



Point Reyes Nature

Hiking Calendar

2024



Hikes under five miles!

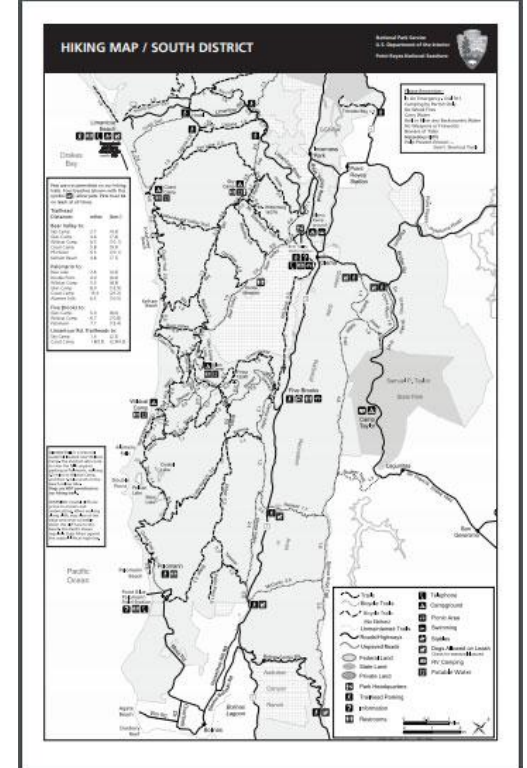
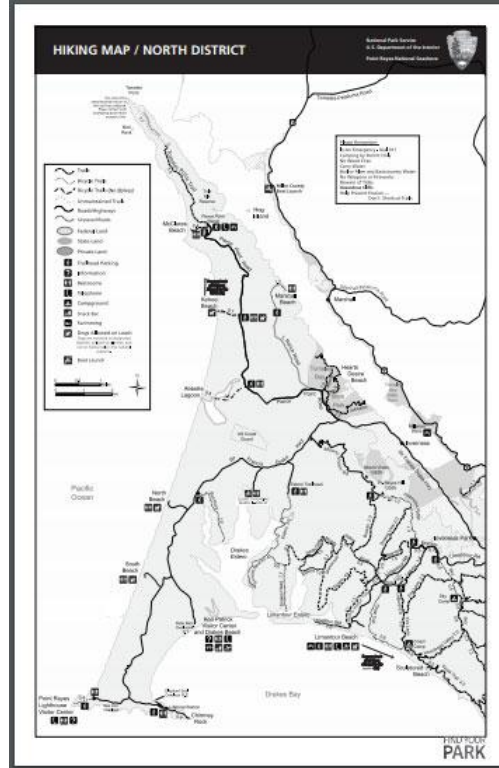
Ranging from easy to strenuous

Check before you go

Events in this calendar are subject to change. Always confirm directly with the sponsoring organization.

Check the Point Reyes National Seashore website for [current conditions](#) including trail & road closures and hazardous conditions.

Download the maps used in this calendar from the Point Reyes National Seashore website: [North trails map](#) and [South trails map](#). Or, stop by the visitor center and pick up a free double-sided hiking map.





January

Bucklin Trail

The south-facing trails at the top of Inverness Ridge offer breathtaking views across hills and forests as far as the Pacific ocean and Chimney Rock. The iconic Amanita Muscaria mushroom peaks in December and January. Their bright red cap and white dots make them easy to find along the Bucklin Trail. Visit Drakes Beach to see Northern Elephant Seals during pupping & breeding season. Visit a Winter Wildlife Docent volunteer to learn more about this incredible marine mammal.

Avg temp: 45-59 F

Avg rain: 8 days, 5.2 inches

Daylight hours: 10

Full moon: January 25 at 9:54 am



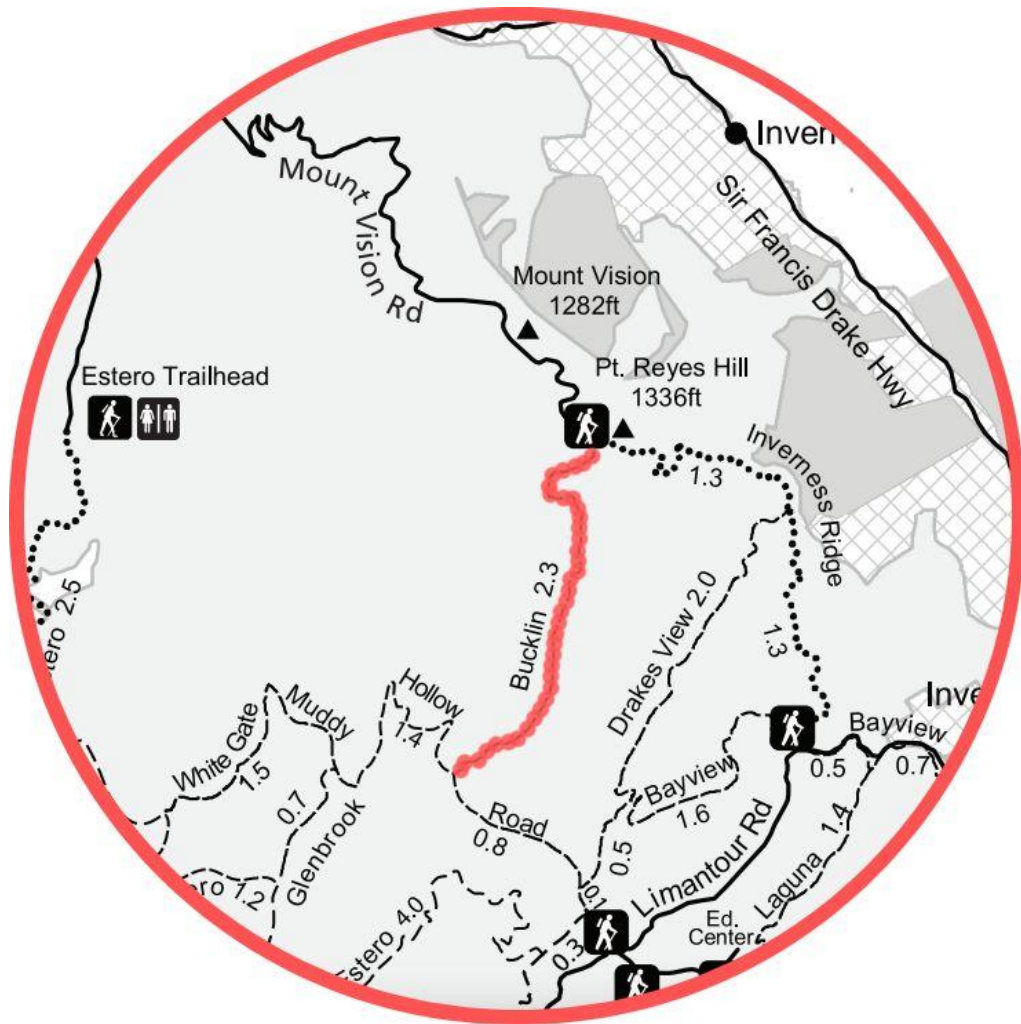
Elephant seal pups at Drakes Beach in March
(after weaning) [photo by Brian Charles](#)

