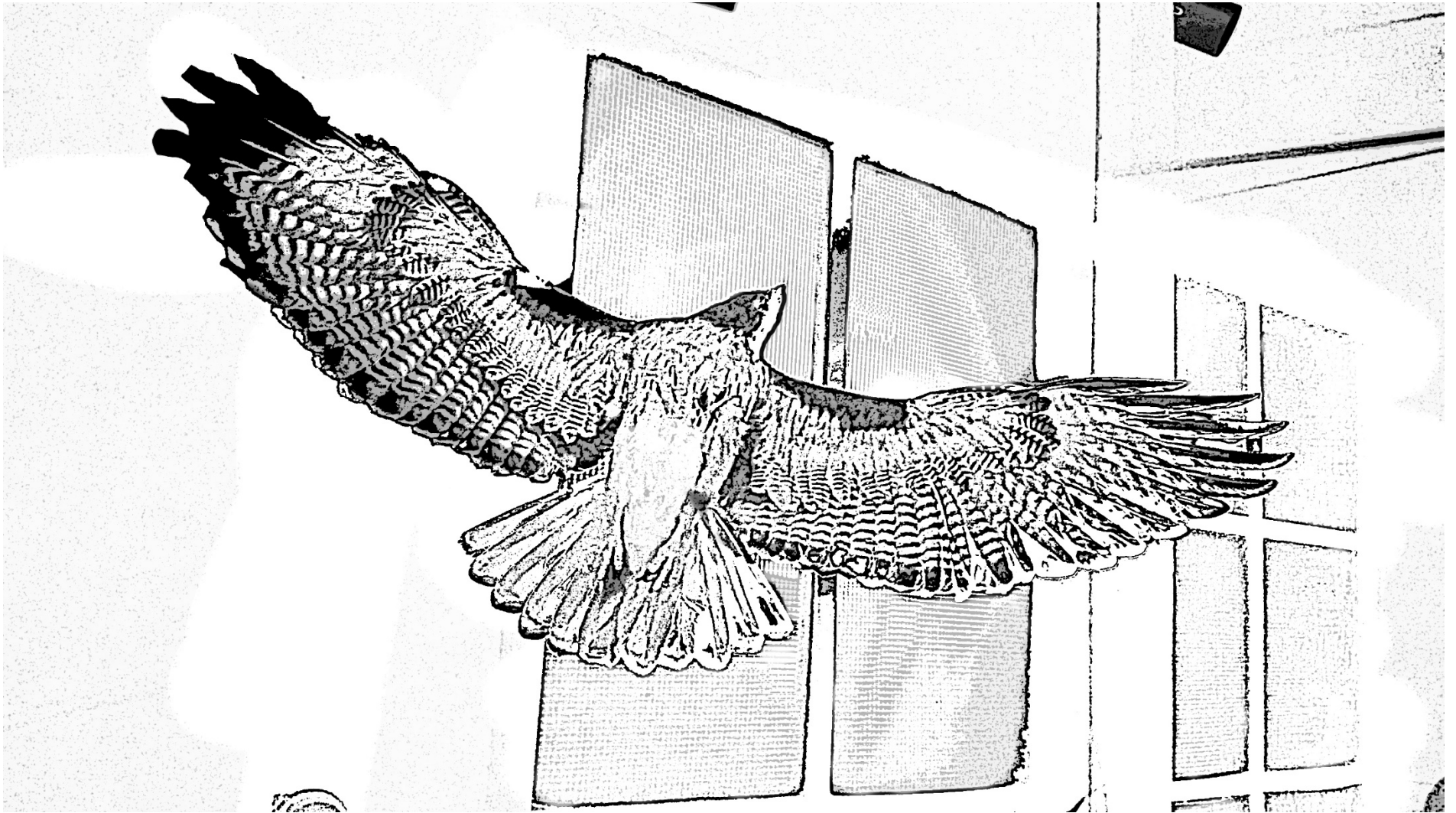
The mountain lion is the largest wildcat in North America, and they are our animal neighbors! Mountain lions are good climbers and stealthy hunters that are most active at night. What adaptations do you think help the mountain lion stay safe and get food?





Our California kingsnake, Prometheus, is certainly the king of the Museum! Snakes have a great sense of smell. When they flick their tongues, they are “smelling” the air. Try closing your eyes. What can you tell about the world with just your nose?





