



**An Introduction to
Cabrillo National Monument**

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Cabrillo National Monument General Information

Name: Cabrillo National Monument
Address: 1800 Cabrillo Memorial Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
Phone: (619) 523-4285 ITY: (619) 222-8211
Fax: (619) 226-6311 Web: www.nps.gov/cabr/

Hours: 9am to 5pm daily

Fees: Private Autos: \$20 per vehicle, good for seven days
Pedestrians, Bicyclists: \$10 per person, good for seven days
Motorcyclists: \$15 per motorcycle, good for seven days
Annual Pass: \$35
Active Duty Military: Free with ID
Educational Groups: Can get a fee waiver; contact park

Passes: Various passes; some are renewable yearly, others are lifetime
All passes are available at the Entrance Station.
(www.nps.gov/cabr/planyourvisit/fees.htm)

Staff: (All Phone numbers are of the form (619) 523-xxxx)

Superintendent	ext. 4260
Administrative Officer	ext. 4261
Visitor Services Program Manager	ext. 4280
Visitor Resource Protection Supervisor Park Manager	ext. 4270
Facility Management Program Manager	ext. 4265
Resources Management Program Manager	ext. 4290

CNM Non-Profit Entities:

Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP): <https://cnmvipvoice.org/>

Cabrillo National Monument Foundation (CNMF): www.cnmf.org

Partners:

Maritime Museum of San Diego: www.sdmaritime.org

Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CabrilloNPS/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFgWF77neF616bLt-Z7LL-w>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cabrillonps/>



A Brief History of Cabrillo National Monument

Cabrillo National Monument was created by presidential proclamation signed by Woodrow Wilson on October 14, 1913. The monument was established to commemorate the voyage and discoveries of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542-1543. Cabrillo and his men were the first Europeans to explore San Diego Bay and the west coast of what is now the United States.

Mission Statement

The National Park Service at Cabrillo National Monument commemorates Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's voyage of exploration and its significance. NPS protects, preserves and manages the monument's cultural and natural resources and associated values in a manner that leaves them unimpaired while providing a high quality educational and recreational experience for all visitors.

Purpose Statement

The purposes of Cabrillo National Monument as stated in the General Management Plan (1996) are:

- To commemorate the 1542 voyage of exploration and accomplishments of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and communicate this story and its significance to visitors and local residents.
- To preserve, restore, protect, interpret, and enhance the significant cultural and natural resources within and adjacent to the park.
- To provide visitors the opportunity to enjoy one of the great harbor views of the world and to experience and understand the relationships humans have with their land and sea environment.

Significance Statement

The significance of Cabrillo National Monument can be summarized as follows:

- The monument overlooks the first landing site of Europeans on the west coast of what is now the United States of America, and represents an important chapter in the history of Spanish exploration and settlement of North America.
- The significance of the monument is enhanced by the presence of: the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, one of the first eight lighthouses built along the West Coast by the U.S. government in the 1850s; 21 historic structures of the U.S. Army's coastal defense system at Fort Rosecrans that protected the aircraft industry and naval port of San Diego during World War II; one of the best land-based sites from which to watch the annual migration of the Pacific gray whales; one of the few protected and accessible intertidal communities on the Southern California mainland; and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service-designated sensitive coastal sage scrub/maritime succulent scrub habitat that is representative of the Southern California environment.
- The monument further provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy a world-class view

of natural and cultural resources in juxtaposition (military operations, shipping, the city and harbor of San Diego, landforms, wildlife, Mexico and the Pacific Ocean), illustrating the relationship humans have with their environment.

Cabrillo National Monument began with the efforts of a local civic group, the Order of Panama. The group hoped to commemorate the 1542 expedition of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo by erecting a 150-foot statue where the Old Point Loma Lighthouse stands. They obtained permission for the monument when Woodrow Wilson signed the presidential proclamation in 1913. But for unknown reasons the Order of Panama never carried out its plans, allowing the lighthouse to stay intact.

In 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt transferred jurisdiction of Cabrillo National Monument to the National Park Service. CNM was formally dedicated on September 23, 1935, with responsibility for the site placed with the superintendent of Sequoia National Park. In 1956, the monument became an independent entity with its own staff and budget.

The first statue of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was donated to the National Park Service in 1949. Created by Alvaro DeBree, a Portuguese sculptor, the statue stood by the lighthouse until 1966 when it was moved to its current location near the new Visitor Center. When erosion compromised the statue, a replica was created by Charles de Almeida and donated by Mrs. Marion Reupsch. The current statue was dedicated in February 1988.

Today, Cabrillo National Monument encompasses approximately 160 acres located at the southern end of Point Loma. It commemorates the accomplishments of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and much more. It is a place to study and learn about the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, U.S. military history, the Rocky Intertidal area (tidepools), the Coastal Sage Scrub and other Coastal Mediterranean communities, the annual migration of the Pacific gray whales, and the relationships that people have with their environment.

Major Park Themes

The Voyage and Discoveries of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and 16th Century Spanish Exploration

Though it is uncertain whether Cabrillo actually set foot on the land that is now included in the park, his landing site and areas he visited within San Diego Bay are visible from the monument.

The Old Point Loma Lighthouse

The lighthouse operated from 1855 until 1891, when the present Coast Guard lighthouse was built. Today the Old Point Loma Lighthouse is furnished to reflect the 1880s period when it was actively maintained by lighthouse keepers, their assistants and their families.

The Rocky Intertidal Area on the Pacific Coast

The intertidal zone at Cabrillo National Monument is the only federally protected tidepool area on the Southern California coast. It protects a variety of sea life that is considered rare or endangered.

