

Anacapa Island's Arch Rock Photo by Russ Finley

The Channel Islands, an island chain lying just off California's southern coast, appear quite close on clear days. Five of the eight islands and their surrounding six nautical miles of ocean, with its kelp forests, comprise Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary. In 1980, Congress designated Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara Islands and 50,500 hectares (125,000 acres) of submerged lands as a national park because they possess outstanding and unique natural and cultural resources. The National Marine Sanctuary was established later that year. The park and the sanctuary provide habitat for marine life ranging from microscopic plankton to the largest creature on Earth—the blue whale.

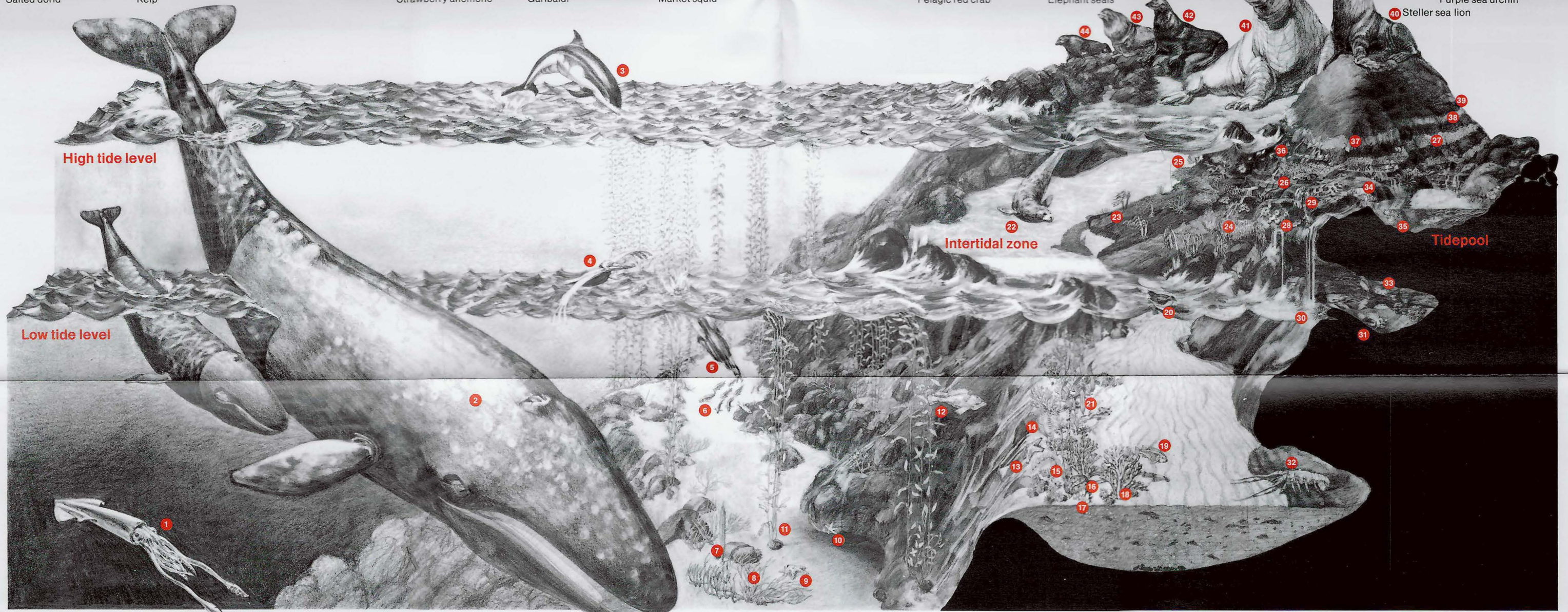
Seafaring Indians plied the Santa Barbara Channel in swift, seaworthy canoes called tomols. The Chumash, or "island people," had villages on the larger islands and traded with the mainland Indians. In 1542, explorer

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo entered the Santa Barbara Channel. Cabrillo, believed to be a Portuguese navigator in service to Spain, was the first European to land on the islands. While on his northbound odyssey of discovery Cabrillo wintered on an island he called San Lucas (San Miguel or possibly Santa Rosa Island). He died as a result of a fall suffered on that island and is believed to have been buried on one of the Channel Islands, but his grave has never been found. Subsequent explorers included Sebastian Vizcaino, Gaspar de Portola, and English Captain George Vancouver, who in 1793 fixed the present names of the islands on nautical charts. Beginning in the late 1700s, and on into the 1800s, Russian, British, and American fur traders searched the islands' coves and shorelines for sea otter. Because its fur was highly valued, the otter was hunted almost to extinction. Hunters then concentrated on taking seals and sea lions for their fur and oil. Several of these species faced extinction as well. In the early 1800s the Chumash Indians were removed

to the mainland missions. Hunters, settlers, and ranchers soon came to the islands. By the mid-1800s, except for the fishermen who operated from cove camps, ranching was the economic mainstay. The Santa Cruz Island ranch produced sheep, cattle, honey, olives, and some of the finest early California wines. In the late 1800s the ranch on Santa Rosa Island was a major supplier of sheep to Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County markets. Anacapa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara Islands also were heavily grazed or cultivated. In the early 1900s the U.S. Lighthouse Service—later the U.S. Coast Guard—began its stay on Anacapa Island. The U.S. Navy assumed control of San Miguel Island just before World War II. The islands served an important role in southern California's coastal defenses. The military's presence on San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and the other Channel Islands is evident even today.

