

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Channel Islands National Park

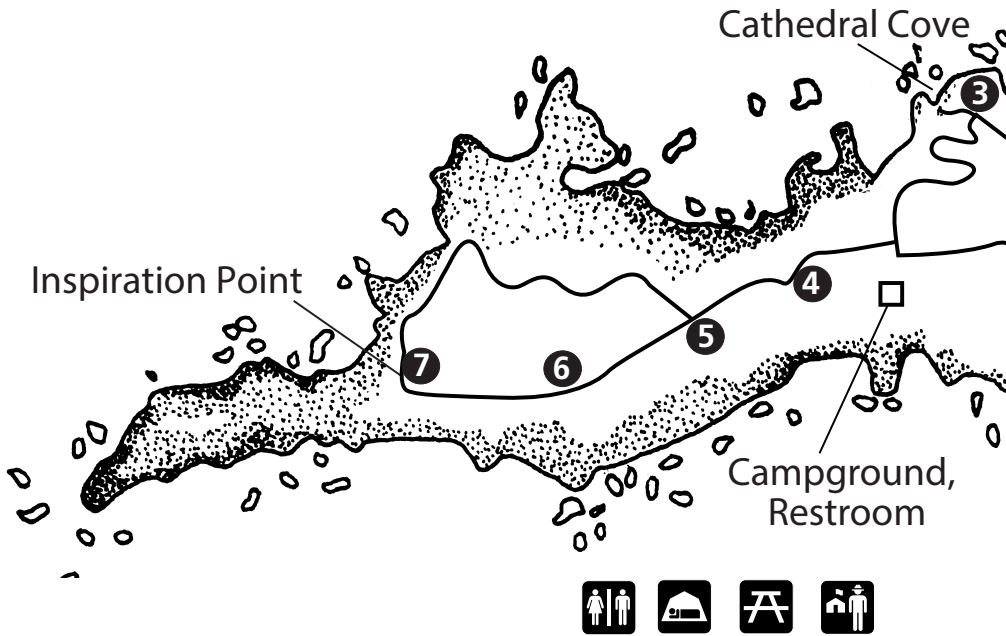


East Anacapa Island Trail Guide



timhaufphotography.com

East Anacapa Island



How To Use This Trail Guide

This trail guide provides 7 interpretive stops along the 1.5 mile loop to Inspiration Point.

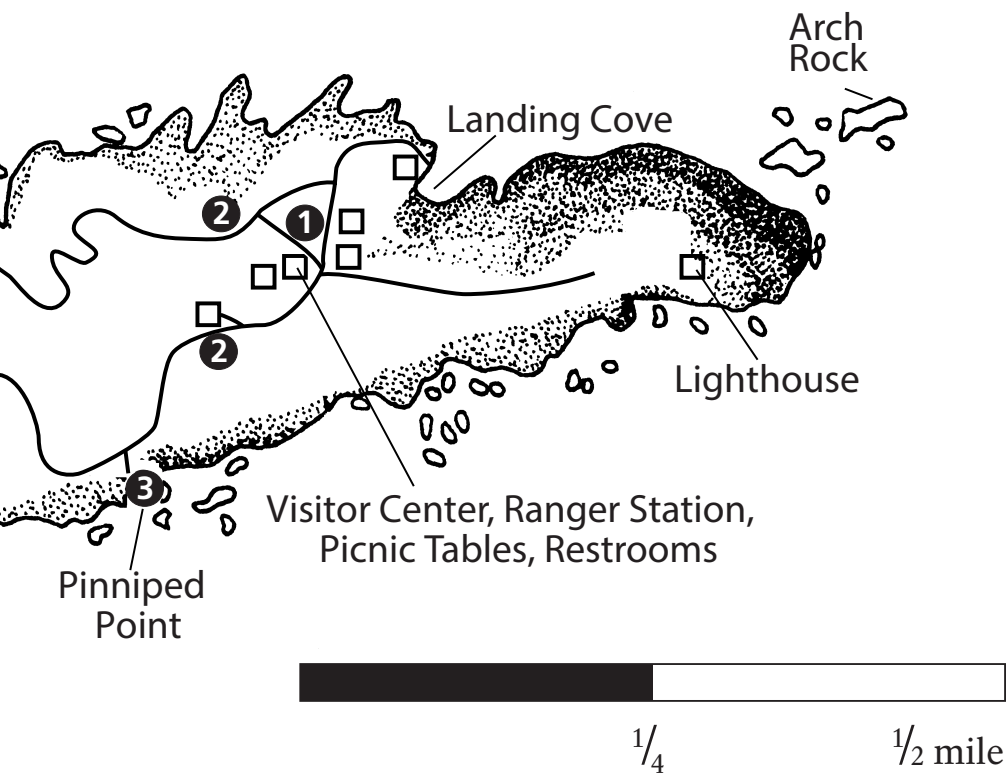
There are two routes indicated on the map above. Both routes begin at the visitor center. You may take the lower trail located in front of the buildings, which leads to Cathedral Cove. Or you may take the upper trail located behind the buildings, which leads to Pinniped Point. Both routes cover the same information. For variety, we recommend you take the opposite route back.