Hike: Bucklin Trail

4.6 miles, out and back, strenuous

Drive to the parking lot where Mt. Vision Rd ends at Point Reyes Hill. Walk less than half a mile along Mt Vision Rd to the Bucklin Trail on the right. The road itself has beautiful views of the ocean. When visibility is good, you can see the Farallones islands thirty miles offshore. The road is bordered by flowers and lichen-filled trees and shrubs. The Bucklin Trail provides spectacular views of the ocean, spanning from Limantour Beach to Chimney Rock, and of the surrounding forests and hills. The trail goes downhill to the Muddy Hollow Trail so prepare yourself for the uphill climb on the way back. In winter, you'll find mushrooms along the way.

[Get details](#)



January highlights

Become a [Point Reyes National Seashore Association member](#) and join PRNSA on a monthly full moon hike.

Volunteer for a Beach cleanup for MLK Day of Service Jan 15

[Coho salmon](#) are spawning! Take an informative [creek walk tour](#) with local non-profit SPAWN.

Visit the Lighthouse or Chimney Rock to watch for [Pacific Gray Whale](#) southern migration (peaks in mid-January)

Visit [Drakes Beach](#) to see Northern Elephant Seals pupping and breeding. Volunteer docents are on hand to answer questions.



Top: [Lipstick Powderhorn](#) (*Cladonia macilenta*) and shield lichen. Bottom: [Fly Agaric](#) (*Amanita muscaria*) mushroom. Right: Bishop Pine trees. Cover: Bucklin Trail, top of the hill overlooking the ocean.

February

Mt Wittenberg-Meadow Loop

This is a popular loop with joggers and an exhilarating ascent to the highest point in Point Reyes, Mt. Wittenberg. A short extension off the main trail leads to the top. Get your heart pumping as you hike uphill on the Mt Wittenberg Trail. The winter forest is fresh and peaceful. Pause to listen for birds. Use [Merlin sound ID](#) to learn which birds are nearby. On a clear day, enjoy panoramic views of the ocean near the end of the Mt. Wittenberg Trail. If you are lucky enough to crest the trail on a foggy day, be awed by the forest in fog. White milkmaids (shown below) are one of the first flowers to bloom. Notice the many forms of fungi growing on trees.

Avg temp: 46-61 F
Rain: 7 days, 5.1 inches
Daylight hours: 11
Full moon: Feb 24 at 4:30am
PRNSA full moon hike: Feb 24



Hike: Mt Wittenberg & Meadow Loop

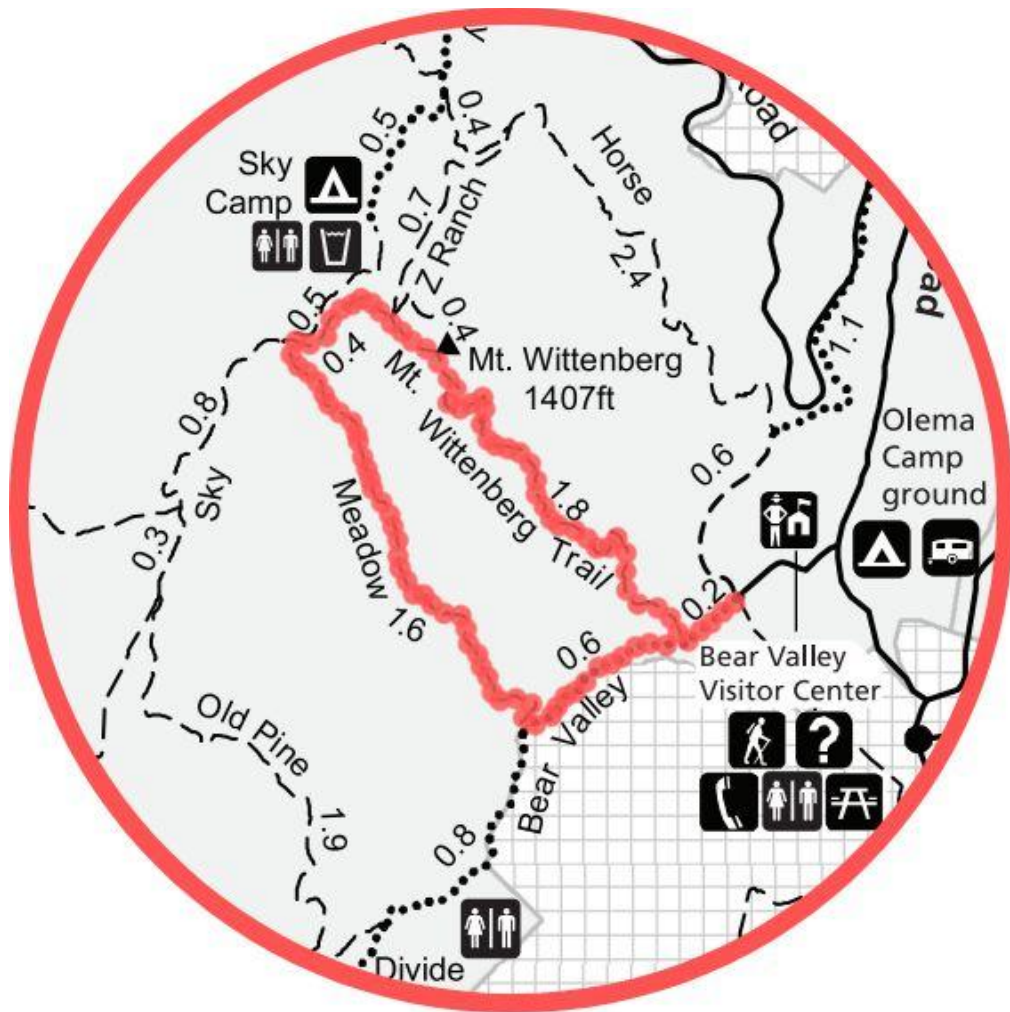
4.8 miles, loop, strenuous

Start at the Bear Valley trailhead

1. Walk 0.2 miles on the Bear Valley Trail to the Mt. Wittenberg Trail on the right.
2. Hike 1.8 miles to the intersection with the Z Ranch Trail.
3. Go left and continue 0.4 miles on the Mt. Wittenberg Trail. Look to the right for spectacular ocean views.
4. At the intersection of Mt. Wittenberg/Sky/Meadow trails, take the Meadow Trail to the left. Continue on the Meadow Trail 1.6 miles until it meets the Bear Valley Trail.
5. Go left on the Bear Valley Trail 0.8 miles back to the Bear Valley Visitor Center.