A series of Federal and landowner actions have helped preserve these

nationally significant island treasures. Federal efforts began in 1938, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed Santa Barbara and Anacapa Islands as Channel Islands National Monument. In 1976 a U.S. Navy and National Park Service agreement allowed supervised visitation of San Miguel Island. In 1978 a conservation partnership between the Nature Conservancy, a national non-profit conservation organization, and the Santa Cruz Island Company provided for continued protection, research, and educational use of most of privately-owned Santa Cruz. Finally, in 1980, Congress designated the four northern islands and Santa Barbara Island and the waters for one nautical mile around each as our 40th national park. Today, Channel Islands National Park is part of the International Man and the Biosphere program to conserve genetic diversity and an environmental baseline for research and monitoring throughout the world.



Island Life and Ecology

- 1 Giant squid
- 2 Gray whale and calf
- 3 Pacific white-sided dolphin
- 4 California brown pelican
- 5 Cormorant
- 6 Blue rockfish
- 7 Sea pen
- 8 Gorgonian (soft) coral
- 9 Bat star
- 10 Ochre star
- 11 Kelp (*Macrocystis*)
- 12 Copper or kelp rockfish
- 13 Leather star
- 14 Gurney's sea pen
- 15 Silvery hydroid
- 16 Smooth red sponge
- 17 Nutting's sponge
- 18 Soft coral
- 19 Garibaldi
- 20 Xantus murrelet
- 21 Ribbed kelp
- 22 Harbor seal
- 23 Sea palms
- 24 Surf grass
- 25 Sea lettuce
- 26 Rockweed
- 27 Acorn barnacles
- 28 Goose barnacles
- 29 Sea palm
- 30 Urchins
- 31 Tidepool sculpin
- 32 Spiny lobster
- 33 Abalone
- 34 Hermit crab
- 35 Aggregated anemones
- 36 Mussels
- 37 Periwinkles
- 38 Blue-green algae
- 39 Lichen
- 40 Steller sea lion
- 41 Northern elephant seal
- 42 California sea lion
- 43 Northern fur seal
- 44 Guadalupe fur seal

Which is more important—the land or the ocean? For many plants and animals of the Channel Islands, life is not possible without both land and sea. Pelicans fish for anchovies from the ocean but nest on the dry bluffs of West Anacapa. Low-growing sand verbena needs the sandy soil of San Miguel Island to grow, but to thrive it also needs salt from the ocean air. Giant kelp fastens its rootlike hold-fasts on the shallow rocks of islands' nearshore reefs, yet this seaweed also needs the nutrients from the deep ocean.

Isolation from the mainland and the mingling of warm and cold water currents in the Santa Barbara Channel help form the Channel Islands' unique character. The plants and animals are similar to those on the mainland, but thousands of years of isolation in unique is-

land environments have resulted in size, shape, or color variations among some plants and animals. All of the larger islands are home for the island fox, a close relative of the mainland's gray fox. But because it evolved in isolation, the island fox is no larger than a house cat. These foxes prey upon deer mice that are slightly larger than their mainland relatives. Both creatures are well adapted to the harsh island environment.

Remoteness from the mainland has buffered the islands from the rapid changes wrought by modern man. While most mainland tidepools are practically devoid of life because of heavy human use, abalone, sea urchins, sea anemones and limpets thrive in the islands' intertidal areas. White-plumed sea anemones still cover underwater rocks at San Miguel, and vivid

purple hydrocorals filter water for food near Santa Cruz Island. Though used by fishermen and sport divers, and subject to mainland water pollutants, the kelp forests of the Channel Islands harbor great numbers of plants and animals.

During the last Ice Age the northern Channel Islands were part of one vast island geologists call Santarosae. Sea level was then much lower, and large areas of today's sea bed were dry. The northern islands were then linked together, though probably not connected to the mainland. Later, when the great continental ice sheets melted, the islands were separated.

During the Pleistocene era, a dwarf species of mammoth roamed Santarosae, and pine and cypress for-

