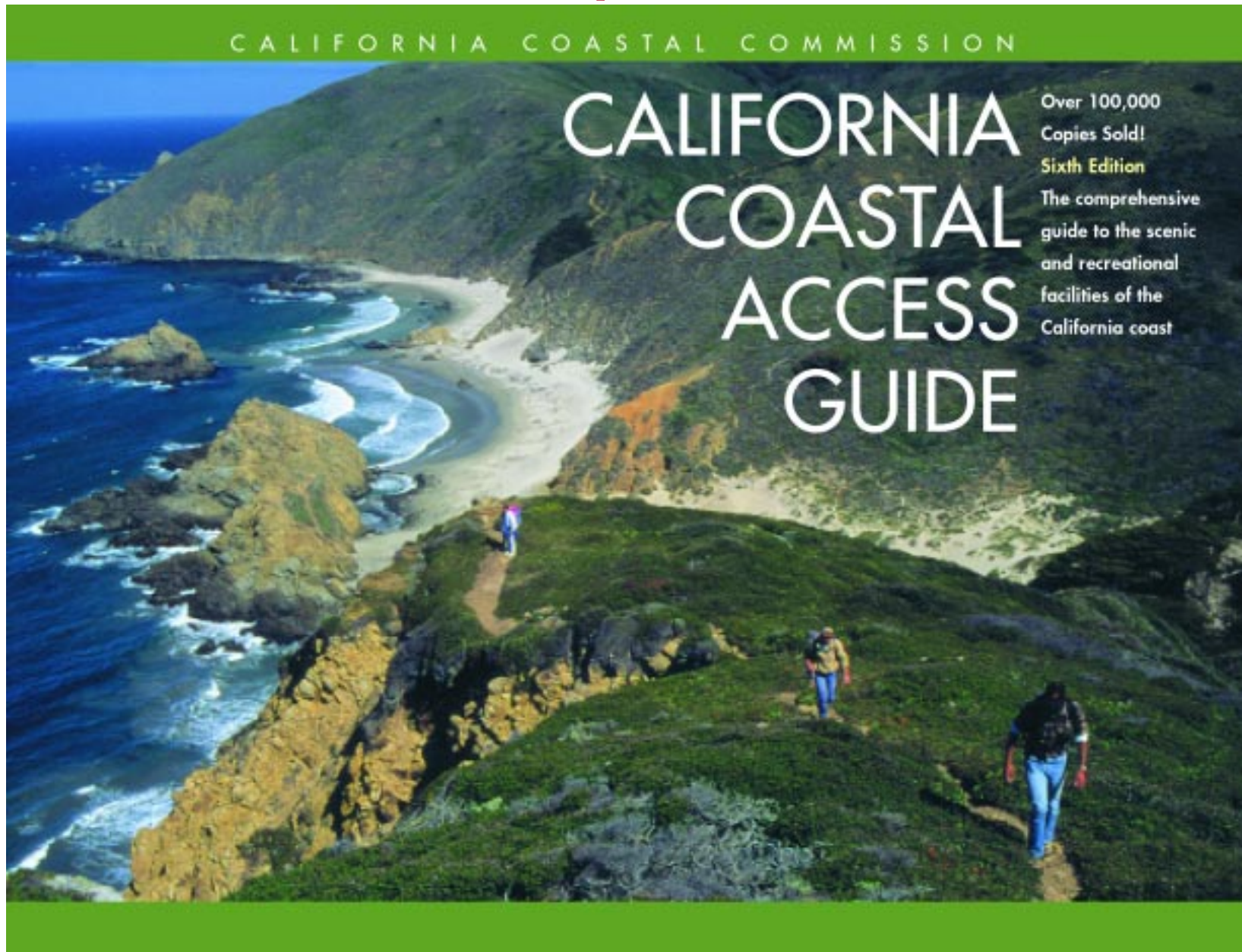


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# Monterey County

**M**onterey County's coastline is one of the most beautiful in the state, stretching from the flat coastal plain around Monterey Bay in the north, through the steep hills of the Monterey Peninsula, to the magnificent, rugged Big Sur Coast.

Monterey Bay was sighted in 1542 by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, and visited again 60 years later by Sebastián Vizcaíno, who named it in honor of his Mexican viceroy, the Count of Monte Rey. In 1770 Gaspar de Portolá and Padre Junípero Serra established the Presidio and the second California mission. The settlement was immediately successful largely because of abundant timber, fertile soil, and mild weather.

Prior to Spanish settlement, the Monterey Bay area was inhabited by the Ohlone, or Costanoan Indians, who were hunter-gatherers, shellfish being their primary food source. During the Spanish occupation the Indians were concentrated in the missions, but following the secularization of the missions by the Mexicans, the Indians were dispersed and eventually disappeared. By 1920, there were only 56 surviving Costanoans.

Moss Landing, the northernmost coastal town in Monterey, was established in the 1860s by Captain Charles Moss, and soon became a bustling harbor and whaling station. Now it is a pleasure and fishing boat harbor, with antique shops, flea markets, and restaurants.

Monterey Peninsula, at the southwest end of Monterey Bay, is the focal point of the county, with its towns of Monterey, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, and Carmel. Historically, the city of Monterey was the capital of Alta California under both Spanish and Mexican rule. Today, the "Path of History" meanders through the city and passes many historic buildings and sites. Cannery Row, made famous by John Steinbeck's novel, *Cannery Row*, was the site of flourishing sardine canneries in the 1940s until the sardines suddenly vanished in 1951. Although the sardines later returned, the canning industry did not, and Cannery Row is now a tourist attraction with shops, restaurants, and galleries.

Pacific Grove, on the north side of the peninsula, is noted for its beautiful flowering ice plant, *Mesembryanthemum*, and the millions of Monarch butterflies that winter in the trees. Seventeen-Mile Drive winds through the forested hills of the Del Monte Forest and along the rocky coast of Pebble Beach. Carmel-by-the-Sea, located at the southwest edge of the peninsula, is a Mediterranean-like village that has become a mecca for both artists and tourists with its shops on the hill, sailboats on the water, and clean, white sandy beach on Carmel Bay.

South of Carmel is Point Lobos State Reserve, a magnificent headland with trails leading through Monterey cypress groves and along the shore, tidepools rich in aquatic life, and abundant marine life such as sea lions and sea otters in the offshore kelp beds.

South of Point Lobos, Highway 1 narrows and winds along the Big Sur Coast between the steep Santa Lucia Mountains and the sparkling Pacific Ocean. There are many pull-outs with spectacular vistas, and several public picnic areas and beaches along Highway 1; Los Padres National Forest, which includes the Ventana Wilderness, begins at the coast and stretches inland for miles, providing numerous hiking trails and campsites. The original inhabitants of the Big Sur Coast were the Esselen Indians, who lived from Point Sur to Lucia; the Salinans, who lived south of Lucia; and the Costanoans, who lived along the coast from the Palo Colorado Canyon to the Big Sur River mouth.



