

East Anacapa Island



The lighthouse is one of the first features noticed by visitors to East Anacapa Island. The lighthouse was inspired by the wreck of the S.S. Winfield Scott which struck an outcropping of rock on Middle Anacapa Island on the foggy night of December 2nd 1853.

Sketch of the S.S. Winfield Scott



An acetylene beacon atop a simple metal tower was placed on the island in 1912. However, due to the rugged cliffs and general isolation of Anacapa, the lighthouse was not built until 1932.

Remains of the S.S. Winfield Scott

Today the wreck of the Winfield Scott is part of the Channel Islands National Park. Most of the wreck has been worn away by over one-hundred years of surf and seawater. Divers can still see remnants of the paddle wheel and some hull planks.



Island Isolation

The northern Channel Islands rose from the sea about 5 million years ago, and are true oceanic islands, isolated from the mainland. This isolation has resulted in some of the unique assemblages of plants and animals that are found in the Channel Islands National Park. Though isolated, these islands have both a rich natural and cultural history going back hundreds, or even thousands of years ago. Today, visitors to the Channel Islands National Park can observe many of the unique natural wonders, as well as see first hand some of the human impacts which have become part of island life. During the interpretive program on the island, your guide will help you discover how isolation from the mainland has had a profound effect on all island life. In addition you will be introduced to some of the ongoing research, restoration and preservation efforts of the National Park designed to help protect these unique island resources.

The following are some terms that will be used on your guided hike, and examples you might come across as part of your East Anacapa Island experience.

Native: a species that grows or occurs naturally in California. Furthermore, natives to the Channel Islands include species that were not brought here by humans.

Native giant coreopsis dormant phase



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The giant coreopsis, also known as the giant sunflower tree is a native species. Most of the year it is dormant as seen on the left. After winter rains, the plant sprouts foliage followed by a spectacular bloom of yellow flowers usually in March or April.

Native giant coreopsis in bloom



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Exotic or non-native: a species that has been introduced by man to the island from the adjacent mainland or another area.



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Several species of exotic south African iceplants have been introduced to Anacapa Island. Exotic species such as the iceplant often out compete more delicate native species and take over a large amount of the islands landscape.

Left: sea fig

Right: common iceplant also called crystalline iceplant.



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Island Endemic: a species that grows naturally only on one or more of the Channel Islands.

Below are a few examples of endemic island plants that you might see at Anacapa Island



Animals of Anacapa Island: because Anacapa does not have a source of fresh water, the largest land mammal is a tiny deer mouse. The absence of large land animals makes Anacapa an ideal place for breeding seabirds. If you visit mid-April through June, you can observe various stages of the Western Gull's reproductive cycle.

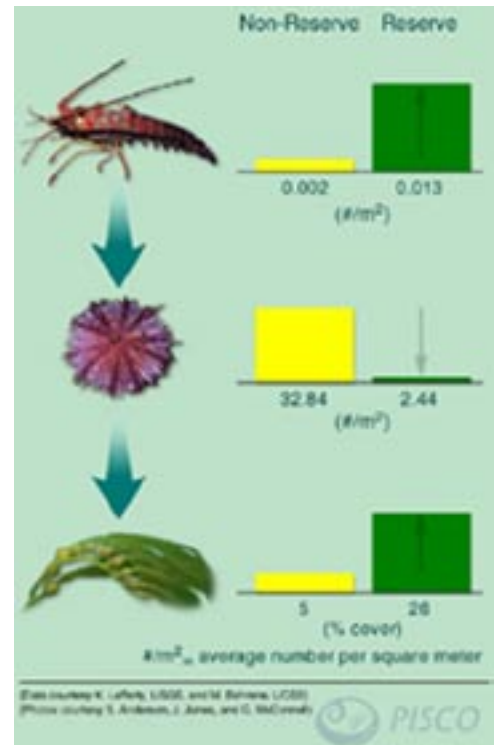


Anacapa is comprised of three small islets. Only the east island is open for topside hiking and exploration. Anacapa is a wilderness area, so whatever you pack in you must also pack out, so bring just what you will actually need during your visit.