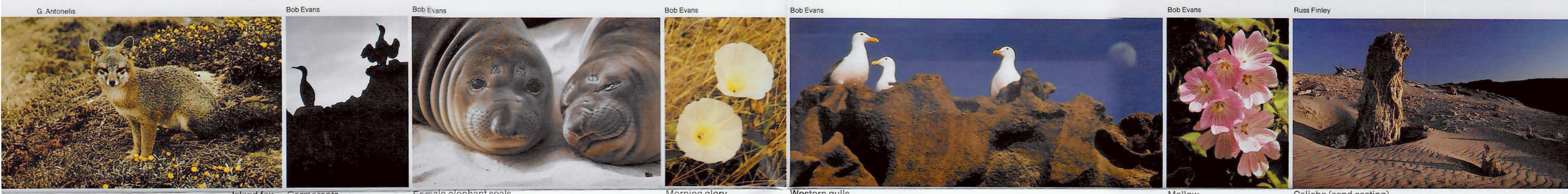
ests stood on several islands. Today, the fossilized remains of dwarf mammoths on San Miguel and Santa Rosa, and the forests of brittle sand castings, known as caliche (pronounced *kah-lee-chee*), that are found on San Miguel remind us that the islands were very different long ago. Some plants and animals have developed special adaptations over time to cope with the isolated environment—others remain unchanged. The giant coropsis is found on all five park islands and on the coastal mainland. Its more common name, tree sunflower, suggests its size and trunk-like stem. Its bright yellow blossoms are sometimes visible from the mainland during the winter and spring.

The introduction of non-native plants and animals to an island ecosystem can devastate native species.

One such exotic is a tenacious South African species of iceplant which found its way to Santa Barbara Island before 1900. Highly salt tolerant, it thrives in arid soil by capturing moisture from sea breezes. It subsequently leaches salt into the soil, producing concentrations of salt that few native plants can tolerate. Today, the iceplant spreads its thick mats over much of the island. Introduced livestock, food animals, and pets have similar impacts on island environments. Escalating feral sheep, hog, cat, and rabbit populations led to damage to—and sometimes elimination of—native plants and animals. The National Park Service seeks to restore these native populations where possible.

All plants, animals, rocks, and other natural, archeological, and historic features on the islands are pro-

TECTED and may not be disturbed, destroyed or taken. Even dead vegetation may not be gathered or burned. Please keep in mind that others will follow you, so "take only memories, leave only footprints" when visiting the islands. **Be careful with fire.** Because of the high risk of fire that could destroy plant communities, no open fires are permitted on the islands. **Discharge of firearms and fireworks is not allowed** in the park or within the one-nautical-mile seaward boundary of ocean within the State ecological reserves. Please take home any trash that you brought in. **Report accidents or unusual incidents** immediately to the National Park Service or U.S. Coast Guard.



Planning Your Visit

Commercial Boat Service

The park concessioner offers regular trips throughout the year to Anacapa, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and San Miguel Islands. For information, rates, and reservations, write or call Island Packers, Inc., 1867 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001, (805) 642-1393. It is wise to make reservations well in advance throughout the year.

Using Your Boat

If you plan to take your own boat to the islands, refer to National Ocean Survey Charts 18720, 18729, and 18756. The Santa Barbara Channel is subject to sudden changes in sea and wind conditions, especially in afternoons. Be familiar with local conditions. Good cruising guides may be purchased at the park visitor center.

Off Santa Barbara Island, anchoring is usually confined to the east side because of prevailing winds and waves. Anchorages on Anacapa Island include East Fish Camp and, in good weather, Frenchy's Cove. Anchoring at either island can be hazardous. Have adequate ground tackle aboard. To go ashore on the islands requires a skiff, raft, or small boat. No special permits are necessary to land on Anacapa or Santa Barbara.

However, to visit Santa Rosa or San Miguel Islands you need a permit from park headquarters. You may anchor on the north side of San Miguel at Cuyler Harbor, or on the south side at Tyler Bight. Cuyler Harbor is usually a safe anchorage—under normal weather conditions—and is the only landing area on San Miguel. *Sea conditions around San Miguel Island are often rough; only experienced boaters with sturdy vessels should attempt the trip.* Depending on sea conditions around Santa Rosa Island, you can anchor in Bechers Bay or Johnsons Loe. For details on landing, hiking, or camping on park islands, contact park headquarters before your trip because special restrictions apply. Landing on privately owned Santa Cruz is by permit only. (See information on access to Santa Cruz on the map side of this folder.) Permits and regulations protect the islands' delicate resources, ensure your safety, and safeguard private landowner's rights.

For Your Safety

A visit to the islands is always an adventure. The seas are unforgiving, and even getting onto the islands is an uncertainty. **When boating** around the islands be familiar with the appropriate charts. Watch the weather. Always have enough flotation devices aboard for you and each passen-

ger and always use them when landing on the islands. Beware of surge! If you need emergency assistance contact the U.S. Coast Guard on Channel 16 of your marine band radio. National Park Service patrol vessels and island rangers also monitor this channel. **When diving**, be certified, be in good condition, know the area, be aware of changing current and wind conditions, and never dive alone. **When hiking** stay away from cliffs and stay on the established trails. While on East Anacapa Island, stay away from the lighthouse—its high intensity foghorn could permanently damage your hearing.

Aircraft Notice

To protect nesting seabirds and to avoid disturbing wildlife, National Marine Sanctuary regulations and State law prohibit aircraft from flying at altitudes less than 300 meters (1,000 feet) within the one-nautical-mile seaward boundary of the islands.

