

Anacapa

An island, a state of mind.

A self-guiding nature trail booklet



For Your Protection

- Cliffs entirely surround East Anacapa Island. They are full of fractures and in many cases are undercut. Stay away from the cliffs!
- The foghorn is of such a high frequency that it could permanently damage your hearing at close range; consequently, the United States Coast Guard requests that no one go past the sign on the road to the lighthouse.

For The Island's Preservation

- Please remember that everything—feather, flower, rock, or shell—is protected and must be left where it is. In this manner, everyone can enjoy these features.
- The island is small and fragile and doesn't get much rainfall. Consequently, any disturbance of the land takes several years to recover. There are several trails on the island already—perhaps too many. Do not be responsible for making more. *Please stay on the trails.*
- Please take back with you all trash that you bring on the island.

Price 25¢ if you take it with you.

Introduction

Welcome to East Anacapa Island, a unique part of the world. No other place has its exact combination of animals and plants, geologic and human history. You are invited to wander the trails over the island. Taking this booklet with you as you walk along the nature trail will introduce you to some of the island's features and moods. As you can see from the map in the center of the booklet, the nature trail is in the shape of a figure-eight; it is approximately 1½ miles (2.4 km) long and will take as much time as you care to give it. Please remember that everything here is protected so that future visitors may have the same chance to see and discover what you have—please, take nothing, disturb nothing.

The building closest to you is the residence of the National Park Service employee stationed here. If you have any questions or observations, or if you need assistance, please contact this person. There is a small museum here for your enjoyment; ask to be shown through it.

To mention once again a couple of words of WARNING! Stay *away* from the *cliffs!* The rock is crumbly and in many cases undercut—don't risk your life to get a slightly better view. *And* stay away from the lighthouse; the foghorn is loud enough to permanently damage your ears.

Acknowledgements:

On Page 4, the lines from the poem "Grey of Falladon" by Sir George Trevelyan (*Grey of Falladon*; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1937) reprinted by permission of the publisher.

On Page 13, the lines from the poem "Continent's End" by Robinson Jeffers (*The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*; New York: Random House Publishers, 1968) reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Man: Now You See Him . . .

Go forth, under the open sky,
and list
To Nature's teachings, while
from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the
depths of air—
Comes a still voice . . .
William Cullen Bryant

1 If you are anywhere close to it, the foghorn can hardly be called a "still voice," but it remains an integral part of Anacapa. East Anacapa Island, because of its strategic location in the Santa Barbara Channel, has hosted aids to navigation for many years. Its location was deemed "strategic" after several boats had crashed against its cliffs, though evidently it only became serious in 1853, with the wrecking of the side-paddle steamer *Winfield Scott*; the 150 passengers spent three uncomfortable days on Middle Anacapa Island before being rescued. Public reaction to make Anacapa Island safer was evidently not very intense, for it was 60 years later

before a small light was built on East Anacapa. This was replaced in 1932 by the present 600,000 candlepower lighthouse. At the same time houses and other buildings were built for employees of the U. S. Lighthouse Service stationed here; they were replaced by members of the U. S. Coast Guard. In 1966, the foghorn and light were automated so that now they function by diesel-operated generator, 24 hours a day, every day. In 1969, the Coast Guard personnel left the island. Now only members of the National Park Service live on Anacapa, though the Coast Guard continues to maintain the foghorn and lighthouse.



Now You Don't

2 Many of the buildings are still here, to support both the Park Service employee and the lighthouse. Other buildings built in the 1930s, including three houses, have since been torn down. You can see some of their foundations around you. They are now covered by figwort or iceplant, (*Mesembryanthemum*), of which there are at least three species on the island. These plants, so common along the southern California coast, are



A man and what he loves and builds have but a day and then disappear; nature cares not—and renews the annual round untired. It is the old law, sad but not bitter. Only when man destroys the life and beauty of nature, there is outrage.

George Trevelyan

originally from Africa, and were introduced down along the coast of Central or South America. They have spread more or less naturally north from there. Because it spreads quickly, there is some concern that iceplant may be taking over the island at the expense of the native plants. Presently, though, notice that it becomes less common as you move away from the developed parts of the island.