The red-tailed hawk stars in the Museum's 'Our Animal Neighbors' Education Program. It is the most common raptor seen in North America. These hawks can be many colors, but they keep their namesake red tail.



Coyotes are related to wolves and dogs. Like dogs, coyotes are omnivores: they can eat both meat and plants. Coyotes are social animals and form packs. What is a benefit to being a social animal?





Our beehive has a pipe to let the bees fly outside and pollinate flowers and collect pollen. Bees do a "waggle dance" to tell each other where to find flowers. If you couldn't talk, what dance moves would you use to communicate?





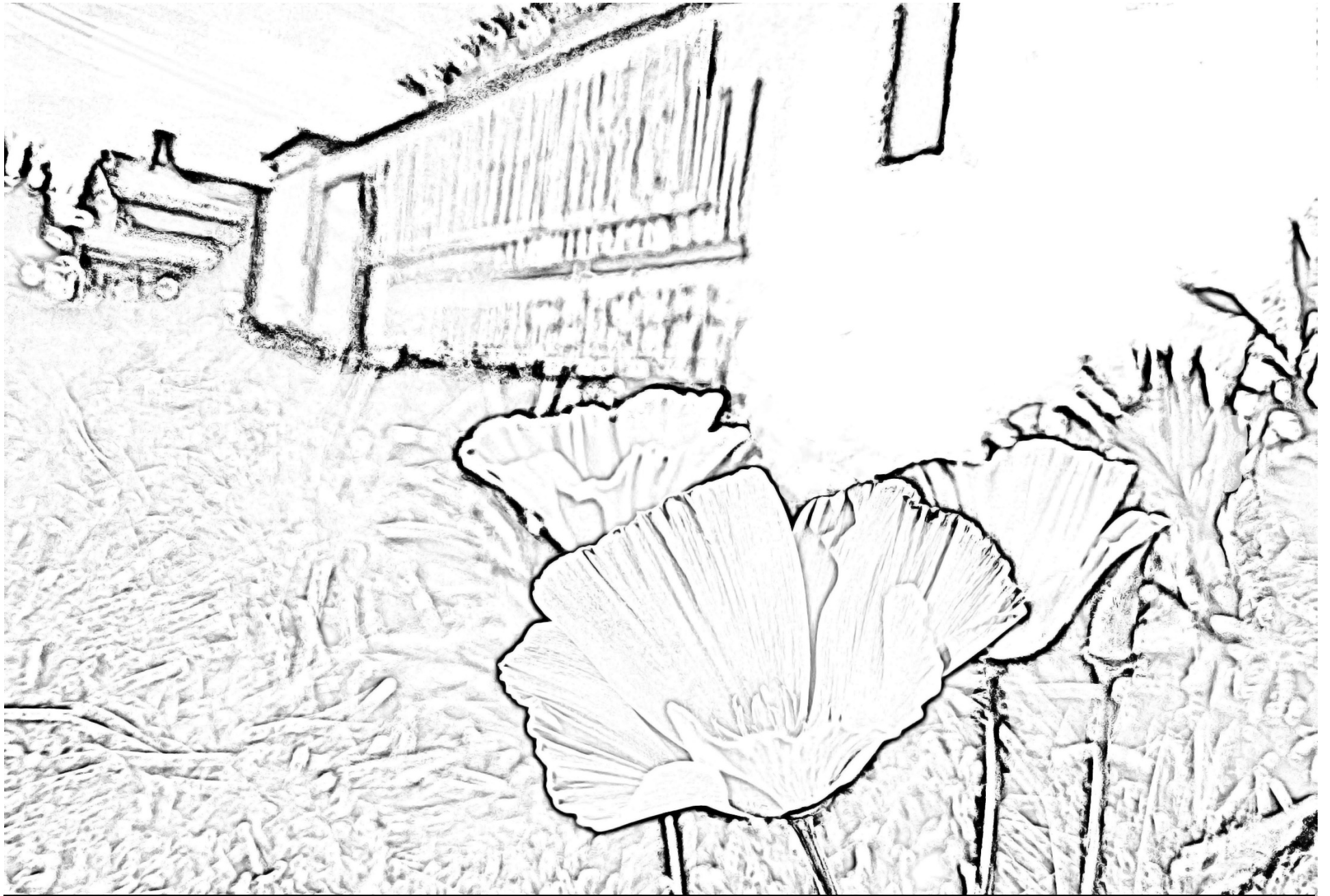
The barn owl is the most common type of owl around the world. They have an incredible sense of hearing--they can hunt for prey in complete darkness!