Coastal Sage and Chaparral Ecology

Once the predominant vegetation of the San Diego coast, this ecosystem has now shrunk to remnants of its former size due to development and introduction of non-native plants. The park

preserves a remaining oasis of this ecosystem, one of the most sensitive in the world.

The World War I and II Fortifications and Military Use of Point Loma

Established as a military reserve in 1852, Point Loma remains the site of coast artillery gun batteries and observation lookouts from both world wars.

The Development and Growth of San Diego and the Ongoing Relationships Between People and Their Environment

San Diego was established with the founding of the Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1769 and has grown to become the second largest city in California and the eighth largest in the United States. The view of the city and Pacific Ocean from Cabrillo National Monument affords an outstanding look at the city and the development that has occurred since Cabrillo's arrival, underscoring the intimate relationship between humans and the terrestrial and marine environments.

Visitors to Cabrillo National Monument will find a variety of sites and activities that preserve and interpret these unique elements of the park. As one of more than 400 National Park areas throughout the nation and the only one in San Diego, Cabrillo National Monument holds a valuable place as a major site in the protection of America's cultural and natural heritage.

The Pacific Gray Whale Migration

During the annual migration of the Pacific Gray Whales from their feeding grounds in the Arctic Ocean to their calving lagoons of Baja California, the whales come within sight of visitors at Cabrillo National Monument. Tens of thousands of visitors come to the park during the migration season from late December through early March to catch a glimpse of these enormous sea mammals.

For more information, read:

An Embarrassment of Riches: The Administrative History of Cabrillo National Monument by Susan Collins Lehmann, 1987, available online at <http://www.nps.gov/cabr/historyculture/administrative-history-of-cabrillo-national-monument.htm>

Cabrillo National Monument by Joseph E. Brown, 1981

General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement: Cabrillo National Monument by National Park Service, 1996

A CNM Quick Reference Guide

The following summaries provide you with a quick reference guide to important topics at Cabrillo. Refer to the Cabrillo Reference Manual (e-binder) for more in-depth information.

The Kumeyaay

Prehistory

When the Native Americans' aboriginal ancestors crossed the Bering land bridge (now known as the melted Bering Strait) that connected Russia and Alaska about 15,000 years ago, they were searching for an environment that would allow them to maintain their hunting and gathering lifestyles. The abundance of marine and land resources in what is now known as California encouraged some groups to actualize permanent settlements, and soon the land was able to boast about 500 separate tribes and 90 different languages. Among these California peoples were the Kumeyaay, who inhabited what is now recognized as San Diego County and Imperial County some 12,000 years before European contact.

Masters of the Environment

The Kumeyaay were skilled at creating tools and other goods from their surroundings. At Cabrillo National Monument, we showcase a variety of plants used by these early Point Lomans for medicinal, dietary, hunting, cultural, and decorative items. The Kumeyaay were also skilled manipulators of their natural environment. They created water irrigation systems and regularly practiced burning the land (known as pyro-diversity) to improve the habitat of game animals, to create a healthy soil medium for the next season's grasses and perennials, and to implement in-bulk harvesting techniques.

Life After European Settlement

Though the Kumeyaay and the European explorers practiced friendly trading, nonetheless these native people inevitably suffered a substantial population decrease with the introduction of measles and smallpox. Over the years, the Spanish mission system and the Mexican-American War and Civil War also severely diminished the numbers of Native Americans. However, the Kumeyaay have always been a resilient people and they fought relentlessly to win back their land rights. In 1875, U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant signed a Presidential Executive Order setting aside specific lands—known as the Sycuan Indian Reservation in Dehesa—in San Diego County for the exclusive use and residence of the Kumeyaay. Today, descendants of the Kumeyaay people still live in San Diego on 13 reservations.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo

Early Life

Though there has been considerable uncertainty regarding where or when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was born, virtually all historians consider this explorer a Spaniard because he

had sworn fealty to the Spanish crown, and everything he did was as a Spanish citizen. A conquistador in his youth, Cabrillo's name appears in the ranks of those who served under the famous Hernan Cortes in battles against the Aztecs.

Exploring California

Cabrillo, our park's namesake, led the first European expedition to explore what is now the west coast of the United States. He departed from Navidad, Mexico on June 27, 1542 in search of new trade routes between Central America and the Spice Islands off Asia. Three months later he sailed into "a very good enclosed port" known today as San Diego Bay. Historians believe he anchored his flagship, the San Salvador, on Point Loma's eastern shore behind Ballast Point. He named this port "San Miguel" (a name that was changed to "San Diego" 60 years later by another explorer, Sebastian Vizcaino). His expedition continued north to Monterey Bay but came to a halt due to violent storms. On the journey back, Cabrillo and his crew settled in the Channel Islands for the winter. There, after a fall suffered during a brief skirmish with natives, Cabrillo shattered a limb and died of complications on January 3, 1543.

Legacy

Though Cabrillo's contemporaries considered his expedition a failure, it left behind the first written glimpse of North America's west coast. It also dispelled myths and misconceptions about the land. And, most important, his observations of weather patterns and currents led directly to the start of trans-Pacific trade, what we today call the "Pacific Rim". Our Cabrillo National Monument, both in its name and its statue overlooking the bay, commemorates Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's voyage of discovery.

The San Salvador

The San Salvador was the first recorded European vessel to sail along Southern California, and the first to survey its coastline. Her expedition also established first contact with the area's indigenous people. The San Salvador may be considered the founding ship of San Diego and California. She is an "origin symbol" ship for San Diego in much the same way the Mayflower is the origin symbol ship of New England. Her history represents the beginning of a common story for the people of California, both past and present.

