



Point Reyes National Seashore

The official visitor guide
of Point Reyes National Seashore



Point Reyes Has a Season for Everyone

A typical year on the Point Reyes Peninsula abounds with opportunities to enjoy an enormous variety of natural experiences. Each season has its own character and delights making a visit worthwhile at any time of year. Even shrouded in August fog or pummeled by a drenching cloudburst in March, the beauty of this singular dynamic landscape is inescapable.

Spring - Greening of the Landscape

Spring is the natural beginning of the year, when the first flowers emerge and migrants, both fluked and feathered, pass by Point Reyes heading north to nesting and feeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. The peninsula hosts nearly one hundred resident bird species, and another one hundred migrant species winter here. In spring and fall, many birds stop by to take advantage of the abundant food and water available here.

Just offshore, the gray whales that passed by in January and February on their way to birthing lagoons in Mexico swim past the lighthouse returning to the rich feeding in the cold waters off Alaska. Mothers traveling with their newborn calves can be seen approaching from the south, passing very near to the Point. From the lighthouse we see their barnacle encrusted backs as they blow a few times and then dive to round the Point.

On the opposite end of the Point Reyes headland, at Chimney Rock, wildflowers such as pussy ears, iris, poppies, blue-eyed grass, and larkspur—among dozens of other species—color the hillsides. Down on the pocket beaches below, elephant seal pups—born during the cool rainy winter, nursed for about a month, and then left on the beaches by their mothers—are seen throughout the spring. Joining them, after the adults leave, are the juveniles, returning to molt on the beaches where they were born.

Bolinas Lagoon and Drakes Estero provide havens for harbor seal pupping. In these protected waters the seals haul out on sandbars, rest and nurse their young. At low tide they are a common sight from Highway 1 turnouts. These areas are closed to kayakers in order to protect them during this vulnerable time. (Continued on page 2)



Photos from top: A beautiful day on Drakes Beach. Mule ears are a beautiful sight during the Spring wildflower bloom. Least sandpipers are among the many shorebirds that can be seen foraging on seashore beaches. Elephant seals are winter guests. Weaned pups, like those pictured, are the last to leave in the late spring.

Welcome

For nearly a century, National Parks have been sanctuaries for people seeking peace from the turmoil of daily life. Since 1962, Point Reyes National Seashore has been a refuge, protected as a living landscape, and abundant seascape, and wilderness.

From a peaceful walk through a misty shrouded forest to a sunny perch above the wide open expanse of the Pacific Ocean, you have plenty of opportunities to find a suitable retreat. In doing so, you may witness the drama of the changing seasons, as foggy summers give way to clear autumn days, and as sun-browned fall gives way to winter's replenishing rains.

You may also observe the magic of this place as snowy plovers nest among the seaside pebbles and as harbor seals give birth to their young in the esteros. While the bugling of tule elk on Tomales Point symbolizes fall on the peninsula, the year closes with the return of the northern elephant seal and the migration of the Pacific gray whale.

Enjoy your visit and help us to preserve this national treasure so that future generations may find wonder and solace here as well. Through active stewardship, this place will remain a refuge for all.

Don L. Neubacher

Don L. Neubacher
Superintendent

Fire Permit

You may obtain a free permit for a beach fire at Point Reyes National Seashore from any park visitor center. You must follow regulations as described on the permit. On high fire days, all permits are null and void. Call (415) 464-5100 for current fire conditions.



Emergencies

Report emergencies to visitor center staff or call 911. Cellular service is not available in most park locations. Pay phones are located at all three visitor centers.

Lost and Found

Items may be turned in or reported missing at Bear Valley, Drakes Beach, or the Lighthouse Visitor Center.

Become a Junior Ranger!

Ask at the Bear Valley Visitor Center or the Lighthouse Visitor Center for your Junior Ranger activity packet.



For more fun, visit these websites:
www.nps.gov/pore/forkids/index.htm
www.nps.gov/webrangers

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Visit us on the web at www.nps.gov/pore



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Point Reyes National Seashore

Established in 1962, Point Reyes National Seashore preserves and protects over 71,000 acres including 32,000 acres of designated wilderness and 80 miles of wild, undeveloped coastline. With its rich biological diversity, and cultural history Point Reyes provides critical habitat to wildlife, is a repository for over 3,000 years of cultural history, and serves as a haven for the restoration of the human spirit.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

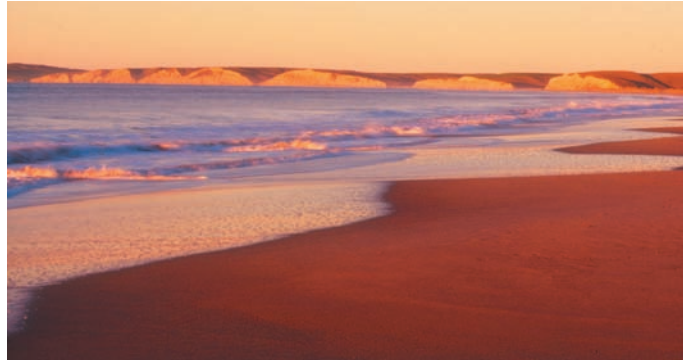


This publication was funded through a grant from the Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA). PRNSA is the primary non-profit park partner working with the community to fund and implement preservation projects throughout the park and to educate people about the environment. To learn more visit www.ptreyes.org.

 This publication was printed on recycled paper.

Seasons of Point Reyes

Limantour Beach is a fine destination in any season, but spring walks along its shore reveal the results of winter and spring storms. Driftwood and kelp wash up on the beach and changing wind patterns strand thousands of *Vellela vellela*, a colonial hydroid, coloring the beaches a bright blue.



Limantour Beach © Susan Van Der Wal

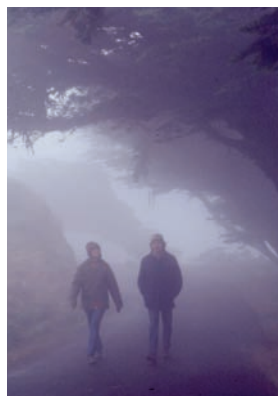
Tule elk, a species reintroduced to Point Reyes in the 1970s, flourish on Tomales Point. In spring, they are calving and should always be observed from a safe distance. These majestic animals once numbered 500,000 in California, but following the Gold Rush, they were hunted nearly to extinction. In 1874, a Los Banos rancher discovered a few elk on his property and became the first to commit efforts toward protecting them. Today more than 3,200 Tule elk range over several protected areas of California.



Tule elk cow & calf © Frank Binney

Summer—Fog Over Fields of Gold

In summer, the hillsides made green by the abundant winter and early spring rains, turn a golden brown. Flowers still bloom along the coast and in cool, wet areas where water is still plentiful. In stark contrast to hot inland areas, thick fog blankets the headlands, making it necessary to bundle up in warm layers. To find the warmth of the sun, you need only return to the Bear Valley area where temperatures can be 20 degrees higher.



