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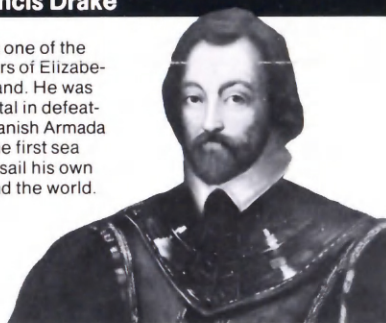
Land and Sea

The story of Point Reyes is a study in motion—slow, continental transformations and sudden, violent jolts that shake the Earth; the rhythmic play of sea-spray along the coast; wings of birds flashing in flight; drifting shrouds of mist and fog; grazing deer who occasionally follow your movements with soft eyes; migrating whales offshore; and the ebb and flow of Pacific tides. Point Reyes is also the story of the Coast Miwok Indians, English and Spanish explorers, the Mexican "Lords of Point Reyes," and 20th-century dairy farmers. The land and its inhabitants have created a legacy for all.

The Point Reyes Peninsula has long baffled geologists. Why should the rocks of this craggy coast match those of the Tehachapi Mountains, more than 310 miles to the south? The answer lies in plate tectonics: the constant motion of the Earth's crust. The peninsula rides high on the eastern edge of the Pacific plate, which creeps northwestward about two inches a year. The slower-moving North American plate travels westward. In Olema Valley, near park headquarters, the North Amer-

Sir Francis Drake

Drake was one of the great sailors of Elizabethan England. He was instrumental in defeating the Spanish Armada and was the first sea captain to sail his own ship around the world.



ican and Pacific plates grind together along the San Andreas Fault Zone. This fault zone contains many large and small faults running parallel and at odd angles to one another. Because each plate cannot move freely, tremendous pressures build up. From time to time this pressure becomes too great, the underlying rock breaks loose, and the surface actually moves. This is what happened in the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 when the peninsula leaped 20 feet northwestward. As if to accent the geological separation along the San Andreas Fault, the weather may vary

quite markedly on both sides of Inverness Ridge. A succession of summer days on the east side may be warm and sunny, while on the ocean side, a chilling fog may hide the sun.

The moderate climate, the fertility of the land, and its nearness to the sea made it attractive to human beings from very early days. The Miwoks, a peaceful people, harvested acorns and berries, caught salmon and shellfish, and hunted deer and elk. In the summer of 1579, Francis Drake, an English adventurer in the service of Queen Elizabeth I of England, appeared offshore in his ship, the *Golden Hind*. Evidence indicates that Drake careened his ship in Drakes Estero to make repairs, staying for about five weeks. The Miwoks supplemented the Englishmen's rations with boiled fish and meal ground from wild roots. Wandering inland Drake's crew sighted herds of deer and one of them noted a landscape "farre different from the shoare, a goodly country, and fruitfull soyle, stored with many blessings fit for the use of man." Before the *Golden Hind* sailed westward across the Pacific on its round

the world voyage Drake named this land Nova Albion, meaning New England. He doubtless noted a resemblance to the Dover coast on his own English Channel.

Explorers from the outside world came and went. In 1595, Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno's ship the *San Agustin* was wrecked in a storm that drove the ship upon the coast; several crewmen were lost. Stranded on the beach, Cermeno and the survivors built a small launch to carry them to Mexico. Since that time, porcelain pieces, believed to have come from the ship's cargo of Ming china, have turned up in excavations of various Miwok Indian sites.

It was a Spanish explorer, Don Sebastian Vizcaino, who gave Point Reyes its name on January 6, 1603. Vizcaino, sailing north out of Monterey to explore the California coast, was buffeted by fierce winds during a one-day stormy anchorage in Drakes Bay. Turning back to sea, Vizcaino sailed past the rocky headlands that he named La Punta de Los Reyes, for this was the Feast of the Three Kings.

After Drake's visit, almost 200 years passed before settlers began to arrive. Indeed, San Francisco Bay, one of the world's great natural harbors, was not discovered by Europeans until 1769 when an overland expedition of Spanish explorers reached it. Mariners had repeatedly overlooked the narrow entrance to the bay in the seemingly smooth coastline.

