

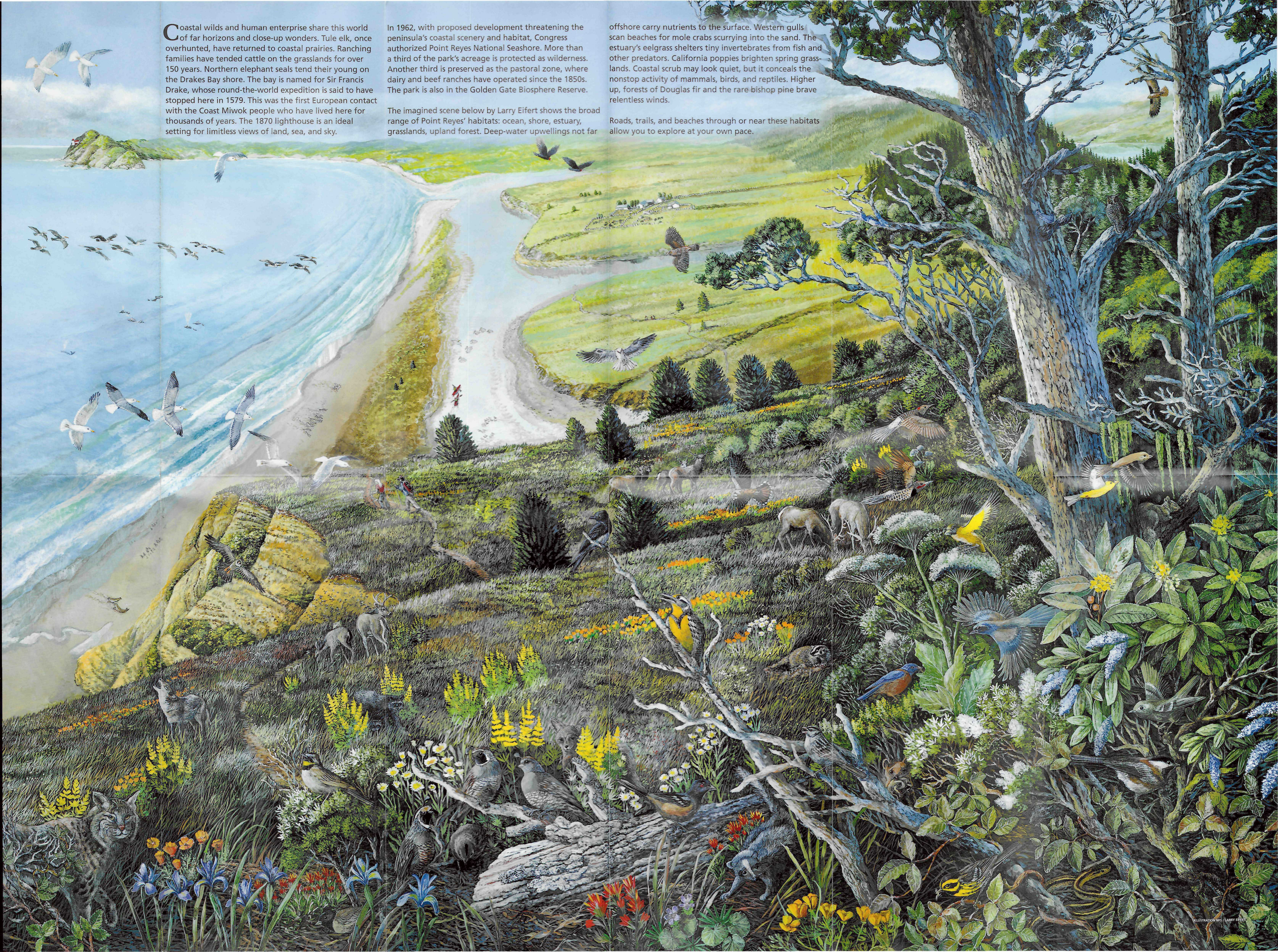
Coastal wilds and human enterprise share this world of far horizons and close-up wonders. Tule elk, once overhunted, have returned to coastal prairies. Ranching families have tended cattle on the grasslands for over 150 years. Northern elephant seals tend their young on the Drakes Bay shore. The bay is named for Sir Francis Drake, whose round-the-world expedition is said to have stopped here in 1579. This was the first European contact with the Coast Miwok people who have lived here for thousands of years. The 1870 lighthouse is an ideal setting for limitless views of land, sea, and sky.

