



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; browsing 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 generations of 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 Tehachapi Mountains rocks more than 310 miles to the south? The answer lies in plate tectonics and the continual motion of the Earth's crust. The peninsula rides high on the eastern edge of the Pacific plate that creeps northwestward about two inches a year. The slower-moving North American plate travels westward. In Olema Valley, near Bear Valley



Willets
©STEPHEN TROMBLE

Visitor Center, the North American 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 pressure builds up. From time to time this pressure becomes too great, and the underlying rock breaks loose so that the surface actually moves. This is what happened in the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 when the peninsula leaped 20 feet northwestward.

As though accenting 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 well be warm and sunny while on the ocean side a chilling fog may hide the Sun.

The moderate climate and the fertility of the land and its nearness to the sea made this area attractive to humans from very early days. The Miwoks, a peaceful people, harvested acorns and berries, caught salmon and shellfish, and hunted deer and elk. In 1579 Francis Drake, an English adventurer serving Queen Elizabeth I, appeared offshore in his ship *Golden Hind*. Evidence indicates that Drake careened his ship (leaned it on its side to expose the hull) in Drakes Estero to make repairs, staying there some five weeks. The Miwoks supplemented the Englishmen's rations with boiled fish and meal ground from wild roots.

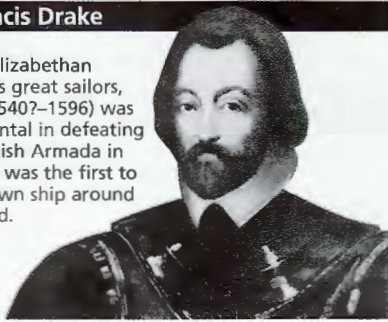
Wandering inland Drake's crew sighted deer herds. One man noted the landscape "farre different from the shoare, a goodly

country, and fruitfull soyle, stored with many blessings fit for the use of man." Before Drake's *Golden Hind* sailed west to cross the Pacific on its round-the-world voyage he named this land Nova Albion, meaning New England. He doubtless thought it resembled the Dover coast of the English Channel.

Explorers from the outside world came and went. In 1595 Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño's ship *San Agustin* was wrecked in a storm that drove it upon the coast, and several of the crew were lost.

Sir Francis Drake

One of Elizabethan England's great sailors, Drake (1540?–1596) was instrumental in defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588. He was the first to sail his own ship around the world.



The Headlands from Chimney Rock
©DEWITT JONES

Stranded on the beach, Cermeño and fellow survivors built a small launch to carry them to Mexico. Porcelain pieces believed to have come from the ship's cargo of Ming china have turned up in excavations of Coast Miwok sites.

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

After Drake's visit nearly 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 Spanish explorers reached it overland. Mariners had repeatedly overlooked the bay's narrow entrance in the seemingly unbroken coastline.

Red-tailed hawk
©SP/JOHN DAWSON



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 the Spanish missions. Except for the few who evaded the missionaries and survivors of the missions who wandered back after the Mexican Revolution, Point Reyes had seen the last of its original inhabitants.

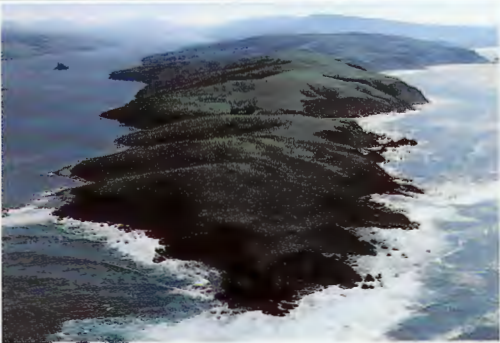
During Mexican rule three so-called Lords of Point Reyes—James Berry, Rafael Garcia, and Antonio Osio—held the entire peninsula through land grants. After the United States conquered California, Point Reyes ended up in the hands of a San Francisco law firm. The land was broken into dozens of dairy ranches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

Visitor Information



Monarch butterfly
©STEPHEN TROMBLE

When You Arrive Stop at the Bear Valley Visitor Center at the Bear Valley entrance to the park, Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center on Drakes Beach, and Point Reyes Lighthouse Visitor Center for more details on the story of Point Reyes. At the visitor centers you can find informa-



Tomales Point
NPS

tion on the weather, tide conditions, safety, and regulations. Visitor centers provide directions to campgrounds outside the park, motels, eating places, riding stables, and bicycle shops. Visitor centers also have information on programs and exhibits.

