

# Salt Point State Park

## Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve

### 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 the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

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**Discover the many states of California.™**

**Salt Point State Park  
Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve  
25050 Coast Highway One  
Jenner, CA 95450  
(707) 847-3221**



**S**alt Point State Park is located on the rugged California coastline about 90 miles north of San Francisco on State Highway One. The shoreline of the 6,000-acre park features rocky promontories, such as Salt Point, that jut out into the Pacific Ocean.

The park encompasses one of the first underwater parks in California. Fishing is permitted throughout the area with the exception of the Gerstle Cove Marine Reserve, where marine life is completely protected. The inland portion of the park features both grassland and forest areas.

Popular activities at Salt Point State Park include camping, picnicking, fishing, skin diving and scuba diving, as well as hiking and horseback riding.

### CAMPING

Each campsite has a fire ring and picnic table with food locker. The campgrounds have drinking water and restrooms, but no showers or sanitation station. The family sites and group campground are reservable March 15 to October 31 by calling (800) 444-7275. Campgrounds consistently fill up on weekends from April 1 to the end of September. Reservations are strongly advised.

#### Family Campsites

There are 109 family campsites at Salt Point State Park. Thirty sites are on the ocean side of the highway at the Gerstle Cove Campground, and 79 sites are on the east side of the highway at the Woodside Campground.

#### Walk-in Campsites

The walk-in campsites are in the Woodside Campground. The 20 non-reservable sites are approximately 1/3- to 1/2-mile from the parking area. No dogs are allowed.

#### Hiker/Biker Campsites

Ten hiker/biker sites are behind the ranger office near the Woodside Campground.

### Group Campground

The group campground is on the ocean side of Highway 1 and accommodates a maximum of 40 people and 10 cars. No dogs are allowed.

### Overflow Camping

A day-use parking lot below Gerstle Cove Campground is available for self-contained vehicles only. No tent camping or open fires are allowed. No restroom facilities or drinking water are available.

### PICNICKING

Fisk Mill Cove is a day-use area with paved parking, picnic tables (some accessible), small upright barbeques, restrooms and drinking water. Bishop pines offer protection from the spring and summer winds. Take a short walk from the north parking lot for a dramatic view of the Pacific Ocean from Sentinel Rock's viewing platform.

Stump Beach has one of the few sandy beaches north of Jenner. There are a few picnic tables near the parking lot, a primitive toilet, but no running water. A 1/4-mile trail leads to the beach. Gerstle Cove has picnic tables, a primitive toilet and a beautiful view of the ocean.

### RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS

There are more than 20 miles of hiking trails. Motor vehicles are permitted only on paved roads. Mountain bikes are not allowed on single-track trails because they cause great damage when trail surfaces are wet. Please stay on the trails in order to preserve the park's unspoiled qualities and to avoid contact with ticks and poison oak. Call (707) 847-3221 for details on accessible trails.



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## LAND PLANTS AND ANIMALS

As the terrain rises northeast of Highway 1, coastal brush and grasslands blend into lush growths of bishop pine, Douglas fir, madrone, tanoak, groves of second growth redwood and quiet meadow areas.

At the top of the coastal ridge, at about 1,000 feet elevation, there is a large open prairie where elk once grazed. At the top of the park, look for pygmy forests, where stands of cypress, pine and even the normally gigantic redwood grow stunted. This is caused by the combination of highly acidic soil that is lacking in nutrients and a hardpan layer just below the surface. Similar stands of pygmy forest can be found along the Pacific coast from Monterey County northward to Mendocino County.

Black-tailed deer, raccoons, coyotes, bobcats, gray foxes, badgers, striped skunks, porcupines and dozens of varieties of rodents such as squirrels, chipmunks and field mice are native to this area. Bears and mountain lions occasionally range the area, although visitors rarely see them.

The forest, grassland and ocean shore host a wide variety of birds. Look for pelicans, ospreys, woodpeckers (including pileated) and oyster catchers. Be wary of Steller's jays and ravens, who ravage unattended campsites in search of food.

## MARINE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Bull kelp thrives along the Pacific coast. In April no kelp is seen from the shore, but its growth has already begun. Attaching to rocks with a "holdfast," it will grow up to ten inches a day as it reaches for the sunlight at the ocean's surface. In August the water is dark with the lush kelp forest that provides homes for numerous varieties of rock fish and marine organisms.



prey

The Sonoma Coast is famous for red abalone. This slow-growing aquatic snail is an important part of the intertidal community. It takes an abalone an average of ten years to reach a diameter of seven inches.

Gray whales can be seen between December and April, as they migrate southward to their breeding and calving areas along the coast of Baja California, and then return to their summer feeding areas in the Bering Sea.