The San Diego Maritime Museum, in partnership with Cabrillo National Monument, built a historically accurate, fully sailable replica of the San Salvador. Construction of the galleon took place on Spanish Landing and was based on meticulous research in the fields of Early Modern Spanish and Portuguese maritime history and maritime archaeology. The ship was officially introduced to the public on Sept. 4, 2015 as part of the Festival of Sail. This newest addition to the museum's fleet is now located at the Maritime Museum docks.

The San Salvador is more than a static museum display. With San Diego as her home port, she sails along the coast of California, visiting cities and towns as a floating education platform for people of all ages.

The Lighthouses

The Old and New Point Loma Lighthouses

California had enjoyed statehood for just a year when the United States Coast Survey party traveled west in 1851 to determine the sites for the first eight west coast lighthouses. At 422 feet above sea level, the tip of Point Loma offered a perfect spot for a lighthouse because the light could be seen from the bay and the ocean. Construction for the historic lighthouse began in 1854 (which also signaled the construction of the first road along the ridge of Point Loma), and was put into service on November 15, 1855.

Though acclaimed as the highest lighthouse in the U.S., its elevation would ironically be its undoing; its light was often obscured by fog and low clouds. A new Point Loma Light Station was established at a lower elevation at Pelican Point in March 1891.

The old lighthouse was boarded up and abandoned. In 1913 the commanding officer at Fort Rosecrans recommended the lighthouse be torn down. But because of the magnificent view from the tower, the lighthouse was still quite popular with tourists. A major 'life-saving' historic rehabilitation of the lighthouse was undertaken between 1933-1935, when Cabrillo National Monument integrated with the National Park Service. In 1966, the lighthouse was restored and refurbished to reflect the lifestyle of a class of people who consistently demonstrated a sense of dedication and responsibility to what was truly a 24/7 job.

Military History

Fort Rosecrans

In 1848, when the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American war, Ballast Point and all of Point Loma passed into the hands of the United States. In 1852, President Millard Fillmore set aside the Point Loma reservation for military use, though it remained a squatter haven and whaling community for another 18 years. During the Spanish-American War in 1898, the military reservation was named Fort Rosecrans after Civil War general and California politician William Starke Rosecrans. With its establishment as a military station, Point Loma remained the site of coast artillery gun batteries and observation lookouts for both world wars. Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery is located on the grounds of the former coastal artillery station. Although Fort Rosecrans is not an official part of Cabrillo National Monument, it is a vital part of the military history of the area.

The World Wars

During World Wars I and II, the construction of emplacements for Coast Defense Artillery and observation bunkers served as a protective ring around the harbor. Specifically during World War II, the monument was closed to the public and was not reopened to visitors until November 11, 1946. The military used the old lighthouse as a signal station. In World War II the lighthouse, like the rest of Point Loma, was under blackout restrictions. The soldiers placed black tar paper on all the windows if they

wanted to turn on any lights. And the lighthouse, dwellings and sidewalks were painted an olive drab to make them less visible during the day. When World War II ended, Fort Rosecrans remained an active military post. However, the land surrounding the old Point Loma lighthouse was returned to the National Park Service, and the Navy was put in charge of all other facilities. Today, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery serves as a namesake of the legacy of the coastal artillery station.

Point Loma's Geology

Geologic History

About 70 million years ago, the area that would later become Point Loma would virtually be ocean waters about 3,500 feet deep. When this peninsula was beneath the water, it was at the end of a giant submarine canyon. You can think of it as the mouth of a river, where flowing sand traveled down the canyon in the shape of a fan and found its final resting place; each layer represents some underwater event that caused sand deposits. Over time, due to receding ocean levels and fault movement, the Point Loma peninsula was lifted out of the ocean and it continues to slowly rise today. It has lifted at an angle, so the west side of the peninsula is actually tilted up out of the water more than the east side.

Tidepools

Uneven erosion from wind, waves, and currents leave depressions in rocks that fill with seawater. Twice a day, low tides will usually expose these tidepools, which serve as homes and nurseries for many marine species.

Point Loma's Climate

Climate Versus Weather

Our San Diego region boasts a moderate and subtropical climate, where the average annual temperature is 63 degrees Fahrenheit, and mean rainfall measures 10 inches. January is the coolest and rainiest month, while June, July, and August are the hottest and driest months. However, as predictable as the climate can be, San Diego's weather is a bit of a different story. In fact, variability is an important facet of San Diego's weather (and that of Point Loma). Therefore, it is important to check weather forecasts when planning visits.

Importance of Wildfire Prevention

The dry climate, frequent high winds, and fire-prone coastal sage scrub habitat make Cabrillo National Monument susceptible to wildfire. Whether started by a carelessly dropped cigarette, lightning, a spreading structural fire, or arson, a wild land fire has the potential to spread quickly and jeopardize public safety and park facilities.

Summertime Catalina Eddy

During the summer, the marine layer thickens at night and dissolves during the day. On occasion, this fog doesn't disappear during the daytime, and this can be attributed to the Catalina Eddy—an upper-level airflow that travels from the Catalina Islands and thickens

and spreads clouds and fog by the time it reaches inland San Diego.

Rocky Intertidal Area

Tidepool Zonation and Creatures

Tidepools provide a home for many animals. They are created by the changing water level, or tides. The high-energy waves make this a harsh habitat, but the animals living here have adapted over time. When the earth, sun and moon align during the full and new moon we have extreme high and low tides. Generally, there are two high tides and two low tides a day. Most often the Cabrillo intertidal zone is accessible during a low-low tide from October to May (during park hours).