For a less daunting incline, start with the gradually-rising Meadow Trail and return on the Mt. Wittenberg trail.

[Get details](#) on the Meadow Trail page



February fungi & fun

Visit sites along the east shore of Tomales Bay to observe the [Winter Birds of Tomales Bay](#) in a Field Institute class on Feb 2.

Take a [Mushroom identification class](#) at the Point Reyes National Seashore Association Field Institute on February 11. Sign up early! This is a popular class.

The PRNSA full moon hike is Feb 24 at Chimney Rock. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: Bracket fungi (Genus [Trametes](#)) on a dead Bay tree. Bottom: [Cramp Balls](#) (*Annulohyphoxylon thouarsianum*) in their sporing stage. Right: [Turkey-Tail](#) (*Trametes versicolor*). Cover: Mt. Wittenberg Trail



March

Bolinas Ridge Trail South

Visit the lush Redwood forest at the south end of the Bolinas Ridge Trail to find early spring wildflowers including California Fetid Adderstongue, Pacific Trillium (shown below), and Pacific Hound's Tongue. Dogs are allowed on leash and bikes are allowed.

Avg temp: 46-61 F

Rain: 7 days, 5.1 inches

Daylight hours: 11

Full moon: Mar 25 at midnight

PRNSA full moon hike: Mar 23



Hike: Bolinas Ridge Trail South

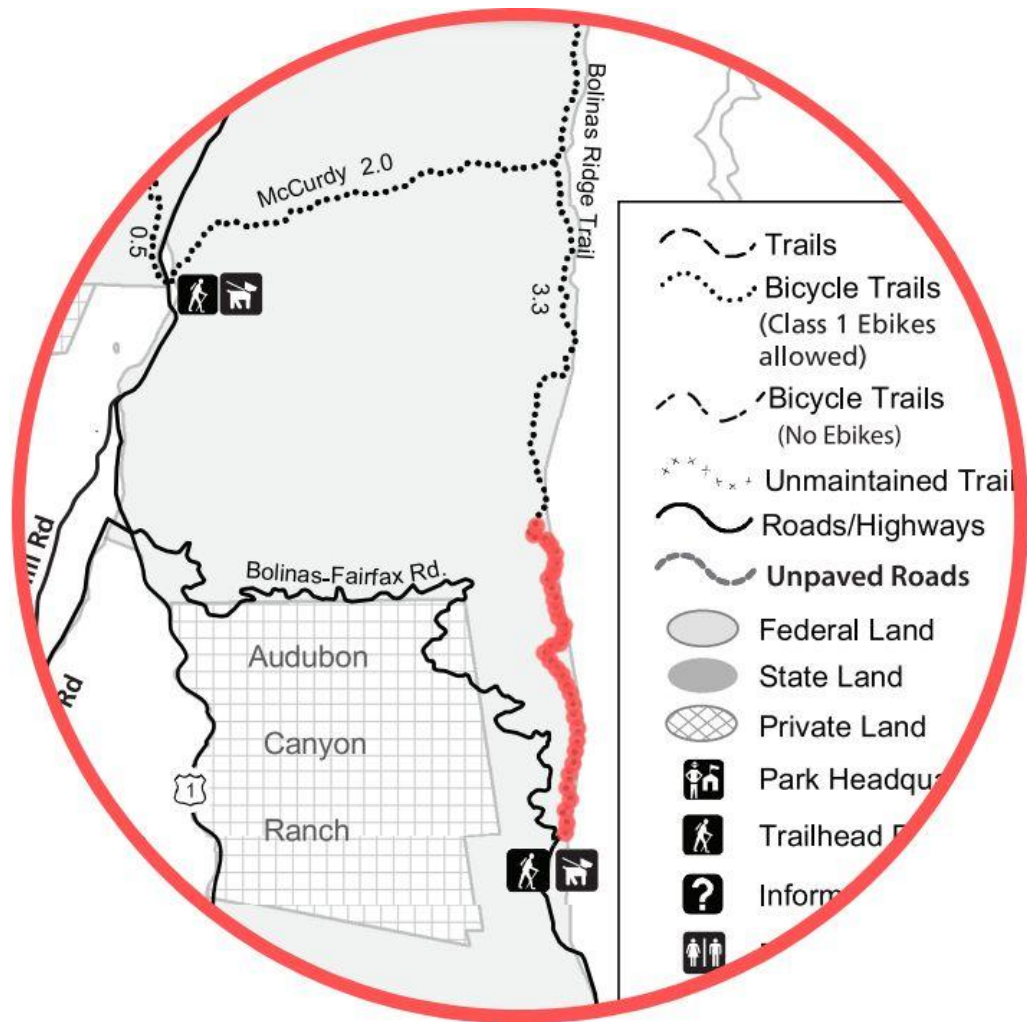
Choose a length, out and back, easy

A few parking spots are available across the road from the trail on Bolinas-Fairfax Road.

The trail is a mix of lush Douglas fir and Redwood forest interspersed with exposed rocky chaparral terrain. Watch for early spring wildflowers in the first part of the trail, and flowering Huckleberry and Manzanita in the drier chaparral areas.

Stop and turn around at any point before the McCurdy Trail (3.3 miles from the south end).

[Get details](#)



March highlights

Hike the [Olema Valley and learn about the geology of the San Andreas Fault](#) in this active boundary between the North American and Pacific Plates on March 1 with the Field Institute.

Take a Field Institute [Animal Tracking & Awareness class](#) on March 15 led by local tracking expert, Richard Vacha.

Celebrate the return of light with a [Forest Bathing class](#) with the Field Institute on March 23.