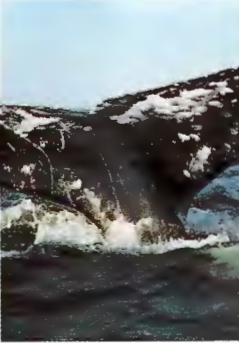
Camping Car camping is prohibited in the park. The four hike-in campgrounds are Sky, Glen, Coast, and Wildcat. Camping is permitted only in these campgrounds. Permits are required and are available at Bear Valley Visitor Center. Camping is



Lupine
©WILLARD CLAY

limited to a total of four nights. You can make reservations up to three months in advance: call 415-663-8054, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. All campgrounds have restrooms, drinking water, and a hitching rail where horses must be tied.

Individual campsites can accommodate a maximum of six persons; group campsites are available for seven to 25 persons. All campsites have a picnic table, charcoal grill, and tent space. Please leave the campsite clean.



Gray whale flukes
©FRANK OLS GORNER

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



Point Reyes Lighthouse
©WILLARD CLAY

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. • Bicycles are allowed on designated trails only. • Help prevent erosion: don't

shortcut trails. • Pack out your trash.

For Your Safety Sleeping on the beach is not only prohibited but dangerous. High tide often reaches to cliff bases and can trap the unwary. Do not climb cliffs; they crumble easily, and



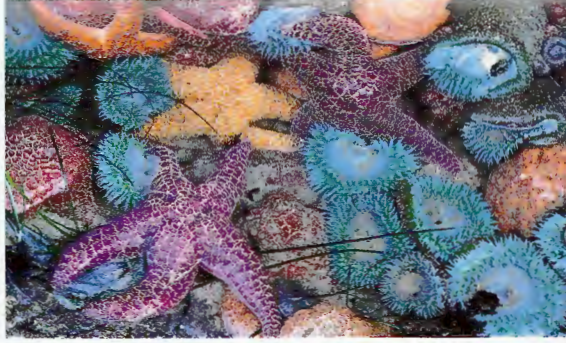
Tule elk
NPS

your foothold may vanish, leaving you in thin air. Walking or sitting below cliffs is very dangerous because of falling rocks.

Respect Privacy Many ranches inside the park are in a pastoral zone and continue to oper-

ate under agreements with the National Park Service. Please respect their privacy.

General Information Point Reyes National Seashore administers those lands of Golden Gate National Recreation Area north of the



Starfish and anemone
©GEORGE WARD

Bolinas-Fairfax Road. Miles of trails within these lands are available for exploration. For hiking maps and information about Golden Gate National Recreation Area, ask a ranger at any park visitor center.

Telephone Numbers Bear Valley Visitor Center: 415-464-5100. Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center: 415-669-1250. Lighthouse Visitor Center: 415-669-1534. Camping reservations: 415-663-8054. In an emergency, dial 911.

Exploring Point Reyes



Getting Here Calif. 1 provides direct access from the north and the south. It is a scenic, winding road; U.S. 101, farther east, is a freeway. East-west roads connect these highways. Limited public transportation is available; call 415-923-2000 for a schedule.

More Information
Point Reyes
National Seashore
Point Reyes Station
CA 94956-9799
415-464-5100
www.nps.gov/pore
Visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov.

Traveling Park Roads

The best place to begin your visit is at Bear Valley Visitor Center, a one-minute drive from Calif. 1 at Olema. Turning onto the entrance road you cross the San Andreas Fault Zone. The visitor center offers exhibits, artifacts, and information. Other points of interest are the Earthquake Trail, a 0.7-mile walk along the San Andreas Fault, a 0.7-mile self-guiding Woodpecker Nature Trail, Morgan Horse Ranch, and Kule Loklo, 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 and left again onto Limantour Road. The drive will take you to Limantour Beach where you can wade, watch birds, beachcomb, 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, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard forks. The right fork, Pierce Point Road, leads to Tomales Bay State Park, where you can picnic and swim, and to Abbotts Lagoon, where you can watch the migratory waterfowl.