For a more detailed hiking map, please see the “Hiking Anacapa Island” bulletin available at the orientation sign near the visitor center.

Before beginning your exploration of Anacapa please note a few rules that will ensure your safety and protect the plants and animals on the island.

No collecting.

The park’s natural and cultural resources are protected by federal law. Please, leave Anacapa as you find it so that others may also enjoy the island.



Stay on the designated trails.

Many of the plants on Anacapa are fragile, the soil is easily eroded, and off-trail travel disrupts roosting and nesting seabirds.

Stay back from cliff edges.

The cliffs are very unstable and many of the overlooks are undercut. Do not risk your safety for a “better” view.

No smoking.

Smoking is allowed only on the cement area by the crane at the top of the stairs.

Remove your garbage.

Visitors are required to pack out what they pack in, including garbage, and to secure their food and trash from birds and animals at all times.

Be aware of boat departure times.

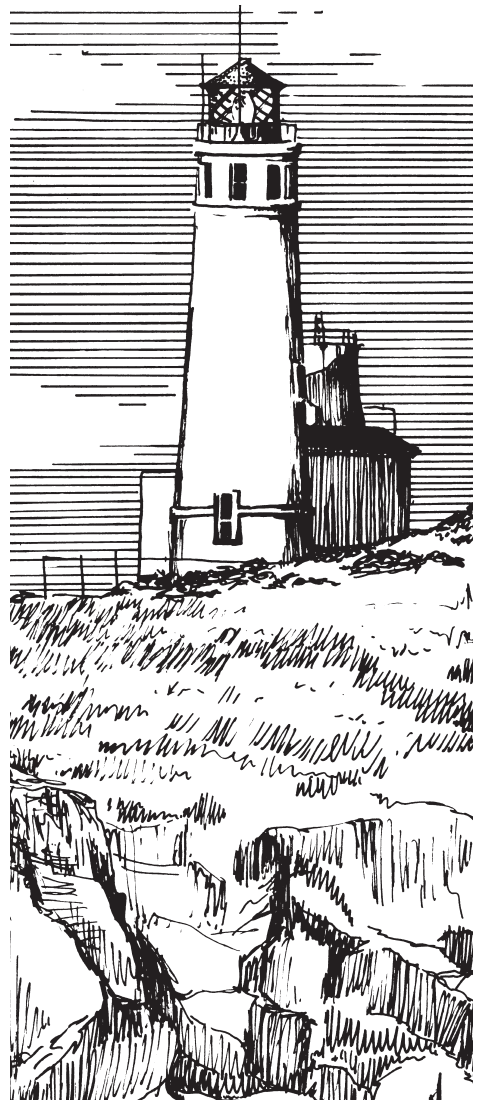
When departing the island, visitors are responsible for meeting the boat on time. Ask the ranger or concessioner for departure times.

East Anacapa Island: A World of Isolation

A peaceful silence surrounds the tile-roofed buildings below the lighthouse on Anacapa. It is a silence that is accented by an occasional call of a foghorn, a cry from a gull flying overhead, or the bellow of a protective male sea lion below. It is a reminder that Anacapa is an island, a world apart, isolated from the mainland by eleven miles of ocean.

Isolation is an important facet of life on all the Channel Islands. It has fostered the evolution of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. Plants and animals that are unique to a certain location are called *endemic* species. Isolation, essential for a species to become endemic, allows these creatures to become well adapted to their unique environment.

Isolation has also played a major role in shaping human activities on Anacapa. The island's separation from the mainland, as well as its steep cliffs, have limited and directed human use and occupation of Anacapa for thousands of years.