[Pacific Gray Whale](#) northern migration (cows and calves are close to the shore)

The PRNSA full moon hike is March 23. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: [Pacific Hound's Tongue](#) (*Adelina grandis*). Bottom: moss-covered stump. Right: [California Fetid Adderstongue](#) (*Scoliopus bigelovii*). Cover: Bolinas Ridge Trail south end



April

Estero Trail

You choose: Hike from either end of the Estero Trail –from the Trailhead to the Sunset Trail/Drakes Head split or from the Muddy Hollow end of the trail. You will have gorgeous views of Drakes Estero on the former and shaded bishop pine forest and many wildflowers on the latter. Blue Dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) peak flowering in April (shown below).

Avg temp: 47-66 F

Rain: 5 days, 2.1 inches

Daylight hours: 13

Full moon: Apr 23 at 4:48pm

PRNSA full moon hike: Apr 20



April highlights

Learn about the [Spring migration at Point Reyes](#) at a Field Institute class on April 12.

Explore the fascinating [Geology of the Point Reyes Northern Beaches](#) at a PRNSA Field Institute class on April 12

Take a Field Institute class on [Wildflowers and Elephant Seals of Chimney Rock](#) on April 13.

Consider the [UC Naturalist program](#) April 13-May 18 at Point Reyes.

Take Paul DaSilva's Abbotts Lagoon Dunes insect class, typically offered during the [Point Reyes Nature & Birding Festival](#) to prepare for the May hike in the dunes.

The PRNSA full moon hike is April 20. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)

Don't miss the [Point Reyes Birding Festival](#) on April 21-23. Become an EAC member to get early registration.



Top: [Thimbleberry](#) flowering. Bottom: [Western Blue-eyed Grass](#). Right: Lone Eucalyptus on the Estero Trail (trailhead end). Cover: Douglas Iris along the Estero Trail (Muddy Hollow end)

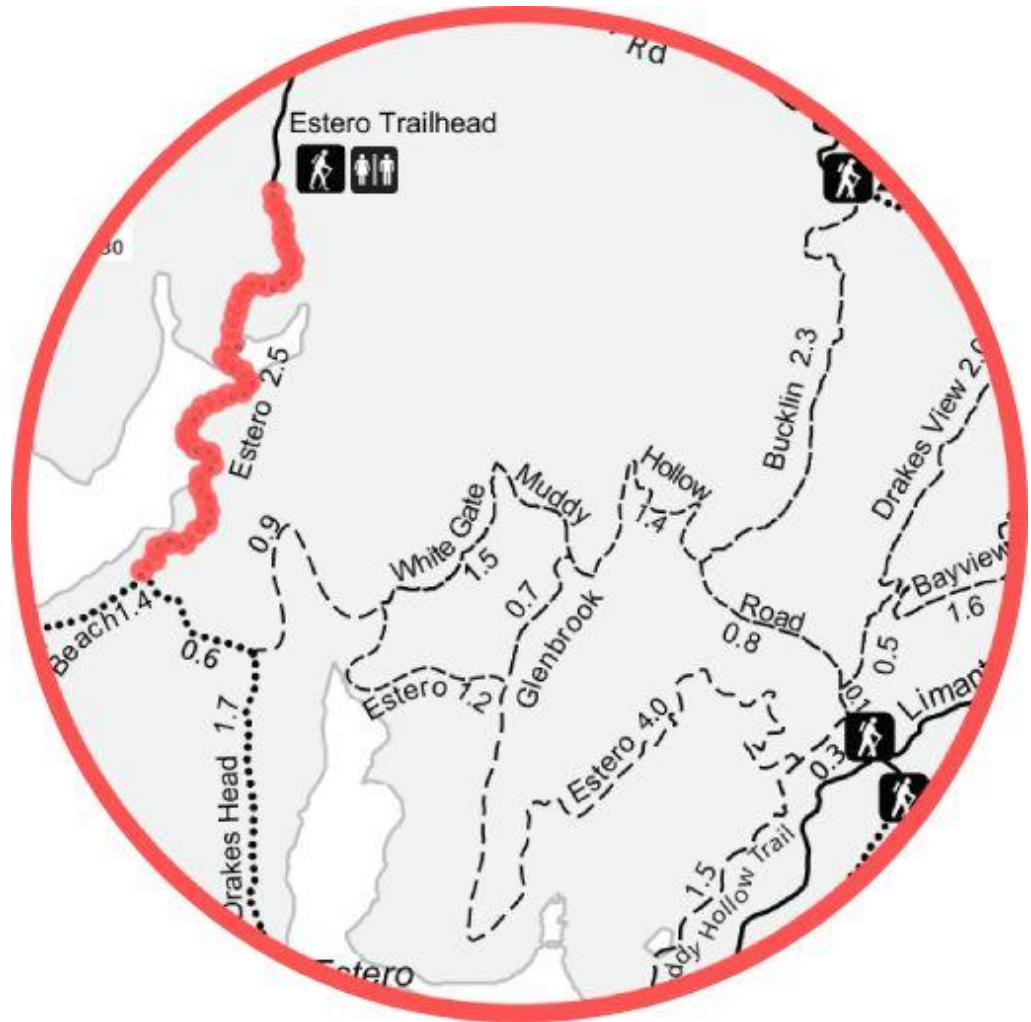
Hike Option 1: Estero Trail from Trailhead

5.0 miles, out and back, moderate

Park at the Estero Trailhead off Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Walk across a pasture and through a small forest. The trees are teeming with birds. Cross Drakes Estero along a raised path with a bridge. Look for small crabs climbing among the rocks. The trail ascends gradually following the outline of the Estero. In this first part of the trail, many plants border the trail. California Quail families skitter along the trail and Columbian Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus ssp. columbianus*) graze in the brush. You will pass through several cow gates and likely encounter cattle wading and grazing in ponds. At 2.5 miles, you'll come to a split with the Sunset Beach trail straight ahead and the Drakes Head and White Gate/Glenbrook trails to the left. Turn around and return.

[Get details](#)



Estero Trail from the Trailhead in April

Bumble Bees are busy gathering nectar from purple bush lupines dotted along this trail. Salmonberry is beginning to fruit, while Thimbleberry and Blackberry are just flowering.

On a foggy day (as shown at the right), the landscape is serene and ethereal. This soft light is great for photos. Fog keeps the temperature mild on this fully exposed trail which can be hot on sunny days.

Watch for egrets and harbor seals in the water.



