The National Park Service administers the monument, which is comprised of Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands.

San Miguel Island, the farthest west of the Channel Islands, is owned by the U.S. Navy, but managed by the National Park Service. Limited public visitation (by permit only) is allowed, but no public transportation is available. The waters around San Miguel are a State Ecological Reserve and some areas are closed to boats.

For further information contact the monument superintendent at his headquarters, 1699 Anchors Way Dr., Ventura, CA 93003, telephone (805) 644-8157.

Channel Islands
National Monument

Giant coreopsis, wave splashed cliffs, and Pacific swells—these symbolize the essential ingredients for which the park was created.

Islands have always excited peoples’ imaginations. To early explorers sailing hostile seas, islands offered haven and refuge—and an opportunity for reacquaintance with the earth. To modern man, islands have continued to be places of haven and refuge—places to acquaintance oneself with a world of basic serenity and to escape for a while an all-too-familiar environment of congestion, noise, and pressure.

Just off the coast of southern California, the eight California Channel Islands beckon the weary. Three of these islands, Anacapa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara, constitute Channel Islands National Monument. Because the park is a unit of the National Park System, you as citizens share in its ownership, and are invited to land here and explore, swim, dive, fish, camp, and picnic.

Your ownership means, however, that you must also share in the responsibility for these islands’ welfare. Always keep in mind that park features are to be preserved for future generations; please help protect them.

After you’ve fished, dove or swum from your boat, climb aboard and just sit. Maybe you’ll then notice the beauty of that single gull soaring overhead, the deep blue of the water around, the lapping of the water against the hull, or the silence of a sleek sea lion surfacing next to you and staring before passing on.

On the islands, after you’ve wandered through the tide-pools, photographed the giant coreopsis, logged x-number of birds, and eaten your picnic lunch, climb to a high spot and rest. Then let sensations drift to you. The smell of the sage, the song of the meadow-lark, a slight breeze, the clear blue of the sky, the now-and-again almost complete silence might be among them. Give yourself a few quiet moments—it’s these that you will remember.

Visiting the Islands
Commercial Boat Service: Public transportation to the islands is available from many southern California ports, though presently there is only one charter operation running on a regular basis. Contact Monument Headquarters in Ventura for up-to-date transportation information.

Using Personally-Owned Boats: Visitors planning to take their own boats should study U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts 18720, 18729, and 18756. The Santa Barbara Channel is subject to sudden rising sea and wind conditions, especially in the afternoons. Anchorage off Santa Barbara Island is usually confined to the Landing Cove area; Anacapa anchorages include East Fish Camp and Frenchy’s Cove. Anchoring at either island can be hazardous; be sure to have adequate tackle aboard. There are loading docks at the landing coves on both East Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands, but neither is acceptable for docking boats. Persons wishing to go ashore will need a skiff or small boat.

Access to San Miguel Island (by permit only) is by private boat and is limited to Cuyler Harbor, usually safe anchorage under normal weather conditions. Another safe anchorage on the south side of the island is Tyler Bight. Sea conditions around the island are usually rough; only experienced boaters with sturdy vessels should contemplate the trip. No public transportation is available.
The intertidal zone: The zone where the land meets the sea is one of the most exciting for inquiring visitors. Because its rocks and depressions are exposed to air and drowned by water twice daily, its life forms are those which can live in both worlds. At low tide, you can see a microcosm of animal and plant relationships in tidepools that includes prey and predator, camouflage and interaction, birth and death. The action can be as fast as a striped rock crab scuttling sideways from rock to rock or a sculpin darting from its hiding place to a rock as though its entire life has been spent on that spot. It can be as deliberate as the action of a starfish gripping the two shells of a mussel and pulling the shells apart or it can be as casual as the sea anemone drifting with the water.

Tidepools are here to explore and enjoy, but please keep in mind that many tidepools are protected by law, and nothing should be taken, except invertebrates which lived in them. To make sure that future generations can have the same sense of discovery you are enjoying, do not disturb the tidepools excessively. If you turn a rock over, turn it back; if you pick up a starfish, put it back where you found it. And remember that on Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands, the most accessible tidepools are protected by law, and nothing can be taken.