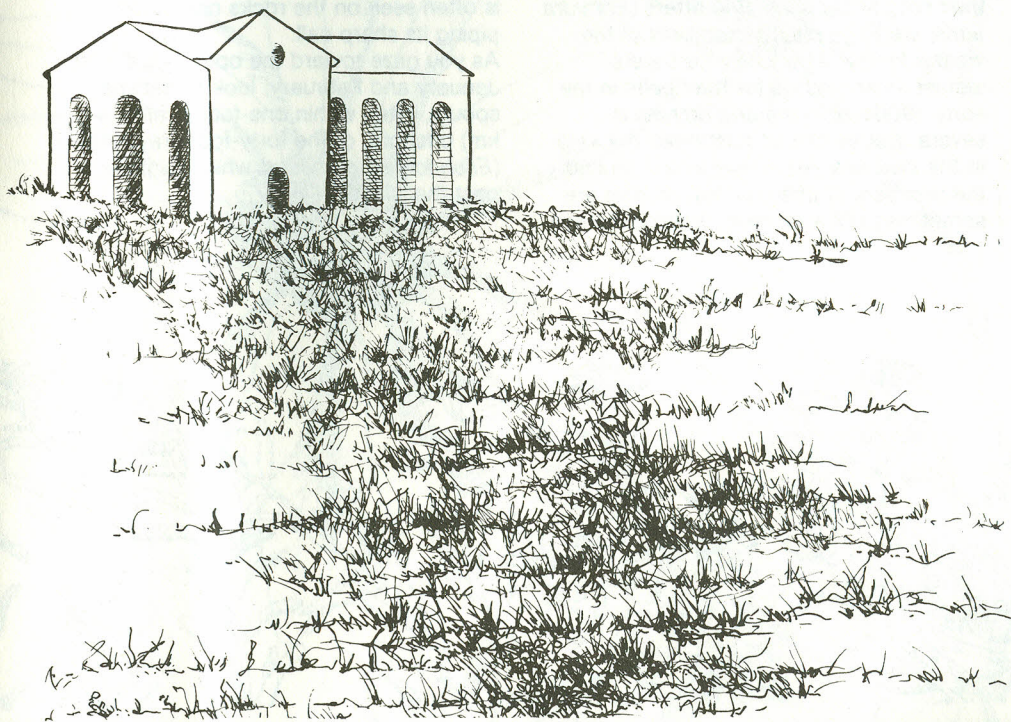
The Church

3 Though this building may look like a place to pray in, it never has been used for that purpose. It was, however, purposely built to look like a church. In years past, the residents on the island were bothered by people from passing boats taking pot shots with rifles at the island water supply, two huge (55,000

gallons 209,000L each) redwood water tanks. So the idea was conceived to build something which looked like a church around the tanks, with the hope that even people who shoot at water tanks might think twice about shooting at churches. And it has worked; in the past few years, at least, *fewer* people have shot at the “church” than used to shoot at the tanks.

Everyone needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.

John Muir



Cathedral Cove

4 Cathedral Cove is one of the prettiest areas around the island, and there is much to notice in its waters. The "seaweed" in the water is kelp—giant kelp (*Macrocystis* sp.) most commonly, but also feather-boa kelp (*Egregia* sp.) nearer the shore. Kelp "forests" provide the home for most of the organisms which live in the water around the island. Kelp is an alga, a plant which has no root; it is held in place by "holdfasts" attached to rocks. These holdfasts are occasionally eaten by abalone (*Haliotis* spp.) and sea urchins (*Strongylocentrotus* spp.). The numbers of these underwater creatures used to be kept in check by sea otters, their natural enemies. Sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*) are large playful members of the weasel family. After sea otters were almost exterminated for their pelts in the early 1900s, abalone and urchins in several places almost destroyed the kelp. In the past few years divers have limited the numbers of abalone, but urchins are sometimes still a problem without the sea



There is pleasure in the
pathless woods,
There is rapture on the lonely
shore,
There is society, where none
intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in
its roar:
I love not Man the less, but
Nature more.