There are three zones within the tidepools: the high zone, the middle zone, and the low zone. The process of evolution has determined where the animals can live and thrive. The tidepools at Cabrillo are protected and have been monitored by the National Park Service since 1990. You may notice bolts in the rocky intertidal; these are used to assist scientists in gathering data to monitor changes.

High Zone: The high zone is covered by the highest tides. Often this area is only sprayed by the crashing waves. The animals that live here must endure a long time without water as well as high wave energy and human disturbance.

Middle Zone: The middle zone is covered by the highest tides and exposed by the lowest tides. The animals here are adapted to live in and out of water.

Low Zone: The low zone is only uncovered by the lowest tides. Animals here are submerged in water most of the time. Some of the animals in this zone like to hide under surfgrass because it provides shelter and refuge against higher rates of predation.

CNM Tidepool Management Zones

CNM created tidepool boundary areas around the tip of the Point Loma Peninsula into:

- Zone 1 – directly at the end of the tidepool path from Parking Lot 1; most visited, most area uncovered at higher tides
- Zone 2 – starts approximately at south end of Zone 1 bay and ends at the Coast Guard boundary; only uncovered during low tides
- Zone 3: closed to public; extends around entire tip of peninsula; used as a control area for research; one of the TPERP's (Tidepool Protection, Education and Research Program) prime missions is to protect Zone 3



Photograph showing the three different management zones

Commonly observed tidepool life

Mussels, Barnacles, Owl Limpet, Key Hole Limpet, Chiton, Shore Crab, Hermit Crab, Kelp Crab, Tegula Snail, Sea Urchin, Knobby Sea Star, Anemones, Octopus, Brittle Star, Moray Eel, Sea Hare, Nudibranchs, Sea Grass, Kelp, Feather Boa Kelp, Sea Lettuce, Sculpin, Garibaldi, Opal Eye

Coastal Sage Scrub and Chaparral

The power of sunlight plays a huge role in the plant communities here at Cabrillo National Monument. The park can be divided into two main plant communities. The first community, called Coastal Sage Scrub, is populated by small plants that only grow to a height of 3 feet. The plants tend to be spread out and brown dirt is often seen in these areas. This community is usually found on southern facing slopes. Here the sun shines directly on everything for most of the day.

Chaparral, the second community, is categorized by woody shrubs that can grow to 8 feet. These shrubs grow close together with little bare ground between plants. This

community is usually found on northern facing slopes where the sun does not shine directly and there is more shade. As you look around the park try to notice the differences. Where the plants are tall and it would be close to impossible to walk through them, this is the Chaparral.

The Coastal Sage Scrub is our most sensitive habitat. The plants here are fighting to stay alive and you can help them most by staying on the paths and letting these special plants have a chance of survival. Once the predominant vegetation of the San Diego coast, this ecosystem has now shrunk to remnants of its former size due to development and introduction of non-native plants. The park preserves a remaining oasis of this ecosystem, one of the most sensitive in the world.

Commonly observed terrestrial vegetation

Snake cholla, prickly pear cactus, Mojave yucca, Shaw's agave, California coast poppy, Indian paintbrush, California buckwheat, California sagebrush, and lemonadeberry

Snakes and Amphibians at Cabrillo

Cabrillo National Monument is home to 12 species of herptiles – six species of snakes, five species of lizards, and one amphibian, the garden slender salamander.

Long-term monitoring of these species began in 1995 by Dr. Robert Fisher (SDSU, then USGS), as part of a larger scale study of herptile species in Southern California. Because the Point Loma peninsula is island-like (surrounded on three sides by ocean, and to the north, cut off by development), and due to their limited home ranges, these animals are extremely susceptible to population decline and extirpation (no longer existing in a particular area where they historically were found). In fact, eight reptile species have already been extirpated from the peninsula: Coronado island skink, red diamond rattlesnake, yellow-bellied racer, coast horned lizard, red coachwhip, two-striped gartersnake, California glossy snake, and the Western long-nosed snake.

Commonly observed terrestrial vertebrates

Western fence lizard, Side blotched lizard, Southern Pacific rattlesnake *(our only venomous species. If you are lucky enough to see one, please give it some room, take a photograph, and report the location to a ranger), Desert cottontail, California ground squirrel, Orange-throated whiptail lizard, Striped racer, San Diego gopher snake, San Diego alligator lizard, California kingsnake

Birds at Cabrillo

Point Loma and Cabrillo National Monument are well known in the birding community as premiere bird watching spots in San Diego. The bird checklist for both the monument and Point Loma peninsula lists 346 species, with over 200 spotted at Cabrillo National Monument alone.

A stop on the Pacific Flyway, migrant species use the peninsula as a resting place or when lost or disoriented. Raptors use Point Loma as a landmark during the peak of their migrations, and some, like the red-tail hawk, make their home here year-round. The rocky shoreline on Point Loma's western side is the only place in San Diego where black oystercatchers are regulars, and Brant's cormorants roost in large numbers on Point Loma's cliffs.

Commonly observed birds (year-round residents)

California quail, California thrasher, California brown pelican, Western gull, Snowy egret, California towhee, Peregrine falcon, Spotted towhee, Anna's hummingbird, Osprey

Marine Mammals, Featuring the Pacific Gray Whales

An assortment of marine mammals such as dolphins and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) can be seen from the cliffs of Cabrillo National Monument. The occasional seal or sea lion might even be caught sunbathing on a rock ledge or looking for food around the shallow tidepools. Respect these wild animals by maintaining a cautious distance and never approach them. All marine mammals are protected under Federal law.