In 1962, with proposed development threatening the peninsula's coastal scenery and habitat, Congress authorized Point Reyes National Seashore. More than a third of the park's acreage is protected as wilderness. Another third is preserved as the pastoral zone, where dairy and beef ranches have operated since the 1850s. The park is also in the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve.

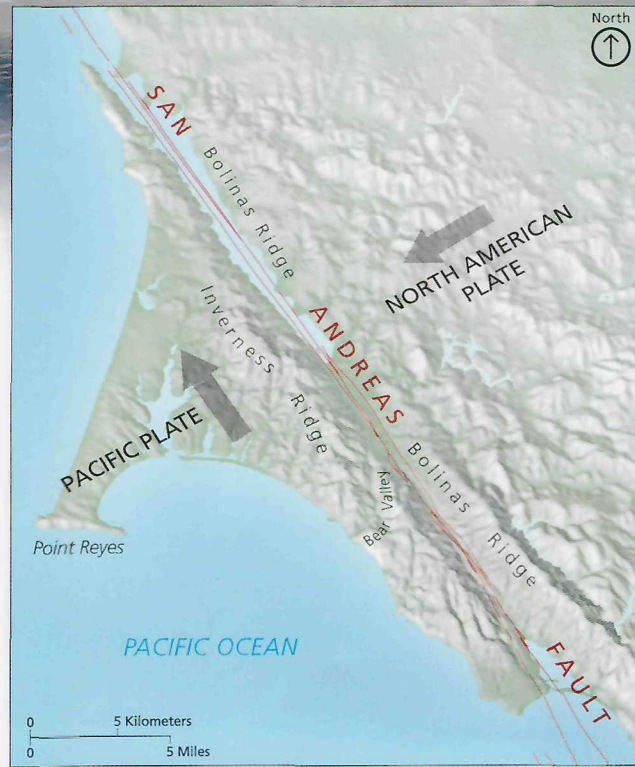
The imagined scene below by Larry Eifert shows the broad range of Point Reyes' habitats: ocean, shore, estuary, grasslands, upland forest. Deep-water upwellings not far

offshore carry nutrients to the surface. Western gulls scan beaches for mole crabs scurrying into the sand. The estuary's eelgrass shelters tiny invertebrates from fish and other predators. California poppies brighten spring grasslands. Coastal scrub may look quiet, but it conceals the nonstop activity of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Higher up, forests of Douglas fir and the rare bishop pine brave relentless winds.

Roads, trails, and beaches through or near these habitats allow you to explore at your own pace.



Shifting Ground



Separating the Point Reyes Peninsula from the mainland is a narrow linear valley running northwest-southeast. Incorporating the Bolinas Lagoon, Olema Valley, and Tomales Bay, the valley lies directly on the San Andreas Fault, where the Pacific and North American continental plates meet.

These plates are segments of Earth's crust "floating" on a sea of molten rock. The Point Reyes peninsula rides on the eastern edge of the Pacific Plate, which advances northwestward. This is why Point Reyes' rocks don't match those east of the fault zone, yet they match rocks hundreds of miles southeast.

The average rate of movement of the Pacific Plate is only one or two inches a year. But the plates don't always move freely relative to one another. The fault zone is actually many large



and small faults running parallel and at odd angles. The plates can "catch" on each other, pressure builds up, and eventually the underlying rock breaks loose in a sudden jolt. This caused the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, when the peninsula leapt 20 feet northwestward in less than a minute. It could happen again in 30 minutes or 300 years. The Earthquake Trail near Bear Valley Visitor Center shows you the results of Earth's tremendous force.

Protecting Ocean Habitat



This portion of the California coast is one of the most biologically rich but threatened areas on Earth. Like land, the ocean has varied habitats influenced by temperature, sunlight, currents, and seafloor terrain. The California Current's spring and summer upwellings carry nutrients to surface waters, the foundation of a food web including everything from plankton to whales. Migrating whales skirt the continental shelf; gray whales often swim quite close to the Point Reyes shore in winter.

