

STUDY OF A NATIONAL
SEASHORE RECREATIONAL
AREA

MATTOLE--HUMBOLDT
CALIFORNIA



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FOREWORD

Presented herewith is the first of a series of intensive studies for proposed National Seashore Recreation Areas, situated along our Pacific Coast. Following a preliminary report for the whole Oregon Coast front, prepared by the writer September 10, 1934, similar areas are now being considered more in detail and are being submitted for California in logical sequence, from north to south. It is not claimed that any of the regions chosen necessarily include extraordinary features, such as are found in our finer National Parks. It is felt, however, that these areas embrace much varied beauty, manifold interests and inspirational elements, and are conceived on so grand a scale that they are of interstate and national significance.

The Humboldt-Mattole area, broad sweeping in scope, diversified in topography, cover types and climate, is richly endowed with elemental beauty and primitive values. It thus may prove to be worthy of selection in California, as answering to the needs and high standards of the National Park Service, for a recreational region of a new order or classification designated as National Seashore Recreation Areas.

Some thoughtful persons, including park authorities, feel that already we have set aside ample recreational areas in each state to care for demands far into the future. It is also claimed that administration responsibilities are many and maintenance costs burdensome. For certain sections of the United States this might be true. When, however, we pause to consider the swift settlement, development and population increase of our Pacific States in the past sixty years, and then consider recent slowing down in population increase,* we realize how almost impossible it is to plan wisely for growth for even one generation hence.

Vital energy is inherent in our people who always find zest in open air pursuits. Our west is very young in recorded history of these United States, and also young in geological time. In this youth lies its hope and strength. Wilderness space, seemingly limitless, is one of our precious remaining possessions. If we act promptly to preserve such remarkable primal areas for all future time, there need be no regret when generations to come seek healthful exulting freedom from our dense, noisy centers of human congestion.

* This slowing down in population increase, possibly only temporary, is due to three factors. First, a severe restriction on immigration in California; second, a distinct reduction in the birth rate. It is felt that simultaneously with the return of better times, when families are freed of economic concern there will be a strong upward trend in the birth rate. Third, the western movement will naturally accelerate with the return of normal times.

MATTOLE--HUMBOLDT

CALIFORNIA

NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATION AREA

GENERAL

This area embodies the Mattole River, Bear River and minor watersheds from the Mendocino-Humboldt County line northward almost to Ferndale, and from the Pacific Ocean front inland to the Redwood Highway and Bull Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park Boundary.

Many of the inhabitants secure their living by the raising of cattle and sheep, goats and hogs, the treeless windswept hills fronting the coast and grassy uplands alternating with forest cover further inland affording feed and range country. Lesser groups engage in dairying, and the growing of fruits and vegetables. Limited numbers engage in the sea food industry.

On the coast rise rocky bluffs, precipitous hills, and mountains. The sea front varies from smooth sandy beaches to pebbly types, or strewn with ponderous boulders. In the north sector of this area, Cape Mendocino juts furthest west of any point on our California coast. In the south, Shelter Cove is a haven for fishing and small craft. Interior lands include much abrupt topography covered with Douglas Firs, Pines, Madrones, Ten Oaks, Live and Mountain Oaks, and Bays,

all with an understorey of dense brush. River and creek bottoms include fine Alders, Cottonwoods, Bays, Maples, and Willows. High rolling Mountain meadows or grass prairies intervene. Lands eastward nearer the Redwood Highway include Redwoods, and would unite with the Ball Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park, to form a logical integral whole.

Scenic character varies from pastoral charm along river valleys to abrupt forest slopes and windswept mountains. The sea coast in general is barren, rugged, and primal, but noble in color, geological form and in scale.

In adopting the proposed boundaries for this area, effort has been made to include a sound, comprehensive acreage so that the area will comprise a complete unit when considering administration, scenic, biological and kindred factors controlling the design and use of such a recreational region. For example, the coastline has been carefully studied in relation to the Redwood Highway and also the Ball Creek area of Humboldt State Redwood Park, besides logical limits both north and south. (The south Boundary is not arbitrary, for in such direction the wilderness area can be freely consistently extended.) The resulting National Seashore Recreational Region will not only effectively protect all scenic and wild life areas included, but will also unite with and supplement existing state park areas to the mutual