By far the largest mammals in the Point Loma area are the Pacific gray whales, which pass by on epic annual migrations between December and March. At 45 feet long and 33 tons, these impressive marine mammals spend summers feeding in the cool, northern waters of the Chukchi and Bering seas. In early autumn, gray whales head south along the west coast for Mexico, a 5,000-mile trip one way, the longest migration of any mammal on earth.

For 40 to 60 years, a gray whale will continue this pattern. This predictability made them easy targets for hunters, who harvested the animals nearly to extinction in the 19th century. Gray whales have been protected from exploitation by the International Whaling Commission since 1946.

The Relationships Between People and Their Environment

At Cabrillo National Monument, you will have many opportunities to help protect and interpret the unique elements of the park. From the world-class views to the cultural and natural resources, you can help visitors understand the unique and intimate relationship we have with our environment.

Seasons of Cabrillo

Winter (November through February)

1. Low tides become more common
2. Whale migration
3. Winter birds become more noticeable
4. Beginning of San Diego storm season
5. The "greening" of Cabrillo NM as plants respond to the rain.
6. Popping season for harbor seals and sea lions.
7. Best time of the year for sunset pictures from inside the monument
8. Two of the peak attendance periods occur (Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays)

Spring (March through May)

1. Spring flowers such as Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and California Sea Dahlia (*Coreopsis maritima*) bloom. The dominant early flowers are yellow.
2. Bird activity picks up. Breeding, chick-raising, northern migration.
3. Best sunset pictures can be taken from Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery

Summer (June through August)

1. Mid- to late season plants bloom. Yellow flowers go past their peak, red/purple/white flowers become dominant.
2. Dry weather becomes prevailing pattern.
3. Not a good season for tide pool viewing due to lack of tides low enough for exposure.

Fall (Sept. through October)

1. Bird migration begins
2. Hurricane season in western Mexico
3. School year begins, park attendance tends to go down.
4. Anniversary of Cabrillo's arrival in San Diego Bay (Sept. 28, 1542)
5. Cabrillo Festival takes place on Ballast Point on the closest Saturday to Sept. 28th



Cabrillo National Monument FAQS

How big is the park?

The park comprises approximately 160 acres.

Where is the monument?

All the grounds of Cabrillo National Monument comprise the monument. The Cabrillo statue is southeast of the Visitor Center, to the east of the traffic circle.

How many people visit Cabrillo National Monument each year?

Over 845,000 people visited CNM in calendar year 2024.

Who was Cabrillo?

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was the first European to explore and chart the west coast of North America.

How do you pronounce "Cabrillo"?

The common pronunciation is "Ca-bree-yo". The Portuguese pronunciation is "Ca-breel-yew" and is spelled "Cabrilho".

How do we get to the Bayside Trail?

Exit breezeway outside the Visitors Center and follow the sidewalk to your left up the hill. A sign is posted on the left just before you reach the old lighthouse.

How long and high is the Coronado Bay Bridge?

The bridge is about 2.5 miles long and about 230 feet high.

Can we see Mexico from here?

Yes, you can see Mexico from CNM – if it's clear enough point it out to the visitor (looking southeast across San Diego Bay). It is about 17 miles as the crow flies or about 25 miles via Interstate 5.

Where are the public rest rooms?

There are four rest rooms: one outside the visitor center to the right, one behind and down the hill from the old lighthouse, one behind the Lighthouses of Point Loma exhibit, and one on the path that leads down to the tidepools.

Where are the drinking fountains?

There are two; one is next to the rest rooms outside the Visitor Center to the right and the other one is behind the old lighthouse. There is also a water bottle filling station next to the rest rooms outside the Visitor Center.

Where may we eat our lunch?

You may picnic on benches, rock walls, and people-used areas. Clean up after yourself and do not feed the animals.

Why are there no trashcans visible in the park?

Cabrillo National Monument has a “Pack-it-in, Pack-it-out” policy. Whatever you bring into the park you need to take out with you when you leave. There are trashcans in the rest rooms if necessary.

May we have beer or wine here?

Yes, for ages 21 and over. Intoxication is not permitted. Please drink responsibly.

Do you have a restaurant?

No, we only have vending machines located down the breezeway, past the auditorium on the right.

Can you recommend a good restaurant?

Note: Government employees may not recommend, but Park Partners may.

Is smoking allowed in the park?

No. Cabrillo National Monument is a smoke-free park.

Are dogs allowed in the park?

Dogs are only allowed on the tidepool path and must be on a 6-foot (or less) leash at all times. Owners must pick up after their dogs. Dogs are not allowed outside the vehicle in the upper section of the park, and they must not be left in vehicles when temperatures are warm.

Where is the Old Point Loma Lighthouse?

It's a 5 minute walk from the Visitor Center. Walk to the traffic circle and follow the sidewalk to the left and up the hill.

May we drive to the Old Point Loma Lighthouse?

No, unless you or someone with you is unable to walk there. A handicap placard will work. If a disabled visitor does not have a placard then we will give them a temporary permit at the Visitor Center.

When was the road to the lighthouse closed, and why?

The road was closed in 1972 because there were too many cars, which distracted from the visitor's experience.

Why can't visitors go up to the lighthouse tower?

We limit availability to the tower for safety and preservation of the lighthouse (narrow openings, narrow stairway, and fragile glass). However, the tower is open to the public on three special dates each year: March 22, the date the lighthouse was taken out of service (1891); August 25, the National Park Service's Founder's Day (1916); and November 15, the date the lighthouse was placed into service (1855).