Under increasing contact with the outside world and new ideas, the settlers of California and Mexico revolted against the Spanish government and in 1821 established an independent Republic of Mexico. During the years of Spanish rule, the Miwoks had been taken from their homelands to labor in Spanish missions. Except for a few who managed to evade the

Red-tailed hawk
illustration by John Dawson



missionaries, and some survivors of the missions who wandered back after the Mexican revolution, Point Reyes had seen the last of its original inhabitants.

During Mexican rule three "Lords of Point Reyes"—James Berry, Rafael Garcia, and Antonio Osio—held the entire peninsula through land grants. After the United States conquest of California, Point Reyes ended up in the hands of a San Francisco law firm. The land was then broken into dozens of dairy ranches controlled by the senior partners of the firm. Beef and dairy cattle have roamed the brushy flatlands of Point Reyes ever since.

Visitor Information



Tomales Point



Wildflowers



Gray whale



Point Reyes Light



Tule Elk



Black-crowned night heron



California sister and poppies

When You Arrive Stop at the Bear Valley Visitor Center at the Bear Valley entrance to the park, the Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center on Drakes Beach, and the Point Reyes Lighthouse Visitor Center for further details on the story of Point Reyes. Always check at a

visitor center for information on local weather, safety, regulations, and tide conditions. The visitor centers provide directions to campgrounds outside the park, motels, eating places, riding stables, and bicycle shops. Check on park programs and exhibits here, too.

Camping Car camping is not permitted in the park. There are, however, four hike-in campgrounds: Sky, Glen, Coast, and Wildcat. Camping is restricted to these campgrounds. Permits are required and are free at Bear Valley Visitor Center. Camping is limited to a

total of four nights. Reservations can be made up to two months in advance by calling 415-663-1092, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. All campgrounds have restrooms, drinking water, and a hitching rail where horses must be tied. Each individual campsite can accommodate a maximum of 8 persons; group sites are available for 10 to 25 persons. All campsites have a picnic table, charcoal grill, and space for a tent. Leave the campsite clean.

Please Observe These Rules • Dogs and other pets are not permitted on trails or in campgrounds. They are permitted only on those beaches that are not seal habitats or bird nesting areas, and then only on a leash. • Wood fires are prohibited in campgrounds. Use only

charcoal, gas stoves, or canned heat. Driftwood fires are permitted only on sandy beaches below the high tide line. • No fireworks, firearms, or weapons of any kind are allowed in the park. • Bicycles are prohibited within the wilderness areas. • Do not shortcut

trails. • Pack out your trash. • Dial 9-1-1 in an emergency.

For your safety, sleeping on the beach is not only prohibited but dangerous. High tide frequently comes to the base of the cliffs and can trap the unwary.

Respect Privacy Many ranches in the park are in a pastoral zone and continue to operate under agreements with the National Park Service. Please respect their right to privacy.

General Information Point Reyes National Seashore administers the Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands north of the Fairfax-Bolinas Road. Miles of trails within these lands are available for exploration. For information and hiking maps about Golden Gate National Recreation Area, contact a ranger at any of the park visitor centers.

Telephone Numbers Bear Valley Visitor Center 415-663-1092 Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center 415-669-1250 Lighthouse Visitor Center 415-669-1534 Recorded Weather and Information 415-663-9029

Point Reyes

Point Reyes National Seashore
California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Traveling the Park Roads

The best place to begin your visit is Bear Valley. From Calif. 1 at Olema, a one-minute drive brings you to park headquarters. As you turn onto the entrance, you will cross the San Andreas Fault Zone. At the visitor center you will find an extensive display of exhibits, specimens, and artifacts. Other points of interest are the Earthquake Trail, a 0.7-mile walk along the San Andreas Fault, a 0.7-mile self-guided Woodpecker Nature Trail, the Morgan Horse Ranch, and Kule Lokio, a replica of a Coast Miwok Indian village.