Kelp Forest Monitoring at Anacapa Island

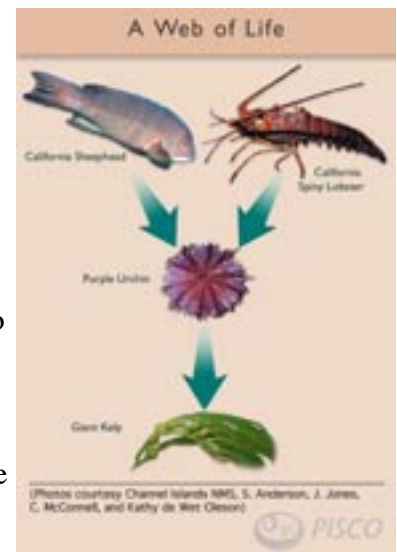
In 1978, the National Park created a special zone known as the Anacapa Natural Area. This was a small zone from the shoreline out to a water depth of 60' along the north shore of East Anacapa where no fishing was allowed. This was the only underwater habitat in the park that received this level of protection, other ocean areas were open to some, or all types of fishing and harvesting of marine life. Park biologists began a long term monitoring program to study the kelp forest in 1980. Biologists collected data from the natural area and other unprotected areas nearby. The results of the data showed that the reserve supported a richer kelp forest ecosystem than the fished areas nearby. Animals in the natural area were larger and more abundant than in fished areas, and the giant kelp forest was five times as dense when compared to other areas nearby. Data also indicated that natural predator prey interactions were important in maintaining the healthy ecosystem observed in the natural area. An example of this relationship was lobster, which prey on young purple urchins, which eat kelp. The abundance of lobsters in the natural area help reduce the urchin population in the protected zone, and therefore more kelp plants grow. Kelp is a crucial habitat for many other species.



New State Marine Protected Areas



In October 2002, the State of California created the West Coast's largest network of marine reserves which is in the Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. There are twelve fully protected zones and two conservation areas totalling 175 square miles. This represents about 10 percent of the Sanctuary waters. The north shore of Anacapa is now both a State Marine Reserve (SMR, from Arch rock to Frenchy's Cove), and a State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA from Frenchy's Cove to the West end). There is no collecting of living organisms in the SMR, and only lobster (seasonally) and pelagic finfish in the SMCA. Prior to these reserves being put into effect in April of 2003, Island Packer (IPCO) divers would collect some subtidal invertebrates to include in our East Anacapa education experience. Though the reserves are open for boating and diving, you are not allowed to remove any animals from their natural habitat. Due to this new limitation concerning collecting areas, IPCO can not guarantee the inclusion of living subtidal animals when visiting the Island. We now include more details on monitoring and research, and have some activities that focus on the life cycle of kelp and food webs in the local ecosystem. *Note: subtidal animals will be included based on daily conditions of open zones.*



Trip Logistics

- Anacapa is about 12 miles from the Channel Islands harbor in Oxnard or about 14 miles from Ventura Harbor. Travel time by boat will vary from under one hour to about one and a half hours. If you are traveling to the islands during the migration of the pacific gray whale (January-March), time on the boat may be extended to look for and observe whales.
- Island Packers recommends that you call: **(805) 642-1393** after 5:30AM on the day of your trip. This number will provide you with confirmation of your scheduled trip, or inform you of any cancellations due to unsafe sea conditions or inclement weather.
- Check your reservation information to confirm the time and location (Oxnard or Ventura) of your departure. Please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to your departure time so you can check in at the office.
- Dress for outdoor activity, wear sturdy closed shoes for both your safety and comfort (no sandals please). This requirement is for safety when climbing the ladder at the pier and the 150+ steps up to the top of the island. Dress in layers for your boat ride, and bring a jacket since it can be cool and breezy even on a sunny day. Sunscreen, or a visor or hat can also make you more comfortable.
- Pack a lunch and beverages, as there are no snack bars on the island, and no running water. Some snacks and beverages can be purchased on the boat. Try to minimize paper and plastic wrappings, as you will have to keep all your waste with you since there are no trash cans or trash services on the island. Anacapa has pit style restrooms .
- Please come to enjoy the isolation and natural beauty of the ocean and the islands. Bring a camera, binoculars or note pad, but leave electronic music and games at home.

We look forward to having you aboard!
www.islandpackers.com 805-642-1393