Lighthouse fog



Golden hills of summer

Abbotts Lagoon, a good wildflower destination in spring, bears fruit in the form of blackberries and salmonberries in summer. The dunes provide good nesting habitat for the Western snowy plover, a bird protected under the Endangered Species Act and monitored at Point Reyes since 1977. The critical nesting habitat among the low dune vegetation has been altered by the spread of non-native beach grasses, that predators use as screens to access birds and nests. Human activities, such as dog-walking, also impact the nesting success of the plovers. Exclosures around the nesting sites help protect the birds. Please don't approach or disturb these sites. On weekends and holidays during nesting season, docents are on site to help you learn more about these threatened shorebirds.



Western snowy plover © Callie Bowdish

(Continued from front page)

Over 130 bird species nest at Point Reyes. As the season progresses the young birds test their wings. This is an opportunity to see juvenile plumage and feeding behaviors, as young birds continue to beg for food from parents. Over 20 federally and state protected bird species, such as the Northern spotted owl and the Bank swallow, make their home on the peninsula. A natural stopover for migratory birds jutting ten miles out into the Pacific Point Reyes has abundant wetland areas for resting and feeding.



Northern spotted owl fledglings

The Tule elk enter into their mating rut in late summer. The bulls' plaintive bugle resounds along this headland a few hundred feet above the crashing waves. The bulls challenge each other for control of large harems of females with which to mate. To aid you in spotting elk and understanding their behavior, docents are on site at Tomales Point on weekends and holidays, from June to September.



Tule elk bull © Bruce Farnsworth

Labor Day signals summer's end with the Drakes Beach Sand Sculpture Contest. Dozens of competitors arrive in the morning to carve their masterpieces, while spectators and judges provide encouragement.



2007 Sand sculpture contest

Autumn—Sunny Days and Warm Southerly Breezes

Fog and wind subside on the coast, bringing forth the warm days that we longed for during the summer chill. The Lighthouse and Chimney Rock temperatures can climb to near eighty degrees during these warm spells. Stalks of dried hemlock and cow parsnip rise up from the drought-laden hillsides, reminders that it has been six long months since the last rain storm.



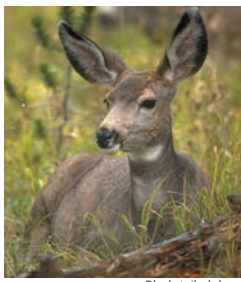
Great Beach

Acorns, the season's bounty, droop from live oaks and tanoaks in the Bear Valley area. In autumn, Coast Miwok Indians sent their sons into the trees to dislodge this coveted seed. Acorn woodpeckers store them in excavated niches for future eating. Insect larvae invade the cached acorns, providing the woodpeckers with protein to complement the fat.



Tan oak acorn

The black-tailed deer enter their rut during this time. The Bear Valley area is full of this activity in autumn. Out on the coast, visitors might catch a glimpse of blue or humpback whales, as they make a brief, but unforgettable, appearance for the fortunate onlooker.

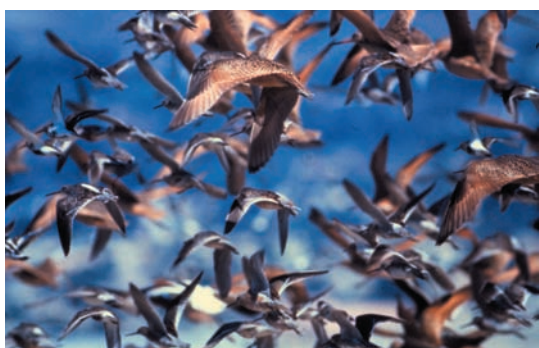


Black-tailed deer



Humpback whale spouting

Migratory birds are winging over the peninsula again. This year's fledglings, inexperienced in long-distance travel, often end up in the Monterey cypress trees near the ranches and the lighthouse.



Godwits & willets © Rich Stallcup

Fall is a great time for hiking and backpacking. Without the fickle weather and high winds of spring, hikers can rely on more amenable conditions. The summer rush is over and camping permits are easier to obtain.



Common Yellowthroat © Susan Farrar

Winter—Blow, West Winds, Blow

Winter storms ravage the coastline, depositing wrack on the beaches and occasionally causing landslides. But between storms, some of Point Reyes' most beautiful days offer ideal weather for being outdoors. Come prepared for these capricious conditions.



Winter storm © Al Simms

Winter is far from a dormant season here. Visitors crowd the lighthouse observation deck to watch for the return of the Pacific gray whales, usually first seen in December. Making their annual 10,000-mile roundtrip journey between Alaska and Mexico, they are drawn to the protected, warm-water lagoons of Baja to bear their calves. By the 1930s, intensive whaling along the California coast caused the gray whale population to dwindle to a mere 1000 individuals. A ban on gray whale hunting adopted in 1937, and an international whaling ban signed in



Whale watching at the Lighthouse

1946, led to the recovery of this gentle species. The Pacific gray whale population is estimated at about 20,000 today.

Another conservation success story, the Northern elephant seal hauls out on pocket beaches surrounding the Point Reyes headland in early winter. Females are among the first to arrive, giving birth to pups conceived during the previous year's visit. By the end of the 19th century, Northern elephant seals had declined to as few as 20, victims of hunters taking advantage of the seals' vulnerability during breeding season. Elephant seal populations are now estimated at 150,000, thanks to Mexico's 1922 seal hunting ban, which helped save these charismatic giants from extinction.



Northern elephant seal bull © Susan Farrar

From late December through March, on weekends and holidays, a shuttle bus is required for transport to whale and elephant seal observation areas. Inquire at any visitor center for more details.

In January and February, Coho salmon and Steelhead trout swim up the creeks from their ocean home to spawn. Lagunitas and Olema Creeks flash with silver as the thrashing fish create depressions in the river gravels, called



Coho salmon

redds, and lay their eggs. The males fertilize the eggs and the fertilized eggs are covered by gravels when the female scrapes out another redd just upstream. The young spend 1—2 years in freshwater before tackling the open ocean, where they spend their adult lives before returning to spawn. Human activities, such as logging and dam construction, have impaired and destroyed fish habitat, leading to a drastic decline in the species' numbers. Through habitat restoration efforts, stream conditions are improving and Coho salmon and Steelhead trout are returning to many of their historic spawning streams.



Coho salmon eggs

Hidden underground, networks of mycorrhizae facilitate the water and nutrient uptake of trees and plants. These structures are the result of the integration of fungi with specialized plant roots. In winter, this hidden process erupts to the surface when the fungal reproductive structures—what we call mushrooms—emerge. Hundreds of mushroom hunters also emerge, seeking delightful edibles—such as chanterelles and boletus—but also to simply enjoy the amazing diversity of these often overlooked beauties. Please use extreme caution as many mushrooms are not edible and some can be fatal if consumed.