Gerstle Cove Marine Reserve is an underwater reserve where no form of marine life may be taken or disturbed. The boundaries of the reserve are marked with a yellow pole on the north end and yellow paint on the south.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

The risk of wildfire is always great in grassland and forest areas. Ground fires and open fires of any kind are not permitted. You may use your own off-the-ground barbecue for cooking in the campground areas, or you may use the facilities provided. Safely extinguish hot coals in fire rings.

The tide pools along the shoreline are home to a wonderful variety of fragile marine organisms, most of which are protected. These creatures are fascinating to observe. Feel free to explore, but please remember that many of these organisms can be damaged or destroyed by even the simple act of turning over a rock and exposing the animals to the sun.

Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times and are permitted only in the developed areas, except for the group campground and walk-in campsites. They must be kept in a tent or vehicle at night.



Photo by Dan Murley

*Tafoni*

## SANDSTONE AND TAFONI

Have you ever wondered where the streets of San Francisco came from? Sandstone from Salt Point was used there in the construction of streets and buildings during the mid-1800s. If you look closely at the rocks at Gerstle Cove, you can still see eyebolts where the ships anchored while sandstone slabs were loaded on board. Quarried rocks can still be seen scattered along the marine terrace north of Gerstle Cove. Look for the drill holes along the edges of the rocks. A drill was used to separate the large rocks into smaller slabs.

Tafoni, the Italian word for cavern, is a natural phenomenon common along the sandstone near the ocean's edge at Gerstle Cove and Fisk Mill Cove. Look for a honeycomb-type network carved into the rocks forming pits, knobs, ribs and ridges.

## KRUSE RHODODENDRON STATE RESERVE

Edward P. Kruse donated this land to the people of California in 1933 as a living memorial to his father, a founder of San Francisco's German Bank. The land was part of a large ranch established in 1880, on which the Kruse family raised sheep and carried on logging and tanbark harvesting operations.

This 317-acre state reserve is located adjacent to Salt Point and features a beautiful second-growth redwood forest mixed with Douglas firs, grand firs, tanoaks and rhododendrons.

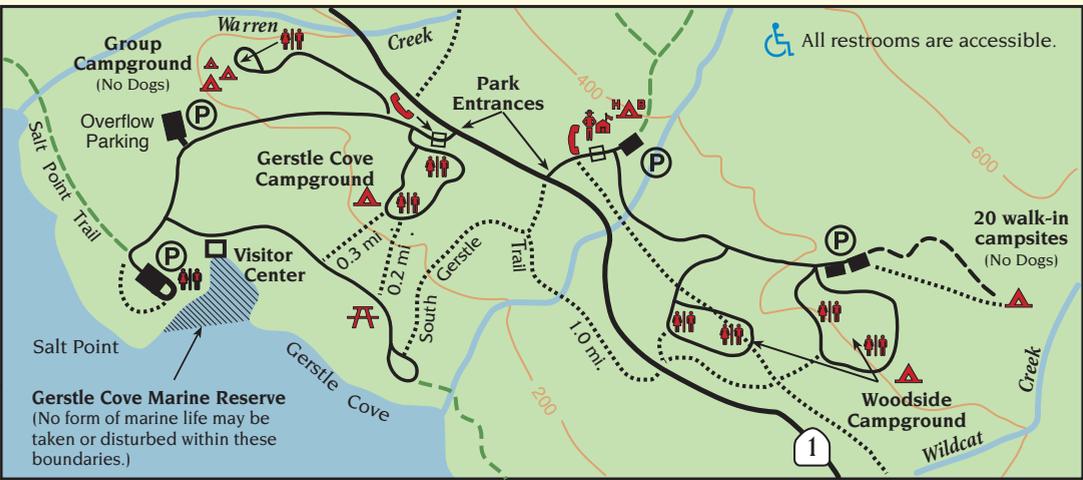
Each May, patches of pink are scattered throughout the green of the forest as rhododendrons burst into bloom. The wealth of rhododendrons is a direct result of the normal progression of plants following a severe fire that once occurred here. Today the regenerating forest is gradually overwhelming the rhododendrons.

There are three miles of hiking trails through the quiet forest. Walls of ferns line the canyons where seasonal streams abound. To protect this pristine area, no bikes or dogs are allowed on trails, and mushroom collecting is prohibited.



*Pacific Rhododendron*

Photo by Robert Potts © California Academy of Sciences



Campground Detail

Salt Point State Park  
 Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve

- PAVED ROAD
- DIRT ROAD
- HIKING, HORSE & MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL
- HIKING TRAIL (No Bikes)
- ACCESSIBLE FEATURE
- CAMPGROUND
- GROUP CAMPGROUND
- HIKE & BIKE CAMP
- PICNIC AREA
- PARKING
- RANGER STATION
- RESTROOMS
- TELEPHONE
- VIEWPOINT

This park is supported in part by the Fort Ross Interpretive Association  
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Accessibility is continually being improved. For current accessibility details, call the park or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

Ocean Conditions Recording: (707) 847-3222

To Jenner 18 miles