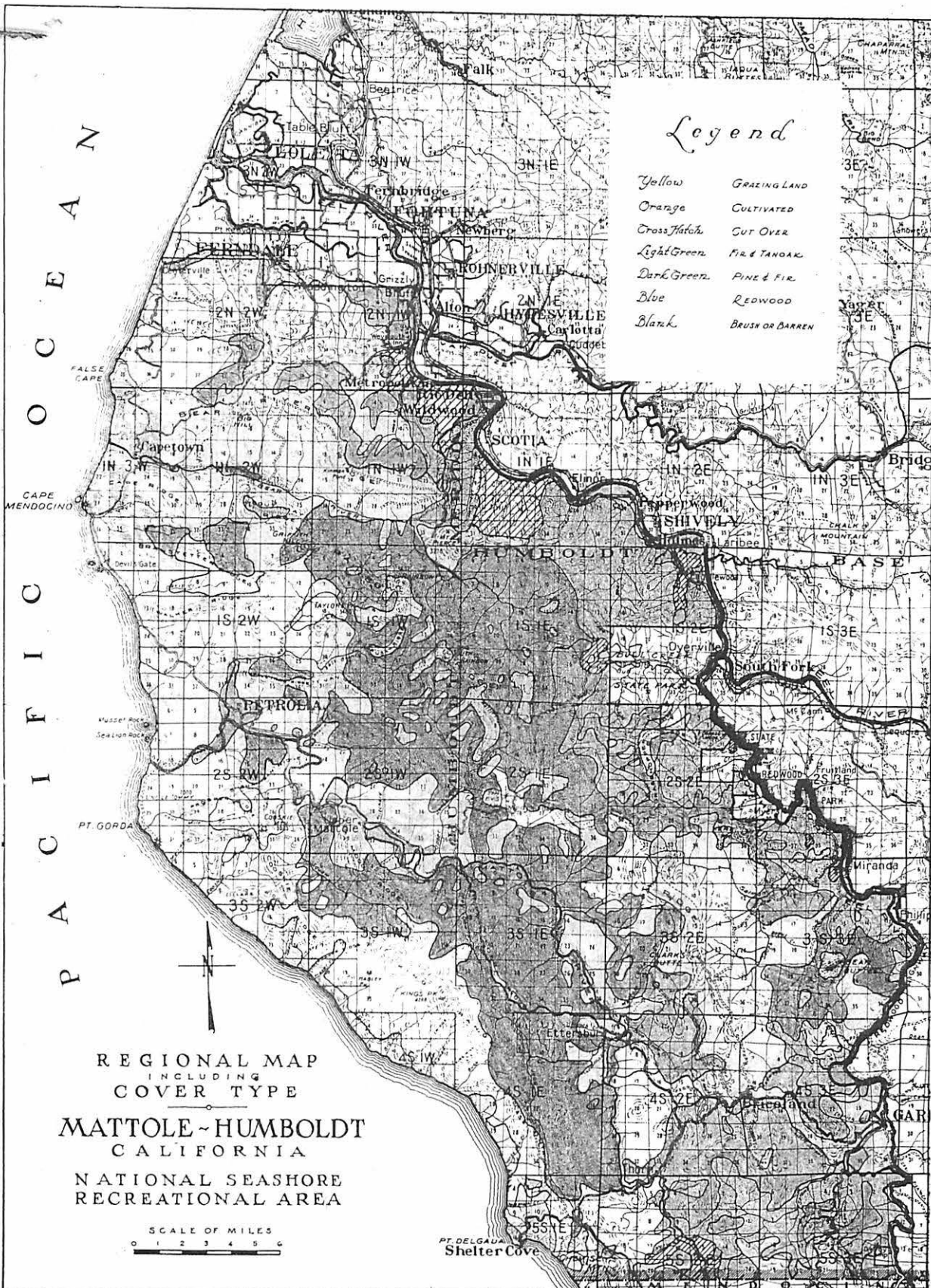
advantage of both ownerships. The fact that no major highway penetrates or traverses the region tends to enhance its intrinsic primitive values.

Recreational advantages are extremely varied and of high potentiality. Bathing, swimming, diving, and boating will be limited on the coast due to its rugged frontage and much cooler air temperatures than those of more favored points further south in California. Fishing and clam digging can offer excellent pastimes. Beach sports such as running, tumbling, and cliff climbing will test endurance. Inland camping, picnicking and hiking, exploration and nature studies should be of absorbing interest. Swimming pools can be created along river courses. Such interior lands will also serve as a valuable permanent preserve for water fowl, forest and upland game.

This region, comprising a total of approximately 460,000 acres, or 720 square miles, it is estimated will cost \$6,320,800.00.

The whole should serve the recreational needs of the densely populated San Francisco Bay area, the hot interior valleys of Central and Northern California, the North Coast counties, western Nevada and southern Oregon. This is a significant and timely opportunity for planning for a future period when California's population is sure to become far more

dense. There is no other integral unit now privately owned of undisturbed wilderness potential park land of such size, scale, and importance available anywhere on the north coast of California. It is of interstate and national significance.

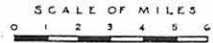


Legend

- Yellow GRAZING LAND
- Orange CULTIVATED
- Cross-hatch CUT OVER
- Light Green FIR & TANOAK
- Dark Green PINE & FIR
- Blue REDWOOD
- Blank BRUSH OR BARREN

P A C I F I C O C E A N

REGIONAL MAP
INCLUDING
COVER TYPE
MATTOLE ~ HUMBOLDT
CALIFORNIA
NATIONAL SEASHORE
RECREATIONAL AREA



PT. DELGAUVA
Shelter Cove

NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

Location: The Humboldt Coast-Mattole River area is located in the southwestern section of Humboldt County, on California's north coast. It extends northward almost to Ferndale, south to the Mendocino County line, and inland to unite with the Bull Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park area and the Redwood Highway.

Present Means of Access: It is reached by the Redwood Highway, Route 101, and is penetrated by good dirt roads from Fernbridge on the north, Dyer-ville and Garber-ville on the east and by way of Fort Bragg from the south. By using San Francisco Bay Ferries this area is 240 miles from San Francisco, Berkeley, or Oakland. The distance to Sacramento is about the same. The Northwestern Pacific R.R. operates trains twice daily through South Fork near Dyer-ville to Eureka.

Extent of Area: The length of the seafrent included in this scheme is approximately 48 miles, from Center-ville, west of Ferndale, southward to Chimise Mountain below Shelter Cove. By purchasing the lands between the coast and the Bull Creek area of Humboldt State Redwood Park, the width of the area will range from 10 to 20 miles with a probable average width of 16 miles.

Scenic Values: The scenic values of this area are richly varied. A rugged south coast with rocky shores, stern chiseled cliffs and sharp rising hills, is relieved gently at intervals by excellent stretches of sandy beaches. Along the north coast exposed rolling hills and mountains include the finest of pasture lands. Interior valleys offer peaceful charm and friendly streams. Most of the hinterland consists of hills and mountains partially clothed with Douglas Fir, Live and Tan Oaks and native brush, alternating with open prairies or grasslands on steep slopes. Redwoods predominate along the east and south borders only. Remoteness, and primitive ruggedness are its forceful characteristics.

Character of Beaches: These vary in width from 50 to 150 feet with no dunes in evidence. Some have gray-black coarse sand and pebbles; but others less steep and sandy are of a pleasing tan or buff color. Time for survey did not permit obtaining length measurements of these stretches. Bathing is not likely to become prevalent for years to come, partly because of the more chilly summer climate of our North California coast and partly because other suitable beaches sufficient to meet present needs lie closer to our population centers.

Present Development: There is very little develop-

ment along this whole front, the chief instance being that of Shelter Cove with its wharf, compact cluster of buildings and small crescent harbor. A few old ranch houses lie close to the coast. No towns or even communities of appreciable size are located anywhere along this whole unit front. Its virgin character is its chief asset.

Possibility of Boating: The rocky front of this area in Humboldt County is not conducive to boating. The region does not abound in lakes, so any use of boating would be very limited, possibly along the lower reaches of the Mattole River. Boating, therefore, cannot become a significant pastime here.

