Exploring San Miguel Island

Welcome to San Miguel Island, one of five islands in Channel Islands National Park. This is your island. It is also your responsibility. Please take a moment to read this bulletin and learn what you can do to take care of San Miguel. This information and the map on the back will show you what you can see and do here on San Miguel.

About the Island

San Miguel is the home of pristine tidepools, rare plants, and the strange caliche forest. Four species of seals and sea lions come here to breed and give birth. For 10,000 years the island was home to the seagoing Chumash people. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo set foot here in 1542 as the first European to explore the California coast. For 100 years the island was a sheep ranch and after that it was used by the military. San Miguel is still owned by the Navy, but it is managed under agreement by the National Park Service. In 1980 it was designated part of Channel Islands National Park.

Access Permit Required

A permit (including liability waiver) is required to visit and hike on the island. They may be obtained at concessioner offices and on the island.

Many parts of San Miguel are closed to protect wildlife, fragile plants, and geological features. Several areas, however, are open for you to explore on your own. Others are open to you when accompanied by a park ranger.

On your own you may explore the Cuyler Harbor beach, Cabrillo monument, and the Lester ranch site.

The Nidever Canyon trail will take you to the ranch site, monument and ranger station. The trail begins at the top of the dune above Gull Rock. It climbs along the east wall of the canyon.

Contacting a Ranger

To see other parts of the island, such as Point Bennett or the caliche forest, you must go with a ranger.

The San Miguel ranger can be contacted on Marine Radio Channel 16. You can also arrange a hike with the ranger through park headquarters at (805) 658-5730.

Island Rules

Everything is protected. Do not collect anything.

San Miguel Island is open only when National Park Service personnel are on the island.

Access permit (including liability waiver) is required.

No pets are allowed on shore.

No smoking or fires.

Take your trash off the island with you.

Hikers must stay on trails.

Hikers must be escorted except where indicated on this map.

California State fishing regulations apply. No fishing in marine reserves.

Safety

The island was a former bombing range and there are possible unexploded ordnance. Do not disturb any munitions that you may find on or off shore. It is extremely dangerous and may detonate at any time. Report its location to a ranger, who will have it removed by qualified personnel.

Use caution when crossing the rockfall along the beach.

The Nidever Canyon trail is steep and slippery. Watch your step.

Hantavirus has been found in deer mouse populations on San Miguel. This is a potentially fatal disease and some basic precautions should be taken: avoid contact with rodents; do not feed wild animals; keep food and drink in rodent-proof containers. For more information, please see the bulletin board in the campground.

Carry plenty of water and drink it.

Hikers should never hike alone—use the buddy system.

Richardson
Rock
Marine
Reserve

No Commercial or
Recreational Fishing Allowed

Point
Bennett

Cuba
Wreck

Castle
Rock

Boating prohibited within 300 yards
of shore from Castle Rock to Judith
Rock from Apr. 30 to Oct. 1 and
Dec.15 to Mar. 15. No boating within
100 yards of shore year-round.

No Commercial or
Recreational Fishing Allowed

Judith
Rock
Marine
Reserve

Adams
Cove

Judith
Rock

Tyler
Bight

Judith

Research
Station

Otter
Harbor

Simonton Cove

Lester Point

Harris
Point

Harris Point Marine Reserve
No Commercial or Recreational Fishing Allowed

N

Green Mountain
817 ft
+

Caliche
Forest

San
Miguel Hill
831 ft
+

Crook
Point

Palm
Trees

Judge Rock

Gull Rock

Cabrillo Monument

Lester Ranch site

Cuyler
Harbor

Prince
Island

Bay Point

Cardwell
Point

0
0

2 km

2 mi

*To avoid disturbing sensitive seals, sea lions, and
seabirds, please stay away from the shoreline where
you see them congregate.

*Refer to the National Marine Sanctuary's *Protecting
Your Channel Islands* brochure for more information
on marine reserves.

Using This Map

This map is your guide
to the open areas on San
Miguel Island. The dashed
lines mark the trails and
sections of beach that you
may travel on your own
with an access permit.

- On the beach, you
may walk to either end
of the beach to where
the sand runs into the
rock.

- If seals are present
on the beach, do not
approach or disturb
them.

- The distance from
the palm trees to the
campground is about
one mile.

- Pit toilets are available
at both the ranger
station and the
campground.

- There is no drinking
water on the island.

- Landing is only
permitted on the
beach at Cuyler
Harbor.

- Only the unshaded
portion of Cuyler
Harbor (outside of
the marine reserve) is
open to fishing.