Top: [Bumble Bee](#) on Lupines. Bottom: [Salmonberry](#) (*Rubus spectabilis*). Right: Estero Trail view of Drakes Estero in the fog. Cover: Cover: Douglas Iris along the Estero Trail (Muddy Hollow end)

Hike Option 2: Estero Trail from Muddy Hollow

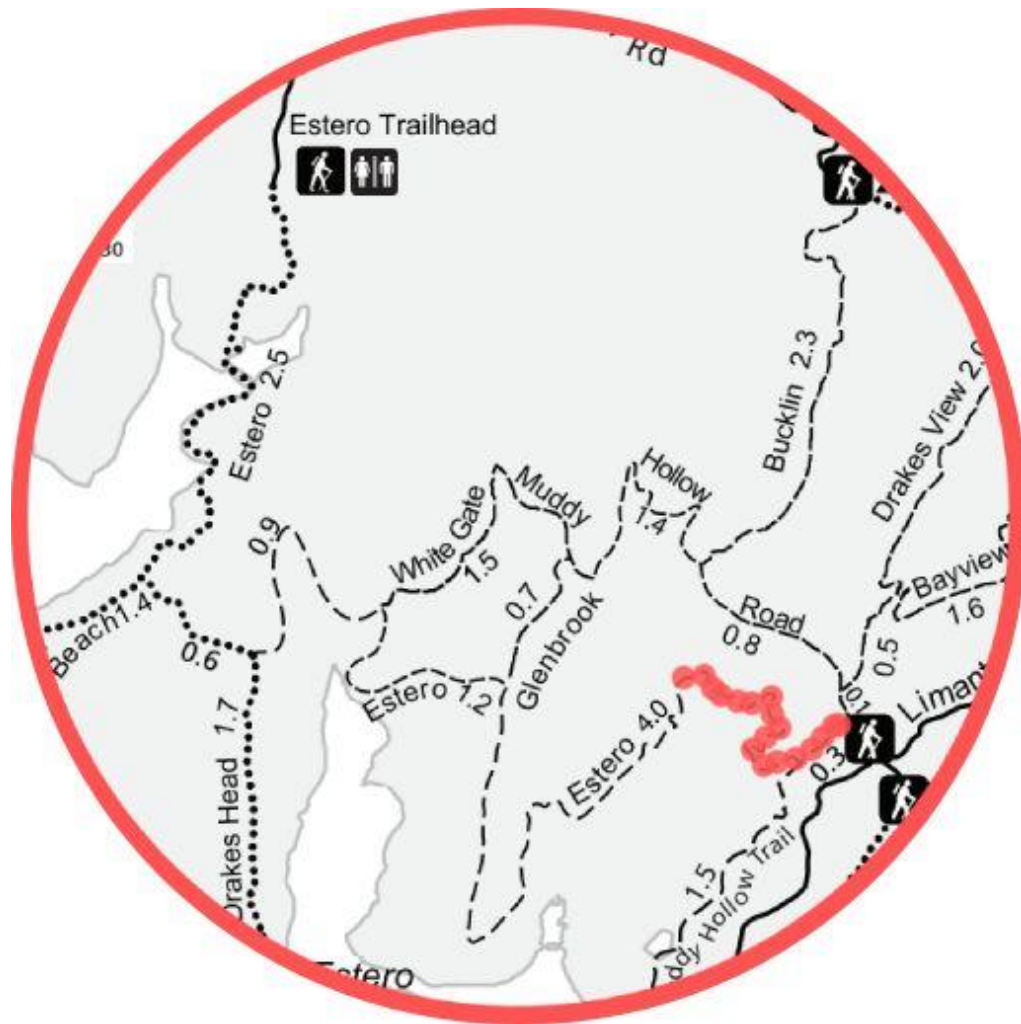
Choose a length, out and back, easy

Park at the Muddy Hollow Trailhead off Limantour Road.

Hike 0.3 miles on the gravel road that starts the Muddy Hollow Trail. Turn right at the Estero Trail and cross the bridge.

Hike as far as you like. A good turnaround spot for a short hike is the bench overlooking the ocean about a mile along the trail. Or continue another mile or so farther downhill to a marshy area and watch for Tule elk in the hills. Turn around return.

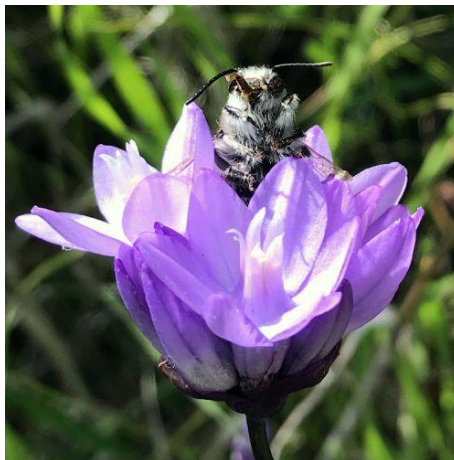
[Get details](#)



Estero Trail from Muddy Hollow end in April

Spring wildflowers and pollinators are everywhere along this section of the Estero Trail. April is an ideal time to explore.

The trail begins by crossing a wooden bridge surrounded by red alders, willows, and brambles. It meanders through tight groves of bishop pines and grasses. It's typically cool and misty, especially in the morning. It's a long trail but even if you turn around before you hike the four miles to Glenbrook, you will be satisfied with the scenery and experience. There are many scenic spots along the way – Drakes Beach in the distance, and often Tule elk in the hills.



Top: [Bee](#) on [Blue Dicks](#) (*Dipterostemon capitatus*). Bottom: [Tolmie's Pussy Ears](#) (*Calochortus tolmiei*). Right: Estero Trail. Cover: Douglas Iris along the Estero Trail (Muddy Hollow end).



May

Abbotts Lagoon dunes

Hike to the dunes to explore an amazing world of insects, plants, birds, and if you are lucky, a river otter family. Walk along the beach farther south to the [dunes restoration area](#) to search for the rare [Tidestrøm's Lupine](#) (shown below).