Forest Values: In a considerable cover of native conifers Douglas Pine predominate, while almost pure stands of Redwoods clothe slopes of lesser extent. On higher ground are found groves of Madrones, Tan Oaks, Live Oaks and Mountain Oaks. In contrast, alders, Willows, Maples, Cottonwoods, Bays, Laurels and White Oaks make pleasant the valleys. This tree growth is high in scenic value and offers the best wild life cover.

Wild Life Values: Deer are plentiful, bear less so, but a great abundance of the lesser animals are found besides a well balanced variety of native birds including California quail and wild ducks. The seashore offers salt

water and shell fishing and the interior streams fresh water fishing. The major portion of this great area should become a permanent Wild Life Preserve.

Estimated Acreage: Taken from available data it is estimated that the total acreage desirable for acquisition is 460,000 which includes 86,880 acres lying within the Public Domain. It would, therefore, be necessary to purchase 433,720 acres.

NATIONAL BEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

MATTOLE--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Mattole River watershed area on the Humboldt Coast while well known and sought by hunters and fishermen, is so little known by our general public as to remain essentially wilderness if not actually a primitive region wherein wild life is now fairly secure. The little settlements found within the heart of this proposed recreation area such as Capetown, Petrolia, Ettersburg, Ericeland and Shelter Cove are so small and picturesque that they may be considered mere hamlets.

The region is so ample that various recreational pursuits may be followed simultaneously without confusion and also without interference with or harm to wild life values. Provided road and trail development is wisely planned with the aim of due restraint these precious values can be retained. The time has already arrived for keenly appreciating the rare privilege of following remote winding roads, now undulating over friendly pastures, now sharply rising against slopes, where feelings of expectation, wonder and surprise are awakened. Should we not try to guard such examples of natural abandon and spontaneity against aggressive modern road treatment where fundamental elements of poetry

seem almost too frequently forgotten?

A vital objective in this plan is that of rendering this remarkable wilderness region reasonably convenient of access from the Redwood Highway, thereby offering a contrast between the character of intensive development for camping, picnicking and other sports found along the major artery--and the rugged primitive fastnesses of this region and its coast.

Just here it seems fitting to sound a warning suggesting the adverse effects upon scenic and wild life values as a result of any great highway being pushed either along the ocean margin or through the heart of this area. It is recognized that increased coastal traffic in future years might justify a major highway from San Francisco via Fort Bragg, into this Mattele-Humboldt wilderness region. Due to the high cost of developing a broad road along so severely rough topography fronting this area, it is hoped that when such an artery finally penetrates it from the south, it might be diverted via the existing Thorn-Ariceland road to join the Redwood Highway, Route 101, at Garberville.

This hope is expressed because delicate adjustments in this vast wild life sanctuary would be rudely disturbed in many ways if any highway is permitted to bisect its entire length, thus separating the whole into two dis-

tinest portions. Timid animals hesitate to cross such a broad man-made way and if they so attempt they risk and often lose their lives. Unless observing persons carefully ponder this matter, they can scarcely appreciate the detrimental effects of a major highway created here with exacting standards, including long tangents, stiff upper cuts, deep fills, and broad artificial lanes across ridges, or through forests--all of which tend to make the traveller watchful of the road, rather than enjoy its environment.

Shelter Cove is the only minor harbor on the Pacific front of this area. Since California north coast waters are often rough, boating will assume little importance in this development scheme. Camping and picnic areas should first be developed with moderation. Later they can be amplified with increased demand. Ideal situations for these exist in the sheltered valleys of Bear River, the Mattole River and its branches, McKee and Redwood Creeks. Because of the exposed character of the coast front it is assumed that any development for recreational use such as picnicking and camping will be limited and in answer to direct growing needs. This entire problem deals with an area so vast that any dependable comment or thoughtful plan can only result from intensive future study. It is urged that in all development work, road and trail construction

be held to an extreme minimum because only by such procedure can inherent values be soundly preserved.

This region is not very close to or quickly available to existing population centers. Still, the use of the Redwood Highway is heavy over a long summer season insuring a ready and inspiring gateway to this area. Cross roads give easy access from California's hot interior valleys. The advantages of this region can easily be enjoyed now by the time expenditure of one day's automobile travel from our more densely populated San Francisco Bay Region. The value of this area to the people of future generations will be high beyond calculation.

NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

MATPOLE--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

LAND COSTS

Estimated Cost of Acquisition: The region under consideration consists of approximately 460,000 acres of land, of which 86,880 acres are lands withdrawn from entry, now lying in the Public Domain.

It is estimated that this entire area including improvements can be purchased for the following amount:

433,720 acres of private holdings @ \$15.00 per acre
or Total Estimated Cost of \$6,520,800.00.

The above estimate does not include the tiny settlements of Capetown, Petrolia, Ettersburg, Shelter Cove, Thorn, or Ericeland, nor the estimated cost to acquire fishing, abalone, or kindred rights.

The units shown above were based on assessments, dependable opinion based on intimate knowledge of the lands, and of actual sales to establish the ratio between assessed and true values.

The unit of \$15.00 dollars per acre for this land was determined as follows:

<u>State</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Estimated Value</u>
California	433,720	\$2,528,320.00	\$6,520,800.00

In this estimate, fifteen dollars per acre is used

for all of the land.

Mattala-Humboldt Area

Classification of Types of Land and Present Costs

	<u>Cost Price Per Acre</u>
Croazing Land, Choice, along coast	050.00
" " Interior hills and mountains	10.00--18.00
Forest Land, Redwoods	50.00
" " Douglas Firs	20.00
" " Tan Oaks	18.00
Fertile Valley Land, Bare or unimproved	100.00
" " " Orchard developed	200.00--500.00
Brush Lands, White Thorn	5.00--6.00
Barren or Low Grade Brush Lands	1000--8.00

A precise survey, showing accurately the amount of acreage falling under each of the above classifications could only be secured as a result of careful and elaborate computation. It is felt, however, that for our present needs in arriving at the cost of this land as a whole the figure of \$15.00 per acre has been determined upon soundly.

