



Perimeter Hike

6 MI., 3-5 HOURS, FROM RANGER STATION. INCLUDES SHORE TRAILS FROM BIRD ISLAND TO GRANITE POINT. TO SHORTEN WALK, SKIP SOME LOOP TRAILS.

Cypress Grove Trail

LOOP FROM SEA LION POINT PARKING AREA: 8 MI., 30 MIN. THROUGH COASTAL SCRUB AND WOODS TO CLIFF WITH DRAMATIC AND SPECTACULAR OCEAN VIEWS. TRAIL GUIDE AVAILABLE AT INFORMATION STATION.

The favorite of many visitors, the Cypress Grove Trail winds through one of the two naturally growing stands of Monterey Cypress trees remaining on the earth. The other is visible across Carmel Bay on Cypress Point, the headland farthest west.

These cypresses, which formerly extended over a much wider range, withdrew to these fog-shrouded headlands as the climate changed with the close of the Pleistocene epoch 15,000 years ago. The outermost trees, surviving in the teeth of salt spray and wind, their roots seeking nourishment in cracks and crevices, mirror the forces of nature and time.

Point Lobos State Reserve was originally acquired to protect these gnarled trees. This particular grove is a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Allan. (See History panel on other side.)

The reddish velvety "stuff" especially noticeable on trees and rocks of the shadowed north-facing slopes is an alga. The color comes from carotene, an orange pigment which also occurs in carrots. The plant does not harm the trees.

Between the loop trail and the parking area, and amid the dense shrubbery off trail, a keen-eyed visitor may discover a dozen or more large mounds of twigs. These are Dusky-footed Woodrat houses, which may achieve great age and size as successive owners add to them.

Take time here to enjoy Nature's array — California Sea Lions on the outer rocks, Sea Otters among swirling seaweeds in coves below, bluff wildflowers holding to chinks in the granite walls, and the delicate and harmless Lace Lichen bearding dead understory limbs.

Sea Lion Point Trail

ROUND TRIP FROM SEA LION POINT PARKING AREA: 6 MI., 30 MIN. INCLUDES COVE OVERLOOKS AND BEST VIEW OF SEA LION ROCKS OFFSHORE. THAT PART OF THE TRAIL VISIBLE FROM THE PARKING AREA IS SUITABLE FOR A WHEELCHAIR.

This trail takes you through one of Nature's seaside garrams to a magnificent ocean view. On the way, ground squirrels scurry, and sparrows perch on bushes to sing. On the right in Headland Cove, look for Sea Otters in the kelp and for Harbor Seals that often bask on the low rocks across the cove at the water's edge.

A natural staircase leads to a lower trail. The rock conglomerate here, known as the Carmelo Formation, was laid down about 60 million years ago. In Sea Lion Cove, look again for hauled-out Harbor Seals.

Barking California Sea Lions are seen further out on offshore rocks. The Devil's Cauldron between Sea Lion Point and Sea Lion Rocks is often a churning display of ocean power. Remain at a safe distance.

Bird Island Trail

FROM SOUTHERN PARKING AREA: ROUND TRIP .8 MI., 30 MIN. THROUGH COASTAL SCRUB. ACCESS TO TWO BEACHES, GOOD VIEWS OF BIRD ISLAND AND CHINA COVE.

On the way to the Bird Island overlook, you pass between woods and sea, high above two white sandy beaches — China Cove and Gibson Beach. Both are accessible via long staircases. Swimming and wading are allowed, but the water is icy cold all year. China Cove's sparkling jade-green waters are framed by hanging cliffside gardens.

Into these cliffs, the sea surges, cuts through the tiny cracks and faults in the brittle granite rock, and in time creates caves that slowly become archways. These eventually collapse — forming islands like Bird Island.

As you walk the loop on Pelican Point, you pass wildflower displays that change seasonally, and you overlook Bird Island, which becomes a large sea bird colony in spring and summer. Hundreds of Brandt's Cormorants nest very close together on the flat part of the island. Watch for Sea Otters resting in kelp offshore and for basking Harbor Seals on rocks just above the water.

North Shore Trail

BETWEEN WHALERS COVE AND SEA LION POINT PARKING AREA: 1.4 MI., 40 MIN. ONE WAY. WOODED, WITH OPEN VIEWS OF COVES BELOW.

Exposed to prevailing northwesterly winds and seas, this rugged headland of sheer-walled coves and changing plant communities offers surprises at every turn. In spring and summer, Guillemot Island is the best spot in the Reserve to see nesting Western Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, and both Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants. Guillemot Island can be observed from a side trail that passes over a sea cave. Part of this cave has collapsed, leaving a hole where the sea surges unexpectedly.

