



Group Tours

Group tours are a great way to introduce your classroom or other large, organized group to the State Beach. To schedule a beach program with State Parks staff, contact the Asilomar State Beach Office: (831) 646-6443.

Our Mission

The mission of the 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. This publication is available in alternate formats by request, and is also available in pdf format on the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds website: www.parks.ca.gov/Asilomar

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Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds
A Unit of California State Parks

Asilomar Coast Trail

A Self Guided Tour

Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds



Welcome to Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds - where every day is a walk in the park! This guide highlights some of the interesting features of the Asilomar Coast Trail. Many of these features can be seen during your walk. Two Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary interpretive signs are located alongside the trail

Sea Otter



with information about the marine sanctuary. Sea lions, seals, and sea otters are some of the marine mammals frequently seen resting on rocks or feeding in the coves adjacent to the trail.

Starting Out

You can begin your walk from any location along the Coast Trail. The trail is fairly level; comfortable walking shoes are recommended. The trail distance is one mile, one way, from the Conference Grounds (2 miles round-trip). Allow approximately 60 minutes to complete the Coast Trail walk (round trip). Free parking is available in designated spaces located off the shoulder of Sunset Drive.

The Asilomar Coast Trail is accessible to all visitors, including those with special needs. Please refer to the map for accessible parking adjacent to

wheelchair accessible portions of the trail. An all-terrain beach wheelchair is available for visitors with mobility limitations by contacting the Asilomar Conference Grounds front desk prior to your visit: (831) 372-8016.



Preserve and Protect

As you explore, keep in mind that each form of marine life, from sea birds to the smallest invertebrates, finds its own place in the natural web of life. You have the privilege of observing these natural processes when you do not interfere or disturb the wildlife. Protect this precious coastal habitat by staying on designated trails, and leaving all tide pools, sandy coves and rocky outcroppings exactly as you find them. Your help is necessary so future visitors may also enjoy Asilomar's beauty.

Trail Guidelines

- Leave all wildlife as found. No collecting, disturbing or injuring plants, animals, shells from the beach, tide pools, rocks and trail.
- No collecting or trampling in Native American midden sites.
- Birds are threatened by dogs running off-leash - dogs are viewed as predators. Help shorebirds feel safe by keeping dogs on leash.

Monterey Peninsula Marine Protected Area

Asilomar State Beach is one of several Monterey marine protected areas that are located throughout the California coast. Fishing regulations in these areas



allow marine species a protected place to thrive. Marine protected areas are like living laboratories - many marine species like birds, fish, invertebrates and plants are indicators of ocean conditions in those specific areas.

Scientists studying these protected areas between 2010 and 2015 have found increasing ocean temperatures, shrinking kelp forests, sea-star 'wasting syndrome'. Scientists also discovered that of the more than half-million seabirds who live along the Northern California coast, 99% breed adjacent to marine protected areas.¹

Rock of Ages

Santa Lucia granodiorite, the rock forming this coastal shoreline, is more than 100 million years old. Formed from a molten mass deep in the earth, this dense, hard rock is comprised of large rectangular crystals of orthoclase feldspar, gray translucent quartz, creamy plagioclase feldspar and black biotite mica. It was

¹Findings by the non-profit California Ocean Science Trust



Santa Lucia granodiorite

exposed through massive uplifts and transported here by the action of plate tectonics. The fissures you see were most likely caused by this movement. These cracks weaken the integrity of the rocks, making them more vulnerable to the forces of erosion.

Coastal Bluff Restoration

Re-establishing native vegetation washed away by high winter surf is critical for protecting the sandy soil from wind erosion and human impacts. Park staff efforts in trail maintenance and planting are ongoing. Hardy native plants survive on the coastal bluffs by overcoming sand piling up, salt-spray coating their leaves and stems, and the sun drying out needed moisture. The coastal environment

Black Legless Lizard



provides habitat for rare plants and animals, including Tidestrom's lupine, Monterey spine flower, and the black legless lizard.

Shell Middens

Rumsien Indians used the coastal areas of the Monterey Bay for camping and hunting sites prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 1700s. They fished, gathered shellfish, and hunted marine and land mammals and birds. Remnants of these old camp

Rumsien shell midden



Yellow Sand Verbena

sites - "middens" - can be seen in the bluff face. The dark soil with bits of broken shell and rocks from their middens provide archaeologists with information about their diet and technology and how these changed through time.

A Balance of Erosion & Sand Deposit

The beach changes radically with the seasons. Severe winter storms generate large waves that sweep sand from the shoreline and into the ocean, where it remains as sandbars in the water just offshore. When spring arrives, gentler waves deposit this sand back on the beach. The late spring winds blow the sand farther inland where it is caught by plants in the first set of dunes called foredunes. Plants, such as yellow sand verbena, beach sagewort and beach bur, hold the blowing sand, thereby adding to the height of the dunes. With a large supply of sand held in the foredunes, a balance between sand depositing and beach erosion can be maintained over time.

Never Turn Your Back to the Ocean

Beware the grip of the rip!! When venturing near the sandy coves and tide pools below the Coast Trail, remember that ocean waves are unpredictable and can sweep you off the rocks. Cold water and rip currents present additional danger - never turn your back to the ocean!