



Dunes and Beachgrasses

Key Vocabulary & Definitions

Ecosystem services - The benefits that humans derive from the environment around them

Dune terms:

- **Toe** - The beginning of the dune closest to the beach/ocean, where a steep incline and thicker vegetation typically begins
- **Crest** - The first highest point on the dune
- **Heel** - The lower elevation area beyond the crest

Beachgrass terms:

- **Ligule** - A thin piece of tissue located at the base of beach grass stems; can be used to ID species since beachgrasses produce different ligule lengths
- **Panicle** - A group of flowers that has multiple branches; inflorescence

Hybrid - An organism produced by the breeding of two different parent species (in the case of the beachgrasses), or of genetically distinct populations within a species

Hybrid vigor - A phenomenon where a hybrid is more “fit” than its parents, such as shown through the taller beachgrass hybrid

Non-native species - A species that originated somewhere other than its current location and has been introduced to the area where it now lives (also called exotic species)

Invasive species - A species of plant or animal that outcompetes other species, causing damage to an ecosystem

Native species - A species that originated and developed in its surrounding habitat and has adapted to living in that particular environment