Near the west end, a short side trail leads to the best view of the Old Veteran Cypress, alone and clinging to the rock wall of Cypress Cove.

Whalers Knoll Trail

THREE TRAILS LEAD TO THE KNOLL. ONE FROM THE ENTRANCE ROAD, TWO FROM THE NORTH SHORE TRAIL. THE LONGEST TRAIL OVER THIS HILL IS 5 MI., 25 MIN.; ELEVATION GAIN: 180 FEET. THROUGH WOODS TO VIEWS.

"Thar she blows!" Imagine yourself an old-time lookout, stationed on this windy hill to spot the whales on which your livelihood depends. A flagpole once stood here. A signal flag was raised when whales were sighted and dipped when the boat crew was heading in the right direction.

Examine the pines for clusters of orange and black Monarch Butterflies that seek sunny, protected branches for wintering.

According to Point Lobos Docent Dorothy Nye, it's "worth the huffing and puffing — the panoramic view is splendid." If you notice neither, you are on the bypass trail.

Lace Lichen Trail

PARALLELS MAIN ROAD COASTWARD FROM RANGER STATION THROUGH MEADOW AND WOODS: .5 MI., 10 MIN. MARSHY AFTER RAIN.

The gray stringy lichen, for which the trail is named, hangs from trees that grow where the climate is cool and humid and where there is little sun. Lace Lichen does not harm the trees; it is found on the branches that have already died from lack of sunlight. A lichen is a combination of a fungus (the framework) and a green alga (the food producer). Supposedly, both plants benefit by the association. Deer like to eat this lichen, and birds carry it off for nesting materials.

After rains, colorful mushrooms, such as the poisonous and prevalent red Fly Amanita, push up through the thick pine needle mat which prevents most other plants from growing.

South Shore Trail

BETWEEN SEA LION POINT AND BIRD ROCK PARKING AREA: 1 MI., 40 MIN. ONE WAY. ALONG CLIFFS; ACCESS TO ROCKS, PEBBLY BEACHES.

Here at the ocean's edge, you may leave the trail at various points between Sand Hill Cove and Weston Beach, where there are no guide wires. Be aware of your own safety (waves and slippery rocks) and of the fragility of bluff plants and tidepool creatures. Each plant, animal, piece of driftwood, empty shell, stone, or clump of washed-up seaweed is an important part of Nature's cycle. Protect it; take nothing but photographs and memories, and keep to obvious trails and side paths.

You may see shorebirds feeding among intertidal rocks, locate stone ribbons where once molten quartz filled fissures in the granite at Hidden Beach, or discover varicolored patterns formed by erosion on uplifted sedimentary rocks.

Whalers Cove & Cabin

This continuously busy area was the site of a whaling station from 1862 to 1880. Where visitors now park, an abalone cannery once operated, and traces remain of a granite quarry, said to have supplied the stone for the San Francisco Mint. Registered scuba divers enter the water here to enjoy that part of the underwater Reserve open to them in Whalers and Bluefish Coves. Two outdoor exhibits describe subtidal life and climatic conditions.

The boulders at the water's edge provide a favorite habitat for the Beechey Ground Squirrel. This is a good spot from which to survey the cove and locate various birds, rafting Sea Otters, or basking Harbor Seals, which frequent the area.

A short walk up the road leads to WHALERS CABIN. Built by Chinese fishermen in the 1850s, it is now a cultural history museum, open as docent staffing permits. Hours are posted at the Ranger Station (usually noon to 4 P.M.). A brochure is available.

Carmelo Meadow Trail

FROM RANGER STATION TO GRANITE POINT TRAIL JUNCTURE, THROUGH PINE WOODS AND OPEN MEADOWS: .1 MI., A FEW MIN. MARSHY AFTER RAIN.

Carmelo Meadow supports a colorful garden of fragile wildflowers in the spring and summer, along with sturdier, perennial sedges and grasses that provide cover and forage for small birds and mammals. These are hunted by owls, bobcats, and coyotes from vantage points along the meadow's edge at twilight and dawn. The opening and closing hours of the Reserve are established to prevent human interference during these important periods.

Granite Point Trail

FROM WHALERS CABIN TO GRANITE POINT AND BACK, THROUGH MEADOW AND WOODS TO PANORAMIC VIEW: 1.3 MI., 60 MIN.