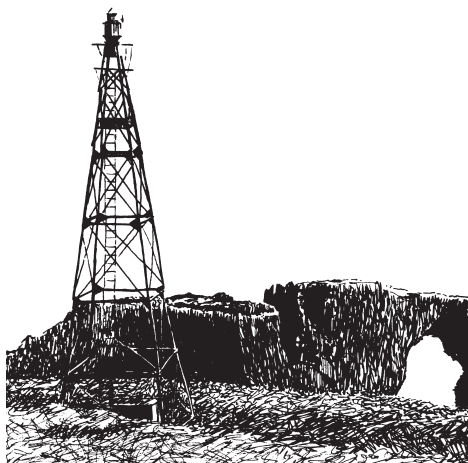
Lighting the Way

Location: Light House Complex

At 11:00 pm on December 2, 1853, a frightening jolt woke the passengers aboard the side-wheel steamer *Winfield Scott*. Rushing on deck, they discovered that the ship had run aground in dense fog. Water poured into the ship's hold through two gaping holes in its wooden hull. Boarding the lifeboats, the passengers rowed to safety on Middle Anacapa Island, but the *Winfield Scott* was lost. Its remains lie submerged off the island's north shore.

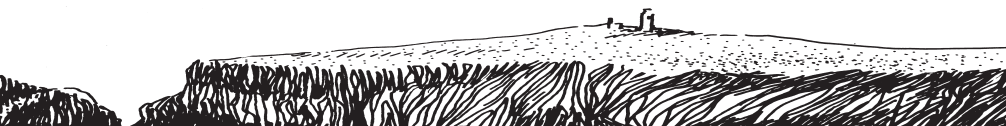
Despite the wrecking of the *Winfield Scott* and other ships off Anacapa's coast, a light was not placed on the island until 1912. Because of Anacapa's isolation, and the difficulties of building and supplying such a remote station, the first light was an unmanned, acetylene beacon placed atop a fifty-foot-tall metal tower.

Responding to requests for better navigation aids along the Santa Barbara Channel, the Bureau of Lighthouses replaced the beacon with a lighthouse containing a third-order Fresnel lens in 1932. The lens is now on display in the Anacapa Island Visitor Center. Buildings to support the lighthouse were constructed in the Spanish Revival style, characterized by tile roofs, stucco walls, and arched openings. The



light station resembled a small town, with four residences flanking a main street that led to the powerhouse, oil house, general services building, fog signal building, lighthouse, water tank building, and other support structures. A series of ninety steps with two landings and a crane were built to transport people and gear from the landing cove to the top of the steep cliff.

Anacapa's isolation has always presented special challenges to island residents. Food, water, and other supplies must be shipped from the mainland and hoisted up the steep slopes at the Landing Cove. Power is supplied by solar energy supplemented by generators; communications are by radio and cell phone.





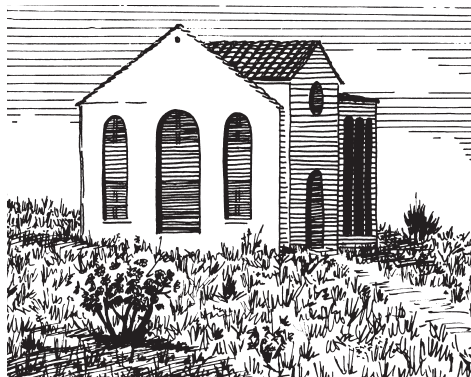
Return of the Natives

Location: Iceplant Meadow or Water Tank Building

Native plants that develop in isolation are often vulnerable to competition from hardier, alien species introduced by humans. In the 1940s and 50s light-station residents brought red-flowered iceplant (*Malephora crocea*) to Anacapa for landscaping and erosion control. The plant spread rapidly in disturbed soil and overwhelmed native plants, reducing diverse natural vegetation and food sources on which native animals, including seabirds depend.

In the past, this iceplant, with its thick fleshy green leaves and large red flowers, covered about 20 percent of east Anacapa like a red and green carpet. To restore Anacapa's native vegetation, park staff, cooperators, and volunteers removed red-flowered iceplant and replanted cleared areas with native plants grown from island-collected seed. Native species that were restored include coreopsis, alkali heath, gum plant, yarrow, needlegrass, California barley, giant ryegrass, live-forever, buckwheat, and goldenbush.

To ensure the recovery of the island's native vegetation, the park will continue to remove other nonnative plants, including other species of ice plant, and replace them with a variety of native plants.



How do you obtain water in an environment that lacks springs, streams, or wells and cannot be reached by pipeline? For hundreds of years Anacapa's isolation and arid climate limited human activities on the island.

Today fresh water must be transported to Anacapa by boat. From the Landing Cove it is pumped uphill to this large wooden building resembling a church, which houses two, 55,000-gallon redwood water tanks. The "church" was constructed around the tanks to preserve them from the weather and protect the water supply from contamination. During the early years, a catchment pad located near Pinniped Point collected and fed water to these tanks. The collection basin was abandoned due to roosting seabirds, unreliable rainfall, and the ability to deliver water by vessels.