George Noel Gordon
Lord Byron

otter to provide a year-round natural check. The animals you may see and hear barking below are not otters but California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), sleek and dark brown when wet. Occasionally a single harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*) smaller and with blotched coat, will appear in the kelp.

On the rocks in the cove look for the ever present western gulls (*Larus occidentalis*) as well as brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) and cormorants (*Phalacrocorax* spp.) black long-necked birds. Another smaller black bird, with a distinctive long coral-red bill is the black oyster-catcher (*Haematopus bachmani*); it is often seen on the rocks near shore piping its sharp call.

As you gaze toward the open sea during January and February, look for telltale spouts, often within one-fourth mile (.4 km) offshore, of the forty-foot gray whale (*Eschrichtius gibbosus*) which migrates past the island.

Tree Sunflowers

What is a weed? A plant
whose virtues have not yet
been discovered.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

5 The plant growing around you is not a weed. For much of the year, though, when it is dormant, dry brown, and seemingly lifeless, its virtues are not apparent to many. This is the giant coreopsis or tree sunflower (*Coreopsis gigantea*), and it grows only on the Channel Islands and the coastal area around Point Mugu. It really is a sunflower, and each plant bears several

large yellow flowers in late winter and early spring when the plant is green. At this time it is most appreciated, since it transforms the island into a spot of sublime beauty. But by June the plant is again brown, and so it remains until the winter rains again turn it green. In the canyons on West Island, where it is protected from wind, some individual plants grow up to ten feet (3m) high.



Intermission

At the campground feel free to sit down, eat your picnic lunch—and of course to camp. Though camping here is primitive (you must bring all your necessities with you) spending the night here can be a rewarding, unusual experience. Even if you're not prepared to spend the night on the island, feel free to leave your spare belongings here—you'll be coming back through the campground on your way down to the Landing Cove.

The pieces of red tile along the trail by the campground are pieces of the roofs of three houses which were torn down in the late 1960s. They were placed where they are to impede the development of a ditch which was forming in the road. As you can see, the ditch has simply moved over.

Some Other Plants

In nature there are neither
rewards nor punishments
—there are consequences.
Robert Ingersoll

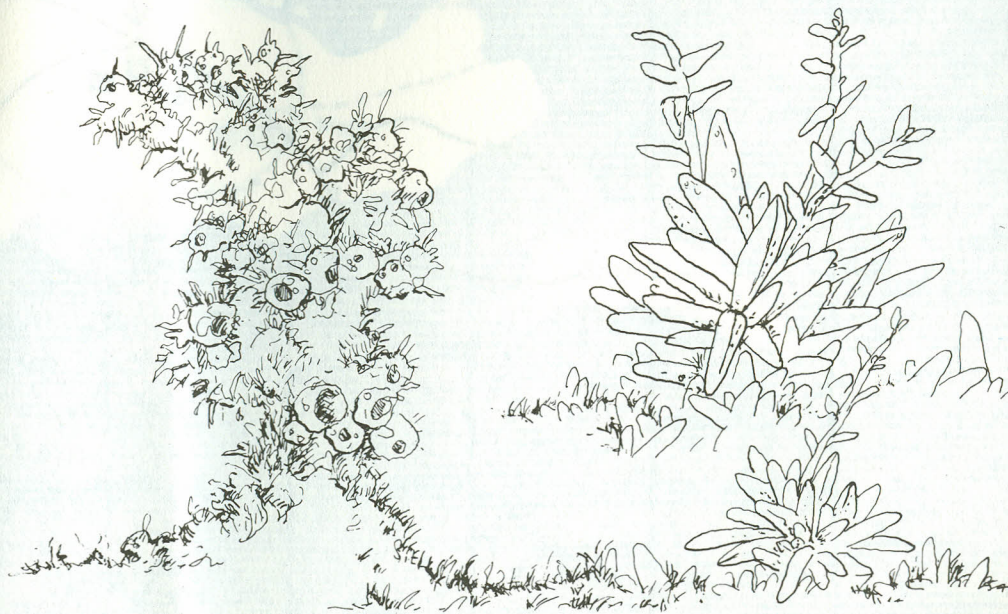
6 Among the larger plants on the island are two kinds of cactus; for those not attuned to these particular aspects of nature, the consequences are likely to *seem* like a punishment.