Avg temp: 49-69 F

Rain: 2 days, 0.8 inches

Daylight hours: 14

Full moon: May 23 at 6:53am

PRNSA full moon hike: May 22

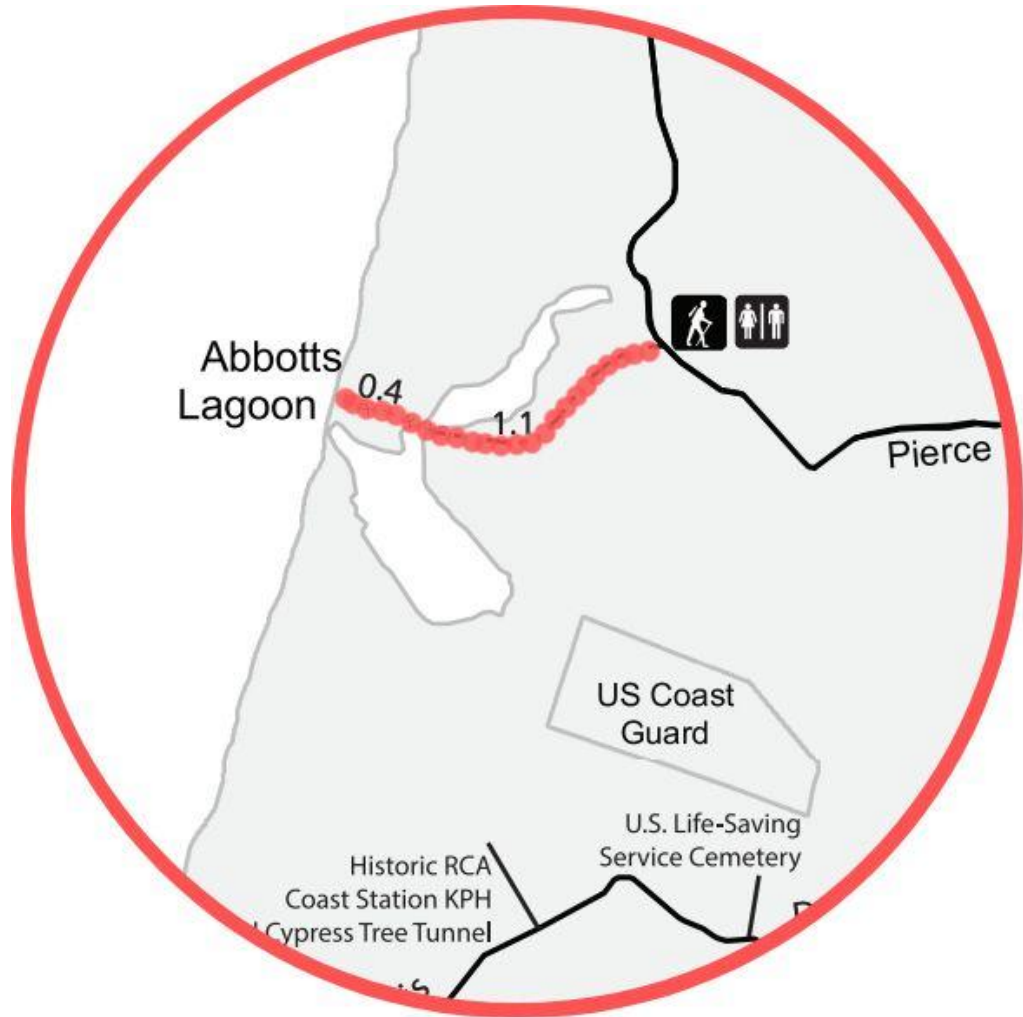


Hike: Abbotts Lagoon dunes

3.0 miles, out and back, easy

Varied terrain makes for an abundance of birds, plants, and insects. Shortly after the lagoon bridge, follow the path into the sand dunes. Stay on the path or step carefully to avoid trampling the native plants. Look for [Western Tiger Beetles](#) often found skittering along the sandy shore of the lagoon and in the dunes. Butterflies love the [Gumplant](#), [Curly-leaved Monardella](#), and [Seaside Buckwheat](#) flowers in the dunes. Western Snowy Plovers are beginning their breeding season so avoid any dune areas that are fenced off for their protection. Watch for the stalwart [Great Blue Heron](#) near the bridge.

[Get details](#)



May highlights

May is peak [spring wildflower](#) bloom including the rare dune plants Tidestrøm's Lupine and Beach Tidytops.

Endangered species day is May 20. Watch for calls for volunteers for the [Snowy Plover docent program](#). One-day training is May 4.

Join the [Bumblebee Atlas Project](#) for field events to learn to use an insect net, collect data, and identify bees.

The PRNSA full moon hike is May 22. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance](#).



Top: Western Tiger Beetle [photo by Kurt Zias](#). Bottom: [Beach Tidytops](#) (*Layia carnosa*). Right: [Great Blue Heron](#) near the lagoon bridge. Cover: Abbotts Lagoon dunes



June

Tomales Point Trail

Lupines! Immerse yourself in a world of colorful fragrant lupines on the Tomales Point Trail. You will be in the good company of caterpillars and pollinators. Explore the many varieties including Miniature Lupine with its tiny furry seed pods. If you go as far as the 1.7 miles of the unmaintained trail, you will see the best [Cobwebby Thistle in Point Reyes](#) (shown below).

Avg temp: 52-75 F
Rain: 1 day, 0.4 inches
Daylight hours: 14.5
Full moon: Jun 21 at 6:07pm
PRNSA full moon hike: Jun 22