Protecting the Marine Resources

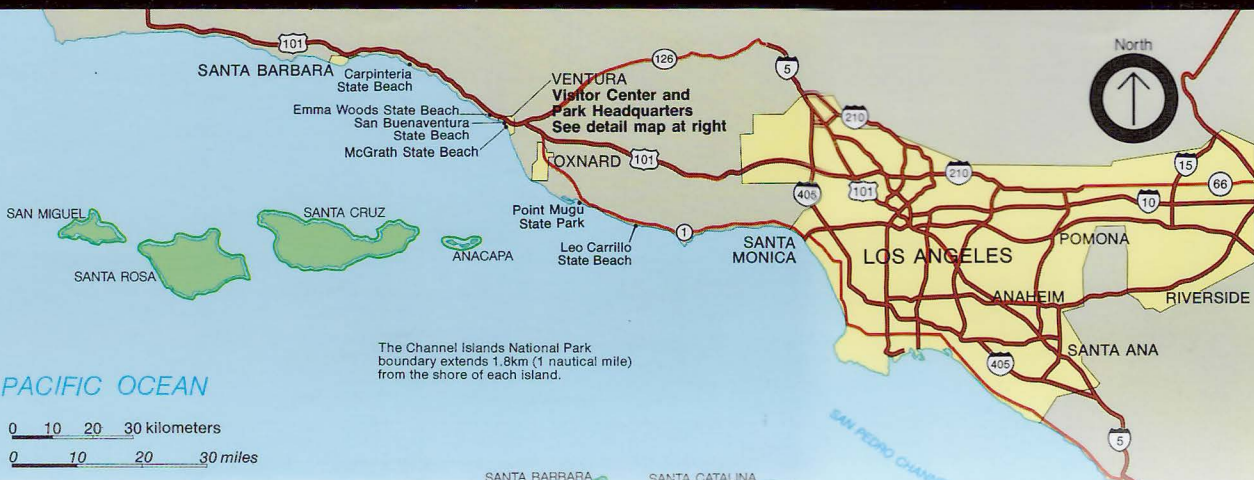
The waters for one nautical mile around Anacapa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara Islands are California State Ecological Reserves. State fish and game regulations apply. Fishing requires a California fishing license. Take

only those plants and animals specifically permitted under California fish and game laws. In some areas in the ecological reserves, such as Anacapa's landing cove area, marine life is totally protected; nothing may be taken. In other reserve areas commercial and sport fishing and diving for invertebrates are allowed. Ecological reserve regulations and a map of closed areas are available from park headquarters. Marine mammals such as whales, seals, and sea lions and endangered species such as the brown pelican are protected by law and may not be harassed or disturbed. Island rangers are deputized fish and game wardens. They can provide more information on fish, game, and marine resource protection regulations. There are accessible tidepools on Anacapa, Santa Barbara, and San Miguel Islands. **Do not collect anything;** collecting is illegal. Leave animals and shells for others to enjoy, too. If you pick up an animal, replace it where you found it. That spot is that animal's home territory. Walk carefully—rocks can be slippery. Discharge of substances and removal of cultural resources are prohibited within the 6-nautical-mile sanctuary boundary.

Channel Islands



The Channel Islands are a unit of the National Park System, which consists of more than 650 parks representing important examples of our country's natural and cultural inheritance.



Visitor Center. Start your visit at the mainland visitor center located at the end of Spinnaker Drive in Ventura. See map at right and address below. Here a 25-minute film introduces the park. You can also view photo displays, exhibits, Chumash Indian artifacts, a simulated caliche ghost forest, and a native plants display. You may purchase publications, maps, and nautical charts at the bookstore. Arrangements for boat service to the islands may be made nearby.

Information. For more information, write or call: Superintendent Channel Islands National Park, 1901 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001. (805) 644-8262.

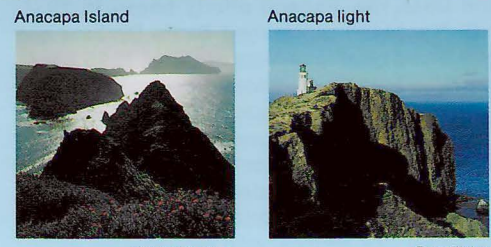
Safety. When boating and before departure, check prevailing and forecasted weather and sea conditions. Know your vessel's limitations and monitor marine band radio. Anchoring at the islands may be difficult because of small harbors and sloping sea floor terrain. Use ample anchor chain and scope. Observe the surf and surge conditions before attempting to land at the designated landings. Ladders, railings, and stairs may be wet, wear suitable nonskid footwear. Watch your footing in tidepools. Stay on designated trails, cliffs may be undercut, obey all signs. Weather conditions change rapidly; dress in layers. Supplies are not available on islands.

The islands comprise a diverse natural area. During seabird breeding season nesting birds are aggressive. Screaming and diving birds indicate you are near breeding activity, stay away from nests.

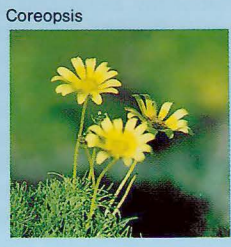


- Authorized park area. Park boundary extends 1.8km (1 nautical mile) from shore.
- Kelp beds
- Sunken wreck
- Exposed wreck
- Ranger station
- Restrooms
- Interpretive trail
- Campsite
- Anchorage
- Suitability of anchorages varies depending on the seasons and weather. Consult boating almanacs and nautical charts.

