



Young elephant seals napping  
At right: adult male elephant seal



pups, battling and mating on the beach up the road from San Simeon Bay at scenic vista points on the coast side of Highway 1.

#### Plants

Native plant communities include riparian, wetland, Monterey pine forest, oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coastal strand and grassland. Look for willow, coast live oak, cottonwood, wax myrtle, blackberry bushes and a great display of seasonal wildflowers. Take a hike through the Monterey pine forest—one of only five native groups left in the world—on the Hearst San Simeon State Park Nature Trail, reachable from the campground and the Washburn day-use area.

The park is home to rare and endangered plants, including maritime ceanothus, dwarf goldenstars, Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita, adobe sanicle, Hickman's onion, Blochman's dudleya and Arroyo de la Cruz mariposa lily. Prairie grasslands are among the area's native plant communities.



Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita

#### AREA HISTORY

##### Native People

Archaeological evidence suggests that ancestors of today's Chumash and Salinan people inhabited this part of the coast for thousands of years, adapting to climatic and environmental changes. They traveled from the coast to the interior valleys, following the abundant marine and terrestrial resources. Their diet included fish, shellfish, wild game, waterfowl and the grasses and seeds found inland. Clothing, shelter and tools were made from resources available in the immediate area; the natives traded other goods for those goods that could not be procured or produced locally.

##### Settlement and Enterprise

In 1769 the first European overland expedition, led by Gaspar de Portolá, made its way up the coast of California, clearing the way for Spanish missionaries. The mission system brought drastic, permanent change in the lifeways of the indigenous people, who now had to adopt new means of subsistence.

Local missions included Mission San Antonio de Padua (1771), with an outpost at San Carpoforo Creek; Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (1772), within 50 miles of San Simeon; and Mission San Miguel Archangel (1779), with an outpost at San Simeon.

The typical mission landscape included ranch

stations, aqueducts, quarries, kilns, crop lands and grazing. In some areas entire native plant communities were destroyed by the heavy grazing of mission livestock.

In 1833 Mexican government officials gave out the newly secularized mission holdings as land grants. They divided the former mission properties into three ranchos: Piedra Blanca, Santa Rosa, and San Simeon. Cattle ranching was still the major enterprise, as it had been during the mission period.

Taking advantage of the annual gray whale migration between Baja California and Alaska, Portuguese whaler Joseph Clark established a whaling station at San Simeon Bay in 1852. From December to April, whale spotters on the bluffs watched for the white plumes of spray as a whale surfaced. Small boats were then launched to capture the whale and haul it into the station for processing. At the peak of the whaling period, forty-five buildings—including a general store, a blacksmith shop, a barbershop and a saloon—stood at San Simeon, and twenty-two families lived on the point. The whaling station's general store is the only building dating back to San Simeon's whaling days.

##### San Simeon

Roads into this remote section of the coast were almost nonexistent until about 1850. Sailing vessels and steamships stopped at San Simeon to deliver freight and load cargoes of mining and agricultural equipment for delivery to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Around 1850 the horse trail between San Simeon and San Luis Obispo

was expanded, allowing small carts to take agricultural products to San Simeon for shipment. However, the trail was passable only seasonally, and shipping by steamer continued for another twenty years.

Later, gasoline-powered trucks and railroad service to San Luis Obispo brought about changes in shipping patterns. By 1915 the practice of shipping by steamer had ended. In 1937 the highway now known as California State Route One was completed.