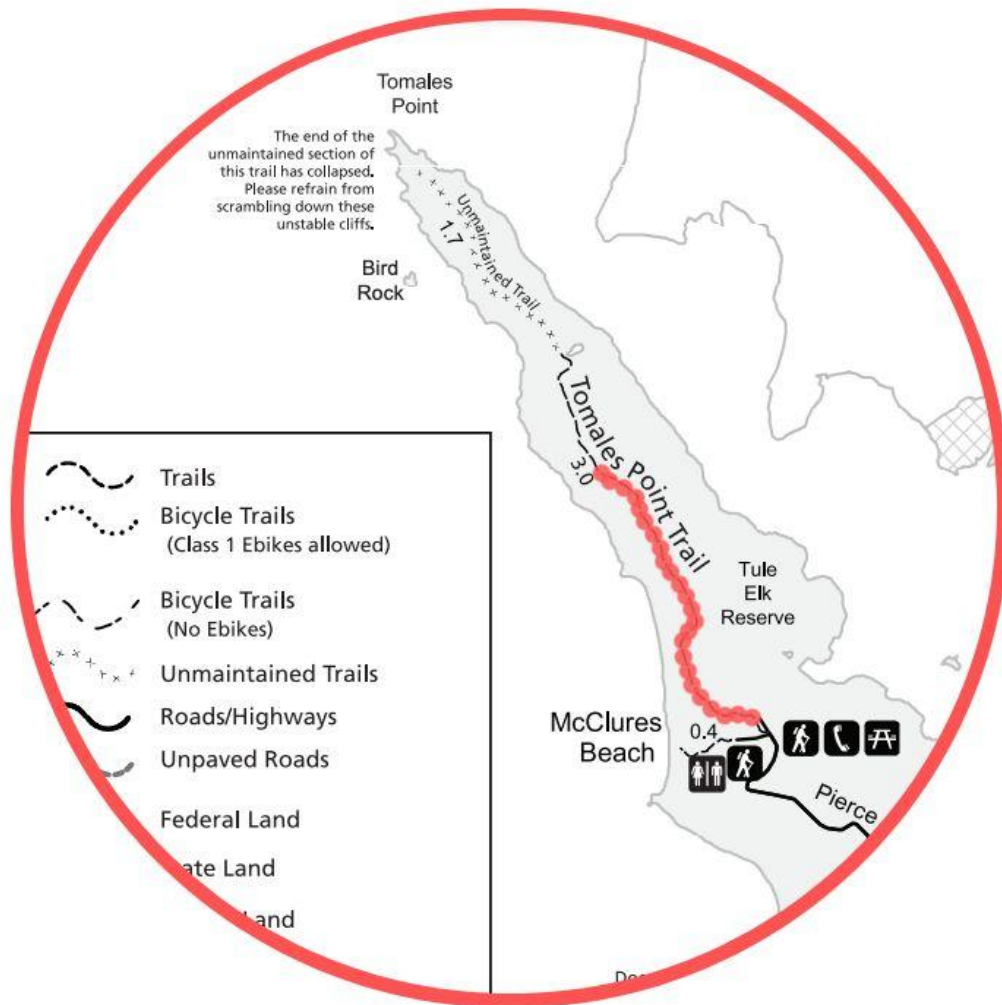
Hike: Tomales Point Trail

Choose a length, out and back, easy to moderate

This is a glorious trail with panoramic views of the ocean to the west and of Tomales Bay to the east. On a foggy day, you may not see the ocean but you'll hear the waves crashing against the rocks and shore. The path is completely exposed with only a few trees at the beginning and near the pond toward the end. Bring binoculars to spot distant Tule elk and raptors. Even hiking a mile or two, you will see lupine and likely elk.

Toilets are available in the McClures Beach parking lot.

[Get details](#)



June highlights

National Trails Day is June 3.

Consider volunteering for [Marin MPA Watch](#) to monitor the health of Point Reyes beaches by doing a simple inventory. It's basically a walk on the beach!

[Harbor seals](#) are at the end of their pupping. A great place to see them is on sandbars in Drakes Estero and Bolinas Lagoon.

[Western Snowy Plovers](#) are beginning their breeding season on Point Reyes ocean beaches.

Save the date for the Point Reyes National Seashore Association's annual fundraiser **Party on the Pacific Plate on September 21**. Subscribe to the [PRNSA newsletter](#) to stay current on events.

The PRNSA full moon hike is June 22. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: [Varied Lupine](#) (*Lupinus variicolor*). Bottom: [Ranchman's Tiger Moth](#) (*Arctia virginalis*) on Coastal Bush Lupine. Right: hillside with [Miniature Lupine](#) (*Lupinus bicolor*). Cover: Tomales Point Trail with [Coastal Bush Lupine](#) (*Lupinus arboreus*) in the fog.



July

Randall Trail

The Randall Trail is near Bolinas on Golden Gate National Recreation Area land managed by the Point Reyes National Seashore. The trail begins in a grassy pasture, ascends gradually through a fir and bay forest to its end at the Bolinas Ridge trail. Nibble on ripe Thimbleberries, Blackberries, and Huckleberries (shown below) along the trail. The park allows [collecting up to 2 quarts](#) for personal use per person per day. That's a lot of nibbling! Dogs on leash are allowed on this trail.

Avg temp: 53-79 F
Rain: 0 days, 0.0 inches
Daylight hours: 14.5
Full moon: Jul 21 at 3:17am
PRNSA full moon hike: Jul 20



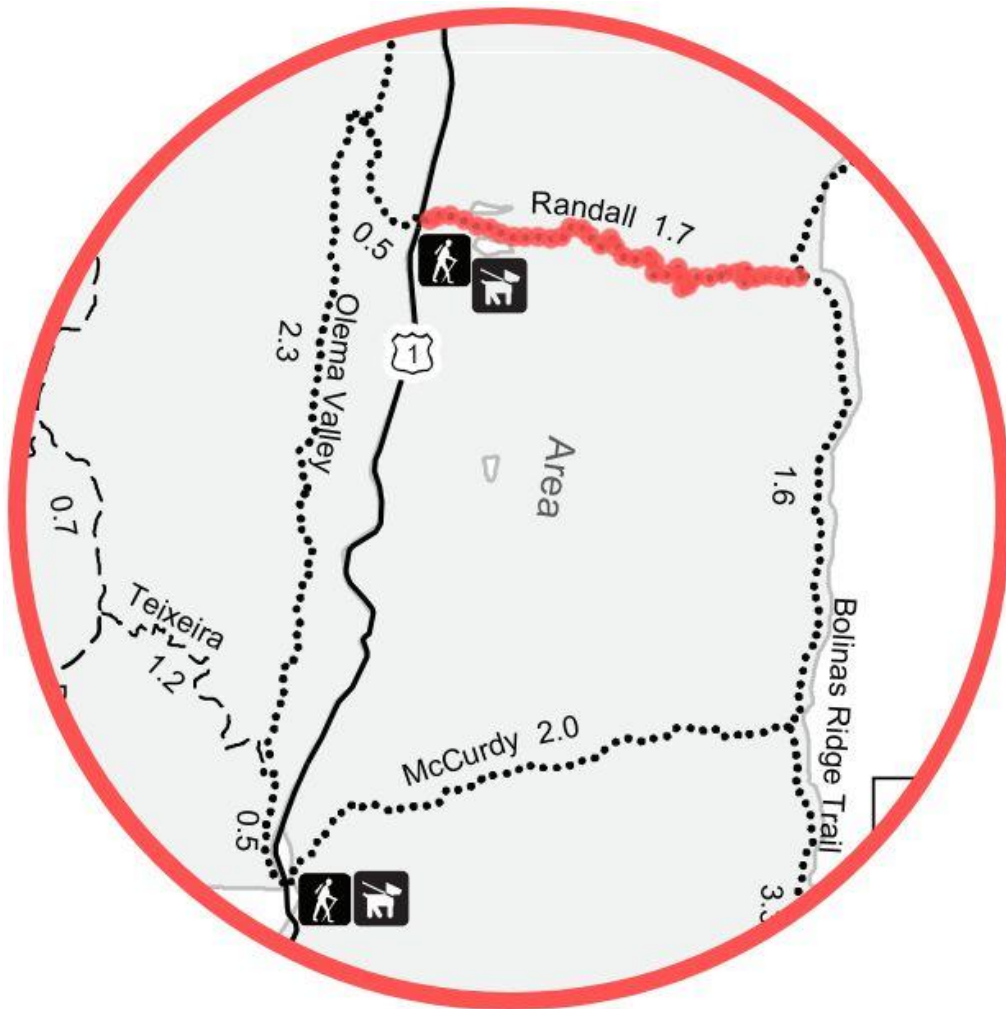
Hike: Randall Trail

3.4 miles, out and back, moderate

It's easy to miss the trailhead and parking area when driving along Shoreline Hwy 1. Also, some map apps provide the wrong directions to the Randall Trailhead. Coming from Olema, it's 6 miles to the trailhead and 2 miles past Five Brooks. Drive slowly and pay attention for the parking turnout area at the Olema Valley (Hagmaier) Trailhead on the right.