Clockwise from top left: *Amanita franchetii*; *Clavulinopsis comiculata* © Dimitar Bojantchev; *Melastiza chateri*; *Inocybe cinnamomea*; © Darvin DeShazer

Every season at Point Reyes has a flavor and texture all its own, leading millions of visitors to return year after year, to walk the shoreline, hike the trails, explore the forests, and enjoy the great natural variety of plants, animals, and landscapes protected here.

Be on the Lookout for...

Poison Oak *Toxicodendron diversilobum*

Contact with any part of the poison oak plant causes a blistering rash. Generally this can be treated at home. More severe cases may need to see a health professional. If you know you have had contact with poison oak, thoroughly wash the affected area as soon as possible to remove the active oils. Preventative topical ointments are available to help avoid reactions to poison oak.



Poison oak

Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*

Bare skin brushing up against a stinging nettle plant tends to break delicate defensive hairs on the leaves and stems that protect the plant from browsing animals. This releases a trio of chemicals, usually resulting in a painful skin rash, typically lasting less than 24 hours. A topical analgesic (used to treat poison oak or bug bites) can be applied to help alleviate the sting.



Stinging nettle

Deer Ticks

Ticks that carry Lyme disease are known to occur in this area. Stay on trails and check your clothing frequently. The sooner that ticks are removed, the less the chance of transmittal of the organism that causes illness. Wearing light-colored, long pants helps you spot them; tuck your pant legs inside your socks to keep them from crawling up your legs. Always check your body completely at the end of your hike.



actual size



Just For Kids—Answer Key

Seashore Scavenger Hunt:
Across: 1. Drake 5. Lighthouse 7. Chimney 8. elephant

Down: 2. Andreas 3. Miwok 4. dairy 6. Tule

Who am I?

1. Tule Elk; Habitat: open grassland and marshes. 2. Brown pelican; Habitat: prefer shallow inshore waters such as estuaries and bays; never found more than 20 miles out to sea or inland on fresh water. 3. California quail; Habitat: open woodlands, brushy foothills, desert washes, forest edge, chaparral, stream valleys, agricultural lands, and suburb areas. Cover is needed for roosting, resting, nesting, escaping from predators, and for protection from the weather. 4. California sea lion; Habitat: mostly water but they will haul out for long periods of time on rocky shorelines.

Arrowhead Challenge:
1. Plants 2. Animals 3. History 4. Land forms (beautiful scenery)

5. Water resources
Bonus Question: late December through early April with peak sightings mid-January and mid-March.



Human Layers on the Land

Over 5,000 years of human history awaits your discovery at Point Reyes. More than just a natural sanctuary, this peninsula holds within its forested ridges, rolling grasslands, and coastal expanses the stories of people who came before us. Their cultures, interactions, and experiences are echoed in the landscape. These human layers offer a window into our past and hold the potential to shape our lives even today.

Coast Miwok—The First People

Coast Miwok people inhabited small family villages in present-day Marin and Sonoma Counties for thousands of years. They enjoyed a rich economy based on gathering, fishing, and hunting. At the time of European contact, an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 Coast Miwok lived in the area.



Coast Miwok in Regalia

Acorns, a nutritious starchy seed, were a favored staple of the Coast Miwok. A family of four ate about 500 pounds of acorns a year. Acorns, collected in autumn, were stored in granaries, and later prepared and cooked by the women.



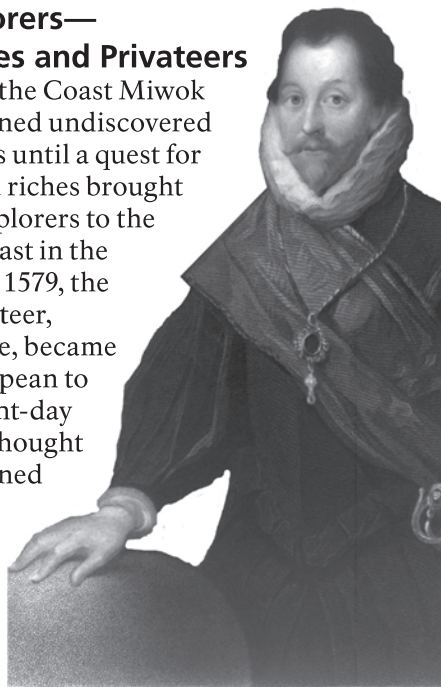
Coast Miwok Basket

Miwok women also gathered and prepared plant materials, such as willow, hazel, lupine and sedge, for making baskets. Many of these beautiful baskets are now in museum collections around the world.

Miwok men made at least two types of arrows, one long and one short. The longer was used for deer and bear, and the shorter for accuracy. Tips were made from manzanita wood, obsidian, and other stone. Sinew was used to attach three feather fletchings and the point.

Early Explorers—Missionaries and Privateers

The home of the Coast Miwok people remained undiscovered by Europeans until a quest for new land and riches brought European explorers to the California coast in the late 1500s. In 1579, the English privateer, Francis Drake, became the first European to land in present-day California. Thought to have careened his ship, the *Golden Hind*, into an estuary along the Point Reyes peninsula to make repairs, Drake camped along a nearby beach which today bears his name. He claimed this new land for Queen Elizabeth, before completing a circumnavigation of the globe.



Sir Francis Drake © National Archives

Trade routes led Spanish galleons past Point Reyes and in 1595, the wreck of Sebastian Cermeño's galleon, the *San Agustín*, became the first recorded shipwreck here. On January 6, 1603, Sebastian Vizcaíno sighted the headlands on the feast day of the Epiphany. Vizcaíno named the point "la Punta de los tres Reyes"—the Point of the Three Kings—to honor the three wise men.

Franciscan missionaries arrived overland in 1775 and changed the traditional life of the Coast Miwok forever. Disease, malnutrition, cultural loss, and depression destroyed 90% of the Miwok population in less than 100 years.

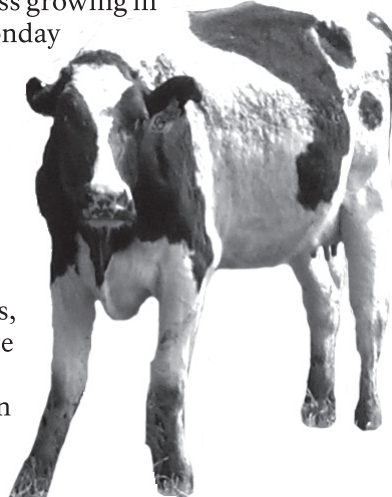
The mission fathers released large herds of feral cattle, which grazed as far west as Point Reyes. Secularization of the missions followed Mexican independence from Spain and led to land grants that divided the peninsula and expanded cattle ranching. The expansive coastal prairie that early ranchers found here was partly the result of Coast Miwok burning practices over more than two millennia.