One of the main difficulties confronting the acquisition of the area would be that of interference with established method of livelihood of settlers in the region, in which cattle and sheep raising play so significant a part. It is possible,

however, that losses might be practicable to present owners
to continue their pursuits to the close of their lives, or
that they might be issued easements on the land for such
purpose for an even longer period.

NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATION AREA

MATTOLE--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

POPULATION DATA

Our 1930 census population survey reveals the following distribution:

Within radius of 100 miles	16,075
" " " 200 "	562,043
" " " 300 "	1,976,065

This region has the advantage of being reasonably convenient to the industrial and commercial centers of the San Francisco Bay zone, the larger interior cities of Sacramento and Stockton, and the many towns of the hot interior valleys of California whose citizens socially need a change in climate and justly crave the cooler, restful conditions this area offers. Eureka, Crescent City, and Ukiah are within one hundred miles of the area. San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento, Marysville, Klamath Falls, and Medford lie within the 200 mile circle. San Jose, Stockton, Reno, Roseburg, Marshfield, and Eugene are located within the 300 mile circle.

Mattole-Humboldt Region is one of the last available natural wilderness areas combined with pristine coast front of adequate extent within 200 miles of San Francisco Bay cities. It could serve as a vacation area for people living in large cities who cannot afford travel to regions further distant.

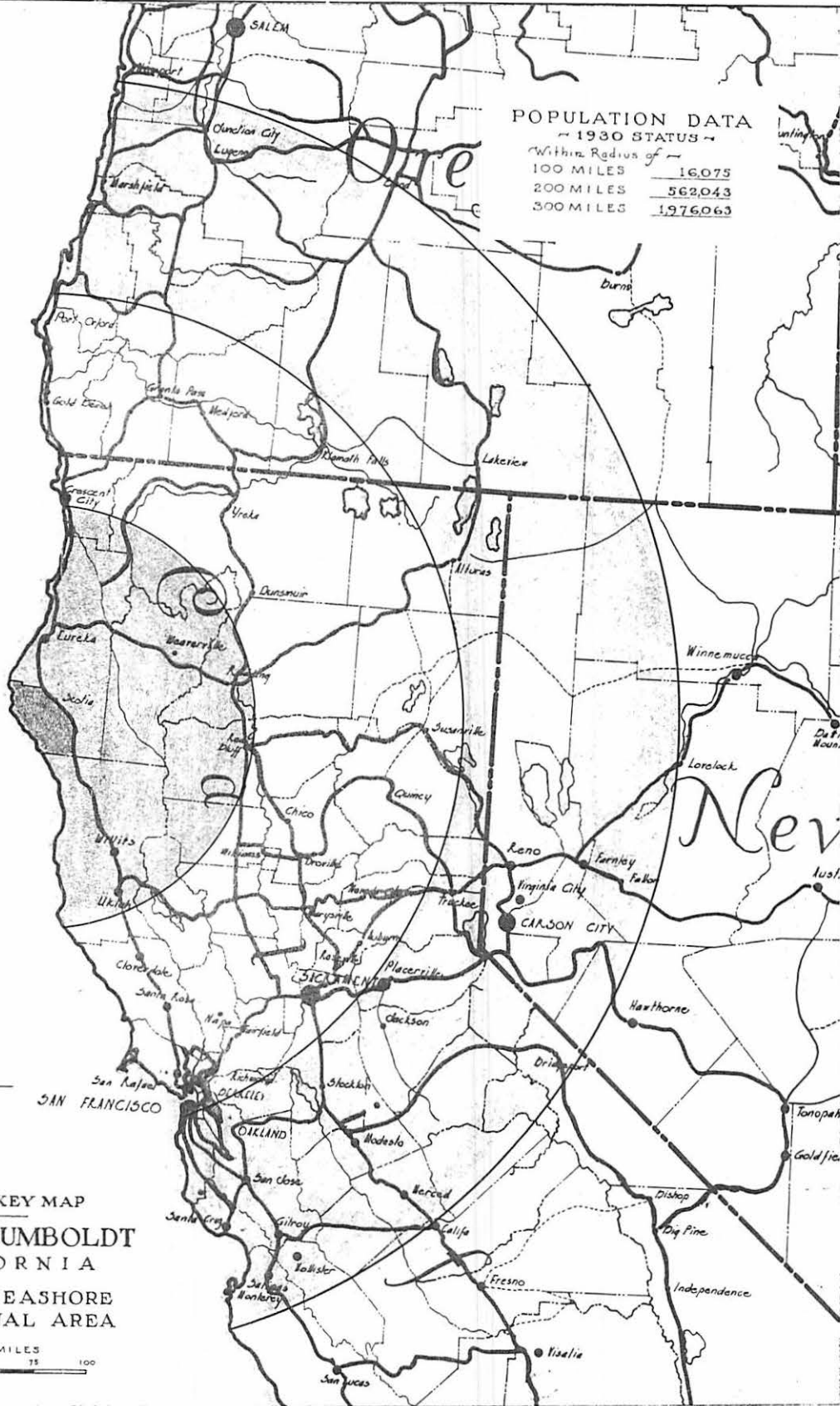
P A C I F I C O C E A N

POPULATION DATA

~ 1930 STATUS ~

Within Radius of ~

100 MILES	16,075
200 MILES	562,043
300 MILES	1,976,063



300 MILE KEY MAP
MATTOLE-HUMBOLDT
 CALIFORNIA
 NATIONAL SEASHORE
 RECREATIONAL AREA



NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

MATTOLE--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

WILD LIFE

This fascinating region is a haven for wild life, which when acquired and rightly administered will offer security for the propagation of game and fur bearing animals.

No Wildlife Technician had been appointed up to the time when the writer made his field study of this area. However, the following animals, birds, insects, trees, and plant materials were either observed, or known to exist.