*For more information on Monterey County's coast, write or call: Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, 380 Alvarado (P.O. Box 1770), Monterey 93940, (831) 648-5360 or see [www.mpcc.com](http://www.mpcc.com); Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce, Forest and Central Avenues (P.O. Box 167B), Pacific Grove 93950, (831) 373-3304 or see [www.pacificgrove.org](http://www.pacificgrove.org); or Carmel California Visitor and Information Center, San Carlos between 5th and 6th Avenues (P.O. Box 4444), Carmel 93921, (831) 624-2522 or see [carmelcalifornia.org](http://carmelcalifornia.org).*

*For transit information, contact Monterey-Salinas Transit: One Ryan Ranch Road, Monterey 93940, (831) 8999-2555 or 424-7695 or see [www.mst.org](http://www.mst.org).*

## Wetlands

**W**etlands are areas where the land meets the water in a gradual transition, characterized by wet soils or by plants adapted to a wet environment; a variety of coastal areas are categorized as wetlands, including salt marshes, freshwater or brackish water marshes, shallow-water lagoons, tidal mudflats, salt flats, and fens.

Coastal wetlands are usually created by the flow of sediments into a bay, river mouth, or other shallow area, forming a delta. This delta gradually builds up to an elevation above low tide level; at that point, plants such as cordgrass and other salt marsh species move in. These plants slow the currents and trap more sediments, causing the wetlands to expand further. As more sediment becomes trapped on the delta, upland plant species take over, converting prior wetlands to uplands.



Elkhorn Slough, Near Kirby Park Fishing Access

Thus, like most natural landforms, wetlands are continually subject to periodic creation and change.

Up until 500 years ago, wetlands covered over 300,000 acres of California's coastal areas, not including the San Francisco Bay area. Only 70,000 acres of coastal wetlands remain today. Diking and filling of wetlands for development projects account for much of this loss. In addition, soil erosion from hillsides has tripled the rate of sedimentation of wetlands during the last hundred years. If wetland sedimentation continues at this level, many remaining wetlands will be lost as well.

Ecologists have found that coastal wetlands are essential habitats for certain fish, birds, and mammals; in addition, many migratory ducks, geese, and shorebirds depend on wetlands for feeding and nesting. San Diego Bay wetlands, for example, seasonally support more than 180 species of birds, 50 species of mammals, 43 species of fish, and thousands of smaller organisms such as crabs, mussels, and ghost shrimp. Elkhorn Slough in Monterey County contains similar numbers of species, including more than 90,000 gaper clams, one of the species sought by clambers.

Many of the species of birds and mammals listed by the Department of Fish and Game as endangered in California are either directly dependent on or somehow associated with wetlands; these include the salt marsh harvest mouse, the California clapper rail, and the California least tern.

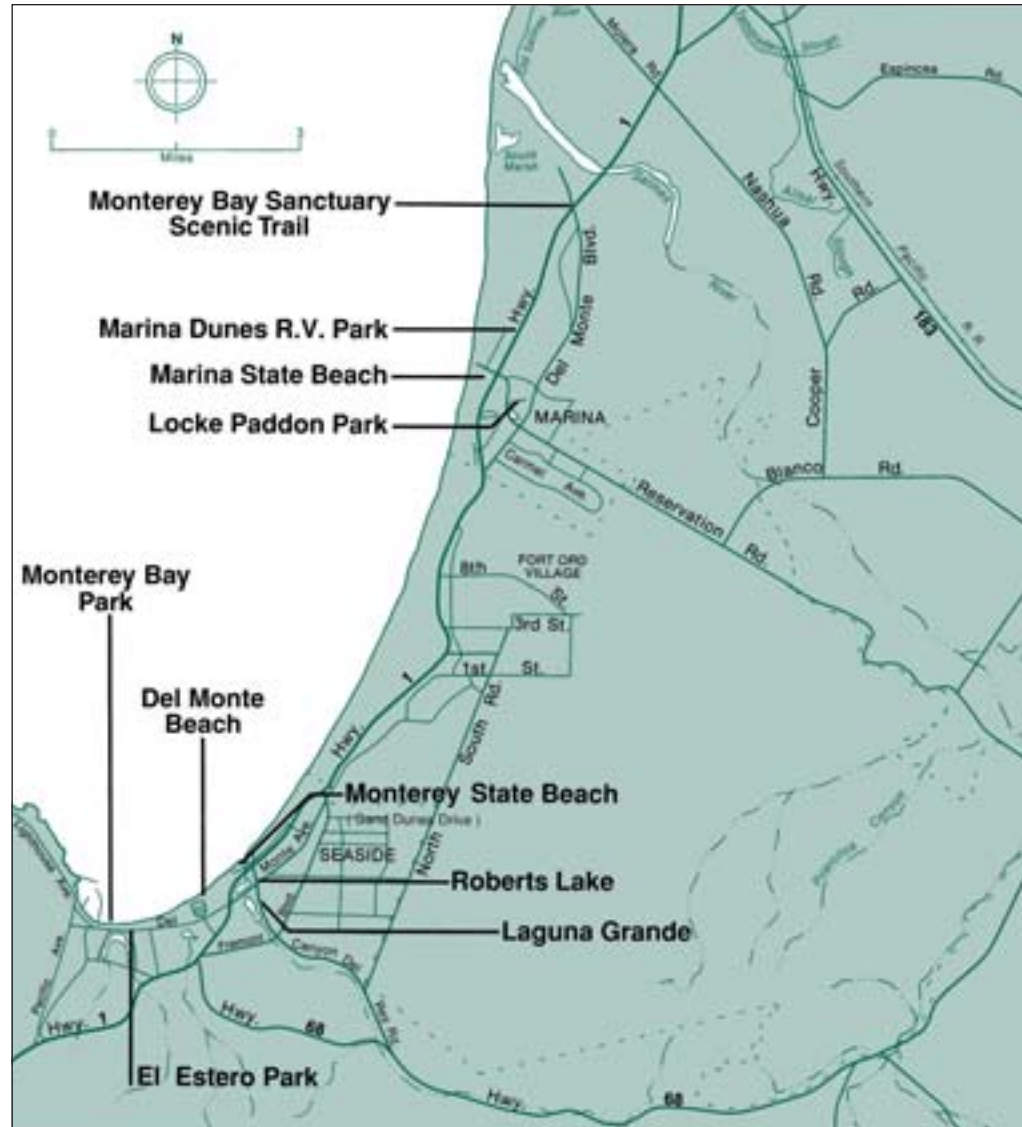
Wetlands also provide a number of direct and indirect benefits to humans. They help stabilize shorelines and absorb flood waters, lessening the need for costly flood control measures; furthermore they purify coastal waters through natural sewage treatment, trapping sediments that would otherwise fill navigation channels. Wetlands are also significant recreation resources and provide opportunities for fishing and bird watching, as well as for nature study and scientific research.

Since wetlands are so valuable from both an economic and biologic standpoint, the California Coastal Act, along with many other federal and state statutes and regulations, mandates governmental regulation in these areas to protect and restore California's wetlands.