Anacapa Island



The closest island to the mainland, Anacapa lies 18 kilometers (11 miles) southwest of Oxnard, and 22 kilometers (14 miles) from Ventura. Almost 6 kilometers (5 miles) long, its total land area is but 290 hectares (about 1 square mile). Anacapa is composed of three small islets inaccessible from each other except by boat. For much of the year, Anacapa looks brown and lifeless. With winter rains, its plants emerge from summer's dormancy and turn green. Sea mammals are often seen around Anacapa's shores. January through March is whale watch season and migrating whales can be seen in the waters near Anacapa. Western gulls, cormorants, black oystercatchers, and endangered brown pelicans may be seen year round. West Anacapa's slopes are the primary West Coast nesting site for the brown pelican. To protect the pelican rookery, West

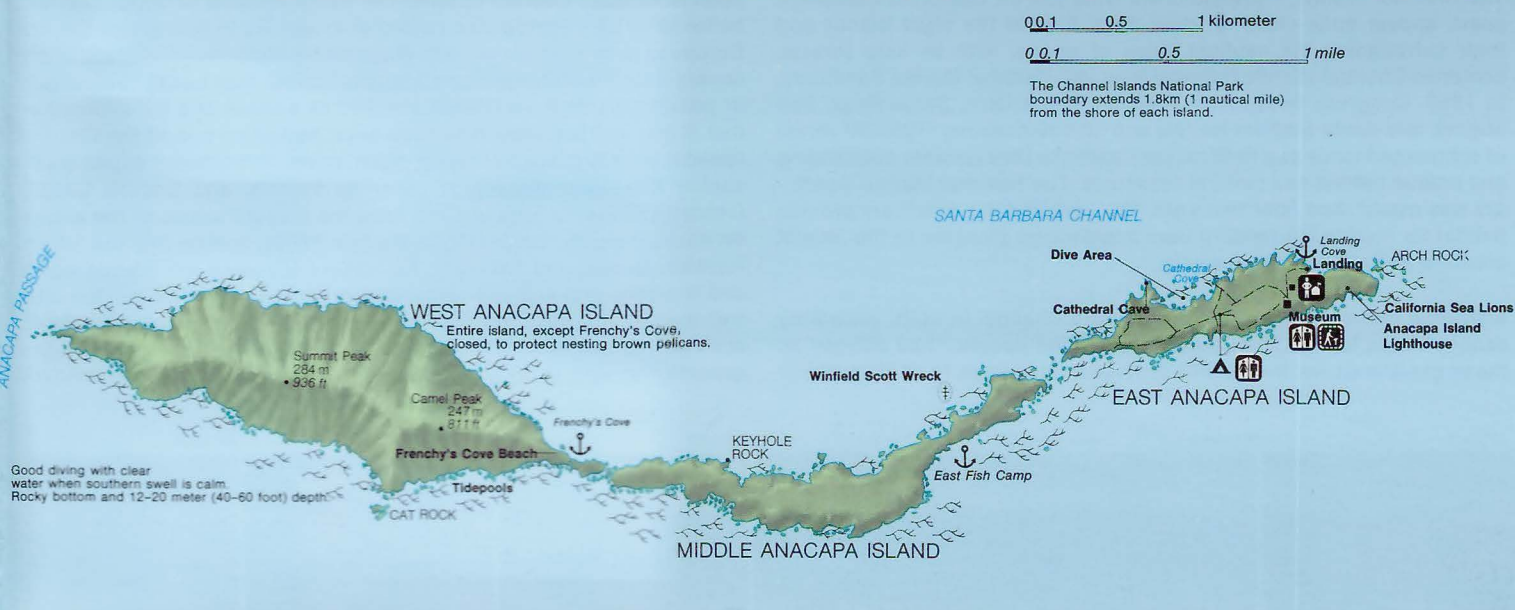


Anacapa is a Research Natural Area closed to the public. Except at Frenchy's Cove, no landings are permitted on West Anacapa. A written permission from the park superintendent. **Transportation** to Anacapa is provided by the park concessioner (see Planning Your Visit). Most visitors go to East Anacapa island. **Picnicking** is allowed, but please carry all trash off the island. There are latrines but no freshwater. Near the

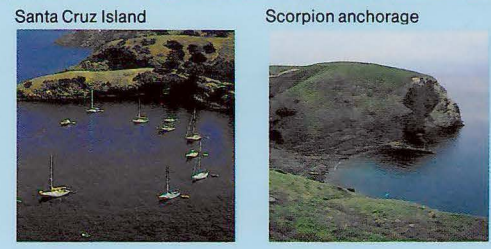
small visitor center a self-guiding nature trail (2.4 kilometers/1.5 miles long) introduces features and moods of East Anacapa. Please stay on trails and obey closure signs—for your safety and to protect fragile island resources. When the fog horns on, don't visit the lighthouse. Severe hearing damage may result. **Beaches** on East Anacapa are not accessible, but on calm summer days you may swim in the landing cove. At West Anacapa's Frenchy's Cove there is a beach and a fine snorkeling area. Picnicking is also permitted. The area is noted for its tidepools on the island's south side. The tidepools at Frenchy's are protected—nothing may be taken. Many fine SCUBA and skin diving areas around Anacapa reveal the island's well known beauty

