

Manchester State Park



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 office at (707) 937-5804. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

P.O. Box 942896

Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call: (800) 777-0369

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

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www.parks.ca.gov

Discover the many states of California.™

Manchester State Park

44500 Kinney Lane (Off Highway 1)

Manchester, CA 95459

(707) 937-5804 or 882-2463

*Once a hazardous area
for shipwrecks and a home
for dairy ranches, this
park's isolated splendor
is now filled with coastal
wildflowers and preserved
natural habitats.*

Manchester State Park, with nearly 3 1/2 miles of uninterrupted, ocean-facing beach, has one of the few remaining “wild” beaches along California’s northern coast. This isolated expanse of sand, crashing waves, salt spray, grasslands and dunes covered in piles of driftwood offers a natural retreat.

The park consists of 1,500 acres onshore, with 3,782 adjacent underwater acres preserved as the Point Arena State Marine Reserve.

The mild coastal climate is generally cool, windy and foggy. Temperatures range from winter lows in the high 30s to summer highs near 70 degrees.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

For centuries before European contact, the area surrounding Manchester was the territory of the Central Pomo. The local people were called the Bokeya Pomo; their village, *Pda’hau*, was near the mouth of the Garcia River. They, like other California Indians, were primarily self-sufficient, drawing from plentiful resources of the ocean, rivers, forests, and coastal shelf.

Early in the 1800s, Bokeya Pomo contact with Europeans was limited to the Russian colony at nearby Fort Ross. The mid-to-late 1800s saw a period of white settlement and development of towns, agriculture and the logging industry within the Bokeya homeland. Efforts to resettle local Indian populations sent the Bokeya Pomo people to the Mendocino Indian Reserve near Fort

Photo courtesy of Steve Coe



Bragg. When the reserve was disbanded in 1867, the people returned to their native area and integrated into white society, laboring on farms or doing seasonal work.

In 1936, with the approval of their constitution and bylaws, the Bokeya became the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians. They had jurisdiction over their rancheria land and operated a dairy business until 1959. While their participation in modern society has increased over the last 200 years, they still retain many of their traditional values, beliefs and cultural identity.

Becoming a State Park

The William Barns Davis family owned the land in this area during the mid-1870s. In 1930, California’s State Park Commission set aside 295 coastal acres for public recreation. In 1961, owner James Biaggi granted the State part of a dairy ranch built by Sylvanus Hoyt in the northern portion of today’s park. The combined land was named Manchester State Park in 1991.

Offshore sits the Arena Rock Marine Natural Preserve, leased from the California State Lands Commission and considered an underwater extension of the state park. Recently the statewide Marine Life Protection Act included the 500-acre Arena Rock Marine Natural Preserve in the boundary of the larger Point Arena State Marine Reserve. The Act offers marine life full protection from disturbance or collection.

Treacherous Arena Rock sits in about 100 feet of water off the southwestern tip of the park; its sedimentary top has a jutting vertical portion visible only at very low tide. Before the nearby Point Arena Lighthouse was built, six known shipwrecks were attributed to the hazards of Arena Rock. An additional 34 ships were presumed lost at sea in the area. The lighthouse exhibits some artifacts recovered from wrecks.

NATURAL HISTORY

Wildlife and Vegetation

Manchester State Park is home to many unusual and rare creatures living in its wetland and coastal dune habitats.

Photos courtesy of Daniel W. Gotshall



Nudibranch (left) and yelloweye rockfish (right) in Arena Rock Marine Natural Preserve

the beach, the threatened red-legged frog in the wetlands, and the endangered Point Arena mountain beaver in coastal scrub and riparian areas.

The park hosts tundra swans in winter. Abalone and sea urchins attach to rocks underwater in the marine preserve. Colorful nudibranchs also brighten the underwater landscape. The endangered tidewater goby, a fish native to California, lives in the park's lagoons. Many shore birds and water birds stop to rest here during seasonal migrations.

Coastal wildflowers, such as sea pinks, lupines, baby blue eyes and blue irises, bloom in the spring. Both native and invasive beach grasses grow on the dunes.

Geology

The northernmost segment of California's 800-mile-long San Andreas Fault slices through Manchester State Park, separating the Pacific and North American tectonic plates.

Movement along the 1/3 to 2/3-mile-wide fault zone has bent stream courses, created rift valleys, and elevated ridges.