Ranching by the Sea

In 1849, a wave of immigrants came west in search of gold. Settlers on the Point Reyes peninsula found their fortune not in nuggets of precious metal, but in great golden wheels of cheese and casks of butter made for the growing city of San Francisco.

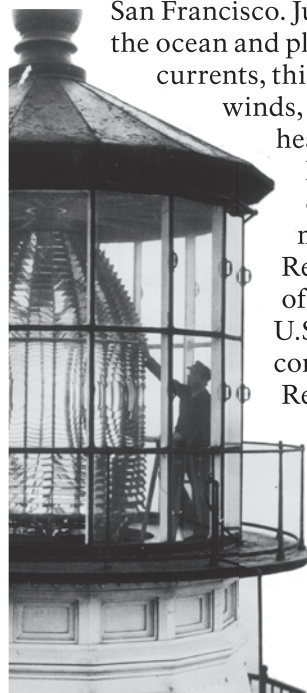
The cool, moist climate of Point Reyes was ideal for dairy ranching: plenty of grass, a long growing season, and abundant fresh water. The 1880 History of Marin County remarked of Point Reyes, "The grass growing in the fields on Monday is butter on the city tables the following Sunday."

Although the peninsula was granted to Mexican settlers, their claims were often disputed. Eventually, a San Francisco law firm, Shafter, Shafter, Park, and Heydenfeldt established ownership. They sold the northernmost tip to Solomon Pierce and divided the rest into tenant dairies, largely run by new immigrants. The ranches were designated alphabetically: "A" Ranch—closest to the Lighthouse—through "Z" Ranch—on the summit of Mt. Wittenberg. Park headquarters and Bear Valley Visitor Center stand at the site of "W" ranch. Point Reyes dairies set the standard for product quality and soon were producing record yields of butter and cheese. In 1919, the Shafter firm sold the tenant ranches, and many immigrant families bought the land they had worked so diligently.



Light Keepers, Lifesavers and the Age of Wireless Radio

Gold-miners, dairy farmers, and lumbermen counted on safe passage through the waters offshore of Point Reyes to transport valuable goods to and from the booming port of San Francisco. Jutting ten miles out into the ocean and plagued by treacherous currents, thick fog, and punishing winds, the sheer granite headlands of the Point Reyes provided a deadly challenge to even the most skilled sailor. Recognizing the severity of these conditions, the U.S. Lighthouse Board constructed the Point Reyes Lighthouse in 1870. With its revolutionary first order French-made Fresnel lens and mechanism, this beacon helped provide safe passage and served as an aid to navigation.



Point Reyes Lighthouse. E. Muybridge

In addition to tending the light, keepers in 1870 had to wash the lens, polish brass, and, at foggy times, stoke the furnace with coal for the steam-powered fog signal. Keepers often responded to shipwrecks and risked their lives to rescue others from the raging seas and deadly cliffs below the lighthouse. At the end of each shift, they had to ascend nearly 300 feet along a wooden stairway, often in howling winds, to reach the comfort of their homes.

Loneliness and depression were constant companions, and many drank alcohol, though it was forbidden. A *San Francisco Chronicle* writer noted that one keeper was "notorious for his love of the flowing bowl. It is said that he even regaled himself when out of whiskey with the alcohol furnished for cleaning lamps. . ."



Lifesavers at work

Despite the heroics of lighthouse keepers, ships continued to founder along the rocky shores of Point Reyes. In response, the first lifesaving station was established in 1889 on the Great Beach, north of the lighthouse. Like the lighthouse keepers, lifesavers endured grueling and dangerous conditions. They walked the beach day and night in four-hour shifts through bone chilling fog and fierce winds watching for shipwrecks and passengers in need of rescue from the frigid waters and powerful currents. Even their weekly drills were dangerous requiring the seamen to launch the lifeboat through the pounding surf twice a week. The severity of that risk resonates through the Life Saving Service motto—"Ye have to go out but ye don't have to come in."

In 1927, a new station was built along the protected shores of Drakes Bay, proving to be more efficient and less daunting. The new life-saving station was equipped with motorized boats, which were launched from the boathouse on rails. Though many successful rescues took place along the treacherous headlands at Point Reyes, several boatmen did not survive drills and rescues in such threatening waters. The Life-Saving Service Cemetery near the historic G Ranch commemorates four men whose lives were lost while on duty at Point Reyes.

Beginning in 1913, Guglielmo Marconi pioneered a wireless radio communication facility in the Point Reyes area, establishing a telegraphy transmitting station in Bolinas and a receiving station in Marshall, along Tomales Bay. Together, these stations formed "KPH", the most successful and powerful ship-to-shore and land station on the Pacific Rim. The Marshall station was replaced in 1929 by a new Art Deco style facility on the G Ranch at Point Reyes. The entrance is marked by two rows of Monterey cypress trees that still line the driveway today.



Guglielmo Marconi © National Archives

Creation of a National Seashore

As early as 1929, Californians were concerned about the fate of their coastline. Development had swallowed most of the eastern seaboard, and plans were being made for the west coast. Congressional reports recommended the creation of a system of national seashores both, to protect these vanishing landscapes and to provide public access to beaches.

When we look up and down the ocean fronts of America, we find that they are passing behind the fences of private ownership. The people can no longer get to the ocean...

Harold Ickes, Interior Secretary 1933-1946

In 1953, the first national seashore was established at Cape Hatteras, on the dynamic barrier island system off the North Carolina coast. Local, state, and federal advocates for protection of the Point Reyes peninsula were encouraged by this success. However, Drakes Bay Estates, with proposed development of over 400 housing units, began construction near Limantour Beach in 1956, lending urgency to the conservationists' battle.



Development at Point Reyes

In the late 1950's, legislation was first proposed to establish a national seashore at Point Reyes. When he took office, President John F. Kennedy announced two conservation agendas: the creation of national seashores, including Point Reyes National Seashore, and the adoption of the Wilderness Bill. Key players in these struggles were President Kennedy's Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, Sierra Club executive director David Brower, California Congressional Representatives Claire Engle and Clem Miller, and author Harold Gilliam, among many others. In August of 1961, a second national seashore was established at Cape Cod in Massachusetts, gaining further momentum for the Point Reyes cause. The 1962 Sierra Club publication of Gilliam's book, *Island in Time*, brought much-needed publicity and a poetic voice to the campaign to protect Point Reyes. David Brower distributed a copy to every member of the 87th Congress.