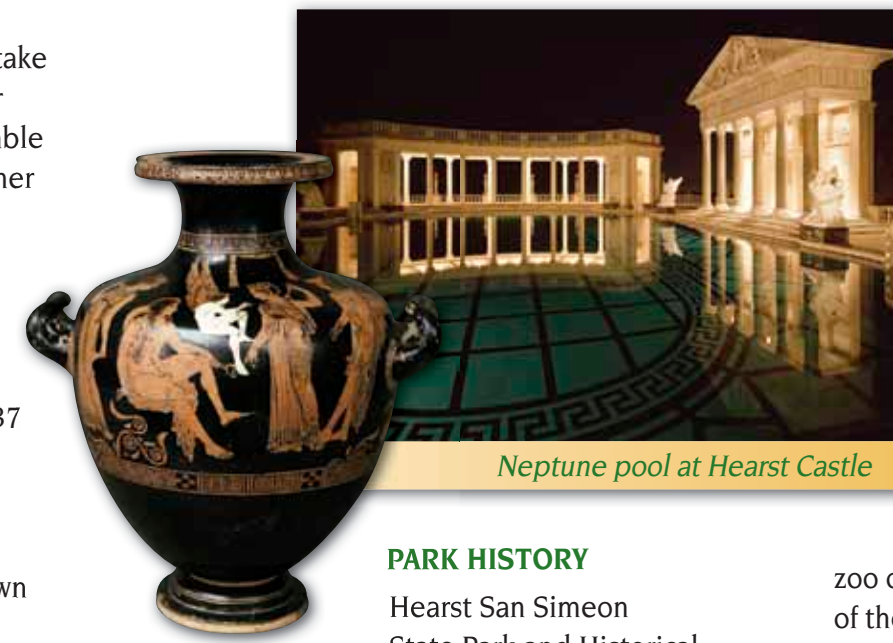
##### The Hearst Family

In 1850 Missourian George Hearst, drawn by the gold rush, arrived in California with a degree in mining.



George Hearst

He staked several mining claims throughout the West. Although Hearst managed several other types of businesses around the state, he made his fortune mining the Comstock, Homestake, Ontario and Anaconda mines. In 1865 Hearst began acquiring the land that would become the Hearst Ranch, where he raised cattle and race horses. That year Mr. Hearst became a member of the California State Assembly, and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1886. When he died in 1891, his wife Phoebe Apperson Hearst inherited Rancho Piedra Blanca, later adding more property that had once been the whaling station. The Hearsts' only child, William Randolph, inherited the ranch property upon Phoebe's death in 1919.



Neptune pool at Hearst Castle

Greek hydria, 5th century B.C.

##### PARK HISTORY

Hearst San Simeon State Park and Historical Monument were both part of a rancharia during the mission era—an

access point for goods shipped to and from Monterey's Mission San Antonio. In 1932 the State acquired more than 500 acres of beach and inland parcels from local ranchers to establish the state park. The Washburn Day-Use Area was a gravel quarry until the late 1920s, before it became a part of the park.

In 2005 the Hearst Corporation donated 1,131 additional acres, expanding the California Coastal Trail and protecting this exceptional example of California's biological diversity, natural and cultural resources and unmatched scenery.

##### HEARST CASTLE®

Hearst Castle was the historic estate of William Randolph Hearst—newspaper publisher, movie producer and art collector.

Built on a hilltop in San Simeon overlooking the Pacific Ocean, "La Cuesta Encantada" was the creation of Mr. Hearst and world-renowned architect Julia Morgan. Construction began in 1919 and continued until 1947.

The Mediterranean Revival-style home houses a collection of art from all over the world. In addition to his fine arts collection, William Randolph Hearst established landscaped gardens and a private

zoo on the property. Descendants of some of the zoo animals, including zebras, can sometimes be seen today grazing on the green hillsides. During the 1920s and 1930s, famous guests arrived at this magnificent country house by car, train and airplane.

Donated to the State in December 1957 by the Hearst Corporation, the estate was opened to the public on June 2, 1958. Hearst Castle, an accredited member of the American Association of Museums, offers guided, year-round tours. Call (800) 444-4445 or visit [www.hearstcastle.com](http://www.hearstcastle.com) for reservations.

##### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to Hearst Castle tours, the Hearst Castle Visitor Center, and the Coastal Discovery Center, park activities include camping, hiking, picnicking, beach walking, windsurfing, kayaking, fishing, surfing, viewing elephant seals and tidepooling. For camping reservations, call 800-444-7275, or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

*"I love this ranch. It is wonderful. I love the sea and I love the mountains and the hollows in the hills and the shady places in the creeks and the fine old oaks and even the hot brushy hillsides . . . I would rather spend a month here than any place in the world."*

-William Randolph Hearst, in a letter to his mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst.

#### Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks 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 (805) 927-2035. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

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[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

Discover the many states of California.™

#### Hearst San Simeon State Park and Historical Monument

750 Hearst Castle Road

San Simeon, CA 93452

(805) 927-2035

## Hearst San Simeon State Park and Historical Monument



### Hearst San Simeon State Park and Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument®

preserve more than 20 miles of dramatic central California coastline. Located 35 miles north of San Luis Obispo along scenic Highway 1, the parks frame shoreline vistas of beaches, rocky promontories and magnificent views of the Santa Lucia Mountains and Hearst Castle®.

The Mediterranean climate is typically mild with average daytime highs of 69 degrees and evening lows of 42 degrees. Rain is most likely from January through March. Spring and summer are pleasant during the day, cooling in the evening as wind moves fog in from the ocean.

#### NATURAL HISTORY

The diverse habitats of these two parks include wetlands, seashore, grassland, coastal scrub and riparian areas.

#### Geology

This part of the coastline consists mostly of geologically young alluvial sediment and older marine terrace deposits. In the park, Cambria slab sandstone—visible at Leffingwell Landing—becomes Franciscan mélange toward the north. The

mélange material is a mixture of sandstone, chert, basalt, greenstone, serpentinite, shale, eclogite and blueschist. This assemblage contains all three rock types—igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic—and has a jumbled appearance.

Low, rolling mima mounds, a unique geological feature in some of the park's grasslands, are found near vernal pools—seasonal pools with abundant plant and animal life.

#### Wildlife

Bobcats and coyotes hunt for brush rabbits, gray tree squirrels and California ground squirrels; black-tail deer graze on hillsides. Sensitive species include California red-legged frogs, tidewater gobies, steelhead trout, Western snowy plovers, golden eagles and longbilled curlews. From November to February, monarch butterflies roost in the Monterey pines.



Bird watchers will be amazed by the diverse number of birds to see at the beach, in the wetlands and on the trails. Look for black phoebes, white-tailed kites, mergansers, egrets and black oystercatchers.

Low tides reveal tidepools with seastars, chitons, limpets, turban snails, barnacles and fish.

Please leave the plants and animals of the tidepools undisturbed; they are vulnerable to human impact and are protected by law. From December to April, gray whales migrate past this stretch of coastline on their way to and from feeding grounds in Alaska to birthing waters in Mexico.

Don't miss the fascinating northern elephant seals. From December to March they can easily be seen resting, having



Tidepooling

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Look for **Friends of the Elephant Seal** volunteers to learn about elephant seals. Part of a nonprofit group that interprets and protects the elephant seals, the blue-jacketed volunteers can be found at the elephant seal vista points. Visit [www.elephantseal.org](http://www.elephantseal.org) to learn more.

One of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, the **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary** (MBNMS) encompasses a shoreline length of 276 miles from Cambria to Monterey, and 5,322 square miles of ocean. The sanctuary protects the coastal resources and offers activities such as scuba diving, kayaking, boating, surfing and fishing. California State Parks and the MBNMS jointly operate the Coastal Discovery Center at San Simeon Bay, across the road from Hearst Castle. Volunteers will orient you to the natural and cultural resources of Hearst San Simeon State Park and the sanctuary. Call (805) 927-6575 or visit <http://montereybay.noaa.gov> for hours.

Visitors to Hearst Castle are surrounded by the **Hearst Ranch**. The 80,000-acre Hearst Ranch is one of the largest working cattle ranches on the coast of California, and one of the largest conservation easements in the U.S. Today, Hearst Ranch specializes in grass-fed beef and has won several awards in the beef industry and for its stewardship of the land. Visit [www.hearstranch.com](http://www.hearstranch.com) for further details.

