

Garrapata State Park



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.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at (831) 649-2836. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

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Discover the many states of California.™

Garrapata State Park

Monterey District

2211 Garden Road

Monterey, CA 93940

831-649-2836

Cover Photo by Tom Moss

*Nestled at the base
of the Santa Lucia Range,
Garrapata's 3,000 acres
encompass a spectacular
rocky shoreline and a
beautiful inland area of
steep mountains and deep
redwood canyons.*



Welcome to Garrapata State Park,

where spectacular rocky shorelines play counterpoint with an inland area of steep mountains and deep redwood canyons. The park is on the northern end of the Big Sur coast, three miles south of Point Lobos State Reserve.

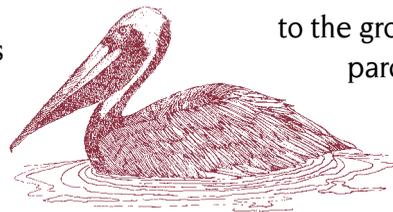
The climate is moderate, with a mean average of 50-65 degrees year-round. Variable weather includes cool, foggy mornings, strong onshore winds, and hot summer days in the backcountry.

PARK HISTORY

Native Americans

Until the mid- to late-1700s, the dominant group here was the Costanoan people, now known as the Ohlone. About 10,000 Ohlone lived in the area south of San Francisco Bay to south of Monterey Bay and east to the Central Valley. The land and sea provided well for them, and what they had in abundance they traded for items they could not obtain locally.

In the late 1700s, without regard to the Ohlones' desires, Spanish missionaries brought them into the mission system. Those who managed to escape no longer had unlimited access to their food sources. By 1830 the loss of their lands, the disruption of their network of village communities, and their lack of immunity to European diseases had reduced their numbers to about 2,500. Despite these drastic changes, many descendants of the Ohlone still live in the area.



Brown pelican



Visitors find colorful wildflower displays along coastal trails.

Soberanes Family

In 1839 this area was part of Rancho San José y Sur Chiquito, a Mexican land grant. The acreage was later divided, and William B. Post purchased two 160-acre parcels. In 1867 he sold his land to Ezequiel Soberanes, who operated a prosperous cattle and sheep ranch for 24 years. Locally famous for their musical talents, the Soberanes family was also known for their hospitality to ranchers traveling along the coast to Monterey. A land title dispute brought the colorful era of the Ezequiel Soberanes Rancho to an end.

The Doud Ranch

In 1891 Francis Doud, an early Monterey resident, combined this and other properties into the Doud Ranch, which operated until the early 1950s. By the 1960s the family had stopped running cattle and their wood-frame ranch house had burned to the ground. The state acquired its first parcel of the property in 1980, and it was classified a state park in 1985.

NATURAL HISTORY

Garrapata's bold, vertical headlands and offshore sea stacks are a combination of granitic rock, marine sandstone, shale, volcanic rock and chert. Their proximity to several fault lines keeps them in a state of seismic movement.

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES

Garrapata's diverse terrain supports six vegetation types and several plant and animal communities.

Scrub—Northern bluff scrub includes lizard tail, mock heather and dune buckwheat. Central coast scrub is dominated by coyote brush, California sagebrush, sticky monkeyflower and poison oak. California sagebrush and black sage grow on the rockier inland slopes. Mixed coastal scrub along the shoreline provides food and shelter for the endangered Smith's blue butterfly.

Chaparral—Northern mixed chaparral includes manzanita, blue blossom and chamise. The denser, taller mixed chaparral at Rocky Ridge shelters the sensitive California horned lizard.

Grassland—Cattle grazing and drought introduced non-native grasses. Near the Rocky Ridge Trail, rare California oatgrass, purple needlegrass, California brome and blue wild rye grow among the non-native grasses, home to the black-shouldered kite, peregrine falcon, merlin and American kestrel. Beechey ground squirrels and Brewer's blackbirds live among the annual grasses.

Coniferous forest—Coast redwoods dominate parts of Soberanes and Malpaso Creeks, where sensitive spotted owls and Pacific giant salamanders live. Giant chain fern, redwood sorrel, California spikenard and western coltsfoot form a typical understory. Conifers and occasional big leaf maples and white alders shelter gray squirrels, Merriam chipmunks and numerous bird species.