To the right, the bright green prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*) with its large, flat sections is easily recognized and avoided, except by those who use its fruits to make jelly. But just to the left is another cactus, not so easily seen or recognized. This is the cholla (pronounced "choy'a") or jumping cactus (*Opuntia prolifera*); while it does not really jump, it gives that impression by so easily sticking to whatever brushes up against it. Most

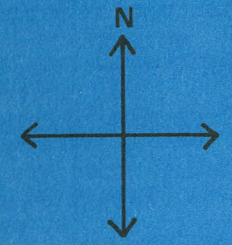
people think of cactus as desert plants, though they grow in almost every state in the Union. On the islands they seem to prefer the dry slopes and southern exposures.

Behind you is a good growth of *Dudleya*, a plant native to the Channel Islands. Like the iceplant, it is a succulent, and they look very similar; possibly their needs were much the same, though they come from different parts of the world.

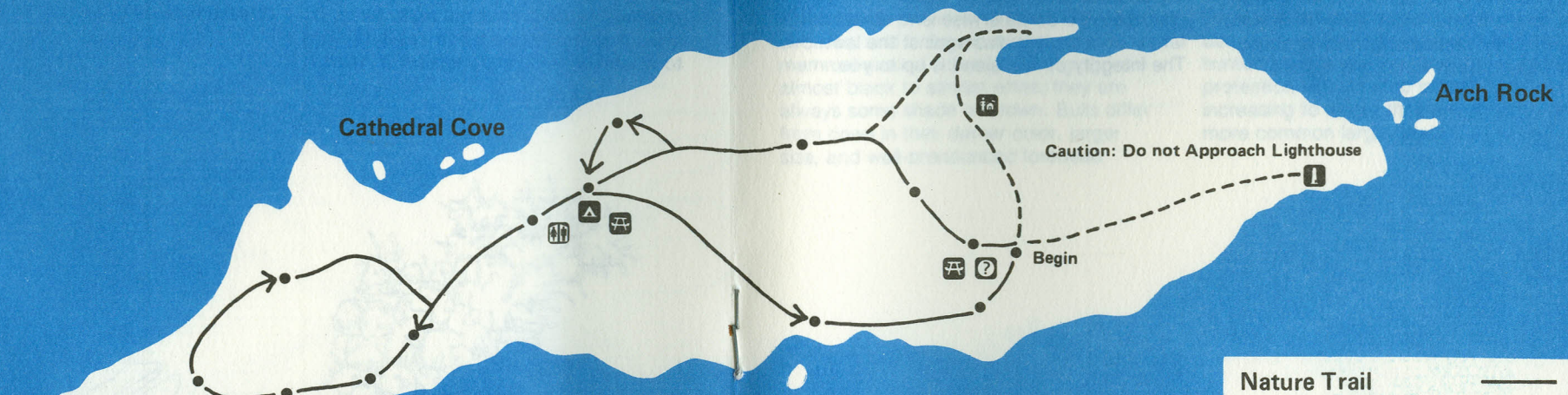
To protect you from the plants, *and the plants from you*, on this fragile island, please remember to stay on the trails.



Anacapa Island



East Anacapa Island



| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Nature Trail | ——— |
| Other Trails | - - - - |
| Nature Trail Stops | • |
| Campground | ▲ |
| Lighthouse | Ⓛ |
| Rangerstation | Ⓜ |
| Info/Museum | ? |
| Picnic | ☼ |
| Restrooms | ♿ |

Kitchen Midden

You cannot feel yourself out of doors; plain, sky, and mountains ray beauty which you feel. You bathe in these spirit-beams, turning round and round, as if warming at a camp-fire. Presently you lose consciousness of your own separate existence: you blend with the landscape, and become part and parcel of nature.

John Muir

7 Chumash Indians lived on the Channel Islands until the mid-1800s. They had villages on most islands and traveled between them, to the mainland, in plank canoes calked with tar from the natural oil seeps. They ate sea mammals, fish, shellfish and seeds, and lived a good life in a sometimes hazardous environment. But it was familiar; they were part of it.