Animals:

Badgers
Bear (black; limited)
" (brown; ")
Bear (wild; formerly domestic)
Ocoons
Coyotes (scarce)
Deer
Elk (formerly)
Fox
Gophers
Mink
Mice (Field)

Birds:

Buzzards (turkey)
Jays (Mountain blue)
Linnets
Larks (Meadow)
Quail (Mountain)
" (Valley)
Robins, Hood (English)
Snow Birds (black breasted)
Wild Ducks

Fish:

Brook Trout

Animals (cont.):

Moles

Panthers

Rats (Wood)

Raccoons

Skunks

Squirrels (Ground)

Squirrels (Gray or Tree)

Wildcats

Sea Life and Foods:

Abalone

Massels

Salmon

Steel Head Trout

Wild Flowers and Shrubs:

Anemones

Blue Eyed Grass

Bleeding Heart

Galyahortas (Pussy Ears)

Geanothus

Clintonia

Columbine

Current (Wild)

Insects:

Spiders (Black Widow)

Tarantulas

Wasps

Sea Birds:

Fish Hawks

Gulls

Grasses and Ferns:

Oxalis

Red Top Rye

Iris

Ferns (Sword)

" (Woodwardia)

Wild Flowers and Shrubs (cont.):

Delphinium (Larkspur)

False Solomon Seal

Gilia

Ruckleberry (Black)

Indian Paint Brush

Euphorbia

Mimulus

Mustard (Wild)

Manzanita

Orthocarpus (Butter and Eggs)

Peas (Wild)

Poppies

Pimpernell (Scarlet)

Salal

Sedums

Salmonberries

Snowberries

Strawberries

Shooting Stars

Trilliums

Thimbleberries

Thistle (Ball)

Thorn (White)

Violets

Trees:

Alders

Bay (Laurel or Pepperwood)

Chinquapin

Cottonwoods

Dogwood

Elderberry

Fire (Douglas)

Hazelwood

Madrones

Maples

Oaks (Live, and Mountain)

" (Tan, and White)

Pines (Knob cone)

" (Sugar)

" (Western Yellow)

Redwoods

Willows

Mr. Ashley G. Brown, Wildlife Technician, Region VIII, offers the following comment on this area.

" Primitive areas conceived as part of National Seashore Recreation Areas owe much of their charm, their educational value and their scientific interest to the birds and animals that inhabit them. While those who visit these quiet sanctuaries for a few days out of each year, do so with the expectation of living in the open, bathing in clear cold streams, tracing mountain trails or watching sunsets from chosen beauty spots, they also anticipate that rarest of all joys, an opportunity to become a little familiar with the native wild life.

No one fails to thrill at the sight of a doe with her spotted fawns, a glimpse of a proud pair of quail with their precious downy brood, the discovery of two white eggs in the dove's nest, or the knowledge that a big old speckled trout lives in a shaded pool beneath a certain gnarled root. These precious glimpses, fleeting though they may be, leave impressions not soon to be forgotten. They are an intimate and inseparable part of the forest and its abundant association for which the city dweller so often hungers.

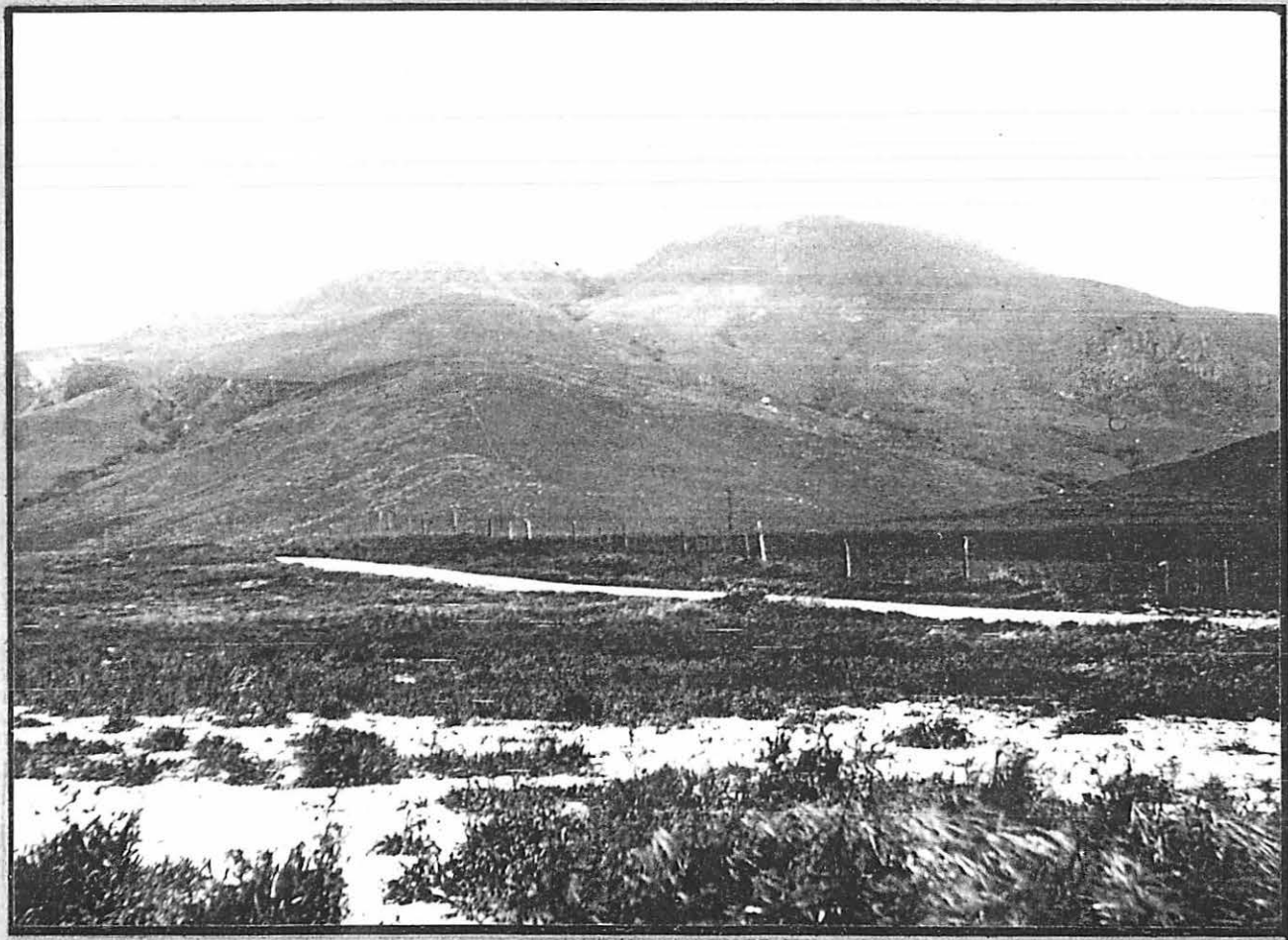
The Mattele-Humboldt area has long been known as one of California's richest coastal regions, possessed of an abundance of wild life still maintaining its normal association balance. Truly it is a storehouse of Nature's resources,

