

# Exploring California's Past Channel Islands National Park



**The bright yellow bouquets of the giant coreopsis on Anacapa Island are so vivid they can sometimes be seen from the mainland.**

You might feel like a modern day Magellan if you are fortunate enough to make the trek to Channel Islands National Park. It is one of the least visited of California's national parks because of its limited accessibility. Only 250,000 people make the sojourn each year.

The fragile and pristine string of islands lies just 60 miles from the California coast, yet it is a world away from the notorious urban congestion and can only be reached by boat or plane.

The Channel Islands National Park is made up of five of the eight Channel Islands—Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel and Santa Barbara—spanning 160 miles of California's coastline. The islands were set aside by Congress in 1980 for the public to enjoy and to preserve the islands' resources, which include some of the world's rarest plants and animals. A TRIP FOR EVERY TYPE OF EXPLORER

Journeying to the Channel Islands is no ordinary excursion, but if you like to hike, bird watch, camp, snorkel, or kayak in a setting with minimal people and services, the Channel Islands could be your perfect getaway.

The National Park Service has made it possible for every type of adventurer to experience the beauty of Channel Islands National Park. You just have to decide how much time you will spend.

One Hour – Two Visitor Centers, one in Ventura and the other in Santa Barbara, offer exhibits and information daily for those who are not able to make the trek to the islands.

The Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center at Channel Islands National Park 805-658-5730 Outdoors Santa Barbara Visitor Center 805-884-1475 • [www.outdoorsb.noaa.gov/](http://www.outdoorsb.noaa.gov/)

Half-Day – Take a non-landing boat tour of Anacapa Island or a half-day, express boat trip to Anacapa or Santa Cruz Islands. Consider taking this journey during the gray whale migratory season (December through April).

One Day – During blue whale season (spring through summer), take a day-long whale watching trip from Ventura or Santa Barbara Harbors. Plan on bringing your own water and snacks to ensure your comfort throughout the day.

Multi-Day – For a true explorer, a multi-day, multi-island camping and boat trip is recommended. GETTING THERE

The islands are only accessible by park concessionaire boats and planes or private boat. Below is a list of special concessionaires approved by the National Park Service.

Island Packers • 805-642-1393 • [www.islandpackers.com](http://www.islandpackers.com) Truth Aquatics • 805-963-3564 • [www.truthaquatics.com](http://www.truthaquatics.com) Channel Islands Aviation • 805-987-1301 • [www.flycia.com](http://www.flycia.com)  
FEES, FACTS AND WHEN TO VISIT

There is no entrance fee to visit the park. However, a \$15 per night, per site fee is charged for camping on the islands. For detailed information, go to [www.nps.gov/chis/](http://www.nps.gov/chis/).  
DID YOU KNOW?

Painted Cave on Santa Cruz Island is one of the world's largest known sea caves. The cave measures 1,215 feet in length (the size of more than four football fields), has a 160-foot entrance, and is almost 100 feet wide.

The Channel Islands are home to the oldest dated human remains in North America, called Arlington Springs Woman, dating between 10,000 and 13,000 years old.

The world's most complete pygmy mammoth specimen was discovered on Santa Rosa Island in 1994. These miniature mammoths, only four to seven feet tall, once roamed island grasslands and forests during the Pleistocene era.