You are standing on a kitchen midden, or garbage pile, and the bones and shells you see around you were deposited by generations of Chumash in the course of stays on the island. Most likely there were no permanent settlements here because there was no fresh water; the Indians

probably were just camped here either on hunting trips or on their way to the mainland.

The kitchen middens are not the only reminders we have of the fact that Indians used Anacapa. The name of the island itself is a derivation of the Chumash word "Eneepah," meaning "deception" or "mirage." Of all the Channel Islands, Anacapa is the only one still reflecting its original Indian name.

Please remember that everything here is protected and may not be taken or disturbed. To do otherwise is to steal from fellow citizens; it is also against the law. The integrity of this island is up to you.

What Can You See?

8 Step carefully through the giant coreopsis to the island edge.

Depending on the day, you may be able to see some of the far islands to the south: Catalina, the most developed; Santa Barbara, the other island in the National Monument; San Nicolas, a Navy installation, fifty miles (80 km) away. Often you can't see as far, however; fog, haze, or smog frequently obscures the view.

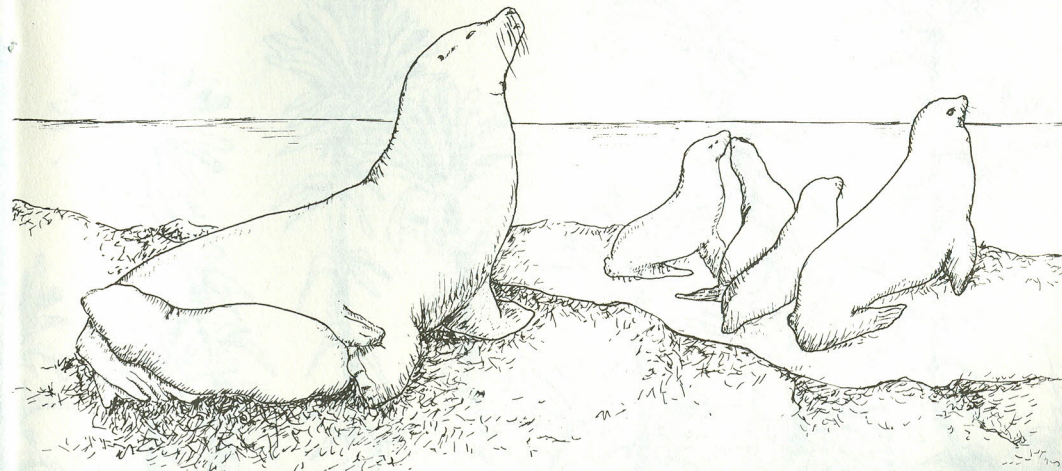
The beach below you is a favorite "hauling out" spot for California sea lions. This species provides "trained seals" of circuses, and is the most common sea mammal around Anacapa. Ranging from almost black to almost white, they are always some shade of brown. Bulls differ from cows in their darker color, larger size, and well-pronounced forehead.

I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray, the established sea marks, felt behind me
Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the continent, before me the mass and doubled stretch of water.

Robinson Jeffers

Harbor seals occur in smaller numbers, but some are often seen on offshore rocks. In color they are either light or dark gray with contrasting blotches, and are short and squat compared to the sea lions. Both animals eat species of fish slow enough for them to catch.

From this point during January and February, you may see the thirty-ton (27 metric ton) gray whales as they migrate south to Baja California to calve or mate. In March they begin to travel north, usually farther west, back to the Bering Sea. At one time gray whales had been hunted almost to extinction, but stringent protection has resulted in their numbers increasing to where they are among the more common large whales.



Hear And Smell

To him who in the love of
nature holds common with her
visible forms, she speaks a
various language.

William Cullen Bryant

9 As you stepped away from the island edge, and the sound of the sea and the sea lions, you may have noticed how quiet it seemed. You might want to linger on the trail and notice a few more things.

Certainly it is very quiet here; even the all-pervading sound of the foghorn is scarcely noticeable. Take the time to listen for the little sounds—the buzzing of a fly, the call of a meadowlark, or the chirp of a sparrow.