Trail Stop
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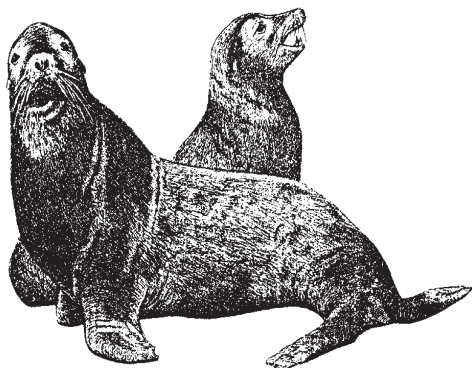
An Ideal Isolated Home

Location: Pinniped Point or Cathedral Cove

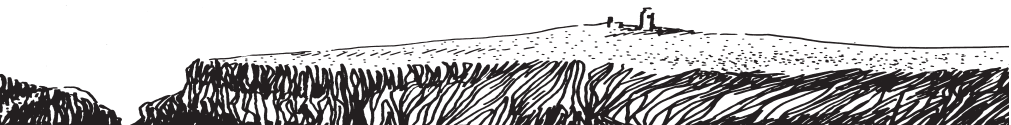
Stand atop the bluffs at Pinniped Point or Cathedral Cove and watch sea lions haul out and sun themselves on the narrow, rocky shoreline.

The isolated beaches scattered along Anacapa's northern and southern shores offer harbor seals and sea lions an ideal combination of safety from predators and freedom from human disturbance.

Even Anacapa's isolation could not protect these and other sea mammals from human predation. Fur hunters exploited the large communities of sea otters near the Channel Islands. Fur seals, elephant seals, and sea lions were also killed for their fur, hides, and oil. Even sea lion whiskers were a popular commodity. Gentlemen used them for pipe cleaners.



Sea mammal hunting ended in the early 1900s and laws now protect these marine species. Today harbor seals and sea lions regularly breed on Anacapa's rocky beaches. Their protected populations are nearly recovered from centuries of slaughter.





An Island Ranch

Location: Eastern Terrace Overlook

Flocks of sheep grazed Anacapa's grassy terraces from 1869 until the 1930s. On East Anacapa sheep ranching ended in 1912 when the first light beacon was constructed. In 1917 as many as five hundred sheep ran on Anacapa.

Sheep ranchers found that Anacapa's isolation offered several advantages. Unlike their mainland counterparts, the flocks were safe from coyotes and wild dogs. They also could be left to wander freely with no need for fences.

But isolation created disadvantages as well. Shearers had to be transported by boat to the island, and seafaring poachers were constant nuisances. With no natural source of fresh water except early morning dew, the animals licked moisture from each other's coats and the vegetation. The sheep devoured



the native vegetation. When forage was especially scarce the sheep had to be removed from the island by boat.

Sheep ranching on Anacapa ended in 1938 when the islets came under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Today the widespread presence of introduced grasses such as wild oats, foxtails, and brome are evidence of this period in Anacapa's history.

Taking from or disturbing archeological sites or artifacts is a violation of state and federal law.

The archeological sites around the Channel Islands are a testament to the importance of the Chumash and other American Indians. Archeological sites are sacred to Chumash peoples today, are protected by federal law, and are a vital nonrenewable scientific resource. Please help us in protecting and preserving this rich part of California's heritage.



Trail Stop
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Window Into Their World

Location: Chumash Midden

Imagine traveling the open sea in a twenty-foot wooden canoe. Now imagine that this canoe was made of carefully fitted planks sewn together with cord woven from vegetable fibers. The seams are caulked and sealed with tar to make them waterproof. The Chumash Indians traveled to Anacapa in canoes, called *tomols*. The evidence of their visits lies beneath your feet.

The tiny fragments of broken shell glittering in the soil are part of a midden, an archeological site containing remnants of their culture. Twentyeight archeological sites mark the Chumash presence on Anacapa for at least 5,000 years.

Although Anacapa offered the Chumash a rich variety of marine foods including fish, sea mammals, and shellfish, other items were not available and had to be brought aboard the *tomols*.

Anacapa Island was also an important stop on the shortest route between the mainland and the islands, especially Santa Cruz Island immediately to the west.

The name Anacapa comes from the Chumash word *anyapakh*, which means “mirage” or “ever-changing.” Anacapa is the only Channel Island with a name that is derived from Chumash.

