

# San Clemente

## 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.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(949) 492-3156**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

#### **CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

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**[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)**

#### **San Clemente State Beach**

**225 Avenida Calafia**

**San Clemente, CA 92672**

**(949) 492-3156**

**[www.parks.ca.gov/sanclemente](http://www.parks.ca.gov/sanclemente)**

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*A dramatic setting  
with sandstone crags,  
invigorating air, and an  
ideal climate entice  
visitors to San Clemente  
State Beach.*



**R**ugged sandstone cliffs tower silently

**above the beach.** Waves alternately lap at the shore and crash onto the sand. Rowdy seabirds seem to be darting and diving for their own amusement as well as for food. Sea lions call out boisterously. Surfers challenge the waves. Evening campfires glow on the bluff tops.

Welcome to San Clemente State Beach. Since 1931, San Clemente has been one of the most popular beaches in California. Midway between Los Angeles and San Diego, the mile-long beach attracts water sports enthusiasts and those seeking respite from the inland heat or nearby metropolitan areas.

“San Clemente, world’s best climate,” the slogan of the adjacent town of San Clemente, also describes San Clemente State Beach. Daytime temperatures are in the 60s and 70s almost year round, while evening temperatures generally hover between the 40s and 50s. Rainfall comes primarily between December and March. In the spring, the beach is often overcast.



*Visitor center*

### **PARK HISTORY**

Prior to its July 1, 1933, dedication ceremony, local residents assisted the State in purchasing 100 acres for a state beach from H.H. Cotton, co-developer of the nearby city of San Clemente. Between 1934 and 1937, under the direction of the National Park Service, members of the Civilian

Conservation Corps (CCC) were based here. CCC enrollees built the infrastructure and the north campground. Rustic rockwork on picnic tables and road gutters are signature CCC features. They also finished converting a Spanish Colonial cottage to a visitor center. During World War II, the U.S. Coast Guard used the park as a logistical and training station.

Despite improvements, the visitor center and campground retain their original flavor.

### **NATURAL HISTORY**

The park’s sandstone bluffs present a visual history of its geology. The bluffs are remnants of marine terraces formed under the ocean eons ago and sculpted by countless

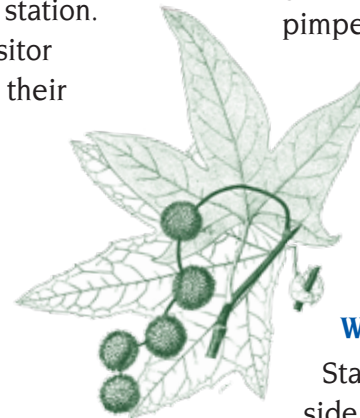


*Riding the surf*

centuries of rain, wind, and sea, punctuated by the occasional cataclysmic flood or storm. The bluffs’ eroded canyon walls look like desert badlands; consequently, they have served as the shooting location for many western movies.

### **PLANT COMMUNITIES**

Coastal sage scrub occupies the undeveloped bluff top and canyon areas. Monterey cypress, toyon or “Christmas berry,” acacia, sycamore, cholla cactus, aleppo pine, coyote brush, and buckwheat grow abundantly. Wild hyacinths, scarlet pimpernel, prickly pear cactus, Mariposa lilies, and California poppies color the park with blooms. San Clemente area species are found in the native rock garden and flowerbed at the campground’s hookup area.



*California sycamore*

### **WILDLIFE**

Stands of eucalyptus trees on the east side of the park provide winter habitat for migratory monarch butterflies. Brush-

covered slopes and ravines hide gray foxes, coyotes, ground squirrels, opossums, Audubon cottontails, raccoons, and striped skunks. Lizards and king and gopher snakes represent the reptile community.

More visible is the avian population—mourning doves, northern mockingbirds, great horned owls, hawks, ravens, and even wild flocks of green Amazon parrots share the skies and trees with an almost infinite variety of shore birds.