The surrounding water: The ocean is often very shallow next to the islands, but falls off hundreds of meters even within a relatively short distance. The waters contain life forms ranging from microscopic plankton to sea lions, sharks, and killer whales. Divers have the opportunity to see more of this world than others do, but even their view is limited.

The sea gives some parts of itself to park visitors willingly. Sea lions arching through the water and giant kelp moving languidly with the surge of the water are sights everyone can enjoy. The different kinds of abalone, the lobster, and the many game fish are the sea's reward for those who care to earn it. But some aspects of the sea's influence are more subtle. Fog, caused by differences in temperatures between the land and the sea, slips across the cliffs and shrouds the islands, sometimes when it is most unexpected. The foghorn, blowing its monotonous melancholy warning, challenges the unseen and comforts the wary. Then there are the sounds of the water, easily heard enough when waves and swells crash against the island's cliffs but scarcely perceptible when the ocean gently laps the rocks. The sea is an all-pervading force; it isolates the islands and excites the imagination. Without it, the park would not belong, as it does, to the realm of the spirit, the eye of the mind.

The islands: A shared heritage: The Channel Islands were inhabited by the Chumash Indians, a tribe which hunted, fished and gathered food here as opportunity dictated. By the mid-1800s, all Indians living on the Channel Islands had been removed to coastal missions. The word Anacapa, incidentally, is derived from the Indian term “Anayapa,” meaning deception or mirage. Little mention is made of Santa Barbara in logs of early explorers, and early charts only indicate the presence of a “Santa Barbara Rock.” Later, shepherders grazed their stock on both islands, and early in this century farmers attempted to raise forage crops on Santa Barbara. In 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt established Channel Islands National Monument, and the sheep were removed. Only the hermit “Frenchy” LeDreau lived on Anacapa Island. His shack was at the cove now named for him. Frenchy fished off the bounty of the sea and the generosity of visitors from 1928 to 1956. Periodically, there have been maritime navigational aids on the islands. Several years after the side-wheeler steamer Winfield Scott, with 250 persons aboard, grounded and sank on Anacapa Island in 1853, the U.S. Lighthouse Service constructed an unattended light beacon on East Anacapa Island. Prior to 1969, several Coast Guardsmen lived on the island and operated the light and horn. Santa Barbara Island was the site of military installations. During World War II, the United States Navy utilized the island as an aircraft early warning outpost and during the 1950s a missile photo-
ARCH ROCK, SANTA BARBARA ISLAND

The foghorn may damage hearing. On calm summer days, you may see the Land's End lighthouse on East Island and at Frenichy's Cove, where you can also explore extensive tidepools at low tide.

A park ranger is stationed throughout the year on East Anacapa Island to provide assistance and information. Groups which make advance requests may meet the ranger for tours, talks, and other programs. There are no telephones on Anacapa Island, but the ranger has radio communication to the mainland in case of emergency.

Please take your trash back with you. Please pack out your trash! 

WEST ANACAPA ISLAND

A steep trail leads from the Land's End lighthouse atop Arch Point maintained by U.S. Coast Guard.

A self-guiding nature trail, with trail booklets available near the ranger station. A park ranger is available for assistance and information.

PROTECTING THE MONUMENT

All plants, animals, rocks, and other natural, archaeological, and historic features are protected and may not be destroyed, disturbed, or taken. These even include dead vegetation, which may be gathered for or burned. Only exceptions are those game fish and shellfish specifically mentioned in the California fish and game laws. These may be taken only under the rules of the state ecological reserves.

Be careful with fire. During the dry season, smoke only at the dock areas or in the campgrounds. On certain days, conditions may be such that no open fires are allowed; please check with the ranger about this when it is quite dry or windy.

Weapons and fireworks are not allowed in the monument, nor are they allowed within the one nautical mile of the state ecological reserve. Pets are not allowed on Anacapa, San Miguel, or Santa Barbara islands.

Stay on the trails and do not walk around the cliff edges. Aside from being dangerous, this is a chief cause of cliff erosion.