and varied marine life. Divers may photograph the undersea life and explore caves, coves, and shipwrecks. The steamer Winfield Scott grounded and sank off Middle Anacapa in 1853. Remains of the wreck can still be seen. Please take only pictures—submerged cultural and historical resources are also protected by law. Souvenirs may not be taken. Fishing requires a California fishing license (see Protecting the Marine Resources on the front side). **Camping** on Anacapa is restricted to the campground on East Anacapa. Reservations are required (no fee), and you must obtain a permit in advance from park headquarters. This allows you to camp up to 14 days. Campers must bring their own food, fuel, shelter, and water. Pack light! At the island you must

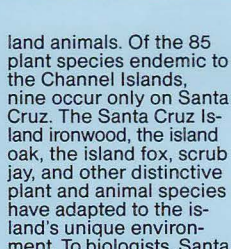
climb 154 steps from the landing cove to the island top and walk 400 meters (¼ mile) to the campground. Firepits, tables, and latrines are available. Bring a tent that can be securely anchored against heavy winds and rains. There are no shade trees on the island, so bring a hat and sun screen. A pack-in, pack-out trash policy is in effect. Take back with you whatever you brought onto the island. The park ranger stationed on East Anacapa provides information and emergency assistance. There is no telephone, but in an emergency the ranger can radio the mainland. Guided walks and evening programs are available.



Santa Cruz Island



Largest and most diverse of the islands within the park boundary, Santa Cruz Island is about 39 kilometers (24 miles) long. Its land area is about 249 square kilometers (96 square miles). The central valley's north slope is a rugged ridge, the south slope is an older and more weathered ridge. At 730 meters (2,400 feet), the highest of all Channel Islands mountains is found here. Santa Cruz Island's 124-kilometer (77-mile)



land animals. Of the 85 plant species endemic to the Channel Islands, nine occur only on Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz Island Ironwood, the island oak, the island fox, scrub jay, and other distinctive plant and animal species have adapted to the island's unique environment. To biologists, Santa Cruz is especially significant for its diversity of habitat, greater than any other of the Channel Islands.

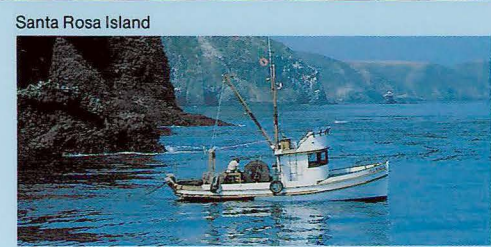
Chumash Indians inhabited Santa Cruz Island for more than 6,000 years. When Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo arrived in 1542, as many as 2,000 Chumash Indians probably lived there. Ranching began on the island in 1839, with a Mexican land grant to Andres Castillero. Since that time the entire island has been privately

owned. In 1989 the Nature Conservancy acquired the western nine-tenths of the island, managed as the Santa Cruz Island Preserve. You may not land on Santa Cruz without a permit, unless you are on a boat trip authorized by the landowner. For a permit to land on the island west of the property line between Chinese Harbor and Sandstone Point, contact the Santa Cruz Island Preserve, P.O. Box 23259, Santa Barbara, CA 93121, or phone (805) 962-9111. A fee is charged for this landing permit and restrictions listed on the application. Opportunities for overnight stays with varied packaged recreational opportunities and transportation by aircraft are available from Channel Island Adventures, 233 Durley Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010. (805) 962-1301. Day trips are also available.

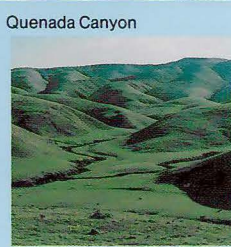
Permits to land on the island east of the property line between Chinese Harbor and Sandstone Point are currently not being issued by property owners. However, Island Packers, Inc., is authorized to provide guided boat trips for the general public to Scorpion Valley. For information, call (805) 642-1393. Overnight sporting packages to Smuggler's Cove are available for information call (805) 646-2513.



Santa Rosa Island



The second largest park island is Santa Rosa. Nearly 24 kilometers (15 miles) long and 16 kilometers (10 miles) wide, its 22,250 hectares (55,000 acres) exhibit remarkable contrasts. Cliffs on the northeastern shore rival those of Santa Cruz Island. High mountains with deeply cut canyons give way to gentle rolling hills and flat marsh terraces. Vast grasslands blanket about 85 percent of the island, yet columnar volcanic formations, the entire island is surrounded



by expanses of kelp beds. Consequently, its surrounding waters serve as an invaluable nursery for the sea life that feeds larger marine mammals and the sea birds that breed along the coastal shores and offshore rocks of all the Channel Islands. Beneath Santa Rosa's non-native grasslands are the remains of a rich cultural heritage. More than 180 largely undisturbed archeological sites have been mapped. These include several as-

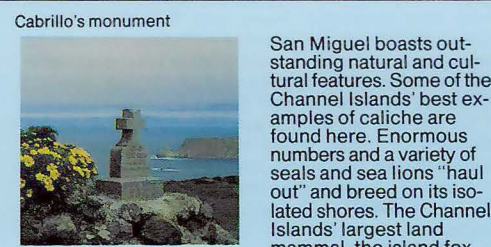
sociated with early man's presence in North America. Chumash Indian villages and historic-era camps of early explorers and fur hunters are evident. Some historians think Santa Rosa may be Cabrillo's final resting place.