Congressional floor debates took place during the summer of 1962, as battles waged over incorporation of ranches and other private property into the seashore. The intense effort finally ended with the passage of S. 476 and on September 13, 1962, President Kennedy signed "The Point Reyes Authorization Act."

On October 20, 1966, Lady Bird Johnson and Interior Secretary Stewart Udall came to Point Reyes to dedicate the park. In her dedication speech, Lady Bird warned that "the growing needs of an urban America are quickening the tick of the conservation clock." She called Point Reyes "a bright star in the galaxy of conservation achievements of the 1960s."

The Seashore Today

Congress authorized the National Park Service to purchase the ranches, which were leased back to the existing ranchers. Currently, thirteen ranches operate in the park, and continue to provide fresh, healthy food for the local community and the nation. Black and white Holstein cows are raised on seven ranches. Black Angus and the brown and white Hereford breed are raised on six beef ranches. The National Park Service and the ranchers act as stewards - protecting the natural landscape and the cultural history of ranching. The historic Pierce Ranch at Tomales Point offers a self-guided walking tour of what was once Point Reyes' premiere dairy.

Maritime history is preserved as well. Though replaced with an automated light in 1975, the Historic Point Reyes Lighthouse still stands, offering visitors a glimpse into the life and work of a 19th century keeper. The Historic Lifeboat Station at Chimney Rock has been restored, complete with the last intact marine railway on the west coast. The home of KPH wireless radio at the G Ranch, though also out of service, remains intact, functional, and used for ceremonial occasions by former RCA key operators today. Though newer technology has eclipsed the need for these installations, the park cares for these sites to preserve a piece of maritime history and honor the lives of those who kept vigilant watch over this coast for over 130 years.

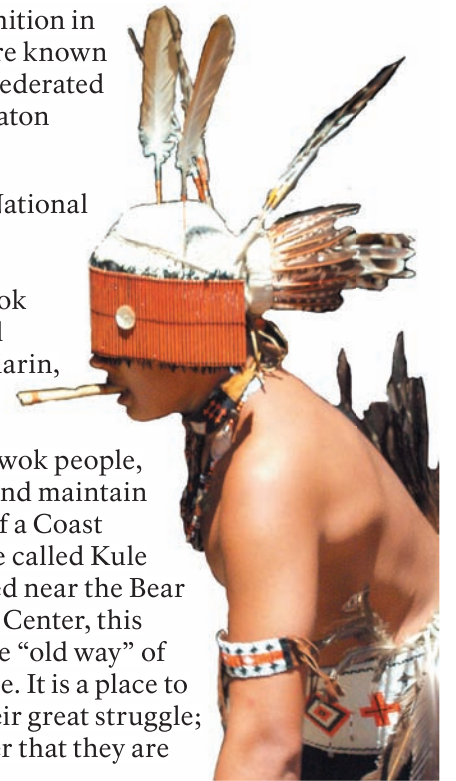


Lady Bird Johnson at the 1966 dedication of Point Reyes National Seashore

We Are Still Here

To gain tribal rights, the modern Miwok people, consisting of more than 1,000 descendants, retraced their family trees to redefine and rediscover their cultural and historic lifeways. After 30 years of research and documentation by the tribe, President Clinton granted the Coast Miwok federal recognition in 2000. They are known today as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

Point Reyes National Seashore in partnership with the Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin, community volunteers, and Coast Miwok people, constructed and maintain a recreation of a Coast Miwok village called Kule Loklo. Located near the Bear Valley Visitor Center, this site honors the "old way" of the first people. It is a place to remember their great struggle; it is a reminder that they are still here.



Today, Point Reyes National Seashore serves as a model for land stewardship and resource protection. Providing a needed escape from crowded urban areas, it is a place to remember our connection to the land. It is also a place to reflect on the many ancestors that have left their mark here, and to contemplate how best to ensure the protection of this special place in the future.

Support Your Park

Point Reyes National Seashore relies on community partnerships to accomplish its mission. You can get involved by becoming a volunteer or by supporting the Point Reyes National Seashore Association.

Volunteer-In-Parks

Get involved by volunteering your time and talents to Point Reyes National Seashore. As a volunteer you can:

- Help combat invasive, non-native plants
- Restore stream habitat for Coho salmon and Steelhead trout; monitor spawning success
- Educate seashore visitors about elephant seals, whales, snowy plovers, and tule elk
- Assist researchers by monitoring tule elk and harbor seal populations



Elk docent and visitor at Tomales Point

- Perform trail maintenance
- Patrol the park on foot, horseback, or kayak
- Help catalogue and manage the Seashore's museum collection
- Collect native grass seeds and re-vegetate restoration areas
- Orient and identify points of interest to visitors at a seashore visitor center
- Help preserve Native American culture by maintaining the Kule Loklo cultural exhibit

Please visit www.nps.gov/volunteer/ for additional volunteer opportunities and to apply.

Point Reyes National Seashore Association

The Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA) is the park's non-profit partner organization that supports park programs through fundraising, bookstore sales, memberships, and education. You can support PRNSA and the Seashore by:



- Becoming a member of PRNSA
- Purchasing merchandise in any of the Seashore's visitor centers
- Enrolling in a PRNSA field seminar
- Volunteering as a field seminar facilitator
- Donating your car to PRNSA
- Making a monetary donation

For more information, visit www.ptreyes.org

Planning Your Visit



Bear Valley Visitor Center

Stop at the Seashore's primary visitor center for general information and to view the Seashore's orientation film. Indoor exhibits introduce the plants, animals, and people of the area. Free park maps and beach fire permits are available at the main desk. Permits for backcountry and boat-in camping are issued at the camping desk, where you may make reservations up to three months in advance.

Hours:

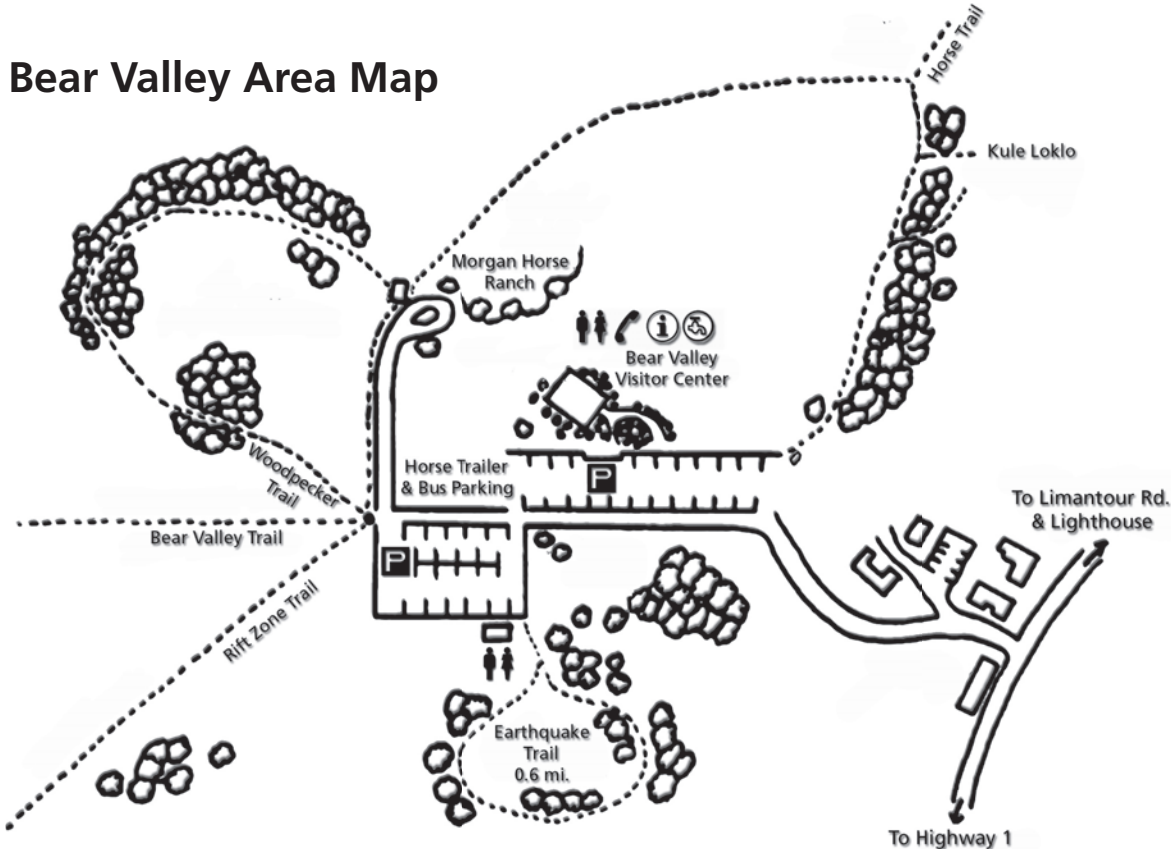
Monday—Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
Weekends and holidays, 8 am to 5 pm

Outdoor Exhibits:

Earthquake Trail, Morgan Horse Ranch and Kule Loklo, Woodpecker Trail

Phone Number: 415-464-5100

Bear Valley Area Map



Drive Time From Bear Valley

Lighthouse/Chimney Rock	45 minutes
Drakes Beach	30 minutes
Limantour Beach	20 minutes
Point Reyes Youth Hostel	15 minutes
Tomales Point	30 minutes

San Francisco (via Sir Francis Drake Blvd)	1 hour
San Francisco (via Highway 1)	1.5 hours

Bodega Bay	1 hour
Petaluma	30 minutes
Novato	30 minutes
Sonoma/Napa	1 hour

Please drive carefully. Follow posted speed limits and watch for cyclists. Gasoline is only available in downtown Point Reyes Station.

Visit the Seashore's Website

The Seashore's website is a great tool for use in planning your visit. You will find maps, driving directions, park regulations, camping and hiking information, official publications, the lighthouse webcam, seasonal highlights, special event details, ranger program information and more!

www.nps.gov/pore



Ken Patrick Visitor Center

Drive approximately 35 minutes from Bear Valley to the Ken Patrick Visitor Center and beautiful Drakes Beach. Enjoy exhibits on 16th and 17th century maritime exploration, marine fossils, and marine environments. You can find refreshments next door at the Drakes Beach Cafe.

Annual Sand Sculpture contest held Labor Day weekend. Inquire at any visitor center or check the park's web site.

Hours:

Weekends and holidays, 10 am to 5 pm

Phone Number: 415-669-1250

Drakes Beach Cafe

Serving local, organic, sustainably produced foods. Open weekends; weekday hours vary seasonally. Friday and Saturday night, dinner by reservation. For more information, call 415-669-1297.



Historic Lighthouse & Visitor Center

Drive 45 minutes from Bear Valley to the lighthouse parking area. Walk 0.4 miles up a moderately steep hill to the Lighthouse Visitor Center. Some handicap accessible parking is available within 1/8 mile of the visitor center. Inquire at any visitor center for access to this parking area. An observation deck overlooks the lighthouse. When the stairs are open, you may walk down the 308 steep steps to the lighthouse.

Fog and wind are common throughout the year. Dress in layers. For current weather information, contact any visitor center or view the lighthouse webcam: www2.nature.nps.gov/air/WebCams/parks/porecam/porecam.cfm

Hours:

Visitor Center : Thursday—Monday, 10am to 4:30pm
*Stairs: Thursday—Monday, 10am to 4:30pm
*Lens Room: Thursday—Monday, 2:30pm to 4:00pm

**High winds or maintenance work may close the stairs. Inquire at any visitor center.*

Pets are not permitted beyond the bounds of the paved lighthouse visitors' parking lot.

Phone Number: 415-669-1534

Outdoor Exhibits

Kule Loklo

This Coast Miwok cultural exhibit provides a glimpse of California before European contact. The replica village is an easy half mile walk from the Bear Valley Visitor Center. Learn about the Coast Miwok culture as you walk along the trail.

Open daily, sunrise to sunset.



Greg Gnesios

Earthquake Trail

Starting from the Bear Valley Visitor Center picnic area, this short loop trail highlights the San Andreas Fault. View exhibits about geology and the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

Open daily, sunrise to sunset. Wheelchair-accessible.



Morgan Horse Ranch

This working ranch at Bear Valley is for Morgan horses used for backcountry patrol at Point Reyes National Seashore. The Morgan is the first American horse breed. Self-guided exhibits, corrals and demonstrations are a part of the ranch.

Open daily, 9am to 4:30 pm.



Historic Pierce Ranch

Established in 1858, the restored Pierce Ranch was one of the most successful dairy ranches of its time on the Point Reyes Peninsula. Located at Tomales Point, a self-guided trail directs visitors through the historic complex.

Open daily, sunrise to sunset.



Explore Point Reyes



There are many ways to experience the outdoors at Point Reyes. Whether in the water or on land, from a bike or a horse, in a kayak or canoe, or on your own two feet, it's important to be prepared. With the variable weather found here, it's advisable to dress in layers. Bring plenty of water and sunscreen. Ask for information at the Visitor Center, consult a hiking guide, or do some internet research, before embarking on your adventure. Call the weather information line at (415) 464-5100 for current weather conditions.

Hiking

Point Reyes is graced with over 150 miles of hiking trails. Some trails ascend steeply into the forested zones along the Inverness Ridge, but there are also less ambitious options among the coastal scrub and prairie communities, and in the valleys. Review the trail sampler on this page for suggestions. An in-depth trail guide and hiking map are available at any Seashore visitor center or online.