Bear Valley Visitor Center to Limantour Beach
The impact of Point Reyes is most dramatic at the meeting of land and sea. Many such areas can be reached by car, so begin by leaving the headquarters area—all distance figures are from this point—and turning left onto Bear Valley Road. The drive will take you to Limantour Beach where you can wade, watch the birds, beach-comb, or picnic. No lifeguard is on duty. The nearby Estero de Limantour is a favorite for birdwatchers for its variety and number of birds.

Bear Valley Visitor Center to Point Reyes Headlands
A few miles past the town of Inverness, the Sir Francis Drake Highway forks. The right fork, Pierce Point Road, leads to **Tomales Bay State Park**, where you can picnic and swim; **Abbotts Lagoon**, where you can canoe and watch migratory waterfowl. But pounding surf and treacherous currents prevail along these beaches, so beware. The Pierce Point Road ends at the tule elk range. Before 1860 thousands of tule elk roamed here. After an absence of almost a century, a herd has been returned to this wilderness.

Hiking the Trails

Besides the interesting points in the park accessible by car and short walks, there are many others that we hope you will have the thrill of discovering for yourself. They are here to see, to touch, to photograph, to enjoy. To become fully acquainted with the park, leave the roads and spend a day of exploration on foot. You may discover Arch Rock, where the Bear Valley trail ends and view the waters of Drakes Bay.

Three types of terrain distinguish the trail systems of Point Reyes: the pasture lands of Pierce Point and the Estero, the chaparral ridges and California-laurel valleys to the east and west of Limantour Road; and the forests and meadowlands in the southeastern end of the park. Certain trails may not be currently maintained. Check conditions at the visitor center. Trail maps are available at all park visitor centers.

Getting There Calif. 1 provides direct access from the north and the south. It is a scenic, winding road; U.S. 101, further east, is a freeway. East-west roads connect these two highways. Limited public transportation is available; call 415-332-6100 for a schedule.

Administration Point Reyes National Seashore is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Questions can be addressed to: Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956.

Weather The weather is a great variable. The clearing of fog often signals the onset of strong winds. So, if you are planning to explore the park on foot, prepare yourself for cool weather, dampness, and wind. Remember that weather varies, not only from day to day but from hour to hour. From February through July, mild weather carpets the land with flowers. Summer is the time for a pleasant hike along the trails of Inverness Ridge. Fall weather and beach activities seem to be perfectly matched. The thrill of watching gray whales migrating southward to Baja California and back to the Bering Sea is compensation for the wet Point Reyes winter. But even if you do not see a whale, the bays and esteros will be thronged with seals and migratory shore birds.

A good protected beach for picnicking or just lying in the sun—if it's out—is at **Drakes Beach**. No lifeguard is on duty here. Stay away from cliff bases. You can get food at Drakes Beach Cafe and park information is available at the Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center. The turnoff is at 15.7 miles from headquarters.

On Drake Highway continue south to the **Point Reyes Lighthouse**, at 20.5 miles. Even if you don't elect to descend the 300 steps to the lighthouse, the view can be impressive. But be prepared for fog and windy weather. The rocky shelves below are home for thousands of common murrelets, and sea lions bask on the offshore rocks. The lighthouse observation platform is the best place to see gray whales on their southward and northward migrations, January to April. The lighthouse and visitor center are open Thursday through Monday, weather permitting. The nearby Sea Lion Overlook is an excellent spot for viewing harbor seals and sea lions.

Bicycles are prohibited within the wilderness areas. Bicyclists, pet owners, and horseback riders should check at a visitor center for information about trail use and restrictions.



Trailheads

The principal trailheads are Bear Valley, Palomar, Five Brooks, and Estero. All have adequate parking. You may get excellent trail maps at the visitor centers. The table gives one-way trail distances, in miles, from the Bear Valley trailhead.

Arch Rock	4.1
Coast Camp	6.1
Divide Meadow	1.6
Double Point	8.6
Glen Camp	4.6
Palomar	11.8
Sky Camp	2.7
Wildcat Camp	6.3