Streambank woodland and forest—Several species of willow and coyote brush grow along the lower portions of Soberanes and Doud Creeks and intermittent streams in the coastal area. Sixty species of mammals and 110 species of birds live in the coastal oak woodland.

Mixed evergreen forest—On some north-facing slopes, tanoak, madrone and buckeye mix with coast redwoods. Song sparrows, small burrowing rodents and common garter snakes live here.

MARINE HABITAT

The cold waters of Monterey Bay are rich with invertebrate organisms that are a food source for the area's whales, pinnipeds and seabirds. Southern sea otters bob about in the offshore kelp forest. On the Lobos Rocks, California brown pelicans roost above resting sea lions.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Photography—Photographers can find inspiration in the rolling surf, wildflower-bedecked trails, rocky outcroppings, and the

interplay between fog, clouds and sun.

Hiking—The Rocky Ridge Trail, on the north ridge of Soberanes Canyon, and the Soberanes Canyon Trail through the redwoods form a strenuous 4.5-mile loop. The 1-mile North Fork Trail and the 1.5-mile Peak Trail are spur trails that return via the same route. The 2-mile round-trip Soberanes Point Trail loops around Soberanes Point and ends at Whale Peak.

Scuba diving—Because of the merciless, rocky shore off the north portion of the park and the depth of the underwater canyons, diving in this location is not recommended.

Wildlife watching—On some weekends in January, park staff lead whale-watching programs as the Pacific gray whales pass by during their yearly migration. Call the park for information.

GETTING THERE

Parking and trails are reached via 19 numbered turnouts along Highway 1. All are on the ocean side of the highway. Numbered placards represent gate numbers as follows:

Garrapata Beach—gates 18 or 19

Scenic overlook with bench—gate 17

Soberanes Point trails—gates 8, 9 or 10

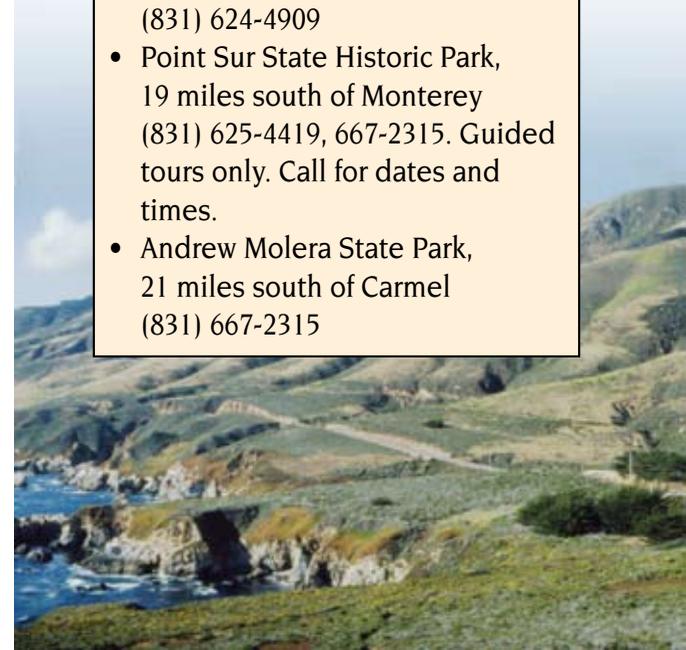
Back country trails—The trailheads for the Rocky Ridge Trail and the Soberanes Canyon Trail are on the east side of Highway 1 across from gates 7 and 8 respectively.