filled with so much that has in other areas been destroyed or driven out by man's continual and relentless encroachment on the fast diminishing wilderness. Most fortunate is the fact that the area as a whole is of sufficient extent to include within its limits the complete ecological associations of large groups of both birds and animals. Wide differences in elevations, sites, cover types, and ranges are sufficient and varied enough to provide the annual requirements of the many forms animals and a large number of the birds as well.

Botanically, the range includes many of our most interesting plant forms, annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees, all here finding happy shelter or the association necessary to their normal welfare. High, steep ocean cliffs, brush covered hillsides, steep rocky canyons, cool creek sides, lofty peaks and upthrust hills are densely covered with that crowning wealth of native plants peculiar to the coastal area. "

CONCLUSION

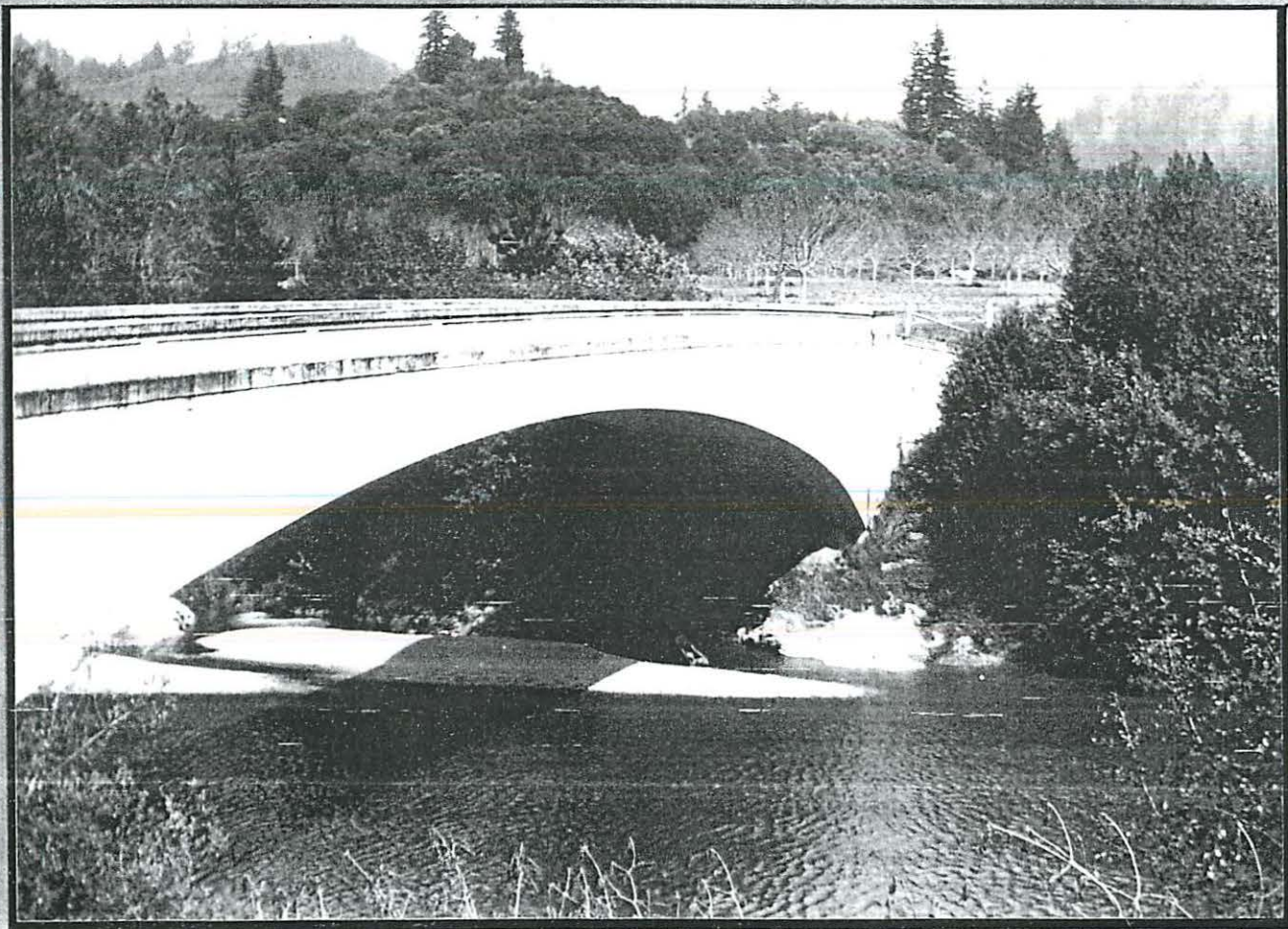
The American spirit still yearns for adventure and finds scope for rugged pioneering in the west. Adventure, spurred by hope, builds character and finds expression through development and test of man's highest powers. We are at the threshold of a new era in which the subtler aesthetic phases of man, long latent can flower. The amenities of life shall hold high place in our new scheme of living. Among the supreme gifts of such a life, our vast parks, national in scope, must be included for they can offer through sea-shore forest and mountain, sequestered wilderness and freedom. In them strong forces are dormant--forces of soul vitality and such joyous uplift for all that they might be regarded as gigantic storage batteries for recharging the ideals and loftier energies of the people. Let us so preserve, administer and perpetuate these areas that they may become constant sources of delight and inspiration for those large numbers, who when seeking the open, find there also the sublime pattern for a life that moves with rhythmic beauty forward and upward, to poise, truth and the noblest existence.



