



Protect Yourself and Your Park

Regulations and Guidelines for Scorpion Ranch, Santa Cruz Island.

Everything is protected.

As in all national parks, it is illegal to feed, collect, disturb, or harm park wildlife, plant life, or other natural, historical, and archeological features.

No pets.

Domestic house pets can carry diseases that could harm the rare island fox or other animals that are unique to the island. Service animals require a permit from the park superintendent.

Remove your garbage and secure your food.

Visitors are required to pack out what they pack in, including garbage, and to secure their food and trash from birds and animals at all times. Use the provided food storage boxes or coolers. Animals will unzip bags and tents so secure zippers with paper clips, twist ties, safety pins, or small carabiners. Wildlife that feed on human food become more vulnerable to predators, lose their abilities to find food, and lose their natural fear of humans. Failure to store your food and trash properly or intentionally feeding wildlife will result in a citation and fine.

Hike only on designated trails.

It is recommended that visitors use the designated island trail system. Although hiking off trail is permitted on Santa Cruz Island, anyone leaving the designated trail system should have experience in off-trail hiking and navigation. Visitors should stay back from cliffs and should not rock climb as the cliffs and rock faces are very unstable. Please refer to the hiking guide located at the orientation area for detailed information.

No campfires or charcoal fires.

Due to extreme fire danger, no campfires or charcoal fires are permitted on the island. Use only enclosed gas campstoves for cooking.

Smoking allowed only on beaches.

Please take cigarette butts off the islands with your other trash.

Firearms are prohibited in park facilities.

Federal law prohibits firearms in federal facilities.

Certain items are prohibited on the island.

To protect park resources and prevent the introduction of nonnative species the following items may not be brought to the park: live or potted plants; soil; cut flowers; firewood or any untreated, unfinished wood (including hiking sticks); corrugated boxes; tools or equipment with attached soil; motorized vehicles; bicycles; and single-use plastic grocery bags.

No landing on offshore rocks.

Landing is not permitted on offshore rocks and islets. In addition, the shoreline between Arch Point and the east boundary of Potato Harbor is closed to landing to protect seabirds.

No fishing within Marine Reserves.

The waters from Potato Harbor to Little Scorpion Bay (including Scorpion Anchorage) are a marine reserve. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource within this area.

Avoid contact with deer mice.

Hantavirus has been found in island deer mice. Contact your physician if you experience flu-like symptoms after contact with deer mice or infected materials. This is a life-threatening illness.

Be aware of boat departure times.

When departing the island, visitors are responsible for meeting the boat on time. Ask the ranger or concessioner for departure times.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, contact a ranger or concession employee. If a phone is available, contact the National Park Dispatch Center at 559-565-4221. This dispatch center handles all emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for Channel Islands National Park. On the water, use a marine radio to contact the US Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16.

More information is available at the visitor center.

The exhibits and handouts available at the visitor center and orientation area provide additional information to help you plan a safe visit within the park.



Watersports Regulations and Safety

For more information on kayak safety and destinations please visit the orientation area exhibits in front of the visitor center.

- All water sports are at your own risk – there is no lifeguard on duty.
- You are not in a protected cove. Conditions are considered “open ocean.” Be aware of strong winds, currents and swells.
- Be aware of boat traffic – put up dive flag at the end of pier when snorkeling, diving or swimming near pier.
- Do not approach Island Packers boats when they are at the pier as they may maneuver at any time and captains can't always see you.

Weather/Sea Conditions

- Always observe and evaluate sea conditions before entering water. Check marine weather forecast for the east Santa Barbara Channel in advance.
- Extreme weather conditions may be encountered at any time. The sea and wind conditions may become dangerous without warning.
- Wind and waves typically come out of the northwest or west. Winds tend to pick up in the afternoon. Morning hours can be a better time to kayak. Santa Ana or east winds may occur from September through April.
- Do not paddle down wind (with the wind) as you will have to return into a headwind. If you find yourself unable to paddle back to Scorpion Anchorage, there are two small beach haul-outs in Little Scorpion Anchorage.

Kayaking Skills

- Do not exceed your skill level. If you are a beginner, stay close to Scorpion Anchorage. Ask NPS personnel or kayak guides if you have questions concerning weather or safety.
- Be familiar and practice kayak re-entry techniques should you fall out of your kayak.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.