Now try to consciously *smell* what is around. At the last stop perhaps you noticed the characteristic fishy smell of the sea lions. Now try to smell some things slightly more pleasant; the grasses, the California sage, the various flowers all

combine to remind you more of an inland valley than a small island.

This is a good place to really look at some of these plants. You are now acquainted with the gray-green California sage (*Artemisia californica*) around you. If you're here in the spring, look for the brilliant red Indian paint-brush (*Castilleja* sp.). A little farther along the trail you will recognize the white flowers of the morning-glory (*Convolvulus cyclostegius*) as its vines climb along the sage. And the gum plant, (*Grindelia* sp.), found growing in the center of the trail, is very common on the island; it gets its name from the white gummy substance found on the buds.



Anacapa Island

10 Anacapa Island is divided into three islets, but as you can see, it is impossible to walk from one to the other. Middle Island extends from below you to the lowest notch beyond; the islet with the peaks is West Anacapa. Frenchy's Cove, a picnic area and good place to explore tide-pools, is just to the right of the notch. Santa Cruz Island, nine miles (14.4 km) west, can usually be seen beyond West Island; Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the Channel Islands with an area of 98 square miles (approximately 255 square kilometers).

Rhodora! if the sages ask
thee why
This charm is wasted on the
earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes
were made for seeing,
Then beauty has its own
excuse for being.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The northern Channel Islands—Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel—extend in a rough east-west line and are the highest peaks of a submerged portion of the Santa Monica Mountains which run through Los Angeles. The islands, by the way, parallel the coast which at this point is also running more or less east-west to Pt. Conception, which you may see 60 miles (96.5 km) away on a clear day. It follows that, looking to the right at the coast, you are looking almost north!

Eggs and Rocks

11 If you are reading this sign anytime from April to July, you have found out that you are in the largest western gull rookery on East Anacapa Island. During this time there are either eggs or young gulls around—please *stay on the trail* to avoid disturbing them. The adults which are overhead probably will not actually touch you, but it would be advisable to protect your head. Gulls are common around the island all year, but they only defend a territory during nesting season. They catch small fish and also scavenge, thereby performing a useful service cleaning up the ocean.

To see a world in a grain of
sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of
your hand
And eternity in an hour.
William Blake

The rocks in front of you are volcanic in origin. They form the base rock of the entire island. Anacapa was not formed by volcanism, however; like the rest of the Santa Monica Mountains, it was probably formed by faulting. The entire southern California region is very active geologically, and it is presumptuous to assume that Anacapa Island will remain as it is now for any length of time.

From this point, continue up the path back to the main trail, then back to the campground. In the campground, take the right fork to continue the walk.



“What Is It?”

We have become detached
from the earth, we have
abandoned her. And a man
who abandons nature has
begun to abandon himself.
Pierre Van Paassen

12 An idea to gather the rain to supplement the water supply led to the construction of this water catchment basin, which is not now in use. Perhaps the annual 12 or so inches (30cm) of rain wasn't enough or maybe the gulls which like to roost here made people leery of

drinking the water. A more plausible reason, and one we have heard was true, is that there was fear of atomic fallout. The catchment basin is now used as a helicopter landing pad for authorized aircraft.

Eucalyptus Trees

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down
their heads,
The wind is passing by.
Christina Rossetti

13 The two small bush-like trees to the left of the building are eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus* spp.). Common in southern California, eucalyptus trees are native to Australia and were planted here several years ago. Due to the combination of wind and salt spray, these remain small and, in fact, barely survive. On Middle Anacapa is a grove of medium-sized

eucalyptus trees, in good health; they receive protection from the wind, which occasionally gusts up to more than sixty miles (96.5km) per hour.

Several of the larger islands have native trees. In the canyons on West Anacapa, for instance, grow Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), island oak (*Quercus tomentalla*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).

