

Sonoma Coast State Beach



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation 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.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

MIKE CHRISMAN
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN
Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS For information call:
(800) 777-0369
P. O. Box 942896 (916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.
Sacramento, CA 711, TTY relay service
94296-0001

www.parks.ca.gov

Sonoma Coast State Beach
Bodega Bay, CA 94923
(707) 875-3483 or (707) 865-2391

*This awe-inspiring shoreline
offers a wealth of opportunities
for wholesome fun. Whether
you like to stroll along the beach,
fish, sunbathe, or settle down
for a family picnic, you will
be able to create many
unforgettable moments.*



Imagine broad, sandy beaches, secluded coves, rugged headlands, natural arches, a craggy coastline with fertile tide pools and offshore reefs—this is Sonoma Coast State Beach, one of California's most scenic attractions. A series of beaches separated by rocky bluffs, Sonoma Coast has 16 miles of some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world. From Bodega Head to Vista Point near the coastal town of Jenner, this awe-inspiring shoreline offers a wealth of opportunities for wholesome fun. Whether you like to stroll along the beach, fish, sunbathe, or settle down for a family picnic, you will be able to create many unforgettable moments along this stretch of Highway 1.

The weather here is often a chilly combination of wind and fog. During the summer months, the morning fog usually burns off to create pleasant, sunny afternoons. Even during the summer, however, visitors are wise to dress for the possibility of wet, cold and windy north coast weather.

NATIVE AMERICANS

The dominant native groups in this area were the Pomo and Coast Miwok, whose presence dates back about 3,000 years. Pomo territory once encompassed much of today's Mendocino, Lake and Sonoma counties. Farther south, the Coast Miwok occupied part of Sonoma County and what is now Marin County. These groups built seasonal villages of redwood bark houses along rivers and streams and near what is now Bodega Bay. For food the native people hunted large and small game, caught fish and shellfish, and gathered

acorns and various seeds. Both groups were accomplished basket makers. The Russian and Aleutian fur trappers who arrived in the area in the early 1800s may have been the Pomo and Miwok people's first contact with non-natives.

The Pomo and the Miwok were among several native groups who actively resisted the servitude forced on them, first by the Russian trappers, and later by Spanish missionaries and hordes of gold seekers. Their resistance was largely unorganized, usually taking the form of sabotage, random attacks or flight into the surrounding countryside. However, within a generation or two, direct conflict and exposure to European diseases nearly decimated them. Today Pomo and Miwok descendents still occupy parts of these ancestral lands, keeping alive the old ways and passing them on to the next generation.

PLANT COMMUNITIES

The bluffs, slopes and dunes that frame the many beaches support a hardy ground cover of native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. In the spring these areas are particularly beautiful, with displays of yellow and blue lupine, sea pink, Indian paintbrush, western wallflower, sea fig, verbena and dozens of other species of native wildflowers.

In 1951 a program was begun to stabilize the drifting sand and keep it from filling Bodega Bay. The dunes between the bay and Salmon Creek were planted with specialized grasses, including European beach grass, a species used to protect dikes in the Netherlands.

WILDLIFE

Many types of animals make their homes in this lush coastal environment. A lucky visitor might catch a glimpse of raccoons, rabbits, black-tailed deer, skunks, squirrels, or, on rare occasions, elusive gray foxes or badgers. The Sonoma Coast is also rich in bird life, with some 300 identified species. The many shore birds and other waterfowl in the area include willets, godwits, gulls, cormorants, pelicans, coots and many species of ducks. Among the land birds thriving here are quail, ravens, wrens, hawks, owls and swallows.

Whales—From December through April, volunteers assist visitors at Bodega Head in viewing the annual gray whale migration from Alaska to Baja California and back.

Seals—The Sonoma Coast, especially the mouth of the Russian River, is home to hundreds of harbor seals. From March through June, seal pups are born, unable to swim and defenseless against predators when left alone. Solitary pups have neither been abandoned nor are they ill—their mothers are feeding offshore. People who approach the pregnant females and newborn pups too closely are considered a serious threat. The seemingly tame seals frighten easily, and—like all wild animals—can inflict serious bites. Do not touch any of the pups, and keep your distance from any beached seal.

Tide pool creatures—Please do not disturb the life in the tide pools. Even the simple act of turning over a rock and exposing the

invertebrates to the sun or air can destroy them. These delicate animals usually die after being removed from their habitat. State law protects many species—check with park rangers and lifeguards, or consult the latest sport fishing regulations for information on licensing, species, season, size and bag limit.

ACTIVITIES

Fishing—The ocean, bay and river frontage of the Sonoma coast are an angler's paradise. Sport fishing species include rockfish, perch, salmon, steelhead and smelt, as well as red abalone, mussels and cockles. A valid California sport fishing license is required.

Picnicking—At Bodega Head, Bodega Dunes, Rock Point, Duncans Landing, Wright's Beach and Goat Rock Beach, picnic tables and wide stretches of sandy beach entice visitors to stop and watch the surf pound against the rugged coastline. Most day-use areas have restroom facilities nearby.

