



California Highway 1 Discovery Route

Wildlife Viewing and Stewardship Tips

Great wildlife viewing encounters involve good timing, observation skills, and a little luck! California's Highway 1 Discovery Route offers some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities anywhere. Use these tips to improve your chances for a memorable wildlife experience!

Be outside during dawn, dusk, and incoming tides. Birds, fish, and mammals are active during these times. Look for churning water surfaces, diving birds, shiny dolphin backs, seals and otters in bays and on open water. Listen for songbirds singing in bushes and trees, especially during spring and early summer.

Be calm and stay awhile. Adopt an unhurried, 'vacation' state of mind. A state of relaxed alertness is the best way to see wildlife.

Blend in. Animals react to movement. Sit quietly next to a bush or tree and practice the 'art of invisibility.'



*"Adopt the pace of nature,
her secret is patience."
— R.W. Emerson*

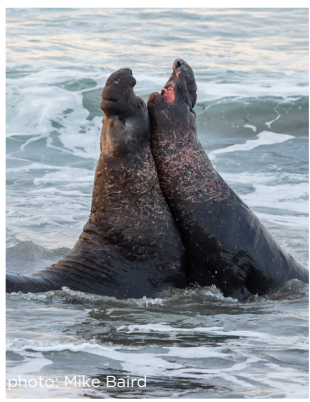


photo: Mike Baird

Keep it steady. When kayaking, keep a slow, steady paddling rhythm. You're more likely to have curious seals, otters, or dolphins approach you.

Zoom in. Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and zoom camera lenses to see wildlife action 'up close at a distance' that is less likely to disturb natural animal behaviors.

Look and listen for signs of wildlife. Look for animal tracks and droppings (called

scat). Large birds like ospreys, hawks, vultures, and cormorants leave noticeable white droppings (whitewash) on bushes, trees, sea cliffs and rocks. When you see this, look up to find where birds roost or nest.

Low tide exposes fascinating and fragile life on the rocks. Venture carefully on rocks for a close-up peek into the exciting tidal world of animals feeding, interacting or waiting for the incoming tide.

Look for whales when seas are calm. Look for whale spouts or blows, tail flukes, and dorsal fins. Big splashes may indicate a whale has just breached. Look for The Whale Trail viewing sites along the Highway 1 Discovery Route <http://thewhaletrail.org/>.



photo: Mike Baird

Connect With Nature IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

SLO County is known for its abundant wildlife season -- significant natural occurrences can be observed annually. Plan your next trip around your favorite species or group of animals.

ELEPHANT SEALS: *December, January, February and May*
Female elephant seals, ready to give birth, arrive in December at Point Piedras Blancas. Thousands of pups are born in January. In February, elephant seal males fight for mating rights with females. In May, females return for the molt season.

BIRDS: *December, January and February*
San Luis Obispo County is considered a top birding spot in the US. Birds from northern climates spend winters in SLO County's mild climate. Bird watchers arrive in December to participate in the worldwide annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Enjoy Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival in January and Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary Day in February.

GRAY WHALES: *March, April and May*
Females and their young calves travel close to shore on their northward migration from Mexico to Alaska. Peak numbers pass along the Central Coast from March through May. This is the best time for viewing gray whales. Follow The Whale Trail to watch them from shore! Gray whales migrate south during October and November. Go to thewhaletrail.org for more information.

SEASON OF OCEAN ABUNDANCE:
August, September and October

Marine animals linger along the Central Coast, feeding on schools of sardines, anchovies and other small fish. Although ocean productivity may vary from year to year, this is the most likely time to see humpback whales, dolphins, sea lions and seabirds feeding close to shore.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES: *November, December, January and February*

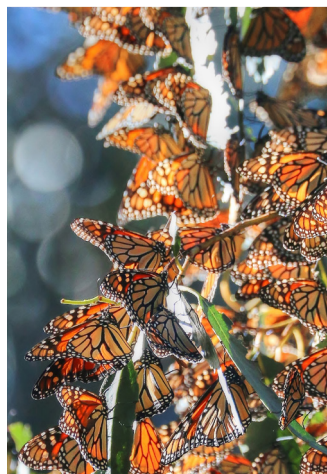
Western Monarch butterflies spend winters in the mild climate of the Central Coast. The Monarch Grove in Pismo Beach/Oceano is the largest in the western US -- each year millions of butterflies rest and mate in the tall eucalyptus trees.

SEA OTTERS: The Central Coast is one of the best places to observe sea otters! Look for them any time of year off the coast of Los Osos, Cayucos, Cambria and San Simeon.

Take Care - Stewardship Travel for Good

Protect wildlife habitat - Stay on trails. Going off trail may harm animal habitat or bird nesting areas. Keep dogs and children safe by staying on designated trails.

Watch where you step. In tide pools, walk on bare rock to avoid crushing fragile tide pool animals, and keep away from seaweed - it's slippery! Please leave tide pool critters in their natural home. Tide booklets may be available in stores and real estate offices.



Stay at a distance, including drones.

If birds and animals get nervous, they show it by looking at you, raising their heads and stopping what they were doing. Any change of an animal's natural behavior is a disturbance.

Please do not feed wildlife. There is plenty of food available in the wild. Human food can create digestive problems and improper nutrition.

Help sick or abandoned wildlife. If you find an injured bird or land animal, stay at a distance and call Pacific Wildlife Care; 805-543-9453. If you suspect a marine animal is injured or in danger, call the Marine Mammal Center; 415-289-7325.



Travel for Good and lend a hand with trash removal. Human garbage is one of the greatest threats to wildlife. Get a Stewardship Traveler Clean-Up Kit to pick up litter on the trail, the shore, and even in the water. Free Stewardship Clean-Up Kits and Appreciation Tote Bags are available in Avila Beach and Cambria.

Plan your next wildlife viewing adventure

Plan your next wildlife viewing adventure and make a difference through Travel for Good activities that preserve and protect wildlife, habitats, and cultural heritage sites.

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Elephant Seals	●	●			●							●
Migratory Birds	●	●										●
Gray Whales			●	●	●						●	●
Ocean Abundance (Seabirds, Dolphins, Whales)								●	●	●		
Humpback Whales								●	●	●		
Monarch Butterflies	●	●									●	●
Sea Otters	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Don't miss special wildlife areas & centers: The Monarch Butterfly Grove, Central Coast Aquarium in Avila Beach, NOAA's Coastal Discovery Center at San Simeon Bay, Morro Bay Sea Otters, Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery

Special appreciation to: Morro Bay National Estuary Program, NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, The Seabird Protection Network, Watchable Wildlife, Inc., The Marine Mammal Center, Morro Coast Audubon Society, Pacific Wildlife Care, and Friends of the Sea Otter

For more wildlife viewing tools & resources:

Visit Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com/Stewardship-Travel