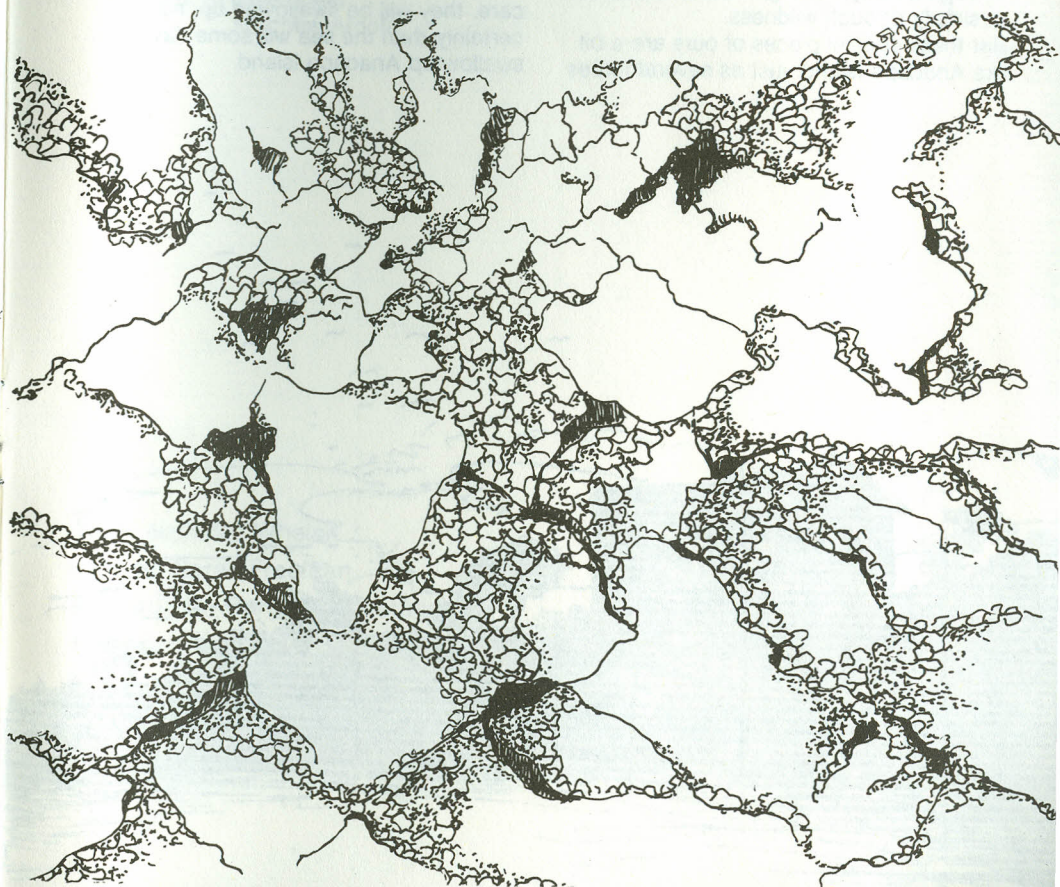


How To Destroy An Island

Nature doth thus kindly heal
every wound. By the
mediation of a thousand little
mosses and fungi, the most
unsightly objects become
radiant of beauty.
Henry David Thoreau

14 On many of the rocks over the island you may have noticed various species of lichens, that combination of algae and fungus which acts as a single plant. Lichens are pioneers, able to live on bare rock and break it down so that higher plants can begin to grow.

So up on top of the island the lichen is destroying the rock; down at sea level, the ocean is doing the same thing in its own way. Add the rain and the wind, and we have several factors at work making this small area of ground even smaller. It might not, in fact, be facetious to be thankful that you chose this week to visit Anacapa rather than next.



Postscript

Anacapa is an island; it is also part of Channel Islands National Monument, an area special enough that it was set aside for preservation, now and in the future. Our society has fortunately set aside several such "special places," in city, state, and Federal parks and refuges; the best use of these areas has been deemed the re-creation of the human spirit, through beauty, through scientific interest, or simply through wildness. But these special places of ours are a bit like Anacapa Island: just as several forces

are combining to tear down this island, so are several interests threatening the integrity of our parks and recreational areas. If you consider your experience here to have been worthwhile, please remember this: unless these special places continue to have the concern and support of enough people, they will never be able to withstand the forces tearing away at them. Ultimately, without your care, they will be swallowed up, no less certainly than the sea will some day swallow up Anacapa Island.

Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in the
spring,
To have loved, to have
thought, to have done.

Matthew Arnold

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