

Morro Strand

State Beach



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.



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P.O. Box 942896

Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call: (800) 777-0369.

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

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Discover the many states of California.™

Morro Strand State Beach

Yerba Buena and Highway 1

Morro Bay, CA 93442

(805) 772-8812

www.parks.ca.gov/morrostrand

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*Miles of sparkling
dunes at Morro Strand
State Beach hold
expansive views,
coastside camping and
vibrant bird life.*



Miles of windswept sand, sea and dunes at Morro Strand State Beach curve gently from the town of Morro Bay to Cayucos. Two long stretches of beach provide recreation for visitors and habitats for a diverse array of plant and

animal life. Overlooking Estero Bay and iconic Morro Rock, the beach hosts a variety of coastal environments—including strand, dunes, and dune wetland communities.

Morro Strand experiences dry summers, with average temperatures in the low 70s, and wet, cool winters. Coastal fog and wind affect the beach during all seasons.

PARK HISTORY

Native Peoples

Ancestors of the Chumash and Salinan people lived on the California's Central Coast, including the Morro Strand area. Adept at hunting and gathering, they made seasonal use of the vast resources of the Pacific Ocean, today's Morro and Estero Bays, and inland areas

Spaniard Don Gaspar de Portolá's journey to the Central Coast in 1769 was the first European overland expedition to reach the area. Nearby missions San Antonio de Padua and San Luis Obispo de Tolosa were



Shorebirds at low tide

established in 1771 and 1772. Indigenous people moved away from their settlements into the missions, which drastically changed their lives. The native population dwindled from exposure to European diseases and lack of traditional food sources.

The missions were secularized in 1833, and the Mexican government granted that land to Mexican citizens. Four such land grants were made near Morro Bay. The Mexican-American War concluded in 1848, and in 1850 California became one of the United States.

Becoming a State Park

Morro Strand was traditionally known as Morro Beach. Land developer Edward G. Lewis purchased the southern portion in 1916, calling the area the Atascadero Beach or Atascadero Colony. Lewis planned to create a beach community and began selling lots to prospective builders, but only one house was built. Lewis opened the Cloisters Inn and Cottages in 1925, but by the start of the Great Depression, Lewis and his hotel were in financial and legal trouble.

The inn stayed open until the beginning of World War

Beach sand verbena



II; the property was added to the State Park System in 1948, classified as Atascadero Beach. The remaining northern portion of Morro Beach had been acquired by California State Parks in 1932. Atascadero Beach and Morro Beach were combined in 1988 and renamed Morro Strand State Beach.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Like many places in California, Morro Strand State Beach has been greatly impacted by both invasive species and coastal development. Restoration efforts have removed invasive plant material that once blanketed the habitat, returning it to a diverse functioning dune ecosystem.

Nearest the ocean is the coastal strand community. Battered with almost constant wind and waves, the strand has practically no vegetation; kelp, wrack, driftwood, and assorted marine debris accumulate along the shoreline.

Farther back from the strand, several types of dune communities are well established. Those farthest from the harsh conditions of the strand shelter more vegetation and



Long-billed curlew



Campground with views of Morro Rock

animal life, including beach sand verbena, Blochman's leafy daisy, dune scrub, and emergent wetland vegetation. Removing invasive vegetation, such as European beach grass and ice plant, has been a focus of park restoration efforts.

Many shorebird species overwinter along California's Central Coast and can be seen at the strand from mid-summer until early spring. Some, including the federally threatened western snowy plover, stay around all year and nest on the beaches between March 1 and September 30.

Portions of Morro Strand State Beach are fenced and closed either year round or seasonally to protect sensitive habitat, breeding areas, or restoration sites. Please respect the fences and use only designated access points while enjoying the park.



RECREATION

Camping—Camping is only available at the entrance off Yerba Buena Street. More than 70 tent or RV spaces with fire rings are available along the beach.

Restrooms are provided; campers may use the showers at nearby Morro Bay State Park with proof of registration. Hookups for trailers and recreational vehicles, with a maximum length of 40 feet, are available. For current reservation information, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.parks.ca.gov/morrostrand.

Surfing—The windswept stretches of Morro Strand create perfect waves for surfers. Check weather conditions before going.

Picnicking—Picnic tables and barbecue grills are available in the day-use area at the campground entrance. Additional picnic tables, a barbecue grill, and restrooms are available at the Azure Street and 24th Street day-use areas.

Bird Watching—View many diverse species of birds at Morro Strand State Beach. Please avoid marked restricted areas, particularly from March to September, to protect nesting snowy plovers.

Tide Pools—Exposed rocks to the north of Morro Strand campground offer some tide pool viewing opportunities, especially at very low tides. Different types of snail, limpet, sea slug, urchin, anemone, and crab can be found clinging to the rocks or in pools and crevices. Please consult tide tables before exploring to avoid getting stranded. Please look at—but do not touch, disturb, or collect—sensitive tide pool dwellers.

Fishing—Anglers aged 16 and over with a valid California fishing license may fish from shore. Visit www.wildlife.ca.gov/fishing for complete fishing and license information.





ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The area has flat, paved, and unpaved surfaces and sand. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

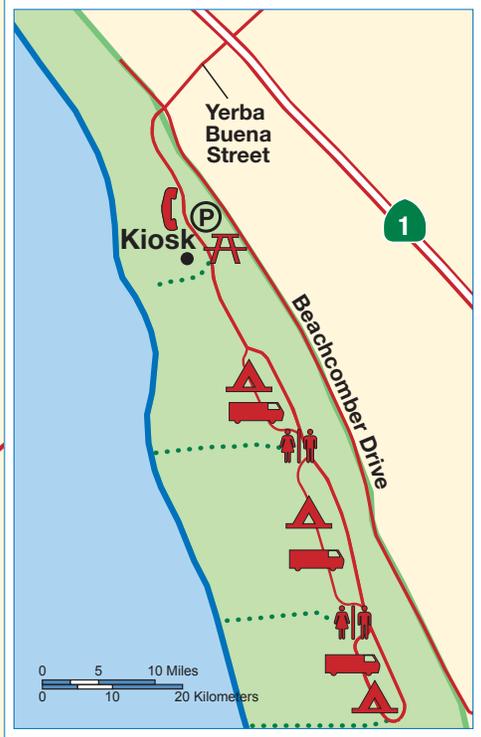
- Morro Bay State Park
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Morro Bay 93442 (805) 772-7434
Museum (805) 772-2694
- Estero Bluffs State Park
Hwy. 1, north of Cayucos 93430
(805) 772-7434

PLEASE REMEMBER

- All natural and cultural features are protected by state law and may not be disturbed or removed.
- Please stay away from posted habitats.
- Except for service animals, dogs are not allowed on the beach. Dogs are permitted on a leash, no more than six feet in length, in campsites and along park roads.
- Kite flying is not permitted from March to September to protect sensitive species.
- Quiet hours are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Varying ocean conditions may become dangerous. Never turn your back on the ocean, and remain aware at all times.

Morro Strand State Beach

This park is supported in part through the Central Coast State Parks Association
 20 State Park Road, Morro Bay, CA 93442
 (805) 772-2694 • www.ccsa.org



Legend

- Major Road
- Paved Road
- Hiking Trail
- Campground
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- RV Camping
- Telephone



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MORRO

STRAND

STATE

BEACH

PACIFIC OCEAN