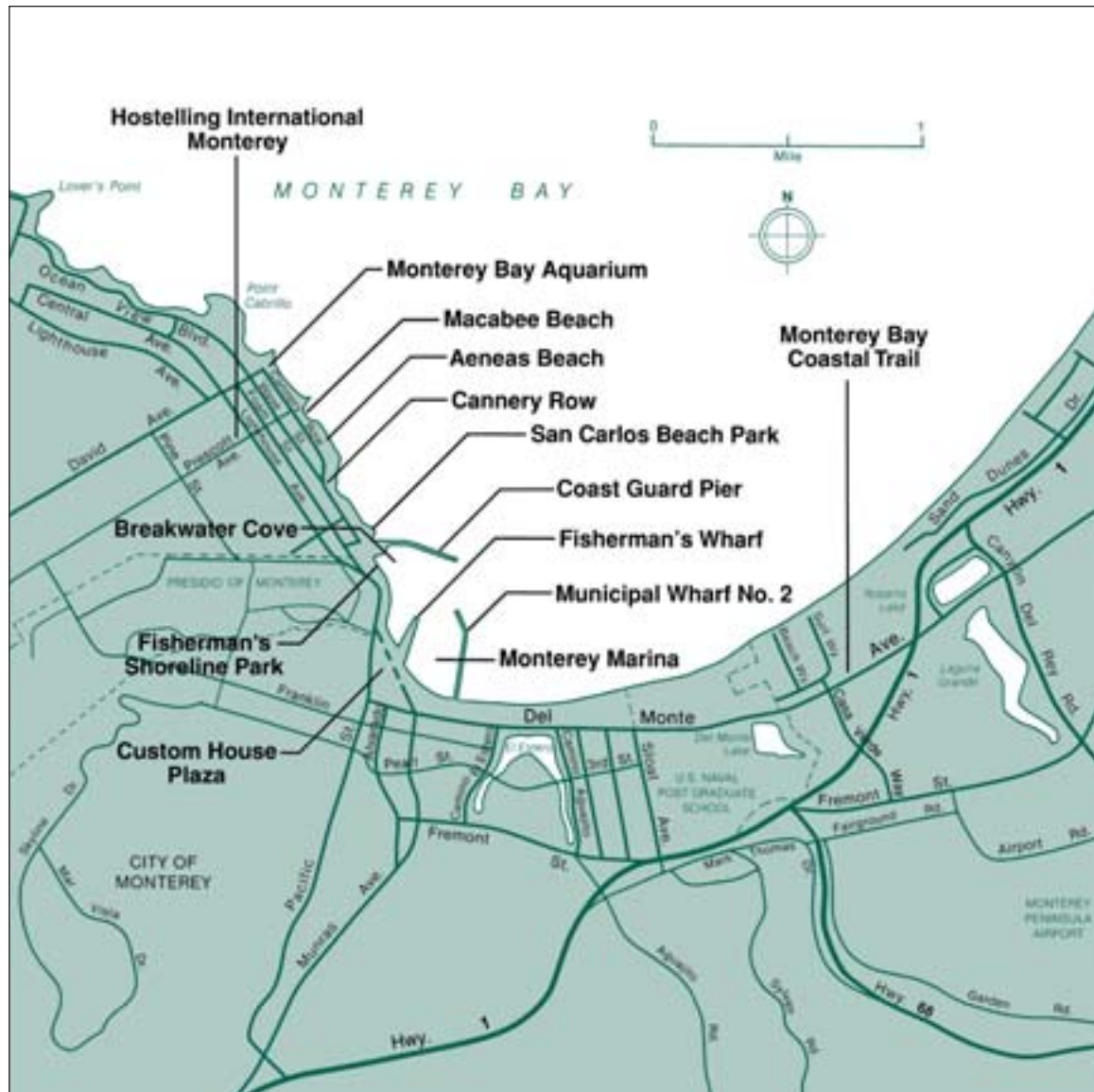
Marina State Beach







Monterey Marina, Fisherman's Wharf





## Monarch Butterfly

The Monarch butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*, is one of the best known of the butterflies, noted for its large size, bright colors, and long migrations. The Monarch belongs to a largely tropical family and, because it cannot survive cold winters, migrates south each fall.

Monarch butterflies emerge from their cocoons in late spring and early summer. During the summer months the butterflies are found dispersed throughout the countryside, visiting flowers and feeding on their nectar. In fall, the butterflies assemble in great numbers in trees and bushes and, at some unknown signal, rise up and begin flying southward en masse. The Monarchs return to the same grove of trees in which their ancestors overwintered.

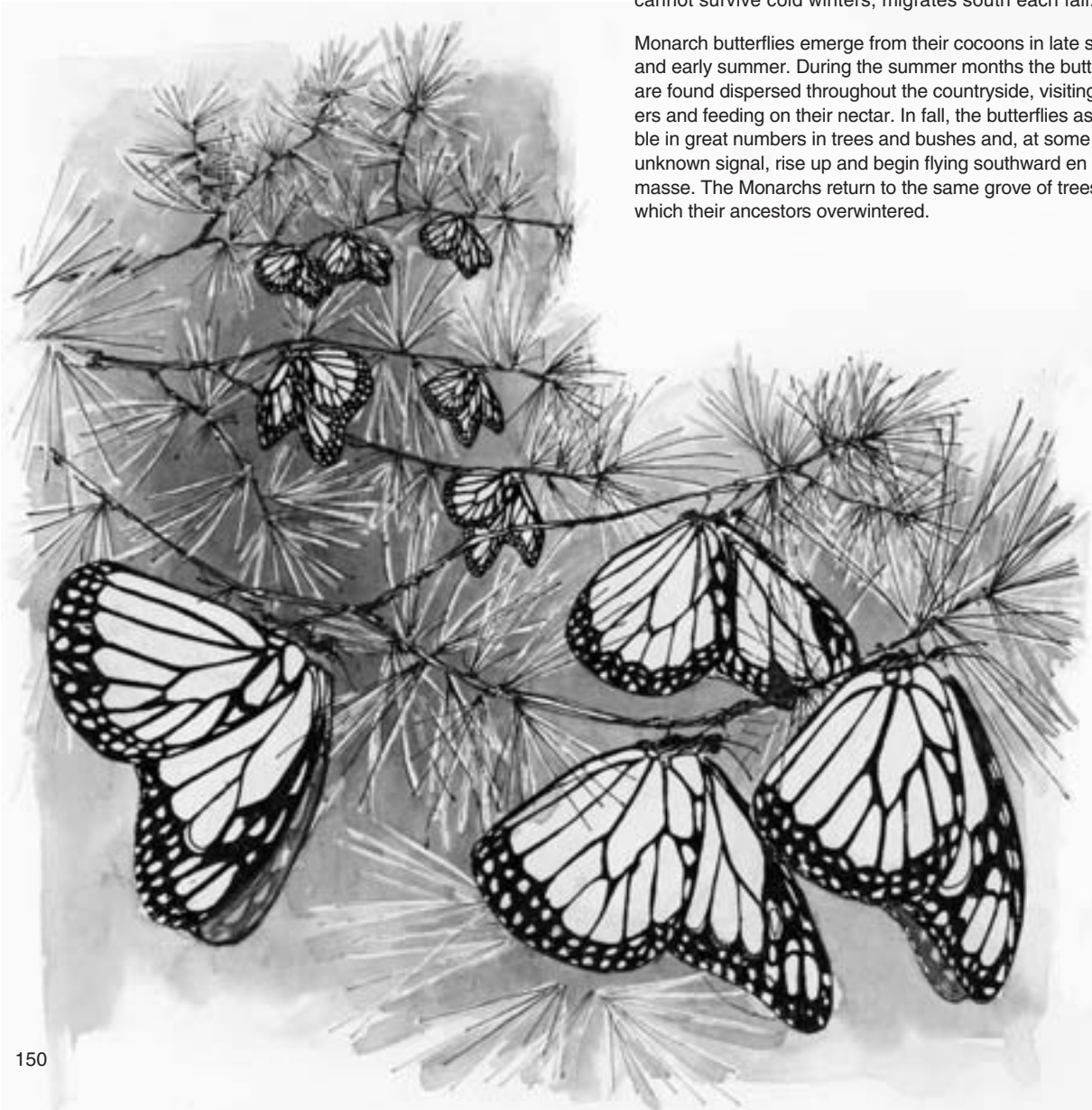
At their wintering grounds they pack themselves tightly together in the trees and remain there in a state of semi-dormancy until spring. The eucalyptus or evergreen pines may be so filled with butterflies that the trees appear orange. When spring arrives, the Monarchs fly northward individually, not as a band.