May we visit the new lighthouse?

No. It is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard and is not open to the public. However, you can get a good view of the new lighthouse from the Kelp Forest Overlook.

When do the Pacific gray whales migrate?

The whales migrate to Baja California, Mexico from late December through mid-March.

Where is the best place to view the whales?

The best places are: from the Kelp Forest Overlook just south of the old lighthouse, from behind the old lighthouse, and from Ocean View parking.

Can we walk to the ocean from the Visitor Center?

No. The Bayside Trail (on the east) will bring you about 100 feet from the shore, but with no safe access to the water. To get to the tidepool area (on the west) it is recommended that you drive, because there are no shoulders along the road. In fact, we do not recommend that pedestrians and school groups walk this road.

Are there rest rooms or water on the Bayside Trail or in the tidepool area?

There are no rest rooms or water on the Bayside Trail. There are rest rooms (but no water fountain) at the entrance to the trail leading down to the tidepools.

What are the islands south of here?

They are Las Islas Coronados (the Coronado Islands) and are part of Mexico. They are an important brown pelican roosting area, as well as a breeding area for seals and sea lions. Mexican soldiers patrol the area to guard against trespassers.

Some of the non-native plants visitors ask about are -

Indian Hawthorn, Lily of the Nile, African Daisy, Bottlebrush, Geraniums, Monterey Cypress...

How many graves are at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery?

Over 101,000. The cemetery is closed to new interments. Visitation hours are Monday thru Friday from 8am to 4:30pm and Saturday and Sunday from 9:30am to 5pm.

How long has the cemetery been around?

Interments date back to 1882. Fort Rosecrans became a National Cemetery on October 5, 1934. The cemetery comprises about 77.5 acres. Because of his service in the Mexican War, Robert Israel, the last lighthouse keeper for the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, is buried at the cemetery. <http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftrosecrans.asp>

When is the best time to visit the tidepools?

During the months of mid-October through mid-May one to two hours before low tide. Tide levels of +0.7 or less are optimal for viewing critters. Groups of 10 people or more need a tidepool permit. Please call 619-557-5450 ext. 4589 to check availability for a tidepool permit.

How high is high tide?

Tides are caused by the interaction of the moon, the sun, and the earth. In this area, we have two high and two low tides each day (a higher low, a lower low, a higher high, and a lower high). The difference between high and low tide varies throughout the year with the phase of the moon, the declination of the sun and moon, and a number of other astronomical forces. The difference is usually 5 to 6 feet, although it can be as great as 9.7 feet.

How can tides be negative? What is a 0 tide?

Tides are measured from a standard mark, called the mean low low-water mark. This is the average value for the lower of the two low tides for our area over many years. This average is assigned a value of 0. So if a tide is -1.0 feet, it is one foot below the average low low tide. If a tide is $+1.0$ feet, it is one foot above the average low low tide. We usually consider negative low tides to be ideal conditions for tidepooling.

What are tidepools? What is there to see?

As the tide changes from high to low, some water gets trapped in little pools called tidepools. These tidepools and the rocks found around them are home to many types of animals and plant life, including:

Molluscs: snails, limpets, chitons, sea hares, nudibranchs, octopuses...

Arthropods: barnacles, crabs, shrimp, lobster, rock lice...

Cnidarians: anemones, jellyfish...

Echinoderms: brittle stars, sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers...

Algae: kelps (brown algae), green algae, red algal turf...

Birds: gulls, terns, egrets, turnstones, willets, sandpipers...

What causes the holes in the rocks?

Most of the round holes are caused by boring molluscs (as in “making holes in things”, not as in “uninteresting”). Chitons will bore into rocks and create little crevices that they fit into perfectly. Over time, some of these little pits and holes will collect water that becomes acidic, causing the rock to erode further. This process eventually leads to the formation of tidepools.

What is this black stuff? Why is it here?

Most of the black splotches you find on rocks are actually red algae that have encrusted. Some of the splotches are tar, which comes from natural oil seeps (not human pollution problems).

Regardless of whether it is algae or tar, splotches are usually quite slick, and caution should be taken if you try to walk over them.

Why can't we take rocks and shells?

The NPS aims to protect and preserve the resource for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Many animals and plants use shells and shell fragments as their homes or as camouflage (hermit crabs and sea anemones are the obvious examples). Rocks are also used as places to attach or as protective hiding places. If every one of the thousands of visitors to the tidepools took a single rock or shell, it wouldn't take long for the tidepool area to be totally stripped.

Where are sea stars?

Southern California is not an area known for its rich intertidal echinoderm populations. The pictures of rocks crawling with sea stars that we commonly see are probably taken farther north. However, in the past decade we have seen an alarming decrease in the number of echinoderms in the intertidal, including the near disappearance of ochre sea stars from Cabrillo National Monument. The disappearance could be due to a number of factors, including disease, increasing water temperatures, or over-collection for souvenirs.

What are the park boundaries in the tidepools?

The National Park Service manages the area from the Point Loma Waste Water Treatment Plant on the west side, past the new lighthouse to the Navy's submarine base on the east side. The protected marine preserve extends 300 yards from shore on the west side.

Is fishing allowed?

No.

Can I take home a souvenir from the tidepools?

You may take pictures and memories home with you. Everything else must remain so the next visitor can enjoy it or one of the critters can use it.

Can I surf here if I come in by boat?

If surfers arrive by boat, they must remain far enough away so as not to interfere with tidepool visitors or cause damage to the resource. Always contact a ranger if surfers arrive in a vehicle to surf in the area.