Safety Equipment

- All paddlers must have lifejackets.
- Water temperatures remain cold throughout the year. It is recommended that you wear a wetsuit and booties or footwear.
- Helmets are recommended. Wear them when paddling below cliffs, near rock outcroppings and in sea caves.
- VHF radio, tow line, throw bag, and knowledge of how to use them are recommended.

Sea Caves

- Sea caves are dangerous. Even on calm days, the wake from large ships in the channel can poise a danger to kayakers in caves.
- Always observe and evaluate sea conditions before entering caves.

Closures

- You may not exit your kayak while in the sea caves. Do not use artificial lights in the caves and do not disturb the wildlife. It is recommended that visitor stay at least 100 yards away from marine mammals and seabirds. Under federal law it is illegal to disturb and/or harm these animals.
- Scorpion Rock and all other off shore islets and rocks are off limits and closed to public entry. Please stay off Scorpion Rock to protect nesting seabirds.
- Several sea caves are closed to public entry. Cavern Point Caves #3 and #4 and Bat Cave are closed. Do not enter. Refer to the kayak map of eastern Santa Cruz Island posted on the bulletin board by the beach.
- No fishing is allowed within the marine reserve – refer to the bulletin board for more information.

Kayak Storage

- Store kayaks and gear in the kayak storage area only. Do not store on the beach – let others enjoy the beach (storage area is behind the eastern end of the beach, to the east of the beach bulletin board, in the area marked “kayak storage”).

Camping Regulations

LOCATION: The campground entrance is located about a 1/3 of a mile up the valley – beyond the ranch and in the eucalyptus grove. The campground consists of two loops, an upper and a lower, the upper loop of the campground is located another 1/3 mile past the lower loop. Site 1-22 are in the lower loop, sites 23-25 and the group sites A-F are in the upper loop. Camping is only permitted within site boundaries within the lower and upper campgrounds at Scorpion. Backcountry camping is prohibited except by reservation at Del Norte.

CAMPSITE RESERVATION: Campsites are available by reservation only. Use only the site(s) listed on your reservation confirmation. Check in time is 12:00 pm. Stage and secure your gear at your reserved site if the previous occupant has not vacated, or leave it at the beach, or by the campground entrance bulletin board.

SECURE TENTS: Stake down tents due to wind. Do not camp under large branches in windy weather. They may break.

SECURE FOOD AND TRASH: Proper food and trash storage at all times is required—gulls, ravens, skunks, mice, and especially foxes have all gotten into visitors' food. Ravens and foxes will unzip bags and foxes in the Scorpion area are unfortunately, becoming habituated to human food. Human food can be toxic to wild animals. Secure zippers with paper clips, twist ties, safety pins, or small carabiners. Failure to store your food and trash properly or intentionally feeding wildlife will result in a citation and fine.

- Store food and trash in the animal-proof containers that are provided at each campsite. Do not hang trash. Do not store food in tents. Tents containing food have been damaged by animals.
- Place all food scraps with your trash and store all dishes, utensils, stoves, and other cookware in the animal-proof containers that are provided at each campsite.
- Do not leave food unattended. Foxes are bold and have taken food right off of tables while visitors are eating. If a fox attempts to steal your food, stomp your feet and clap your hands to scare the fox away. Report the incident to a ranger.
- Pack out all trash; no trash in outhouses. On your day of departure, if you have trash bags that don't fit in your containers or backpacks, you may store the trash bags TEMPORARILY in the containers by the pier. You MUST take trash with you when you board the boat.

NO SMOKING: Smoking is not permitted on the island except on beaches. Please do not smoke in campgrounds, bathrooms, piers, or other areas due to extreme fire danger. Cigarette butts must be removed from the island. Pack out what you pack in.

NO FIRES: Campfires are not permitted on the islands. Only gas stoves are allowed for cooking and use is permitted at campsites only. No charcoal, wood, or pressed logs are permitted.

QUIET HOURS: 10pm to 6am.

EMERGENCIES: Contact a ranger or concession employee. If a phone is available, call the National Park Dispatch Center at 559-565-4221. This dispatch center handles all emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for Channel Islands National Park. On the water, use a marine radio to contact the US Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16. You are on Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, 20 miles west from Ventura, CA.

CHECKOUT TIME AND DEPARTURE: Checkout time is 11:00 a.m. Please make sure your campsite is available for the next camper by removing your gear by 11:00 a.m. Gear may be staged near the boat departure area. On your day of departure (especially during storm or wind events), please check with staff to confirm boat departure time before heading out for a hike. Boat schedules may change due to weather. Generally these changes are not announced until after 8:30am.