



## Hiking Santa Rosa Island



Several trails and roads traverse Santa Rosa Island, providing visitors with spectacular hiking opportunities. These trails and roads range from the relatively flat route to Water Canyon Beach to the rugged, mountainous path to Black Mountain. Hikers need to assume individual responsibility for planning their trips and hiking safely. To increase your odds of a safe hike, decrease your disturbance to wildlife, and lessen damage to resources, visitors should be in good physical condition and must follow the regulations and guidelines in the “Limiting Your Impact” section of the park newspaper and those listed below:

- Each year from mid-August to mid-November, Vail & Vickers Company (former island owners) operates a private hunt for stocked deer and elk. During these hunting periods, hiking may be restricted in certain areas. Please check with a ranger before hiking and be aware of the the hunting operation.
- Otherwise, visitors may hike unescorted throughout the island. However, the ranch area is closed to the public. Please respect the privacy of Vail & Vickers by following the signed path from the pier through the ranch area.
- Beaches between and including Skunk Point and just before East Point are closed to landing and hiking from March 1st to September 15th to protect the nesting area for the snowy plover, a federally listed, threatened shorebird. Please remain on the road throughout this area.
- Please avoid disturbing sensitive pinniped (seals and sea lions) and seabird areas that are found throughout the island.
- It is recommended that visitors use the trail and road system when exploring Santa Rosa Island. Please avoid animal trails, which are narrow, uneven, unstable, and dangerous.
- Cliff edges should be avoided at all times since they tend to be crumbly and unstable. Stay well back. Children should be supervised at all times by an adult.
- Hikers should never hike alone—use the buddy system. This allows someone to go for help if you encounter trouble.
- Carry plenty of water and drink it. One quart for short walks, more for longer hikes.
- Be aware of poison oak, “jumping” cholla cactus, ticks, and scorpions. Poison oak can be identified by its clusters of three shiny leaflets. Some ticks carry disease; check your clothing and exposed skin after hiking.
- In order to help prevent wildfires, do not smoke on trails or in brush areas. Smoking is allowed only on beaches.
- When departing from the islands, visitors are responsible for meeting the boat concessionaire on time. Be aware of departure time by asking the ranger or concessionaire employees. Boats trips are not scheduled every day.

Destination (from pier)	Distance (miles, round-trip)	Difficulty	Description
<b>1</b> Campground	3	Easy	A flat walk along the coastal terrace to the Water Canyon campground. Please stay on the signed path through the ranch area.
<b>2</b> Water Canyon Beach	3 (to beach entrance)	Easy	If the wind is not too strong, explore the wonderful 2-mile-long white sand beach. <i>The pier is not accessible from the beach unless there is a minus tide.</i>
<b>3</b> Water Canyon	3	Moderate to strenuous	Although the round trip to the mouth of Water Canyon is only 3 miles, <i>the canyon continues for another 6 miles exiting near Soledad Peak.</i> Follow the stream bed and animal paths through a beautiful canyon with year-round water and native vegetation on the steep walls. This is an off-trail hike for experienced hikers.
<b>4</b> Cherry Canyon	3.5 (via the loop trail)	Moderate	A loop hike with riparian vegetation and views of Bechers Bay. Other trails branch off of the Cherry Canyon trail allowing for visits to Black Mountain, the campground, and Water Canyon beach.
<b>5</b> Black Mountain	8	Strenuous	A long, steep climb that rewards visitors with oak woodlands and great views (weather permitting) of Santa Rosa, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, and the mainland. Visitors may make this a loop hike by including the Cherry Canyon trail and Telephone and Soledad roads.
<b>6</b> Torrey Pines	5 (to base of pines) 7.5 (via the loop trail)	Moderate Strenuous	View one of the rarest pines in the world, the Torrey pine. The easier, moderate route allows visitors to view the pines along the flat Coastal Road. The strenuous route follows the loop trail to the top of the grove, providing spectacular views. For the best route take the loop trail up the western edge of the grove, along the top, and down the steep, eastern side of the grove. For an easier, more gradual descent, follow the road down to Southeast Anchorage.
<b>7</b> East Point	16	Strenuous (due to length)	A beautiful hike along the Coastal Road with opportunities to explore the Torrey pines and beaches. <i>Beaches between and including Skunk Point and just before East Point are closed from March 1st to September 15th.</i> Please remain on road throughout this area.
<b>8</b> Lobo Canyon	9 (to canyon mouth)	Strenuous	A spectacular canyon with wind- and water-sculpted sandstone cliffs, a year-round stream, riparian vegetation, and a spectacular coast at its mouth. Well worth the effort.