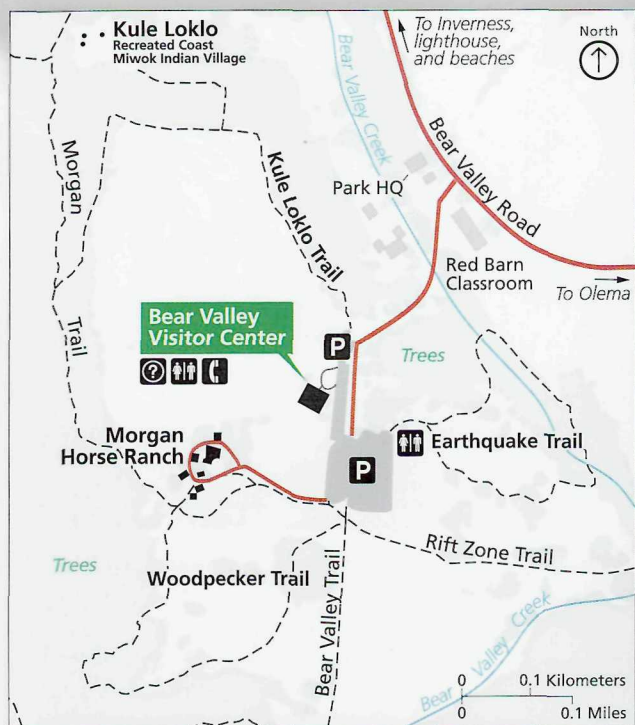
The global significance of protecting Point Reyes and its surrounding waters continues to grow, aided by federal and state law. National Marine Sanctuaries, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, conserve habitats and species while allowing for compatible human use.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (NMS), protects a rocky underwater island perched on the edge of the continental shelf. Surrounded by soft mud and sand, the hard-surfaced bank is a haven for colorful invertebrates and fish.

Gulf of the Farallones NMS protects open ocean, rocky reefs, and estuarine wetlands. Over 25 endangered or threatened species, including killer, blue, and humpback whales, seasonally feed in this rich environment.

The state of California administers a network of Marine Protected Areas off the Point Reyes coast. Some of these areas allow limited sport fishing and commercial harvest; others don't. For detailed information and regulations visit www.nps.gov/pore/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.mlpa.htm.

Explore Point Reyes



Stop by the Bear Valley Visitor Center. There are exhibits and information to help you plan your activities. Ranger-led programs are scheduled on week-ends year-round.

Things to Do
Limantour Beach Sheltered beach; no lifeguard. Nearby Estero de Limantour is a good birding spot.

Mount Vision Overlook Panoramic view of the Point Reyes peninsula from Mount Vision, 1,282 feet.

Point Reyes Beach (Great Beach) 11-mile expanse of Pacific shoreline. *Be careful along the water's edge:* High surf, rip currents, and very large, powerful "sneaker" waves can be deadly. The area is subject to severe undertow.

Point Reyes Lighthouse Spectacular views of Point Reyes Beach and Pacific Ocean. Descend 300 steps to the lighthouse. The observation platform is an ideal perch for spotting migrating gray whales in winter.

Chimney Rock Watch elephant seals as they breed and molt on the beach. Early spring wildflowers.

Drakes Beach Sheltered beach beneath sandstone cliffs. No lifeguard. Visitor center and cafe.

Abbotts Lagoon 1.5-mile trail to diverse bird habitat. Nesting area for threatened snowy plover.

Tule Elk Reserve Hunted to near-extinction in the 1800s, Tule elk were reintroduced to this designated wilderness in 1978.

Historic Pierce Point Ranch Established in the 1860s, this dairy ranch operated until 1973. Short trail down to McClures Beach.

Tomales Bay State Park Swimming beach, kayaking, trails, picnic area.

Giacomini Wetlands Restored wetlands habitat, good birding spot. (Part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.)

Hiking The park's 150 miles of trails traverse pasture lands, chaparral ridges, California-laurel valleys, forests, and meadowlands. Check on trail conditions and get detailed trail maps at park visitor centers.

Camping Camp at four hike-in campgrounds: Sky, Glen, Coast, and Wildcat. Permits and walk-in reservations at Bear Valley Visitor Center. Advance reservations at www.recreation.gov.

Protect Your Park and Keep It Safe Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features in the park. Do not approach or collect injured or oiled marine mammals or birds; report these to park staff. • Sneaker waves and treacherous currents make beaches dangerous. • See park website for firearms regulations. • Many ranches inside the park are in a pastoral zone and continue to operate under agreements with the National Park Service. Please respect their privacy. • For a full list of regulations, visit the park website.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a park ranger, or check our website.

More Information Point Reyes National Seashore, which also administers the northernmost lands of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, is one of over 400 areas in the National Park System. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov.

Point Reyes National Seashore
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Point Reyes Station, CA 94956
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www.nps.gov/pore

Emergencies call 911