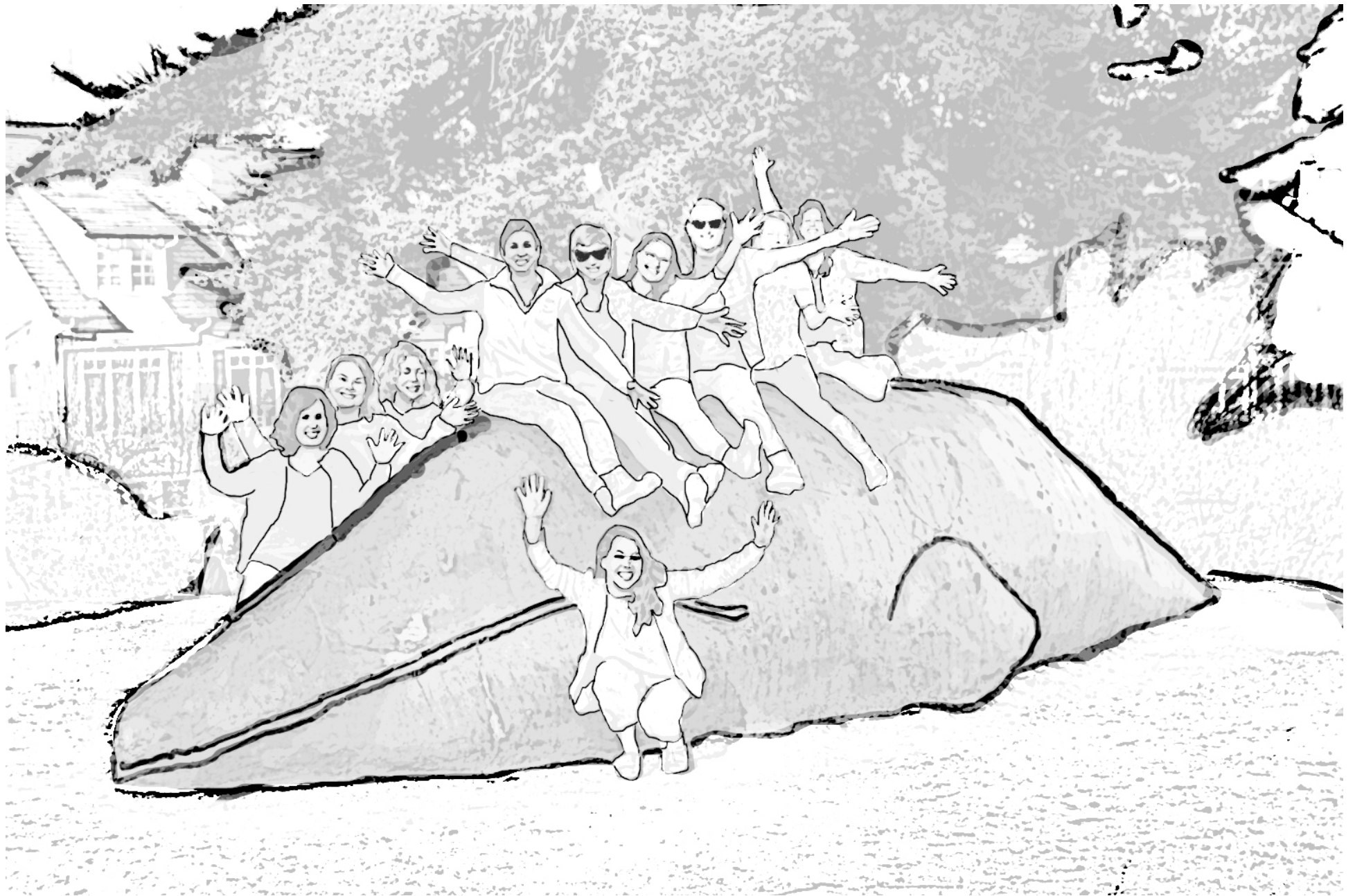
This tiny tule pond is in the Museum's Garden Learning Center. Tule is water-proof, flexible and full of air bubbles. What could you make from a material like that?





The Museum's Garden Learning Center is home to many native California plants. The golden poppy is the California state flower. It is one of the earlier wildflowers to bloom.





This life-sized gray whale model has laid outside the Museum since the late 1970s. A gray whale can swim up to a hundred miles in a day--what an adventure!