Visiting With Your Dog

Dogs, on leash, are welcome on four park beaches: Limantour Beach, North Beach, South Beach, and Kehoe Beach. The short trail leading to Kehoe Beach is the only park trail where dogs are permitted. Nearby, in Golden Gate NRA, along the Bolinas Ridge Trail, dogs on leash are also allowed. For more information, please check at any visitor center or online.



A Hiking Trail Sampler

For a more detailed list of hiking trails and a map, please ask at the Visitor Center.

EARTHQUAKE TRAIL
Bear Valley picnic area
0.6 mi./1 km
(15 min./easy)
DISCOVER the geology of the San Andreas Fault Zone, through interpretive signs, on this paved loop. Along the trail, a fence that jumped 16 feet in the 1906 earthquake helps us to imagine the earth's power.

KULE LOKLO TRAIL
Bear Valley parking lot
0.8 mi./1.3 km
(20 min./easy)
DELVE into Coast Miwok Indian culture and history while visiting this replica Miwok village. Return on the same trail, or continue around the pasture to return via the Morgan Horse Ranch.

CHIMNEY ROCK TRAIL
Chimney Rock parking lot
1.8 mi./2.5 km
(45 min./easy)
ENJOY spectacular views of Drakes Bay, the Pacific, and, in spring, wildflowers. January through May, look for migratory gray whales from the point. Rocky cliffs drop steeply to the ocean. No beach access.

DIVIDE MEADOW VIA BEAR VALLEY TRAIL
Bear Valley parking
3.2 mi./5.1 km
(1.5 hours/easy)
WALK through dense, mixed Douglas fir forest along Bear Valley Creek to an open meadow. Several benches along the way offer great resting spots in the shade.

MT. WITTENBERG AND SKY TRAIL
from Limantour Road
4.3 mi./6.9 km
(2 hours/strenuous)
CLIMB the Sky Trail to the highest point on the Peninsula, with ocean views, meadows, and forest to Horse Trail. Turn right onto Z Ranch Trail to Mt. Wittenberg summit, and continue to Sky Trail junction, turn left and return to the trailhead.

ARCH ROCK VIA BEAR VALLEY TRAIL
Bear Valley parking
8.2 mi./13.1 km
(4 hours/moderate)
MEANDER along a creek through Douglas fir forest to an ocean view. This pleasant, sheltered walk ends at Arch Rock, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. No beach access.

TOMALES POINT TRAIL
Pierce Point Ranch
9.5 mi./15 km
(4.5 hours/moderate)
RANGE over cliffs perched between the ocean and the bay in the Tule Elk reserve. Three miles of managed trail give way to an unmaintained path to the point that is overgrown, in places, with shrubs.

Camping

Car camping is not available within the Seashore's boundaries. However, Camp Taylor (415) 488-9897 and Olema RV Resort and Campground (415) 663-8001 are just down the road. Within the seashore, visitors can choose from 4 primitive backpacking camps. Two are on bluffs above the ocean and two are in forest clearings. To make reservations for these campgrounds you may call up to three months ahead. Reservations are recommended for May through October. To make reservations, call (415) 669-8054, Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 2 pm.

Minimum walking distances for Point Reyes' campgrounds:

SKY CAMP 1.4 miles (from Limantour Road)
COAST CAMP 1.8 miles from Laguna Trail Parking
GLEN CAMP 4.8 miles from Bear Valley Parking
WILDCAT CAMP 5.5 miles from Palomarin Parking



Paddling

Kayaking and canoeing are popular pursuits at Point Reyes. Tomales Bay, a narrow, 12-mile-long shallow estuarine bay provides wonderful opportunities for novice and experienced paddlers. Leopard sharks, bat rays, harbor seals, osprey, and moon-jellies are your companions along the way. Overnight camping on the bay's west shore can be reserved through the Point Reyes backcountry reservation system (see information above). From July 1 until the end of February, paddling is also permitted in Drakes and Limantour Esteros.



Cycling

Bicycles are permitted on all paved park roads, and on a limited number of trails at Point Reyes. On the official park map these trails are indicated with dashed red lines. Where permitted, you must stay on the trail. Watch for horses and hikers; maximum speed limit is 15mph.



Horseback Riding

Equestrians may use all trails at Point Reyes. Please check at a visitor center on current trail conditions, especially in winter and spring when storms and high winds can cause flooding and treefall. On weekends and federal holidays, there are a few restrictions leaving from the Bear Valley area. To access Sky trail, horses must travel up Horse Trail or the Mount Wittenberg Trail. The Bear Valley Trail beyond the Wittenberg Trail, and Meadow and Old Pine Trails are closed on weekends and federal holidays.



Tidepooling — A Rare Treat



A common question asked here is, "where can I go tidepooling?" Only a few times a year, at negative low tides, does the intertidal zone open its doors to allow a glimpse of the harsh life of the plants and animals that live there. Plan ahead by finding out which days offer the safest opportunities for tidepool exploration. The lower the tide recedes the more rocks become exposed and the deeper you can see into these dynamic life zones.

Above all, respect the ocean and never go out there alone. Keep your eye on the water for rogue waves, watch your footing on slippery vegetation, and be mindful of the creatures living there. Look at the chart below to plan your next tidepooling adventure and to see just how rare a perfect tidepooling day is.

Year	Date	Time	Height
2007	November 23	03:50 PM	-1.40
	November 24	04:37 PM	-1.80
2008	January 19	02:43 PM	-1.20
	January 20	03:32 PM	-1.50
	April 8	7:18 AM	-1.10
	April 9	8:12 AM	-1.10
	April 10	9:12 AM	-1.00
	May 7	7:06 AM	-2.00
	May 8	7:56 AM	-1.80
	May 9	8:56 AM	-1.50
	May 10	9:56 AM	-1.00
	June 5	6:54 AM	-2.10
2009	June 6	7:45 AM	-1.90
	June 7	8:36 AM	-1.40
	July 4	6:44 AM	-1.68
	November 11	03:55 PM	-1.60
	January 9	03:44 PM	-1.53
	February 8	04:13 PM	-1.16
	April 27	7:23 AM	-1.40
	April 28	8:15 AM	-1.34
	April 29	9:12 AM	-1.12
	May 26	7:12 AM	-1.89
	May 27	8:02 AM	-1.70
	May 28	8:55 AM	-1.35
	June 24	6:58 AM	-1.84
	June 25	7:45 AM	-1.54
	June 26	8:32 AM	-1.06
	July 23	6:37 AM	-1.31
	December 1	04:16 PM	-1.25
	December 29	03:17 PM	-1.03
	December 30	04:01 PM	-1.42



There are tons of **cool** things to discover while visiting Point Reyes. Get started on your seashore adventure today by completing the **activities** on this page!