The life expectancy of a Monarch butterfly is about a year, and not all adults survive the entire journey back north. Some fly part way, lay their eggs and die; their progeny then continue north, even as far as Canada. The butterflies that return south the following fall are the descendants of those that migrated north in the spring.

There are two major populations of Monarchs in the United States. Members of the eastern population migrate as far as 3,000 miles to overwintering spots in central Mexico. The western population returns to wintering grounds along the California coast. Monarchs overwinter in many places along our coast, but the best known spot is Pacific Grove, where thousands of Monarchs may be seen during the winter months in “butterfly trees” throughout the town. Monarchs are protected by law in Pacific Grove, and anyone disturbing them may receive a fine or a jail sentence.

Monarch butterflies are somewhat protected from predation because they feed on milkweed, a poisonous plant that makes the Monarchs themselves inedible to birds. A bird that has tasted one Monarch and become sick learns not to eat other Monarchs. The Monarch’s bright, highly visible “warning coloration” serves to remind potential predators of the butterfly’s toxicity. The Viceroy butterfly, *Limenitis archippus*, possesses coloration and habits almost identical to those of the Monarch, and enjoys a certain degree of protection from predation because of this “protective mimicry.” Potential predators mistake the edible Viceroy for the unpalatable Monarch, and therefore avoid the Viceroy.

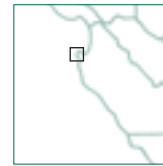
The Monarch, like other butterflies, passes through four stages of development, in a process called metamorphosis. The female lays her eggs on the underside of a leaf, usually of a milkweed plant. The striped caterpillar that emerges three to twelve days later immediately starts feeding on the milkweed. After several molts, the full-grown larva finds a sheltered spot and sheds its skin once again, revealing a pale green pupa, or chrysalis. This is a resting stage during which the insect reorganizes physiologically to form a butterfly. After about two weeks the adult Monarch emerges from the chrysalis. The process from egg to adult takes about five weeks.





# Monterey County

## PACIFIC GROVE



NAME	LOCATION	FACILITIES												ENVIRONMENT											
		Entrance/Parking Fee	Parking	Restrooms	Lifeguard	Campground	Showers	Firepits	Stairs to Beach	Path to Beach	Bike Path	Hiking Trail	Facilities for Disabled	Boating Facilities	Fishing	Equestrian Trail	Sandy Beach	Dunes	Rocky Shore	Upland from Beach	Stream Corridor	Bluff	Wetland		
Shoreline Park	Ocean View Blvd., between Pt. Cabrillo and Lover's Pt., Pacific Grove	•															•		•						
Berwick Park	Ocean View Blvd. and Monterey Ave., Pacific Grove	•																	•						
Lover's Point	17th St. and Ocean View Blvd., Pacific Grove	•	•																•						
Perkins Park	Along Ocean View Blvd., N.W. of Lover's Point, Pacific Grove	•																	•						
Point Piños Lighthouse Reservation	End of Lighthouse Ave., W. of Asilomar Ave., Pacific Grove	•																	•						
Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds	Pico Ave. at Sunset Dr., Pacific Grove	•	•			•													•						

**SHORELINE PARK:** Follows the shoreline along Ocean View Blvd. from Point Cabrillo to Lover's Point. Paths and benches. Several steep paths allow access to pocket beaches; hazardous surf. Street parking. The Monterey Bay Coastal Trail, a paved pedestrian and bicycle path, runs the length of the park passing through Andy Jacobsen Park, Berwick Park, and Greenwood Park. Information: (831) 648-5730

**BERWICK PARK:** Narrow grassy park south of the railroad tracks, with benches and a path; street parking only. Nearby Andy Jacobsen Park, at the foot of 7th St. and Ocean View Blvd., is a small landscaped park on a slope. Greenwood Park, at the foot of 13th St. and Ocean View Blvd., is a grassy park with a foot bridge that crosses a small creek running through the center of the park; view of the bay.

**LOVER'S POINT:** Grassy blufftop park with a parking lot, benches, paths, picnic tables, and grills, plus a small fishing pier and three small protected sandy beaches accessible by stairways. Restrooms, pier, and beach south of the pier are wheelchair accessible. Popular diving and surfing spot; no dogs allowed. Call: (831) 648-5730.