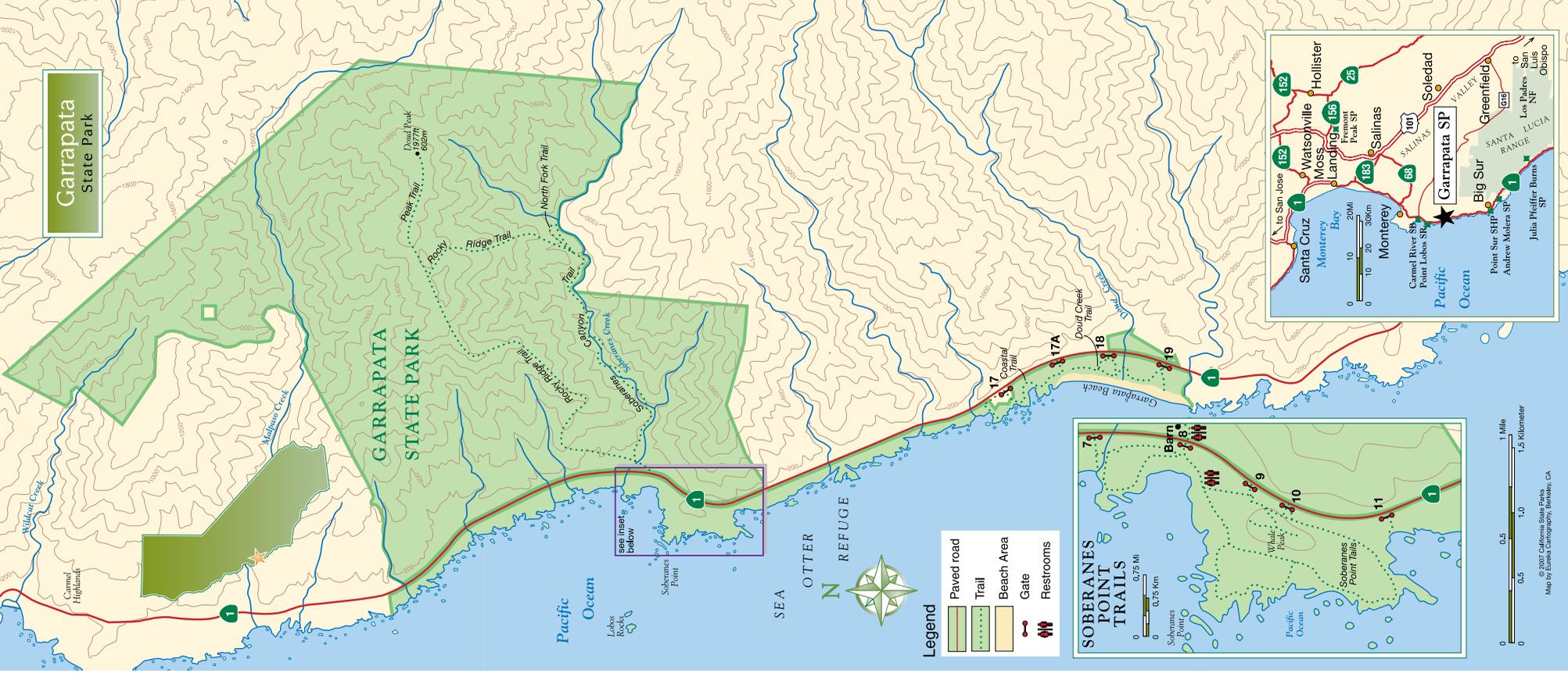
PLEASE REMEMBER

- The surf is extremely dangerous. Do not swim, wade or climb on rocks.
- Camping is not permitted—the park closes at sunset.
- Rattlesnakes, ticks and mountain lions live here—walk only on established trails.
- Dogs are only allowed on Garrapata Beach and must be kept on a 6-foot leash at all times.
- Fires are not permitted.
- Do not remove plants, minerals and other natural features.
- Bicycles are permitted only on Rocky Ridge Trail.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Carmel River State Beach, Carmelo Street and Scenic Road, Carmel (831) 624-4909
- Point Lobos State Reserve, 3 miles south of Carmel (831) 624-4909
- Point Sur State Historic Park, 19 miles south of Monterey (831) 625-4419, 667-2315. Guided tours only. Call for dates and times.
- Andrew Molera State Park, 21 miles south of Carmel (831) 667-2315





Garrapata State Park

GARRAPATA STATE PARK

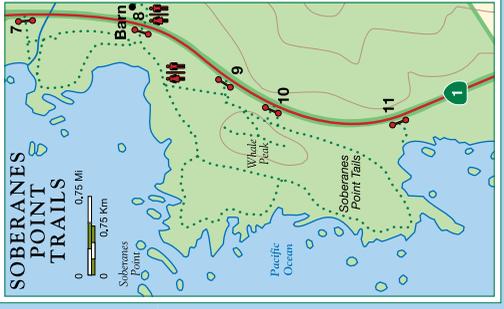
OTTER REFUGE

Pacific Ocean

SEA

- Legend**
- Paved road
 - Trail
 - Beach Area
 - Gate
 - Restrooms

see insert below



0 0.5 1.0 1.5 Miles
0 0.5 1.0 1.5 Kilometer

Map by Eureka Cartography, Berkeley, CA