Threatened red-legged frog

RECREATION

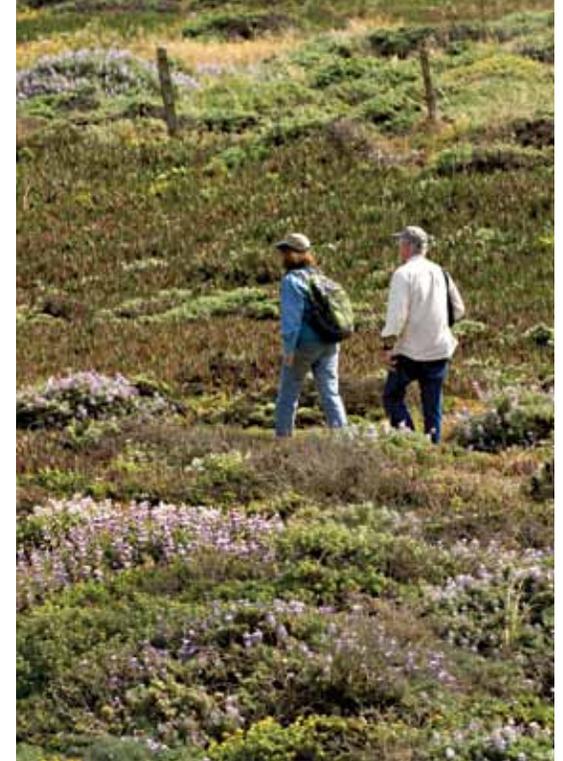
Hiking, birdwatching and walking the park's nearly five miles of beach are popular pastimes. Whales may be spotted offshore during the annual humpback and gray whale migration from October to April. Experienced, certified scuba divers may dive from their boats near Arena Rock, part of the Arena Rock Marine Natural Preserve. Shore diving in the turbulent water is not advised.

Camping—40 family campsites and eight environmental sites are available first-come, first-served. The family sites can hold tents, trailers up to 22 feet, or RVs up to 30 feet long. The dune environmental sites require a one-mile walk from the parking lot. Call ahead for environmental campsite conditions. The group campsite is limited to 40 people and 12 vehicles. Group camping reservations are recommended for weekends or summertime. To reserve the group site, call (800) 444-7275 or visit the website at www.parks.ca.gov.

Fishing—Steelhead may be caught in Brush Creek and Alder Creek. Please check with the Department of Fish and Game for seasonal closures and restrictions at www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations. All anglers 16 and over must possess a valid California fishing license.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

The main campground and day-use parking lot have accessible vault toilets. No campsites are designated accessible. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

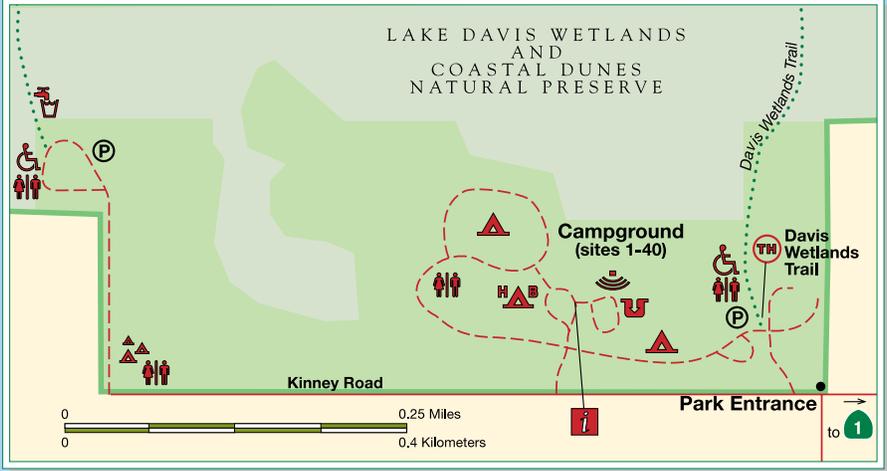


NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Hendy Woods State Park, 18599 Philo-Greenwood Road, Philo 95466 (707) 937-5804 or 895-3141
- Schooner Gulch State Beach, Schooner Gulch Road at Highway 1 Point Arena 95468 (707) 937-5804

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Dogs must be on a leash no longer than six feet and are never allowed on the beach.
- All park features are protected by law and may not be disturbed or removed.
- Underwater, do not touch marine life or harm geologic features. The underwater park resources offshore are also protected by law.



This park receives support in part through the Mendocino Area Parks Association, P.O. Box 1387, Mendocino, CA 95460 www.mendoparks.org

Legend

- Major Road
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Hiking Trail
- Intermittent Stream
- Marine Natural Preserve
- Natural Preserve
- Accessible Feature
- Campfire Center
- Campground
- Drinking Water
- Environmental Campground
- Group Campground
- Hike/Bike Campground
- Information/Self-Registration
- Marsh Area
- Parking
- Restroom
- RV Sanitation Station
- Trailhead



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