Surfing is prohibited in the tidepool areas because the tidepools are the primary resource in this area of the park. The visitor's ability to enjoy them should not be compromised by damage inflicted by surfers or by surfers interfering with people in the tidepools. Also, the National Park Service cannot assume liability for surfers injured in the tidepools.

Can we dive here?

No, for many of the same reasons surfing is not allowed.

Are jet skis allowed in the park?

No. The noise detracts from visitors' enjoyment and the two-stroke engines add lots of unburned fuel to the water. Contact a patrol ranger and try to write down the registration number on the craft whenever you see a jet ski within the park boundaries. Boats and jet skis must stay at least 300 yards from low mean tide.

Why do the tidepools close so early?

The monument occupies one small portion (approximately 160 acres) of Point Loma. The Navy occupies most of the peninsula and their security concerns supersede our own. In order to get everyone out of the park by 5pm, we need to get people out of the tidepools around 4:30.

Why is smoking not allowed in the tidepool area?

Even though it's outside, the environment is too sensitive for tobacco to be left as litter to filter into the tidepools. Crushed cigarettes are unsightly and potentially dangerous to the marine environment.

What if I see a dead or stranded animal?

The park keeps statistics on dead animals within its boundaries. It also has a stranded marine animal SOP. Call a ranger if you encounter either situation.

What's the fastest way to learn about the tidepools?

Watch the movie in the auditorium *On the Edge of Land and Sea: The Tidepools of Cabrillo National Monument* and ask a TPERP!

Where are other tidepool areas?

Sunset Cliffs and La Jolla

Is it tide pool or tidepool? And mollusk or mollusc?

Although many references separate tidepool into two words, the official ‘brand’ (and preferred term) at Cabrillo National Monument is tidepool. Mollusc can be spelled either with a ‘c’ or a ‘k’, but here at Cabrillo we prefer the ‘c’.

Where are the dolphin tanks?

The area just south of the tidepool parking lot once had dolphin tanks used by the Navy for training dolphins. In 1980 the animals were transferred to the other side of the peninsula and are now adjacent to the submarine base.

What are the buildings next to the tidepool parking lot used for?

These buildings belong to the Navy and the work done there is related to software engineering (to the best of our knowledge).

Is Cabrillo a celebrity?

Yes! CNM has been used for many commercials (especially for cars and motorcycles) as well as movies and TV shows. Here are three movies that include a snippet of CNM:

The Bandit of Point Loma (1912) with Marshal Neilon and Jessalyn Van Trump

Dive Bomber (1941) with Errol Flynn and Fred MacMurray

Top Gun (1986) with Tom Cruise and Tom Skerritt

There were at least two TV shows:

California's Gold with Huell Howser in the rocky intertidal 2004

California's Gold with Huell Howser on Cabrillo's Ship

And several You Tube videos -- see if you recognize anyone:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=cabrillo+national+monument&oq=Cabr%09ill+Nat&gs_l=youtube.1.0.0.690.11386.0.13196.7.6.0.1.1.0.116.576.5j1.6.0...0.0.UwRy%09voFAaT8

Junior Rangers

Cabrillo National Monument

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Volunteers-In-Parks Program
Cabrillo National Monument



Photo and information from the Cabrillo National Monument webpage:

<http://www.nps.gov/cabr/>

The Junior Ranger Program is a free and fun way to learn more about the park and earn a badge.

Junior Ranger materials are available in the park from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily.

The Cabrillo Junior Ranger Program must be completed on-site.

How to get started:

- Request materials from a park ranger or volunteer in the Visitor Center.
- If the welcome desk is unstaffed between the hours listed, please call 619-523-4285 to request Junior Ranger materials.
- A park ranger or volunteer will explain the program, hand out the Junior Ranger activity papers and badges, and lead the Junior Ranger oath.
- Parents and guardians will be deputized with the authority to give the badge to their kids upon completion of the required Junior Ranger activities.

A Word About Community Outreach

Each year, Cabrillo National Monument strives to remind the public about our fantastic park by participating in a number of community outreach opportunities.

These opportunities can be at large festivals that draw thousands of people over two or three days, such as the Festival of Sail, Whale Days, or the Cabrillo Festival; or they can be at much smaller events (such as the San Diego Museum Council's Museum Mash Up) that last just a few hours.

Depending on the event, CNM will be represented by rangers, rangers and VIPs, or just VIPs.



We'll set up a booth or a table at the venue with the appropriate National Park Service branding materials as well as promotional materials specific to CNM. We'll often bring some interactive materials—such as whale bones, replica tidepool critters, or 16th Century armor—so visitors to our display can have a better understanding of what CNM is all about.



Events tailored toward children may have more age-appropriate activities, such as coloring, cut-outs, button-making, or Junior Ranger program information.

Part of the responsibility of participating in a community outreach opportunity involves assisting with the set-up and tear-down of our table, signs, displays, and tents/awnings.

Aside from the obvious perk of sharing Cabrillo National Monument with guests, volunteering at some of the larger festivals may include other perks as well. At the Festival of Sail, CNM volunteers have typically been granted admission to the San Diego Maritime Museum free of charge on the day they're volunteering.

If you are interested in representing Cabrillo National Monument at a community outreach opportunity, please let your interest be known to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Annual Events at Cabrillo National Monument

Cabrillo National Monument offers a range of special events throughout the year, providing unique opportunities to engage with the park's history, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Here is an overview of our annual events:

January

Whale Watching Season

Join us for an exciting whale-watching adventure as we try to spot Pacific Gray Whales on their annual migration.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Enjoy a Fee-Free Day in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

March 22

[Open Tower Day](#)

Step back in time as we celebrate the anniversary of the extinguishing of the light of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse. This is one of only three days each year when the lighthouse tower is open to the public.