Beyond Carmelo Meadow, the trail goes through pine woods to Coal Chute Point, a good overlook for observing Harbor Seals and Sea Otters. Continuing on through dense, shoulder-high coastal scrub, the path takes you down to the edge of a former pasture and then up to Granite Point.

At the high point of the loop trail, there is a windswept rocky outcrop amid a garden of low-growing wildflowers. You will see Carmel Bay with its sandy beaches, the red-tiled roof of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, and Pebble Beach, famous for its golf course.

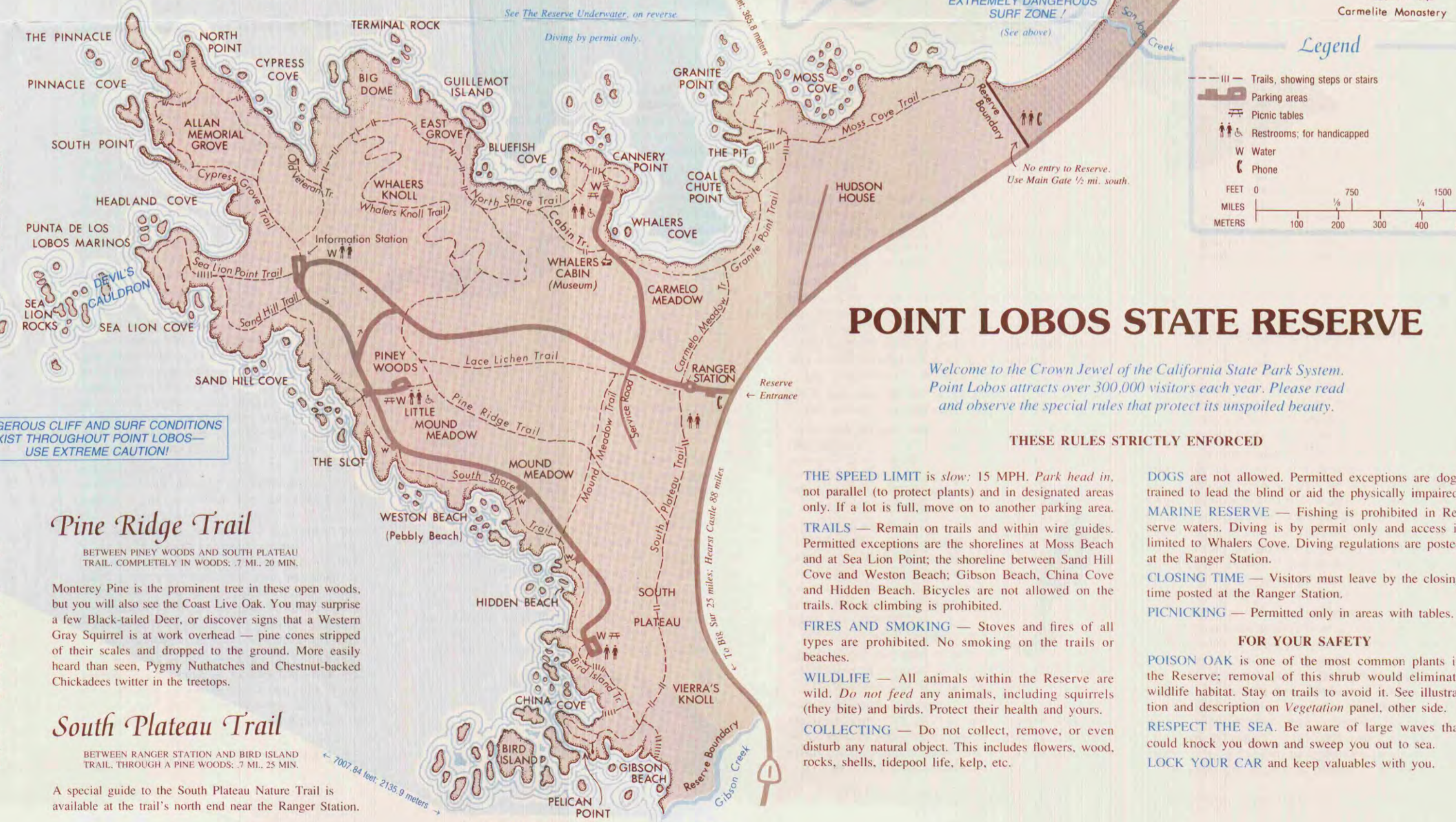
Moss Cove Trail

FROM GRANITE POINT THROUGH AN OPEN FIELD TO NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF RESERVE AND BACK: .6 MI., 30 MIN. SIDE TRAIL TO A ROCKY BEACH. NO EXIT OR ENTRY AT MONASTERY BEACH. USE MAIN GATE ONLY.