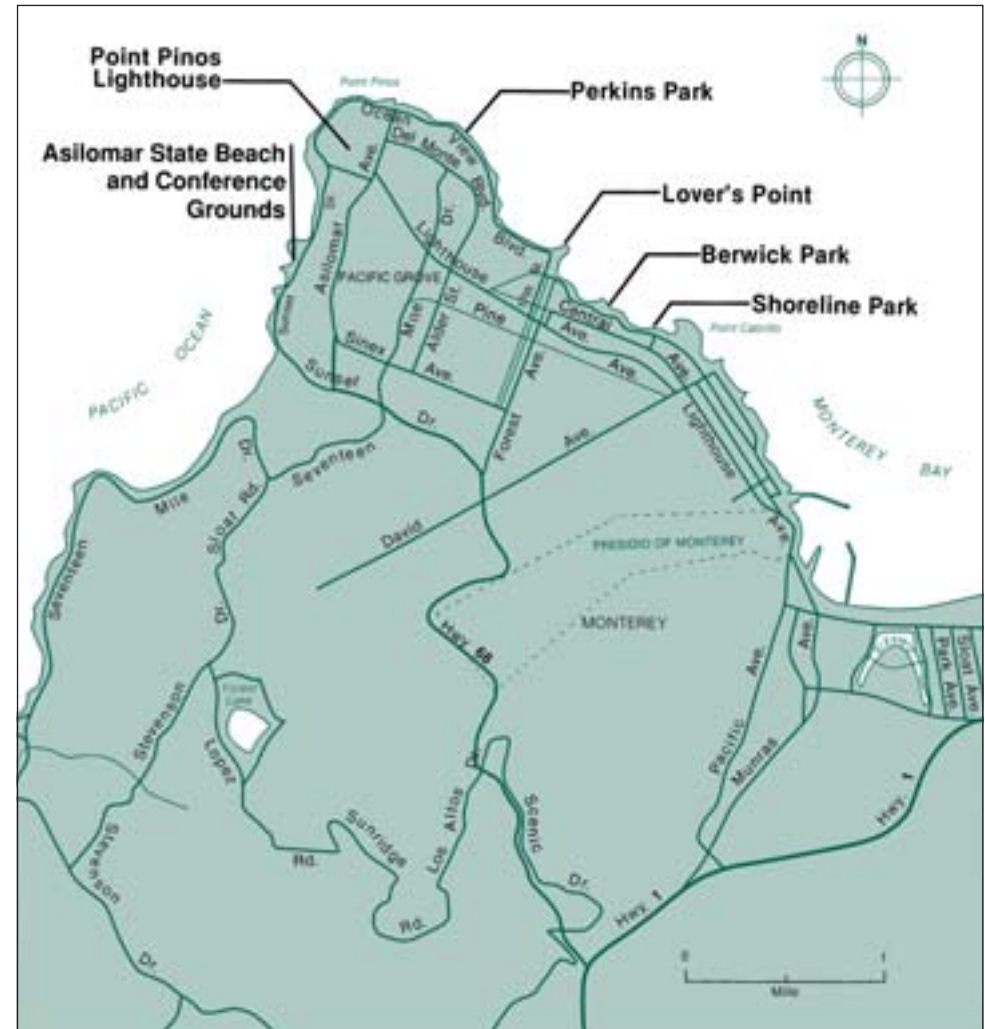
The Pacific Grove Marine Gardens Fish Refuge is offshore; it is illegal to take any marine or plant life without a permit. The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History at Forest and Central avenues is free and is open 10 AM-5 PM Tues.-Sun.; exhibits include displays of birds, shells, butterflies, fish, marine mammals, and Indian artifacts. Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are available. Museum: (831) 648-5716.

**PERKINS PARK:** Blufftop park with benches and a spectacular view of the bay; paths wind through the ice plant. There is a small parking lot at the foot of Beach St. and another at the foot of Asilomar Ave., where there are picnic tables and grills overlooking the shore. Four stairways provide access to small pocket beaches. Undeveloped Esplanade Park is located at Esplanade and Ocean View boulevards.

**POINT PIÑOS LIGHTHOUSE RESERVATION:** The lighthouse was built in 1855 of 18-inch-thick granite quarried on site; now the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the west coast. Open to the public Thurs.-Mon. 1 PM-4 PM; small Coast Guard historical museum. The Reservation is a preserve for plants and wildlife, such as the rare Tidestrom's lupine, deer, sea otters, and pelicans. Spectacular coastal views from Point Piños. For information, call: (831) 648 5716.

**ASILOMAR STATE BEACH AND CONFERENCE GROUNDS:** Thirty six acres of rugged rocky shore, tidepools, sandy beach and dunes. Diving area. Unsafe swimming; hazardous rip currents. Beach wheelchair is available.

Seventy-one acre conference center has conference facilities and 28 lodges (313 rooms) nestled in a restored dune habitat and pine-oak forest. Craftsman style buildings by renowned architect Julia Morgan were designated an historic landmark in 1987. Free guided nature walks and cultural history tours. Conference Center information: (831) 372-8016.



## Monterey Pine and Monterey Cypress

Famed for its beauty, the Monterey Peninsula conjures up visions of bluffs meeting the sea. The area's magnificent native trees are an integral part of this scene. Among these, the Monterey cypress and the Monterey pine are perhaps the most well known.

The Monterey pine and cypress are members of the closed cone pine forest plant community—they are evergreen, cone-bearing plants growing on or near the coast from sea level to about 1,000 feet. Both occur in relatively cool climates with much fog, and reach a height of about 100 feet. Although each starts as a symmetrical tree, with age they both become flat-topped and frequently take on a characteristic windblown appearance.

Monterey pine, *Pinus radiata*, is quite easy to distinguish from a cypress by its needle-like leaves that occur in clusters.

There are only four native stands of Monterey pine in the world; the only mainland stands are on Año Nuevo Point in San Mateo County, on the Monterey Peninsula, and in Cambria in San Luis Obispo County. The fourth is located on islands off Baja California. This tree has been planted outside its native range and has, in fact, become the most important cultivated timber tree in the Southern Hemisphere even though its use in California, where it is vulnerable to natural pests and diseases, is severely limited.

The Monterey cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, is restricted to two native stands. Both are on the Monterey Peninsula immediately adjacent to the sea. The larger is at Pebble Beach, the second in Point Lobos State Reserve. Monterey cypress has been extensively planted along the coast as an ornamental and windbreak.