Camping—Wright's Beach Campground has 30 developed sites near the beach. No shower facilities are available. At Bodega Dunes Campground, 98 developed sites have restrooms, a campfire center, hot pay showers and a RV sanitation station. Advance reservations are advised. From June through September, camping stays are limited to 10 consecutive days and a total of 30 days annually. To reserve campsites at Sonoma Coast State Beach, call (800) 444-7275. You may make reservations as much

as seven months or as little as 48 hours in advance using your Visa®, Discover® or MasterCard®, or by mail. Reservations can also be made online at www.reserveamerica.com. For general state park information, call (916) 653-6995.

Environmental Camping—Pomo Canyon and Willow Creek environmental campgrounds do not require reservations. Both parking areas are located about 50 to 300 yards from the campsites. To reach them take Highway 1 about 8 miles north of Bodega Bay, turn right on Willow Creek Road, and follow the signs. If you are traveling on Highway 116, turn left onto Highway 1, cross the bridge over the Russian River, and turn left onto Willow Creek Road. The Willow Creek Campground is about one-half mile east of Highway 1 on Willow Creek Road. Turn left on the dirt road to the campground parking area. The Pomo Canyon Campground is 2 miles farther along Willow Creek Road. Enter the open gate to the parking area. Please self-register at the "iron ranger" (at the trailheads to the sites) as soon as you select a campsite. Place the payment envelope stub on your dashboard in a visible spot to avoid a citation. The length of stay in environmental sites is a maximum of 7 consecutive days, no more than 30 days per year. Eight people are allowed per site.

Riding and Hiking—Equestrians and hikers can access the park's 5-mile trail system through the Bodega Dunes, via Bay Flat Road. Horses are allowed onto Salmon Creek Beach by way of the trail, but are not allowed north of the boardwalk. Dogs are not permitted on any trails. The Kortum Trail begins at the

Shell Beach parking lot and travels north. The Pomo Canyon Trail, also out of the Shell Beach parking lot, winds over the hill 3 1/2 miles to the Pomo Canyon Campground.

Jenner Visitor Center—Learn about the natural and cultural history of the Jenner area while enjoying a spectacular view of the Russian River. This volunteer-staffed facility is only open on weekends through the summer months.

SURF SAFETY

The beaches along the Sonoma Coast are not recommended for swimming or wading. The very things that make this area such a spectacular place to look at and enjoy can be lethal to those caught unaware along the shoreline.

Large surf, cold water temperatures, backwash, sudden drop-offs, pounding shorebreak and dangerous rip currents can



turn what seem like safe activities, such as playing near the surf line, wading, or climbing on rock outcroppings, deadly.

There is limited lifeguard service along the Sonoma Coast. Check with on-duty park staff about the ocean conditions. Please be aware that conditions may change quickly along this coastline.

“Sleeper Wave” or “Rogue

Wave”—These are names given to a wave that is larger than the average wave height. They can be unpredictable waves which may occur even on days when most of the surf looks small and unspectacular. The cause of too many drownings over the years, these large waves catch people close to the shoreline by surprise, washing them into the cold, turbulent water. Most victims were climbing on rocks and cliffs, playing near or in the surf, or shore fishing.

Rip Currents—These are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. They typically extend from the shoreline, through the surf zone, and past the line of breaking waves. Rip currents can occur at any beach with breaking waves.

If you are caught in the seaward rush of a rip current, do not panic or attempt to swim directly to the shore against the strong current. Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the rip current, then swim to shore angling away from the rip current.



Duncan's Cove

Even if you are unable to do this, the current usually dissipates just beyond the surf line. At this point, you may swim around the current and back to shore. Remember to swim at an angle away from the area to keep from getting caught up in the rip current again.

In an emergency dial 911. Try to remain calm. Have someone spot the person in trouble or keep your eyes on the person.

Give a clear explanation of your location and stay on the line with the dispatcher until you are told otherwise. Only professionally trained rescuers should attempt water rescues.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

- Of 3 designated accessible sites at Bodega Dunes Campground, only site #80 has furnishings on a firm, stable surface. Four restrooms with showers are generally accessible, and shower benches are usable.
- There are 4 accessible picnic sites at the picnic area near the Vista Trail, with a generally accessible pit toilet in the parking area.
- The 1-mile Vista Trail overlooking the coastal bluffs is paved and accessible.
- A 675-foot boardwalk out to Bodega Dunes is generally accessible, but some assistance may be required due to its length and blown sand.
- Beach wheelchairs are available. Call (707) 875-3483 for information.

