



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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## Elephant Seal Guided Walks Resume at Año Nuevo State Park

*PESCADERO, Calif.* — Reservations for guided seal tours at [Año Nuevo State Park](#) go on sale October 8 for school groups and October 20 for the public. Guided walks to see the elephant seals will begin this year on December 15, 2016, and continue through March 31, 2017.

Año Nuevo State Park is home to one of the largest mainland Northern Elephant Seal colonies in the world. Adult seals begin arriving on the beaches by early-December. Bulls weighing up to 5,000 pounds engage in battles for breeding access to the females. Pregnant females come ashore to have pups beginning in mid-December, with births reaching a peak by late January. Mothers nurse their pups for about a month before weaning them, mating, and departing back to sea. Birthing and mating activity is constant from January through February. During March, hundreds of weaned pups remain behind to rest in the dunes and learn to swim in the tide pools.

State Park Volunteer Docents lead visitors among the huge marine mammals and explain both the story of the elephant seals and the natural and cultural history of the area. Reservations are recommended for these popular guided walks including Public Seal Walks, School Group Walks and Equal Access Guided Walks. No public walks will be held on Christmas Day (December 25) or during Seal Adventure (Saturday, January 28 and Sunday, January 29.)

There are four tour options include:

- **Public Seal Walks:** Are offered daily for families, individuals, or groups.

These popular three-mile moderate hikes over rolling sand dunes and sloping terrain last about 2 1/2 hours. Visitors should prepare for an outdoor hiking adventure that may include high winds, heavy rains, and cold temperatures. Recommended clothing includes hooded rain gear, layered clothing, and sturdy walking shoes. For safety



reasons, use of umbrellas and baby strollers are not permitted on the walks. Food and beverages are not sold at the park, but picnic tables are available for use before or after guided walks. It is advisable to bring bottled drinking water on the tour.

Guided Walks are conducted rain or shine. The first guided walk of every day will begin at approximately 8:45 a.m. and the last walk at 2:45 p.m. Each walk will begin on time; visitors who are late will forfeit their reservations.

Public Guided Walk tickets cost \$7.00 per person. Children three and under are free. Reservations can be made up to 56 days in advance, through ReserveAmerica at 1-800-444-4445 or online at [www.parks.ca.gov/anonuevo](http://www.parks.ca.gov/anonuevo).

- **School Group Walks:** Elephant Seal Walks for schools are offered Monday through Friday mornings for grades one through 12. School Group tickets cost \$21.00 each and allow entry for up to 20 students with two adult chaperones. One chaperone is required for every 10 youths, 17 years or under. There is no parking fee for school groups that arrive by school bus or individual cars.

Reservations can be made through ReserveAmerica at 1-800-444-4445. School Group Walk reservations may be made beginning at 9am on Saturday, October 8, 2016, for any dates during the season. There is a limit of four School Group Walk tickets per call.

- **Equal Access Guided Walks:** Individuals with accessibility needs may make reservations for special Equal Access Guided Walks. Seal walks are available on an accessible boardwalk for visitors needing mobility assistance. These tours take place on Fridays, weekends, and select holidays from mid-December through mid-March. The cost is \$7.00 per person. Reservations are required. For reservations and information email [Año.EqualAccess@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Año.EqualAccess@parks.ca.gov) starting November 1, or call (650) 879-2033.
- **Seal Adventure Weekend - Saturday and Sunday, January 28 and 29, 2017:** The nonprofit Coastside State Parks Association (CSPA) and California State Parks will host Seal Adventure Weekend, a special fundraising event to support educational and interpretive programs at Año Nuevo State Park and other California State Parks along the San Mateo coast.

For one weekend only, visitors will have extraordinary access to linger for an entire morning (8:30 a.m.-1 2:00 p.m.) or afternoon (1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.) to view the elephant seals at the peak of the breeding season. This is a rare opportunity, one that can be enjoyed by everyone—from families to avid wildlife photographers.

Seal Adventure tickets will be available for sale online ([www.CoastsideStateParks.org](http://www.CoastsideStateParks.org)) starting in early November for CSPA members and late November for the general public. Tickets are \$60 per person. The number of tickets is limited; only 100 visitors will be allowed to register for each half-day.



CSPA is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit and the official cooperating association for California State Parks on the coast of San Mateo County. All money from ticket sales will be used to support programs and projects at Año Nuevo and other local State Parks. The cost of the tickets is a donation to CSPA and is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

- **Park Location** Año Nuevo State Park is located west of Highway 1, between the cities of Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay, approximately a 1½ hour drive south from San Francisco. Day use parking is \$10.00 per car.

For more information on the elephant seals, the guided walk program and other features of the Park, dial the Park at (650) 879-2025 or (650) 879-0227 for recorded information. Information can also be found online at [www.parks.ca.gov/anonuevo](http://www.parks.ca.gov/anonuevo).

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