Seashore Scavenger Hunt

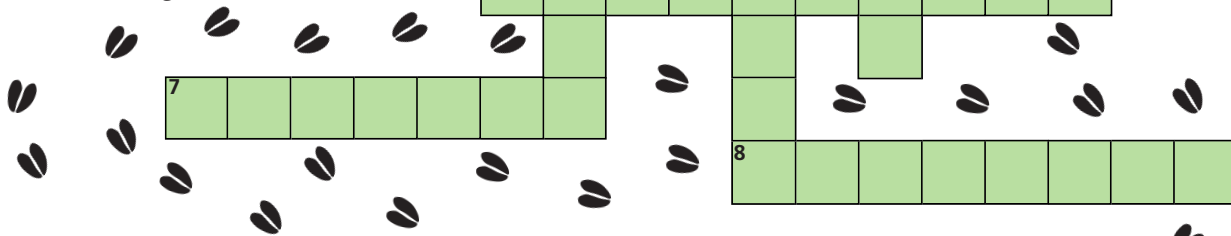
Complete this crossword puzzle by hunting throughout this paper for the answers. You might also find the answers while exploring throughout the seashore.

Across

- In 1579, Sir Francis _____ became the first European explorer to come ashore in northern California and is thought to have camped along a beach in Point Reyes which today bears his name.
- In 1870, the Point Reyes _____ was built to guide ships safely past the treacherous Point Reyes headlands.
- _____ Rock Trail is one of the best places to view spring wildflowers.
- Each winter, _____ seals leave their solitary lives at sea, coming ashore at Point Reyes for the breeding and birthing season.

Down

- The famous fault that separates Point Reyes National Seashore from mainland California is called the San _____ Fault.
- You can learn about the first people of this area by visiting Kule Loklo, a replica Coast _____ village.
- A cool, moist climate has made Point Reyes an ideal location for _____ ranching for over 150 years.
- The _____ Elk were nearly driven to extinction during the Gold Rush of 1849.



Who am I?

Point Reyes provides critical habitat to many different kinds of animals. A habitat is a place where animals find the important things needed to survive like food, water, shelter and space. Can you identify these seashore animals? What kind of habitat do they need to survive? Once you have finished filling in the blanks, have fun coloring!



artwork by Catherine Ball



2. I am a _____
My habitat is _____



4. I am a _____
My habitat is _____

3. I am a _____
My habitat is _____



1. I am a _____
My habitat is _____

Nature Detective

Seashore scientists use their sharp observation skills to study Point Reyes. Like detectives trying to crack a case, they look and listen carefully for clues that will help them solve mysteries about plants, animals, habitats, and people. This information often helps us make decisions about caring for Point Reyes.

Put your observation skills to work by carefully investigating your surroundings. You can study one special place, observe a living thing or hunt for clues that will tell you about the animals that live in the area. Write your discoveries on the field notebook to the right.



Answers for the activities on this page can be found on page 3. No peeking!

Become a Junior Ranger

and help protect Point Reyes National Seashore! By discovering and learning about your national parks, you are taking important steps towards helping to take care of these special places today and for the future. This is a big job, but can be tons of fun, too. Ask at any visitor center to learn more about how you can become a Junior Ranger. For more fun, visit these websites:

www.nps.gov/pore/forkids/index.htm
www.nps.gov/webrangers



Arrowhead Challenge

The arrowhead is the official symbol of the National Park Service. You will find it on buildings, signs, vehicles, and rangers' uniforms. Each part of the arrowhead represents the important resources that our National Parks preserve and protect - even the shape! These resources include plants, animals, land forms, water resources and history. Can you identify these parts? Label them on the arrowhead below.



Throughout your visit, try to find as many arrowheads as you can!

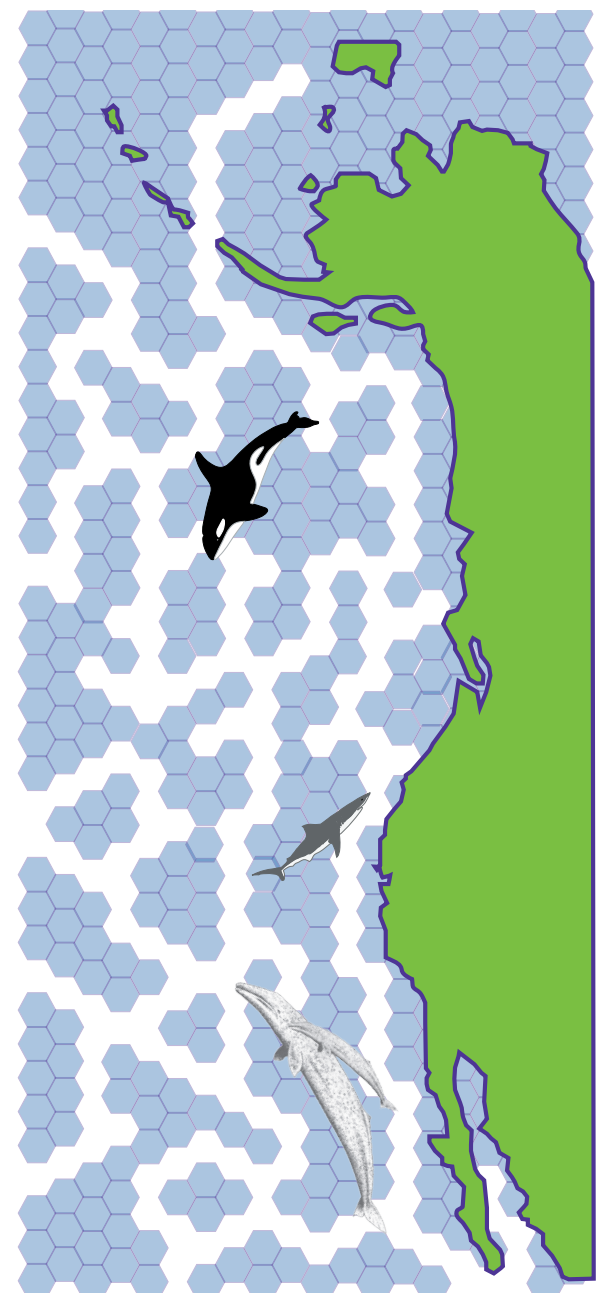
Arrowhead Count:



A Whale of a Journey!

Gray whales complete a 10,000 mile round trip journey each year migrating between their birthing and breeding lagoons in Baja, California and their feeding grounds in the Bering Sea of Alaska. This is the longest migration of any mammal!

Help the gray whale find its way to Alaska. First, label Alaska and Baja on the map. Next, trace the migration route of the gray whale through the maze. What type of hazards could the gray whale encounter along their way?



Bonus Question: When are you most likely to see Gray Whales at Point Reyes?