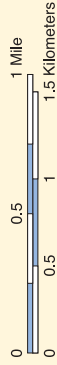
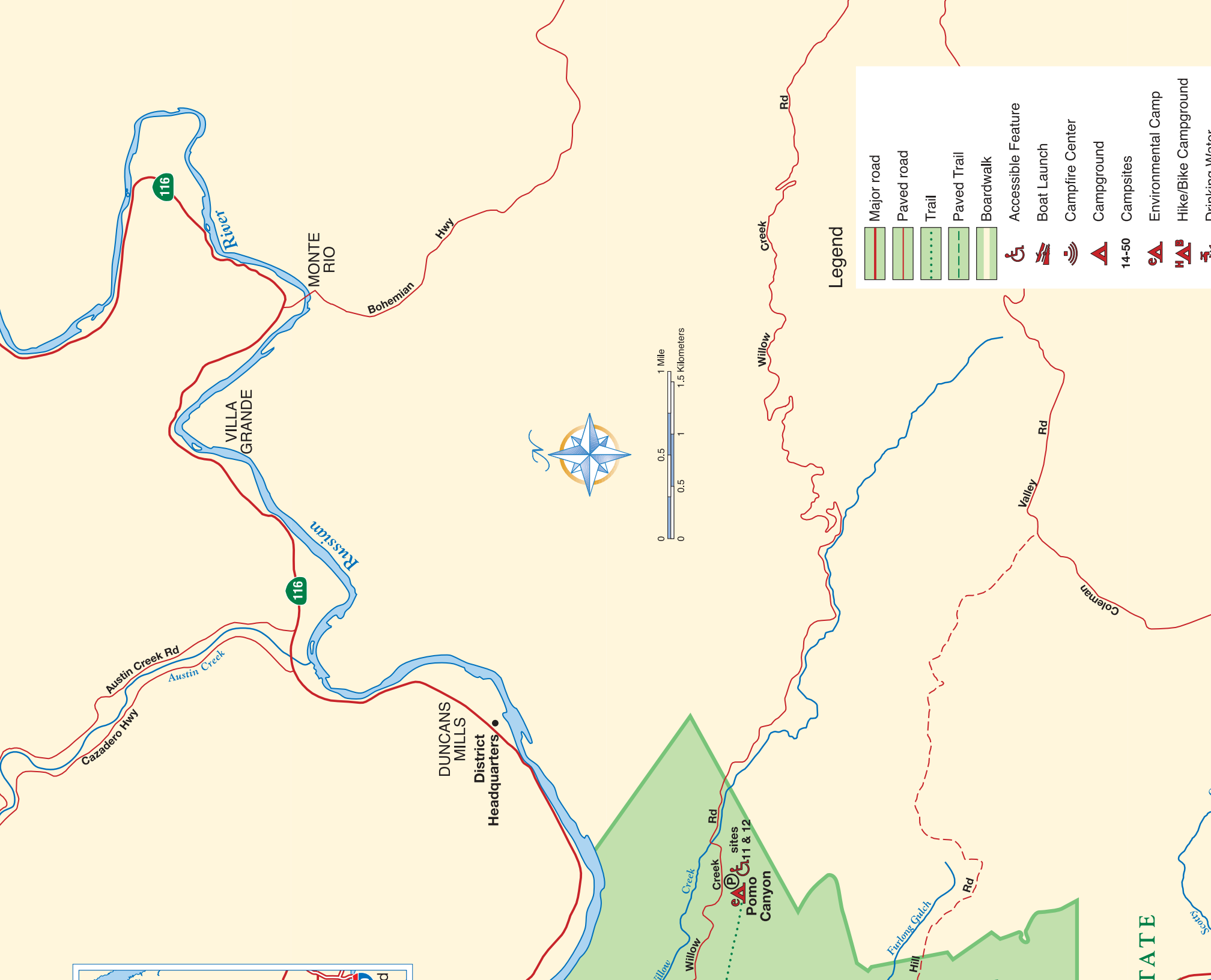
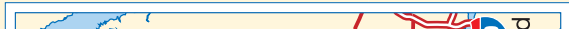
PLEASE REMEMBER

- The shale formations of bluffs and rocks are unstable and unsafe for climbing. Stay on trails and heed warning signs and fences.
- Fires are not permitted in the dunes because of the high fire danger.
- Dogs are not allowed at Goat Rock Beach.
- There is no drinking water at the environmental campsites. Bring an adequate supply for your stay. Vehicles may not be driven into the environmental camp sites. Camping in a recreational vehicle in the parking area is not permitted.
- Pets are not allowed in the environmental campgrounds. Wildlife will avoid places where domestic animals are kept.
- Swimming or wading in the ocean is not recommended.
- Fires are allowed only in the fire rings provided, or you may use a camp stove. Wood gathering is not permitted. Bring your own wood or purchase it at Bodega Dunes or Wright's Beach campgrounds.
- Keep your site clean. When you leave, it should look as though no one had ever been there.
- Park Headquarters is located one mile north of Bodega Dunes campground at Highway 1.

Sonoma Coast State Beach







Legend

	Major road		Accessible Feature
	Paved road		Boat Launch
	Trail		Campfire Center
	Paved Trail		Campground
	Boardwalk		Campsites
			14-50
			Environmental Camp
			Hike/Bike Campground
			Drinking Water