Ancient Ocean Pathways Lead the Chumash Home

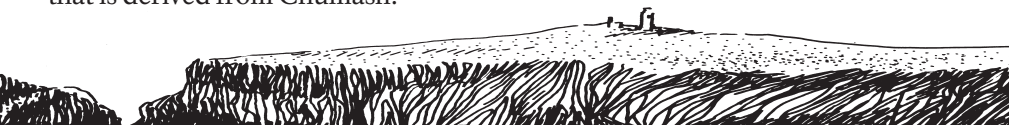


In 1976, the Chumash Brotherhood of the *Tomol* built and paddled the *tomol*, *Helek* (Peregrine Falcon), from San Miguel Island to Santa Rosa Island, and finally to Santa Cruz Island. This historic ocean voyage, the first since the mid-1800s, brought the Chumash back to their island home and sustained their traditional way life.

Then in 1997, a group of Chumash built the traditional style *tomol*, ‘*Elye’wun* (Swordfish), the first to be owned by the Chumash in 150 years, and paddled her from the mainland to Santa Cruz Island in 2001, completing the island circle begun by *Helek*.

Members of the Chumash community continue to celebrate their heritage and culture through annual *tomol* crossings to Santa Cruz Island. These journeys are an affirmation of tradition, which contemporary Chumash regard as a gift to their ancestors and children.

Centuries ago, the *tomol* was used to connect different island Chumash groups with each other and the mainland. Today, it links past generations of Chumash with the present-day Chumash community.



Tree Sunflower

Location: Coreopsis Forest

Each spring Anacapa's coreopsis, or tree sunflower, undergoes a marvelous transformation. For a few brief weeks in March and April the plant's tall, bare trunks disappear beneath masses of bright green foliage with showy yellow blossoms.

Coreopsis survives the lengthy dry season—nine or ten months each year—by remaining dormant. The plant's brittle, seemingly lifeless stems are easily damaged or broken. Anacapa's isolation and the absence of large animals that might trample them protect coreopsis during this dormancy.

Unfortunately, the severe drought in California during the 2010s devastated the islands' coreopsis. Without adequate rainfall many of the coreopsis died off or were blown over in strong winds. However, as the rains return, seedlings will sprout and the coreopsis forest will eventually return.

Native plants found in association with coreopsis include island morning glory, gumplant, Indian pink, and golden yarrow. Please be careful to stay on the designated path and not disturb or walk on the island vegetation.





A Seabird Sanctuary

Location: Inspiration Point

A cool, salty mist fills the air at Inspiration Point. Graceful gulls and pelicans soar above the foaming waves that surge across the narrow, rocky strait separating East and Middle Anacapa. Seven different species of marine birds nest on Anacapa, including western gulls, California brown pelicans, double-crested cormorants, Brandt's cormorants, pelagic cormorants, pigeon guillemots, and Xantus' murrelets. Twenty-two different species of land birds breed on the island and many other birds stop over during migration.

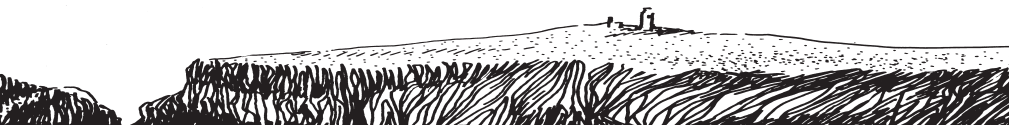
The western gull rookery on East Anacapa is one of the main breeding colonies on the Channel Islands. Gulls have a surprisingly high chick mortality rate, as much as sixty percent. Anacapa's isolation and freedom from predators such as foxes and nonnative rats are crucial for these seabirds to successfully breed and rear their young.

On the north slopes of West Anacapa, California brown pelicans typically nest and raise their young from January through October. In fact, West Anacapa has the largest and most consistently used brown pelican nesting colony on the West Coast of the United States. Brown pelicans will abandon their

nests if disturbed, leaving the eggs and chicks defenseless against predators such as gulls and ravens. A serious disturbance can cause an entire colony to be abandoned. For this reason Anacapa's isolation is a critical factor in the successful nesting of these seabirds. Except for the beach at Frenchy's Cove, West Anacapa is designated as a Research Natural Area and is closed to the public.

From Inspiration Point you can return by the same trail or follow the longer route that loops through the lower terrace. Either way, you will experience Anacapa's unique beauty. You will also notice how isolation has allowed endemic species to flourish on the island.

Anacapa Island's unique resources were first recognized in 1938, when the island was proclaimed a national monument. The protection was reaffirmed and strengthened in 1980 when Anacapa was included in the newly established Channel Islands National Park. The National Park Service is preserving the island's native plant and animal communities and its historical and archeological features for future generations to study and enjoy.





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