Our Mission
The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park office at (805) 772-7434. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact interp@parks.ca.gov.

The pristine and diverse beauty of Harmony Headlands is reflected in its coastal prairie grasses, its wildflower meadows, and its dramatic coastline—all teeming with life.

Harmony Headlands
State Park
4500 Highway 1
Cayucos, CA 93430
(805) 772-7434

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ranching until the mid-1860s. In 1883, the ranch was acquired by Robert Logan, who in 1901 sold it to Joseph Righetti, a dairyman. In 1912, Righetti sold the property to Armando Storni. The Storni family operated a dairy until the mid-1960s.

Chinese Seaweed Harvesting
Between 1890 and the mid-1960s, Chinese immigrants harvested seaweed along the San Luis Obispo County coast. They burned competing species of seaweed from rocks in the intertidal zone to allow the favored species, Ulva or sea lettuce, to thrive. The seaweed was harvested, dried and shipped to China by way of San Francisco.

Becoming a State Park
Private developers eventually bought the Stormi Ranch and secured permits to construct up to 12 ridge-top homes overlooking the ocean. In 2003 before any houses were built, the State Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, State Parks, and the Coastal Commission together funded the purchase of the 750-acre ranch with $17 million in voter-approved park bonds. In coordination with the American Land Conservancy, property title was passed to California State Parks to preserve and protect the land in perpetuity.

NATURAL HISTORY
Habitats
Grasslands—Non-native and native grasslands and coastal scrub are the most common vegetation in the park. The San Luis Obispo morning glory, California buttercups, blue-eyed grass, goldfields, owl's clover, yarrow, coyote bush, and lupine thrive here.

The flat terraces of the bluffs are dominated by native purple and slender needle grass, melic grass, wild rye, and California oatgrass. The steep north- and west-facing bluffs have the largest community of native grasslands and coastal scrub in the park. In spring, wildflowers bloom profusely.
Scrub—Coastal sea bluff scrub—including seaside daisy, California aster, goldenbush, lizard tail, coast buckwheat, and sea pink—grow along the terraces, on bluff faces and in other eroded areas. Some shrubs may be dwarfed by constant wind and salt spray.

Rocky outcrops—Lichen-covered outcrops lie scattered among grasslands and scrub. Ferns, dudleya, Indian paintbrush, miner’s lettuce, golden yarrow, and California sagebrush flourish on outcrops.

Wetlands—In these low places where water accumulates, plants such as sedges, willows, rushes, and aquatic grasses grow in profusion.

Riparian corridors—These waterside areas are home to ferns, willows and cattails.

Ponds—The manmade ponds are fed by rainwater and runoff from surrounding hillsides; they support freshwater marsh habitat with rushes and willows.

Emergent wetlands—These low-lying areas—wet about half the year—are home to such freshwater marsh and wetland plants as sedges and rushes.

Wildlife

Marine mammals are a welcome sight and sound along the intertidal areas. Sky-hunting northern harriers swoop down to seize their favorite meal—meadow voles.

Typical grasslands species include California ground squirrels, brush rabbits, skunks, coyotes, mule deer, several varieties of mice, raccoons, and badgers. The endangered California red-legged frog and the southwestern pond turtle, a species of special concern, live in this area. Black-bellied salamanders, Pacific tree frogs, California alligator lizards, and California king snakes thrive.

Seabirds, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl call this place home. Abundant grasslands and rolling terrain bring plentiful small game to attract peregrine falcons and golden eagles. Among sensitive avian species, see brown pelicans, double-crested cormorants, white-tailed kites, black oystercatchers, long-billed curlews, and Heermann’s gulls.

Climate

Summer is warm and dry with morning fog; winters are cool and wet. Wind and fog keep temperatures moderate. Coastal weather changes often.

RECREATION

Harmony Headlands State Park will entice nature lovers, picnickers, photographers, artists, and bird watchers. From the parking lot, the two-mile Headlands Trail offers panoramic ocean views west to the marine terrace grasslands.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

At this time, there are no accessible features. Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, call the park office or visit http://access.parks.ca.gov.

PLEASE REMEMBER

• Hours are from 6 a.m. to sunset.
• Dogs, horses, and bicycles are not permitted in the park.
• Camping and ground fires are prohibited.
• Please stay on trails and avoid bushes or grasses where ticks are common.
• Please stay away from sensitive wetlands and pond areas, and back away from birds or marine mammals that take notice of you. Please leave tide pool life undisturbed; it is protected by law.
• Dial 911 for emergencies, or call (805) 772-7434 to reach park staff for problems.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

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  750 Hearst Castle Rd., San Simeon 93472
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• Estero Bluffs SP
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This park receives support in part through the Central Coast State Parks Association
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