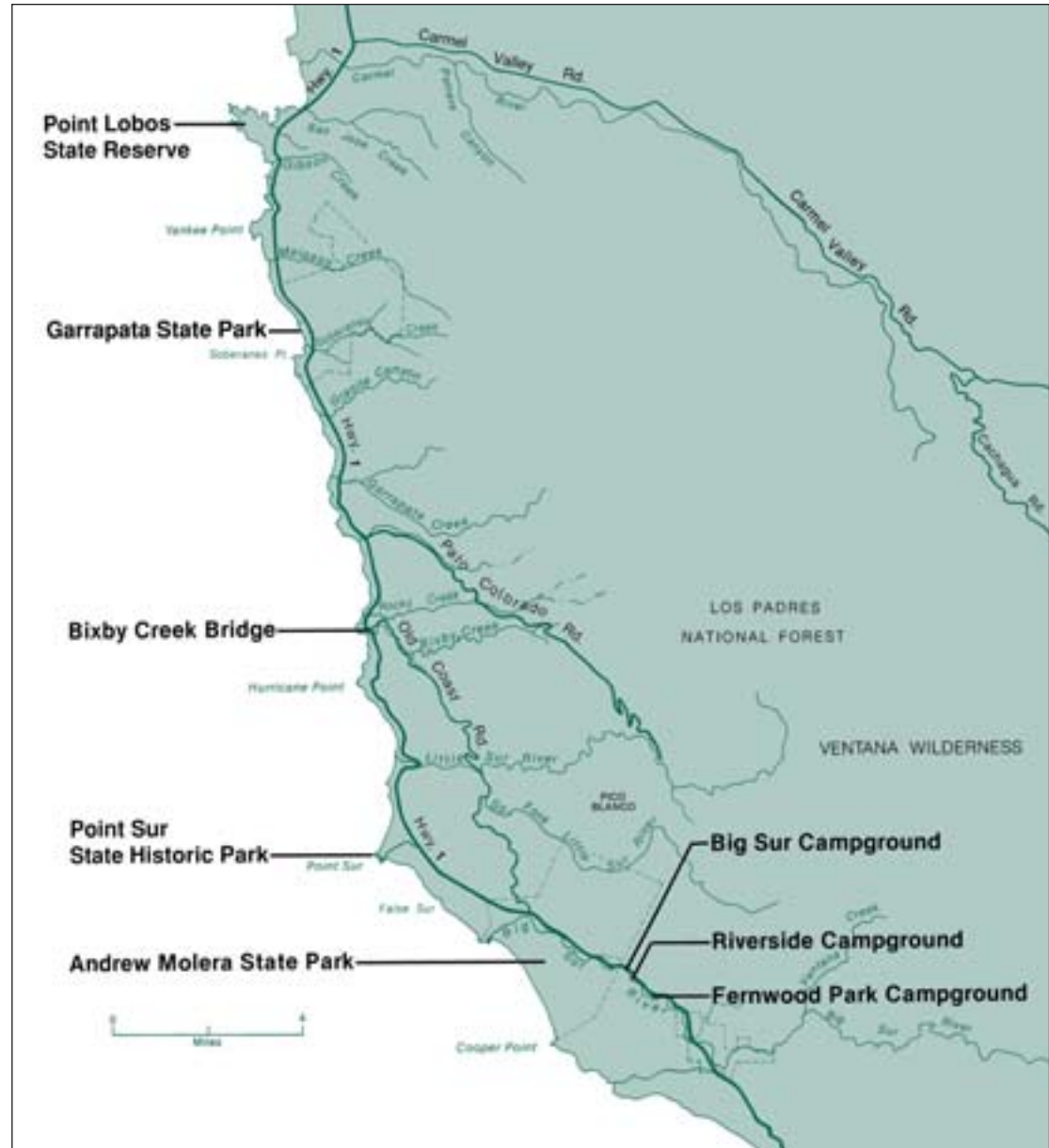
Monterey pine *Pinus radiata*

Monterey cypress *Cupressus macrocarpa*





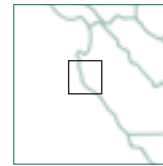
Bixby Bridge





# Monterey County

## NORTHERN BIG SUR



NAME	LOCATION	FACILITIES													ENVIRONMENT									
		Entrance/Parking Fee	Parking	Restrooms	Lifeguard	Campground	Showers	Firepits	Stairs to Beach	Path to Beach	Bike Path	Hiking Trail	Facilities for Disabled	Boating Facilities	Fishing	Equestrian Trail	Sandy Beach	Dunes	Rocky Shore	Upland from Beach	Stream Corridor	Bluff	Wetland	
Point Lobos State Reserve	W. of Hwy. 1 at Riley Ranch Rd., Carmel	•	•	•													•		•	•		•		
Garrapata State Park	Hwy. 1, 2 mi. S. of Malpas Creek, Big Sur		•	•														•	•	•		•		
Bixby Creek Bridge	Hwy. 1, N. end of Old Coast Rd., Big Sur		•																•					
Point Sur State Historic Park	Hwy. 1 at Point Sur	•	•	•														•	•	•		•		
Andrew Molera State Park	W. of Hwy. 1, S. end of Old Coast Rd., Big Sur		•	•	•		•	•	•	•								•	•	•	•	•		•
Big Sur Campground	Hwy. 1, 1.7 mi. N. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park	•	•	•		•	•	•																•
Riverside Campground	Hwy. 1, 1.6 mi. N. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park	•	•	•		•	•	•																•
Fernwood Park Campground	Hwy. 1, .7 mi. N. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park	•	•	•		•	•	•																•

**POINT LOBOS STATE RESERVE:** 1,276 acres of headlands with spectacular views of the coast, sandy coves, beaches and tidepools. Monterey cypress groves and more than 300 plant species and 250 bird and animal species. Numerous sea lions can be seen on the rocks offshore at Sea Lion Point; Bird Island is a sanctuary for thousands of birds. Sea otters can frequently be seen from the bluffs. Interpretive center called Whaler's Cabin contains artifacts from whaling days. Open 11 AM-5 PM. Hiking trails and picnic areas. Swimming in China Cove. Diving access in Whaler's and Bluefish Coves by permit only. No dogs. Admission fee. Open 9 AM-5 PM winter; 9 AM-7 PM summer. Information: (831) 624-4909 or see [www.pt-lobos.parks.state.ca.us/](http://www.pt-lobos.parks.state.ca.us/)

*Numerous paved and unpaved highway pull-outs with scenic views are located on Hwy. 1 in Big Sur. These include: Abalone Cove Vista Point at Kasler Point; Notley's Landing just south of Palo Colorado Creek; a turn-out just south of Rocky Creek Bridge; Vista Point, south of Bixby Landing; Hurricane Point, one mile south of Bixby Landing, a paved turn-out just south of Partington Cove; Anderson Landing just south of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park; a vista point north of Lucia; and a vista point at Willow Creek Bridge.*

**GARRAPATA STATE PARK:** The park has two miles of beach front including the outstanding coastal headlands at Soberanes Point. The 2,879-acre park offers diverse coastal vegetation with trails leading from ocean beaches into dense redwood groves. Sea lions, harbor seals and sea otters frequent the coastal waters and California gray whales pass close by during their yearly migration. Offshore, the California Sea Otter Game Refuge extends along the entire Big Sur Coast south into San Luis Obispo County. Do not disturb the otters. Hazardous cliffs. Leashed dogs allowed on beach only. Roadside parking; outhouses.

East of Highway 1 are the Soberanes Canyon Trail and the Rocky Ridge Trail which form a four mile loop through the redwoods and across the ridge with sweeping views; approximately 1850 feet of elevation gain. Additional lateral trails. Information: (831) 624-4909.

**BIXBY CREEK BRIDGE:** A major landmark of the Big Sur Coast, and one of the world's longest concrete arch span bridges, 260 feet high and over 700 feet long, with highway pull-outs on both sides and observation alcoves on the bridge itself; spectacular view.

**POINT SUR STATE HISTORIC PARK:** 2 ½ hour walking tour of Point Sur Lighthouse every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM. First come, first served. Tour involves ½ mile walk each way. Fees charged. No food, drinks, or dogs. Parking off Highway 1 in front of the light station; no motorhomes or campers. For summer schedule or moonlight tour information, call: (831) 625-4419 or see [www.lighthouse-pointsur-ca.org](http://www.lighthouse-pointsur-ca.org).