**Piedras Blancas Light Station** has been in continual operation since 1875. Owned and operated by the Bureau of Land Management since 2001, the light station is still in use as a navigational aid and for scientific research. Public tours of the Light Station are available. Visit [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov) to learn more.

**California Coastal National Monument** manages many of the small, off-coast rocks that are teeming with life. The Bureau of Land Management works with many partners to protect this unique and fragile ecosystem.

**Friends of Hearst Castle** is a nonprofit cooperating organization that supports preservation and interpretation of the park. Through membership and fundraising, FHC provides funding for educational and interpretive programs and artifact conservation programs. These programs provide visitor appreciation and enjoyment of this unique historical and cultural resource. For specific details, visit [www.friendsofhearstcastle.org](http://www.friendsofhearstcastle.org).

**PARK PROGRAMS**

Ranger-led park programs include Junior Ranger programs for children ages 7 to 12, guided hikes and campfire programs. Call (805) 927-2035 for more information.



Coastal Discovery Center exhibit

**ACCESSIBLE FEATURES**

California State Parks is committed to making certain that all visitors have access to the natural and cultural resources of the

parks. Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, call (805) 927-2035 or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

**Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument**—Accessible parking is designated. The ticket and information

area, restrooms, visitor center, Hearst Castle Theater and the gallery are accessible. Accessible tours are provided. Assistive devices, touchable artifacts and Braille transcripts may be requested. Sign language interpreters can be provided with advance notice. Reservations are highly recommended for the accessible tours.

**San Simeon Campground**—Three sites have accessibly designed picnic tables and level routes of travel to restrooms with generally accessible features.



**Washburn Campground**—This undeveloped campground has two generally accessible sites with firm surfaces and accessible fire rings. Toilets and routes of travel are generally accessible.

**Washburn Loop Trail**—Accessible trailhead, parking and restrooms are available at Washburn day-use area.

**Moonstone Bluff Trail**—This accessible one-mile beach boardwalk follows the coastal bluffs from the northern end of Cambria to the mouth of Santa Rosa Creek.

**PLEASE REMEMBER**

- All features of the park are protected by law and must not be disturbed.
- Stay on designated trails and paths.
- Watch out for poison oak, which causes an itchy rash.
- Dogs must be on a leash no longer than six feet and under control at all times. Only registered service animals are allowed on Hearst Castle tours.
- Restaurants, shopping, service stations and hotels are nearby in the towns of San Simeon and Cambria.

**NEARBY STATE PARKS**

- Limekiln State Park 40 miles north on Hwy. 1, Big Sur (831) 667-2403
- Harmony Headlands State Park 18 miles south on Hwy. 1 (805) 772-7434
- Morro Bay State Park 33 miles south, Morro Bay State Park Road, in Morro Bay, (805) 772-7434
- Montaña de Oro State Park 43 miles south, Pecho Valley Road, in Los Osos, (805) 772-7434

**What is a Marine Protected Area?**

As a result of the Marine Life Protection Act, California's marine protected areas (MPAs) are geographic marine or estuarine areas set aside to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. There are specific regulations for each area. To learn more, please visit: [www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa).



**Legend**

	Major Road
	Paved Road
	Unpaved Road
	Trail
	State Park Property
	Piedras Blancas SMR
	Accessible Feature
	Boat Launch
	Boating
	Bridge
	Call Box
	Campsite Center
	Campground
	Dogs Allowed on Leash
	Drinking Water
	Fishing
	Hike/Bike Campground
	Lighthouse
	Marsh
	No Bicycles Allowed
	No Dogs Allowed
	Parking
	Picnic Area
	Post Office
	Primitive Campground
	Restrooms
	RV Sanitation Station
	Showers
	Trailhead
	Viewpoint
	Visitor Center

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