Beware of the pounding surf and treacherous currents along these beaches.

Pierce Point Road ends at the Tule Elk Reserve. Before 1860 thousands of tule elk roamed this entire peninsula. After nearly a century's absence a herd has been returned to this wilderness. If you

leave the side trip to Tomales Bay for another day, continue along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. At 8.7 miles take the road to **Mount Vision Overlook** for its panoramic view of the entire peninsula.

Back on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard head west and south to Point Reyes Beach. This windswept landscape is divided into two areas: Point Reyes Beach North at 13.2 miles and Point Reyes Beach South at 15.7 miles.

Please note: Point Reyes Beach North and Point Reyes Beach South are ideal for a picnic—but don't go near the water! The hammering surf and rip currents are extremely hazardous, and this entire area is subject to severe undertow.

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. Stay away from cliff bases. You can get food at the Drakes Beach Cafe and park information at the Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center. The turnoff is at 15.7 miles from headquarters.

On Sir Francis Drake Boulevard continue south to 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 you must be prepared for fog and windy weather. The rocky shelves below are home to thousands of common murrelets, and sea lions bask on offshore rocks. The lighthouse observation platform is the best place for seeing gray whales on their southward and northward migrations, January to April. The lighthouse and the visitor center are open Thursday through

Monday, weather permitting. Nearby Sea Lion Overlook is an excellent spot for viewing harbor seals and sea lions.

Weather The weather varies greatly—not only from day to day but from hour to hour. The clearing of fog often signals the onset of strong winds. So if you plan to explore the park on foot, prepare yourself for cool, damp weather and wind. From February through July, the mild weather sees the land carpeted with flowers. Summer is the best 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 or 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.

Do not approach or collect injured or oiled marine mammals or birds. Please do report any sightings of injured marine mammals or birds to a park visitor center.

Federal law prohibits the disturbance of any cultural resources in the park. Even a single clue can give park officials valuable information about America's past. If an object is disturbed, however, a part of our common national heritage is lost forever.

Fire Permits A permit is required for any wood fire in the national seashore. Do not cover coals with sand—that insulates their heat and poses an unseen danger to wildlife and visitors who are barefoot. Extinguish all fires completely with water.

Hiking the Trails

Besides those interesting park points accessible by car and short walks, there are many others where you will discover for yourself, to see, touch, photograph, and enjoy. To get fully acquainted with the park, leave its roads for a day of exploring on foot. You may well 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: pasture lands of Pierce Point and the Estero; the chaparral ridges and California-lau-rel valleys to the east and west of Limantour Road; and forests and meadowlands in the park's southeastern end. Certain trails may not be maintained currently. Check on condi-

tions and get trail maps at any park visitor center.

As you hike use common sense and keep the following precautions in mind. Bring your own supply of water; stream water is not safe to drink. Backpackers especially must be prepared for fog, cold, and wind in July as well as December. The waters at lakes and bay beaches are inviting after a warm hike, but enter unknown waters cautiously.

Slopes and valley bottoms are usually covered with tall, dense brush, much of it poison oak and stinging nettles. Staying on trails will help you avoid getting lost, injured, or itchy. And, this will keep you away from edges of the steep

cliffs, which are likely to crumble and slide if you get too close. Climbing on the cliffs or walking near their edges invites catastrophe. Check tide tables before walking on the beaches; you could get trapped. Stay away from cliff bases because of falling rocks.

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

Lyme disease is caused by a bacterium. This disease is transmitted by ticks found at Point Reyes. If you think you may have been exposed, contact a physician.



Trailheads

Principal trailheads are Bear Valley, Palomarin, Five Brooks, and Estero. All have adequate parking. You may get excellent trail maps at visitor centers. This 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
Palomarin	11.8
Sky Camp	2.7
Wildcat Camp	6.3