In the 1840s and 1850s, Santa Rosa was a cattle rancho. After the cattle industry of old Spanish California collapsed in the 1860s, sheep were brought to Santa Rosa and soon became its economic mainstay. Sheep grazing continued into the early 20th century, but when the island was sold to Vail & Vickers Company in 1902, the sheep were removed and cattle reintroduced. Though the impacts of introduced grains, insects, sheep, pigs, deer, elk, and cattle were severe,

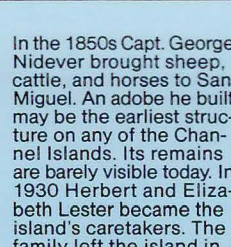
examples of Santa Rosa's native plant communities survive. These tend to be restricted to rocky canyons and upper slopes. Native and endemic plants include the tree poppy, island manzanita, and an endemic sage. Santa Rosa Island Oaks grow on protected slopes, and two groves of Torrey pine are visible near Bechers Bay. More than 195 bird species are found on Santa Rosa. With its extensive grasslands, the island supports large populations of European starlings, horned larks, meadow larks, house finches, and song sparrows. Shore birds and waterfowl favor the freshwater habitat found on Santa Rosa's eastern tip, its freshwater marsh and the island's running streams and springs provide habitat for tree frogs and Pacific slender sala-



San Miguel Island



San Miguel boasts outstanding natural and cultural features. Some of the Channel Islands' best examples of caliche are found here. Enormous numbers and a variety of seals and sea lions "haul out" and breed on its isolated shores. The Channel Islands' largest land mammal, the island fox, can be seen on San Miguel. San Miguel's fragile treasures include more than 500 relatively undisturbed archeological sites, some dating back thousands of years. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, discoverer of California, is believed to have wintered and died at Cuyler Harbor in 1543. Although his grave has never been found, a monument overlooking Cuyler Harbor was erected in 1937 to commemorate his northern voyage of discovery.



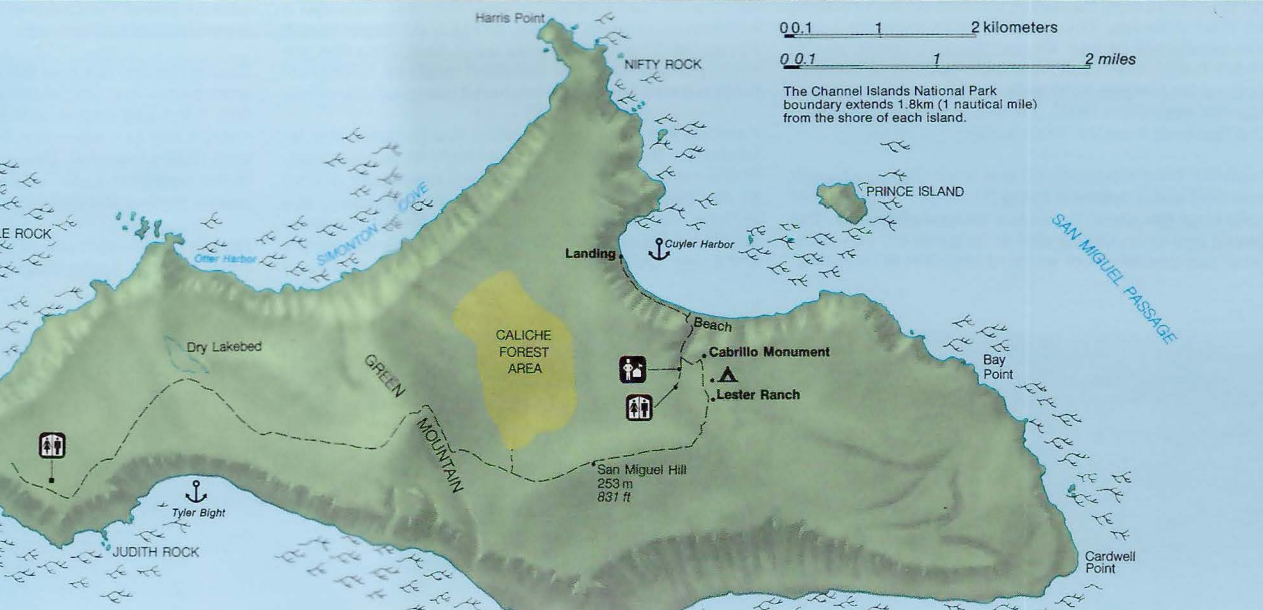
In the 1850s Capt. George Nidever brought sheep, cattle, and horses to San Miguel. An adobe he built may be the earliest structure on any of the Channel Islands. Its remains are barely visible today. In 1930 Herbert and Elizabeth Lester became the island's caretakers. The family left the island in 1942 after the suicide of Herbert Lester, who had become known as the "King of San Miguel." From the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s the island was used as a bombing range. Staying on the trail is particularly important on this island because live ordnance is still occasionally uncovered by shifting sands.