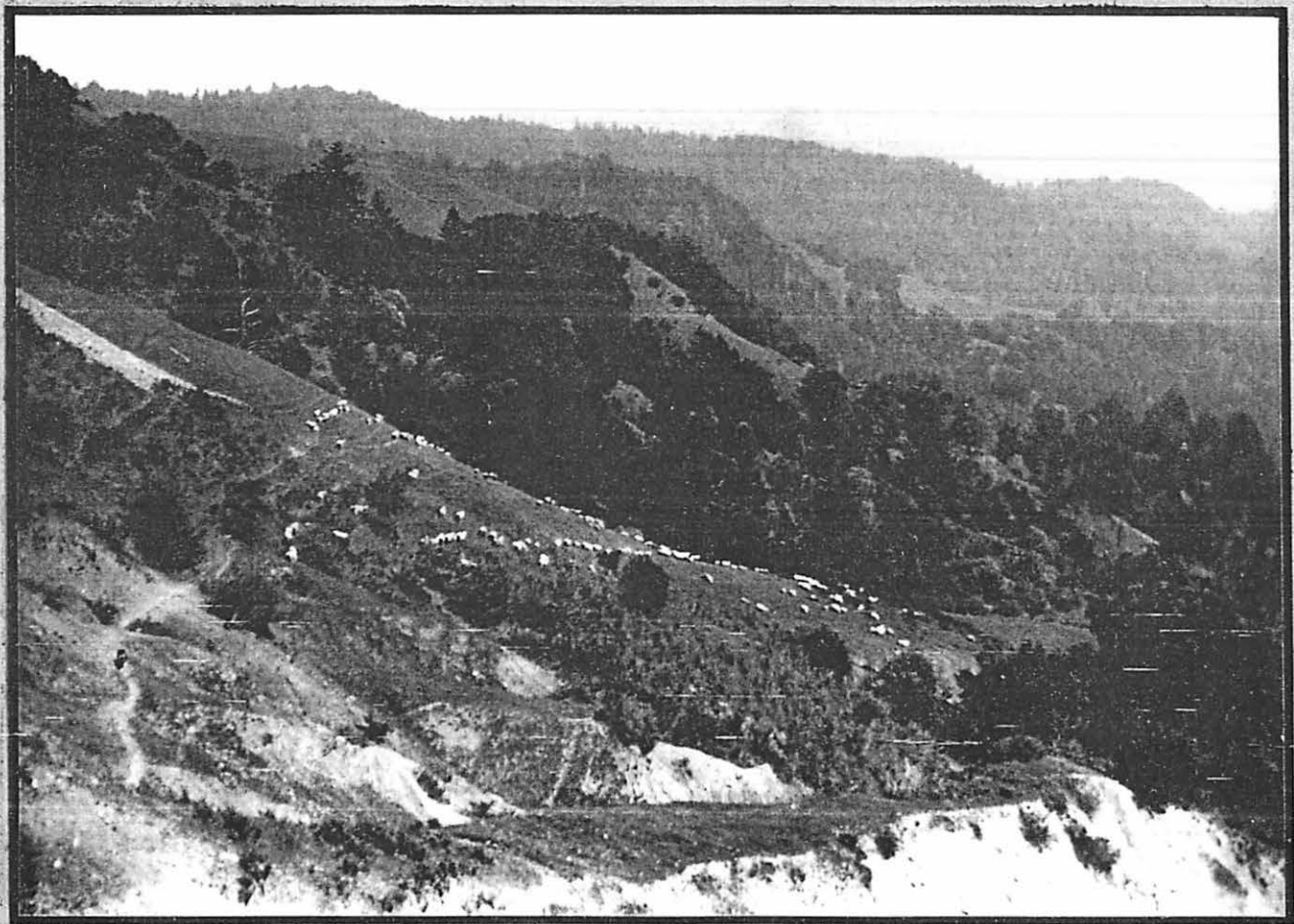
BRANSTETTER RIDGE IN FOG. NEAR CAPE MENDICINO