**ANDREW MOLERA STATE PARK:** 4,749 acres of flatland, meadows, mountains, and sandy beach west of Hwy. 1. Day-use areas and walk-in campground .3 mile from the dirt parking lot. Firepits and chemical toilets available; fee charged for camping. Three-night limit. The Big Sur River flows through the park and empties into the ocean, forming a shallow lagoon that is a bird sanctuary; hiking trails lead to the beach adjacent to the lagoon and to the scenic ridgetop to the south where various loops return the hiker to the flood plain. For information, call: (831) 667-2315.

**BIG SUR CAMPGROUND:** Privately owned, with sites in the redwoods and along the Big Sur River; cabins, tent rentals, water and electric hook-ups, picnic tables, laundry, store, and playground. Fee charged. Open all year, reservations accepted. Contact: Highway 1, Big Sur 93920; (831) 667-2322.

**RIVERSIDE CAMPGROUND:** Privately owned, with 46 campsites in the redwoods and along the Big Sur River; facilities include cabins, picnic tables, playground, laundry, and a swinging footbridge over the river. Tent sites and R.V. sites. Fee charged. Information: P.O. Box 3, Big Sur 93920; (831) 667-2414.

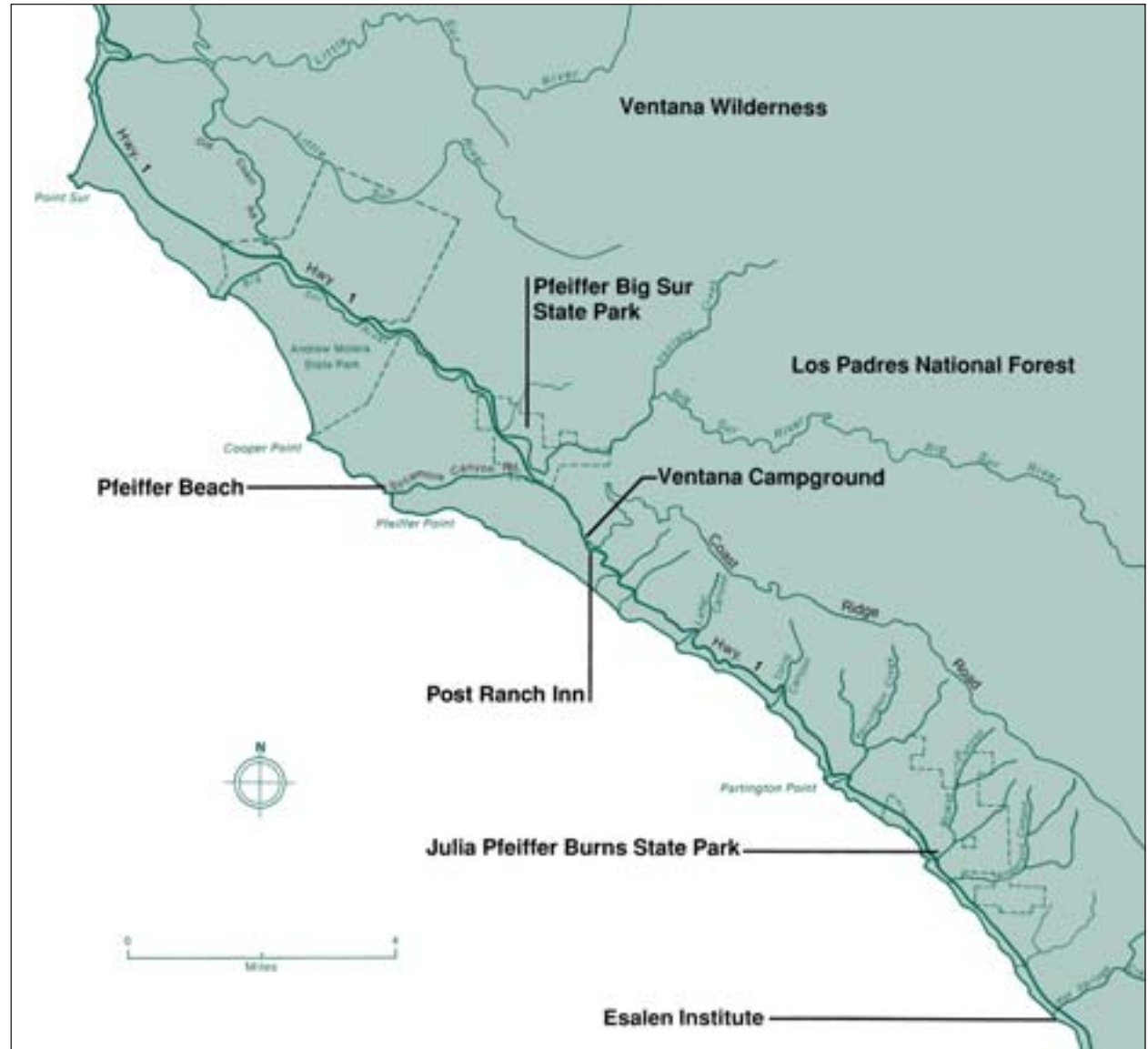
**FERNWOOD PARK CAMPGROUND:** Privately owned, with sites in the redwoods and along the Big Sur River; camping and day use fees. Firewood for sale. Restaurant, bar, motel, and grocery store. For information, call: (831) 667-2422.



Andrew Molera State Park



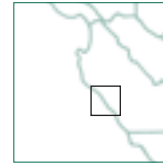
Pfeiffer-Big Sur State Park





# Monterey County

## BIG SUR



NAME	LOCATION	FACILITIES													ENVIRONMENT							
		Entrance/Parking Fee	Parking	Restrooms	Lifeguard	Campground	Showers	Firepits	Stairs to Beach	Path to Beach	Bike Path	Hiking Trail	Facilities for Disabled	Fishing	Equestrian Trail	Sandy Beach	Dunes	Rocky Shore	Upland from Beach	Stream Corridor	Bluff	Wetland
Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park	E. of Hwy. 1, 26 mi. S. of Carmel, Big Sur	•	•	•		•	•	•							•	•	•	•				
Los Padres National Forest/Ventana Wilderness	Big Sur Coast		•	•		•	•			•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		
Pfeiffer Beach	W. of Hwy. 1, end of Sycamore Canyon Rd., Big Sur	•	•	•									•		•	•		•	•			
Ventana Campground	Hwy. 1, 2.4 mi. S. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Big Sur	•	•	•		•	•	•										•	•			
Post Ranch Inn	W. of Hwy. 1, 2.4 mi. S. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Big Sur		•										•					•				
Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park	E. and W. of Hwy. 1, 11 mi. S. of Big Sur State Park, Big Sur	•	•	•		•				•		•	•					•	•	•		
Esalen Institute	W. of Hwy. 1, 14.6 mi. S. of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park	•	•	•														•		•		



Pfeiffer Beach

**PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK:** 821 acres in the redwoods and along the Big Sur River. Facilities include 218 campsites (each with a stove and picnic table), a bicycle camp area, group camp, hiking trails, store, and laundry; no trailer hookups. Some campsites are wheelchair accessible. Swimming in the river; abundant wildlife. Popular spots along the trails include Pfeiffer Falls and the Gorge. Guided walks and campfire programs in the summer.