Visible at low tide, a rock formation at the park's northern end is home to mussels, sea urchins, sea stars, limpets, and shore crabs. Offshore, California sea lions play and rest on the rocks. In early winter and spring, migrating California gray whales pass by.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The ocean dominates the park's activities. Trails follow two of the scenic ravines that cut through steep sandstone cliffs, providing easy access to the beach from the day-use parking area. Swimming, surfing, paddle boarding, body surfing, snorkeling, and sunbathing are equally popular. While experienced surfers appreciate the cresting surf breaks, the beach also accommodates beginning board riders.

Surf-fishing enthusiasts catch bass, croaker, corbina, and barred perch. In season during high tide, grunion come ashore to lay their eggs in the sand. Grunion may be caught only by hand. A valid California fishing license is required for all anglers age 16

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Rip currents—brownish, river-like waters pushing out to sea from the shore—occur sporadically here. If you are caught in one, do not try to swim against it to shore. Relax and swim parallel to the beach until you reach calm water, then head for shore.
- Do not climb the bluffs! They are unstable and extremely dangerous. The earth crumbles under the weight of people and animals. Stay on the trails.
- Dogs must be on a six-foot leash at all times and must not be left unattended. Keep dogs inside your vehicle or tent during nighttime hours. Noisy or vicious dogs will be removed from the campground. Except for service animals, no dogs are allowed on trails or the beach.
- Vehicles must be parked in legally marked spaces and must remain on the pavement at all times. Day-use and guest vehicles must park in the day-use parking lot.
- Bicycles are not permitted on the dirt trails. Riders under age 18 must wear helmets.
- Alcoholic beverages are permitted only in individual campsites, not on the beach.
- Quiet hours are from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. Sound-producing devices must be off between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 a.m. No noise should travel beyond your campsite.
- Fires are allowed at campsites only in the provided fire ring. No fires are permitted on the beach.
- Collecting of dead wood is prohibited.
- Articles may not be tied, nailed, or hung from trees or brush.
- Do not feed any wild animals or birds.
- Camping reservations are recommended year round. To make group or family campsite reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov/sancclemente](http://www.parks.ca.gov/sancclemente).

and over. For current regulations, see [www.wildlife.ca.gov/fishing](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/fishing).

The Nature Trail and the Butterfly Trail skirt the edge of the park. In summer, park staff conduct campfire programs, Junior Ranger programs, and hikes. Event schedules are posted around the park.

## CAMPING AND PICNICKING

The family campground sits high atop the bluffs. Each of 160 sites has a fire ring and picnic table. Water faucets are nearby. The family campground has 72 RV spots, with electric and water hookups.



Two group-camping areas can each hold 50 people. Each campground has hot showers, flush toilets, and sinks. Group camp #1 holds up to 20 RVs; Group camp #2 takes tent-only campers with a maximum of 10 vehicles.

A picnic area displays sweeping vistas of the Pacific Ocean from bluffs 150 feet above the beach. Two group picnic areas are also available. The visitor center adjoins the 200-space parking area.

### ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

- Restrooms, showers, seven campsites, the visitor center, the Butterfly and Multi-Use Trails, and picnic sites near parking are accessible. Assistance may be needed on the steep trails to the beach.
- Accessibility in state parks is continually improving. For recent updates, visit [www.access.parks.ca.gov](http://www.access.parks.ca.gov).

### NEARBY STATE PARKS

- San Onofre State Beach  
three miles south of San Clemente off I-5  
(Basilone Road exit)  
(949) 492-4872 / 492-0802
- Doheny State Beach  
25300 Dana Point Harbor Drive  
Dana Point 92629  
(949) 496-6171 / 492-0802

This park receives support in part through a nonprofit organization. For information, contact the San Onofre Foundation  
3030 Avenida del Presidente  
San Clemente, CA 92672 (949) 366-8599  
[www.sanonfreparksfoundation.org](http://www.sanonfreparksfoundation.org)



*Enjoying the ocean*

# San Clemente State Beach



0 100 200 Feet  
0 50 100 Meters



## Legend

- Paved Road
- Trail: Hike
- Trail: Accessible
- Railroad
- Fence
- Accessible Feature
- Campfire Center
- Campground
- Campground: Group
- Campground: RV
- RV Sanitation Station
- Ranger Station
- Picnic Area: Group
- Picnic Area
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Showers

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