The Moss Cove Trail crosses over the lower of two uplifted and visible marine terraces, remnants of ancient beaches from an earlier geologic age. This newest addition to the Reserve is a former pasture, and it may take many years before native vegetation reclaims it. Birds of prey find good hunting here and are often seen perched on fence posts and rocky outcrops. Uphill is Hudson House, a ranger residence and training center.



Pacific Ocean



POINT LOBOS STATE RESERVE

Welcome to the Crown Jewel of the California State Park System. Point Lobos attracts over 300,000 visitors each year. Please read and observe the special rules that protect its unspoiled beauty.

THESE RULES STRICTLY ENFORCED

THE SPEED LIMIT is slow: 15 MPH. Park head in, not parallel (to protect plants) and in designated areas only. If a lot is full, move on to another parking area.
TRAILS — Remain on trails and within wire guides. Permitted exceptions are the shorelines at Moss Beach and at Sea Lion Point; the shoreline between Sand Hill Cove and Weston Beach; Gibson Beach, China Cove and Hidden Beach. Bicycles are not allowed on the trails. Rock climbing is prohibited.
FIRES AND SMOKING — Stoves and fires of all types are prohibited. No smoking on the trails or beaches.
WILDLIFE — All animals within the Reserve are wild. Do not feed any animals, including squirrels (they bite) and birds. Protect their health and yours.
COLLECTING — Do not collect, remove, or even disturb any natural object. This includes flowers, wood, rocks, shells, tidepool life, kelp, etc.

DOGS are not allowed. Permitted exceptions are dogs trained to lead the blind or aid the physically impaired.
MARINE RESERVE — Fishing is prohibited in Reserve waters. Diving is by permit only and access is limited to Whalers Cove. Diving regulations are posted at the Ranger Station.
CLOSING TIME — Visitors must leave by the closing time posted at the Ranger Station.
PICNICKING — Permitted only in areas with tables.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

POISON OAK is one of the most common plants in the Reserve; removal of this shrub would eliminate wildlife habitat. Stay on trails to avoid it. See illustration and description on *Vegetation* panel, other side.
RESPECT THE SEA. Be aware of large waves that could knock you down and sweep you out to sea.
LOCK YOUR CAR and keep valuables with you.

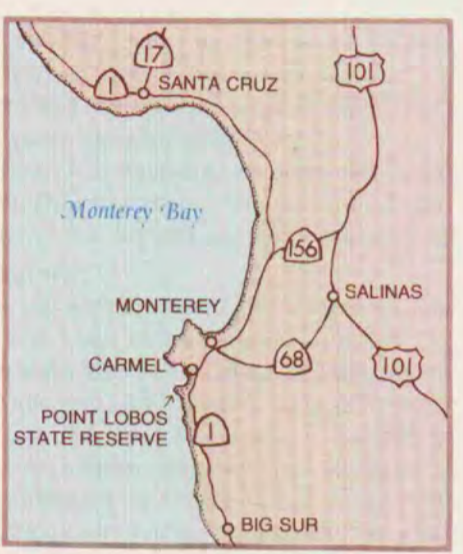
CARMEL RIVER STATE BEACH

This mile-long coastal strand gives visitors a place to stretch their legs, splash in the lagoon, bird watch or relax in the sun. The area is open to the public from 7 A.M. to 10 P.M., but the parking lot closes at sunset. Dogs must be on leash and are not allowed in the bird sanctuary. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the beach, trails, lagoon or river. Alcoholic beverages must not be consumed in the parking lot or within 25 feet of it. No fires or barbecues are permitted north of the river and lagoon.

All tidepool life is protected, but visitors with a license may sport fish in the ocean. Fishing in the lagoon or river is prohibited except between dates listed in the current Department of Fish and Game regulations.

MONASTERY BEACH (San Jose Creek Beach) has an extremely dangerous surf zone. At the water's edge, the coarse-grained sand lies at a steep angle and gives way underfoot. Even under placid surf conditions, children should be closely supervised, and experienced divers and swimmers should proceed with caution.

There is no entry from Monastery Beach to Point Lobos Reserve or the Reserve waters. Enter at Main Gate only.



Legend

- Trails, showing steps or stairs
 - Parking areas
 - Picnic tables
 - Restrooms; for handicapped
 - W Water
 - Phone
- FEET 0 750 1500
MILES 0 100 200 300 400 500