The park is open all year; for reservations, call: 1-800-444-7275. Seven-day camping limit June 1-Sept. 30. Fee charged for overnight and day use. Information: (831) 667-2315. The Big Sur Lodge has rooms and cabins, swimming pool and sauna, restaurant, and gift shop. Call: 1-800-424-4787 or (831) 667-2171.

**LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST/VENTANA WILDERNESS:** The National Forest, which consists of two sections, comprises almost two million acres and extends into five counties, with 1,750 miles of recreational trails. The smaller section is in Monterey County and includes part of the Big Sur Mountains and the Santa Lucia Mountains. For general information on the National Forest, call: (805) 968-6640.

The 230,000 acre Ventana Wilderness, within the forest, has a system of trails through woodlands and canyons. California campfire permit required during the fire season, approximately May-October. Permits and information from the Monterey District Rangers Office: U.S. Forest Service, 406 S. Mildred St., King City 93930; for information, call: (831) 385-5434 or see [www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres/](http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres/)

There are three places along the coast where information, maps and permits can be obtained, and where trails lead into the National Forest. Big Sur Station is 1 mile south of the main entrance to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. Permits can also be obtained at Botcher's Gap several miles inland of Highway 1 on Palo Colorado Road which is approximately 10 miles south of Carmel. The Pacific Valley Forest Station is 33 miles south of the Big Sur Valley.

**PFEIFFER BEACH:** A unit of Los Padres National Forest. A beautiful white sandy beach at the end of sycamore Canyon Rd., which is the second right hand turn off Hwy. 1 south of Big Sur State Park. The turn-off,

which is one mile from the State Park entrance, is a sharp right turn downhill. The two mile road to the beach is very narrow and winding. Private property is adjacent; do not trespass.

The beach is at the end of a sandy trail leading from the parking lot through cypress trees, and is surrounded by steep cliffs, sea stacks, and sea caves. Spectacular waves crash through natural arches in the rocks. Sycamore Creek empties onto the beach into a small lagoon. Hazardous surf, gusty winds. Fires are prohibited. Beach open 6 AM-sundown. Wheelchair-accessible restrooms. Fee charged for day use. Information: (831) 385-5434.

**VENTANA CAMPGROUND:** Privately owned 80 site campground in the redwoods. Fee charged. Reservations recommended; arrive before 6 PM. Restaurant, bar and gift shop up the hill at the renowned Ventana Inn. Information: (831) 667-2712.

**POST RANCH INN:** Private resort on ridge west of Hwy. 1; entrance opposite Ventana Campground. Loop trail through upland forest open to public on a permit basis; obtain pass at entry kiosk.

**JULIA PFEIFFER BURNS STATE PARK:** 2,405 acres with wooded hiking trails and picnic tables; the restrooms are wheelchair accessible. A paved footpath leads to a spectacular overlook of McWay Waterfall cascading 80 feet into the ocean near Saddle Rock; another trail leads to a picnic area near McWay Creek. Two environmental campsites available by reservation, call: 1-800-444-7275. Day use and camping fees. Park closes at sunset. Information: (831) 667-2315.

Partington Cove is accessible by a trail on the west side of Hwy. 1, 1.8 miles north of the park entrance; look for an iron gate. The trail leads across Partington Creek via a wooden footbridge and through a 200-foot long tunnel cut into the cliff.

**ESALEN INSTITUTE:** This retreat was an early center for the "human potential" movement. Classes and workshops are offered on education, religion, philosophy, and the physical and behavioral sciences. Information: (831) 667-3000. Esalen's hot springs are open to the public 1:00 AM -3:00 AM Monday-Saturday mornings; fee charged; reservation required, call: (831) 667-3047.

## Southern Sea Otter

The southern sea otter, *Enhydra lutris nereis*, one of the most interesting of California's marine mammals, can be found off the coast between Santa Cruz and Avila Beach in San Luis Obispo County. The sea otter is a member of the weasel family; adult males measure up to 4-1/2 feet long and weigh up to 85 lbs., while females are somewhat shorter and lighter. Otters have dense fur ranging in color from black to dark red, and short front paws used primarily for feeding and grooming; hind feet are webbed and used as flippers for swimming.

Like primates, otters use tools in their daily routines. For example, an otter will dive beneath the water's surface and, with its paws, use a rock to remove shellfish from the sea bottom; once it has surfaced, the otter floats on its back, positions its catch on its chest, and hammers the shell until edible portions are accessible.

The sea otters' diet varies according to environment and the length of time they have stayed in an area. Where kelp beds are present, otters will float in the beds and search for crabs and snails; in coastal areas with sandy beaches, otters will come ashore and forage for crabs and clams. When otters first move into an area, their preferred diet consists primarily of abalone, sea urchins, and crabs if the area is rocky, and clams and crabs in sandy locations. As the population increases and becomes established, abalone and sea urchins become less abundant, and crabs become the otters' chief food source; otters may also feed on other marine species such as squid, mussels, limpets, and sea stars.

To compensate for the lack of blubber that insulates most marine mammals, the average otter consumes food that equals up to 25% of its body weight daily. An otter consumes 2.5 tons of food during a single year; this large quantity of food fuels its metabolism and maintains proper body temperature. Although its fur is not a very efficient insulator in the water, the otter meticulously grooms it to provide maximum warming; part of the grooming process includes rolling vigorously in the water to trap air bubbles in the fur.

The hunters' desire for the otter's thick, attractive fur nearly resulted in the animal's extinction. Although native North

Americans hunted the otter from Alaska to southern California for many years, large-scale hunting did not occur until the mid-18th century. Between 1741 and 1911, Russian, American, French, and British fur traders hunted marine mammals off the western coast of the United States and the otter population declined to a near extinct level. In 1911 the Fur Seal Treaty was signed and included provisions to protect the sea otters; subsequently, a number of state and national laws providing for marine mammal protection were enacted. Today, most of the southern sea otters live within the California Sea Otter Game Refuge, a protected habitat area between the Carmel River in Monterey County and Santa Rosa Creek in San Luis Obispo County.

Spotting sea otters in offshore waters can be difficult because otters often remain in kelp beds, and the kelp floats resemble otter heads. One of the best times to observe otters is during feeding times, usually in the early morning and late afternoon. Sea gulls hovering above kelp beds are a good indicator of an otter's presence, as gulls often wait above the beds to feed on scraps left by otters. With binoculars one can observe the otters feeding and grooming themselves and their young; at times it is even possible to hear otters pounding on shells with rocks and pups crying out for their mothers.

Sea otters are protected by state and federal law; it is illegal to take or even to temporarily possess a sea otter. Any person finding a dead, sick, or wounded otter or an apparently abandoned otter pup should not touch the animal but should immediately notify the California Department of Fish and Game at (805) 772-1135 or the Marine Mammal Center at (415) 289-7325.