LOOKING UP MATTOLE VALLEY AT PETROLIA



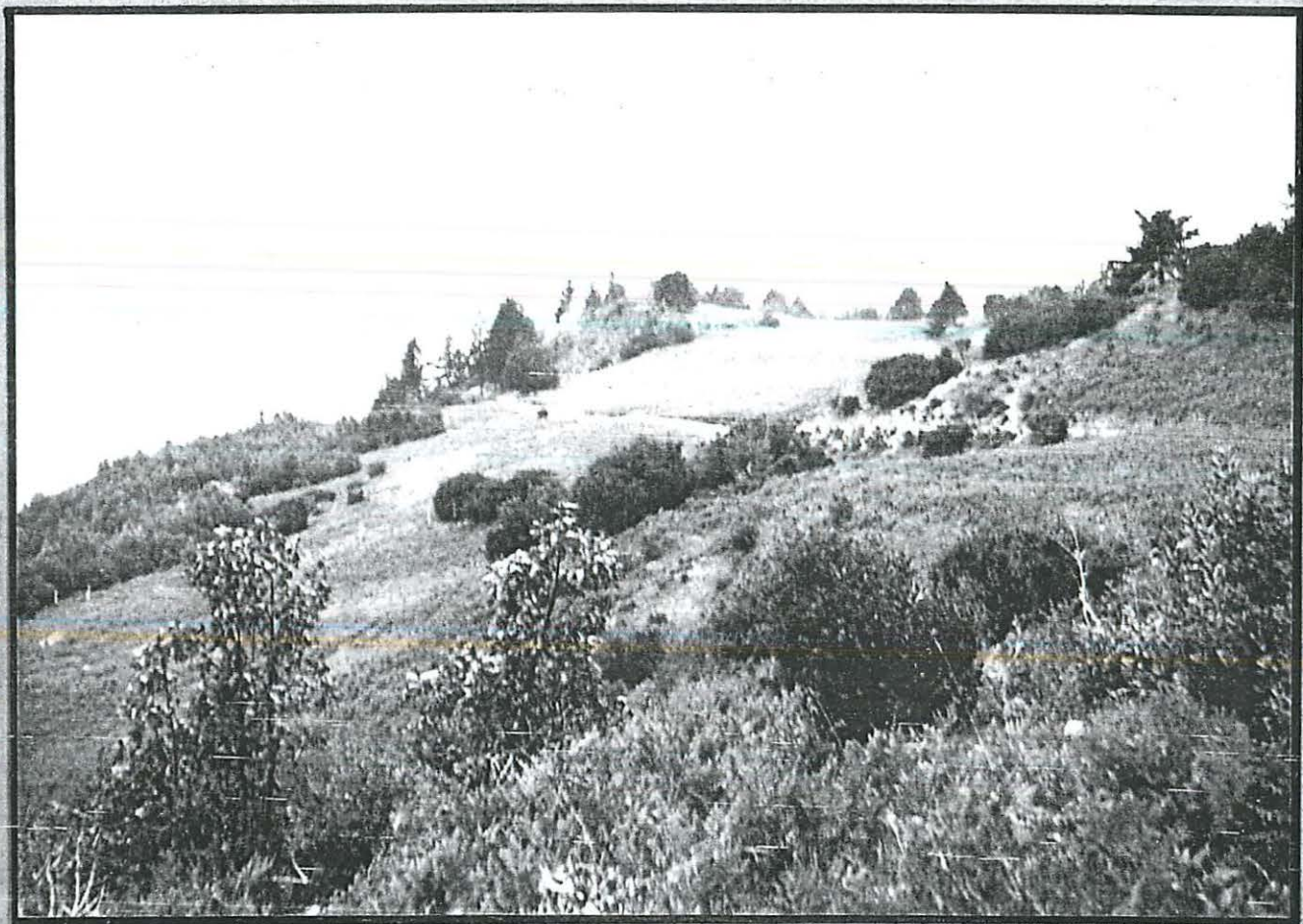
MATTOLE RIVER BRIDGE EAST OF PETROLIA



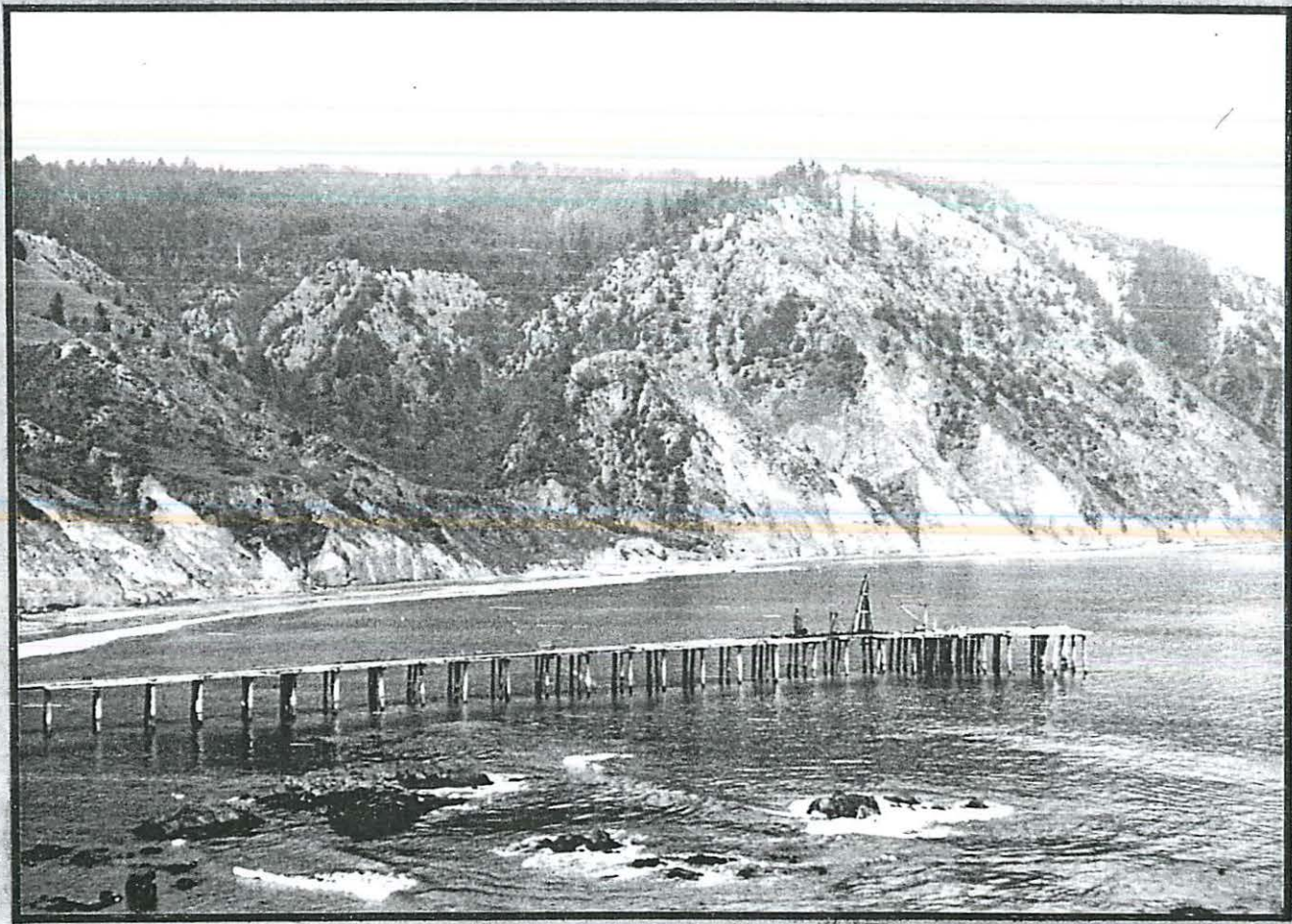
PANORAMA. SHEEP GRAZING NEAR WINDY NIP GAP



OPEN GRAZING AND FOREST LANDS, WINDY NIPGAP



MEADOW OF BRACKEN ON WILDER RIDGE



BLUFFS AND BEACH AT SHELTER COVE



HUMBOLDT COAST FROM CLIFFS ABOVE SHELTER COVE

The foregoing report is respectfully submitted
to Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Officer, Region VIII.

By Emerson Knight
Emerson Knight
Associate Landscape Architect
Inspector, Region VIII