April

First Day of National Parks Week

Celebrate the first day of National Parks Week with free admission to all National Parks.

August 25

[Founder's Day, Open Tower Day](#)

Celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service with another opportunity to access the tower of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse.

September

[Cabrillo Festival](#)

The annual Cabrillo Festival commemorates the voyage of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. It was put on hold during the pandemic and has yet to resume. Find more information on the Cabrillo Festival page.

November

Veteran's Day

Enjoy a Fee-Free Day in honor of Veteran's Day.

November 15

[Open Tower Day](#)

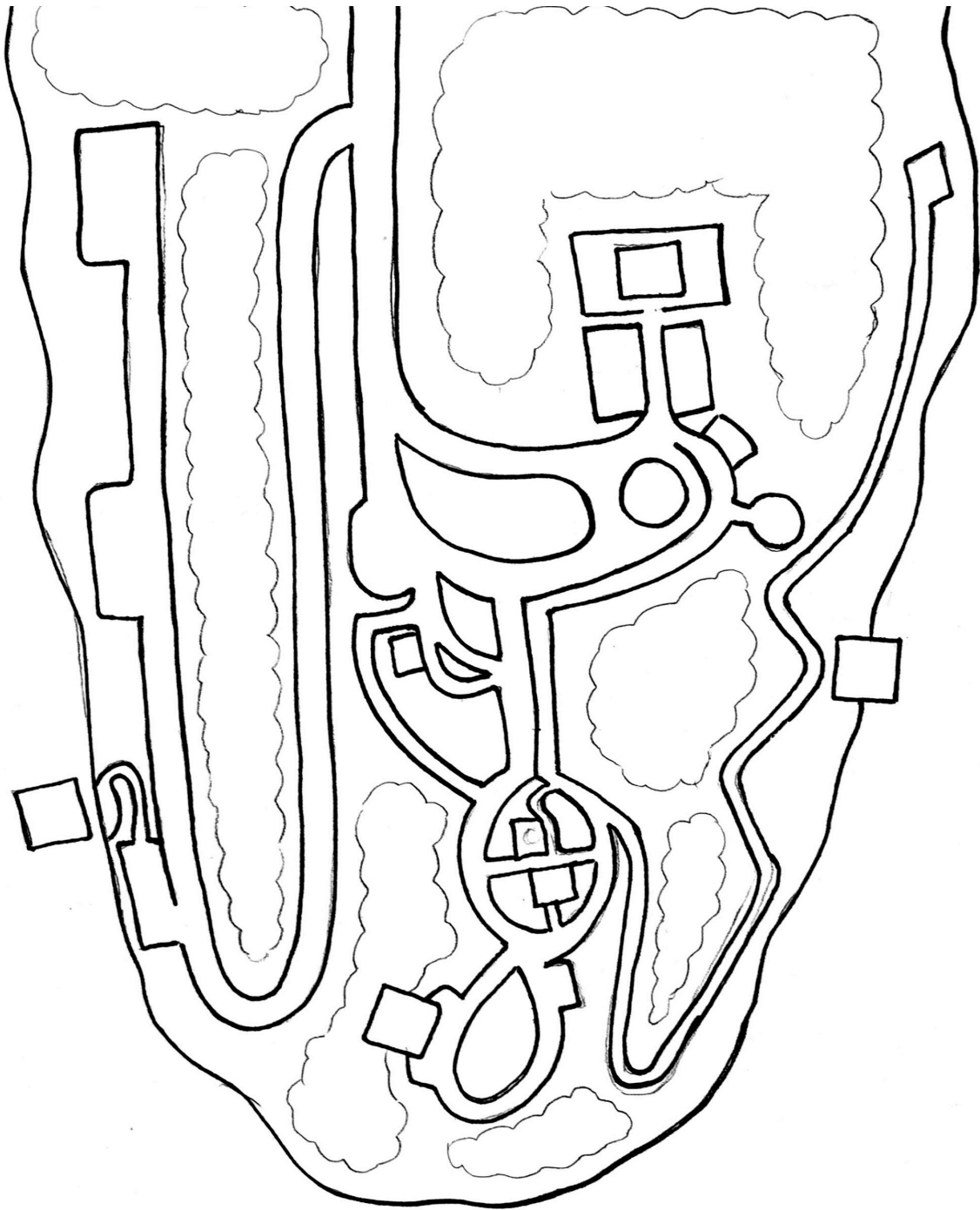
Celebrate the anniversary of the lighting of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse on November 15. This is the third and final day each year when the lighthouse tower is open to the public.

These events offer unique opportunities to learn about and appreciate the rich history and natural beauty of Cabrillo National Monument. Check our website or contact the Visitor Center for more information and updates.



Features of Cabrillo National Monument





Where in the Park are You? See if you can remember where everything is (if not, refer to the previous map). This map courtesy of Ranger Amanda Gossard.

**CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT
Organization Chart**

Superintendent

**Division of
Administration**

**Division of
Facilities
Management**

**Division of
Interpretation
and Education**

**Division of
Resource and
Visitor Protection**

**Division of
Natural and
Cultural Resource
Management &
Science**

Administration Officer

*Facility Management
Program Manager*

*Visitor Services
Program Manager*

*Visitor Resource
Protection Supervisor
Park Ranger*

*Resources
Management Program
Manager*