8262, for permits and information. Landing is permitted only at Cuyler Harbor. Daytime use of the beach does not require a permit. If you go beyond the beach area at Cuyler Harbor, however, you must have a landing permit. Landing elsewhere is prohibited. Campsites on San Miguel must be reserved in advance at park headquarters; no fees. The primitive campground has four campsites: three individual sites, 1 to 6 people, and one group site, 7 to 12 people. Stays are limited to two nights and a maximum of 30 campers are restricted to the availability of the San Miguel Island ranger. From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. campers are restricted to the campground and the Lester Ranch Historic Area, designated by the old fence-

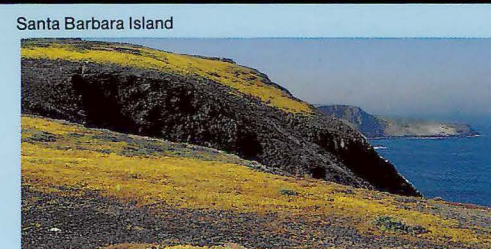
line. Camping on San Miguel will test your ability to adapt to the island's sometimes harsh surroundings. Strong winds, rain, and fog are constants. Bring a strong tent, sleeping bag, and warm waterproof clothes. You will also need water, stove, first aid kit, and toilet paper. A pit toilet facility is provided, and wind shelters are installed at each campsite. All garbage must be carried off when you leave.

For half-day visits to the island, the caliche forest is a popular destination. Once you hike from the beach to the island's top, it is about 5.5-kilometers (3.5-miles) from the ranger station to the caliche forest. Caliche is a mineral sandcasting. As with all park resources, it may not be collected. Take all the pictures you want. The island has been greatly altered by extensive sheep grazing, but you can still see an array of distinctive native plant species. Coreopsis and other flowering plants produce beautiful displays in spring.

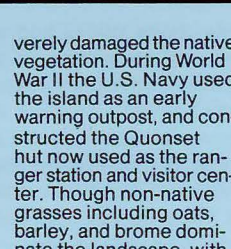
If you can spend more time on the island, try to make the 24-kilometer (15-mile) round-trip hike across the island to Point Bennett. With binoculars you may see thousands of breeding seals and sea lions (pinnipeds) from an overlook about 1.5 kilometers (1 mile) from the beach. Depending on the time of the year, the California sea lion, Steller sea lion, northern elephant seal, harbor seal, northern fur seal, and the Guadalupe fur seal may be seen at Point Bennett. (All except the Guadalupe fur seal breed on the island.)



Santa Barbara Island



Santa Barbara Island lies far south of the other four park islands. Small, about 260 hectares (640 acres), and triangular, its steep cliffs rise to a marine terrace topped by two peaks. The highest point, Signal Peak, is 134 meters (439 feet) in elevation.



December 4, 1602—Saint Barbara's Day. Because of the lack of freshwater, Indians did not reside on the island, but they occasionally stopped off there on journeys to other islands. Not until the 20th century was Santa Barbara Island settled to any extent. During the 1920s, farming, grazing, intentional burning by island residents, and the introduction of rabbits se-

verely damaged the native vegetation. During World War II the U.S. Navy used the island as an early warning outpost, and constructed the Quonset hut now used as the ranger station and visitor center. Though non-native grasses including oats, barley, and bromes dominate the landscape, with protection and encouragement the native vegetation, is recovering. With the rabbits now removed, stands of glaucous coropsis are thriving. In places this sunflower grows up to 3 meters (10 feet) tall. In the spring, goldfields blanket the island with tiny, bright yellow flowers.

California sea lions and, in winter, elephant seals breed on the island. Bird watching is superb. Western gulls nest in abundance, and occasionally brown pelicans rook here, too. Land birds, including barn owls, American kestrels, horned larks, and meadowlarks, also nest here. Although not commonly seen, the island deer mouse and the island night lizard, a threatened species, live on the island.

Santa Barbara Island offers 9 kilometers (5.5 miles) of trails to explore. A good place to start is the Canyon View Self-guided Nature Trail near park headquarters. A trail booklet enables you to learn about most of the island's interesting features readily. Then you can explore the other trails on your own. A park ranger stationed on the island interprets its features and enforces rules and regulations. There is no telephone, but in emergencies the ranger has radio communications with park headquarters.

Camping is allowed only in the campground. Reservations are required (no fee) and you must obtain a permit in advance from park headquarters. Tables and latrines are available. Campers must bring their own food, fuel, shelter, and water. Bring a tent that can be securely anchored against heavy winds and rain.

There are no shade trees on the island, bring a hat and a sunscreen. A pack-in, pack-out trash policy is in effect: please take back with you whatever you brought onto the island.