Cross the road to the Randall Trailhead on the east side and begin your climb. The Randall Trail is a mostly shaded wide fire road that ascends 1.7 miles through Douglas fir and Coast Redwood forests to the Bolinas Ridge Trail. Pets (on a six-foot or shorter leash), bicycles, and horses are permitted on the trail.

[Get details](#)



July highlights

Summer flowering plants you may encounter on your hike include purple [Brodiaea](#), enchantingly-named [Fairybells](#) with golden orange or red fruit, [Thimbleberry](#) with red berries (also known as the toilet paper plant for its large soft leaves), [California Milkwort](#), a lily [Andrews' Clintonia](#) with small blue fruit commonly called Western Bluebead Lily. You are likely to encounter a beautiful but invasive species of orchid, [Broad-leafed Helleborine](#) which peaks flowering in July.

The PRNSA full moon hike is July 20.

[Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top row from left: Brodiaea, Fairybells, Thimbleberry.

Bottom row from left: California Milkwort, Andrews' Clintonia, Broad-leafed Helleborine.

Cover: Randall Trail



August

Jepson Trail to Heart's Desire and Indian Beach

Mostly shaded, this hike is perfect for a warm day when you want to escape the heat. This is an ideal nature hike for kids or curious adults – you'll find plenty of different leaves to inspect, banana slugs (shown below), and ripe huckleberries in summer. Hike the Jepson trail to Heart's Desire Beach. To extend your hike, continue on the Indian Nature Trail to Indian Beach. Interpretive signs point out the flora and fauna along the trail. Indian Beach, a quiet spot with fewer crowds than Heart's Desire, has a tidal marsh and two Coast Miwok-type structures to explore.

Avg temp: 54-79 F

Rain: 0 days, 0.0 inches

Daylight hours: 13.5

Full moon: Aug 19 at 11:25am

PRNSA full moon hike: Aug 17



Hike: Jepson Trail

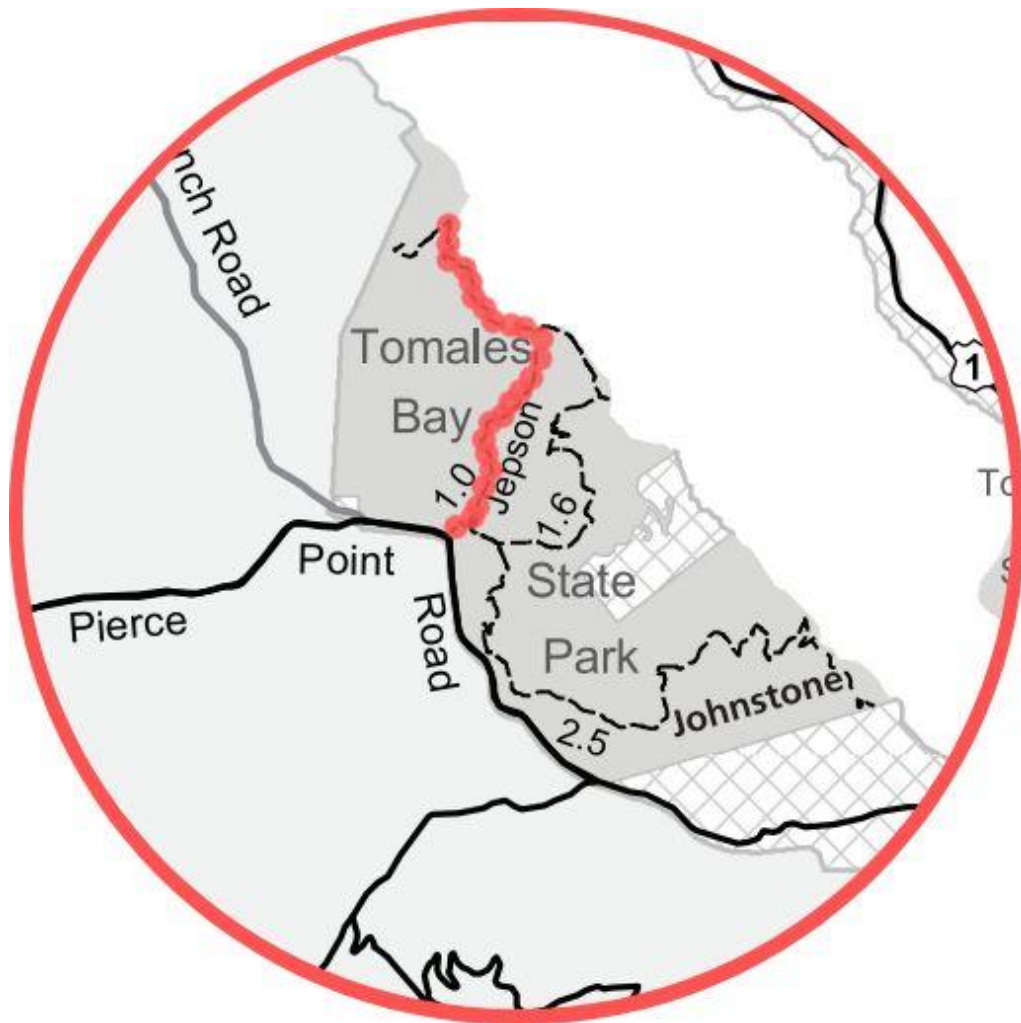
3.0 miles, out and back, easy

Park at the Jepson Trailhead on the right, off Pierce Point Road.

Hike 1.0 mile on the Jepson Trail to Heart's Desire Beach. Closer to the beach, you will cross a parking lot - follow the signs.

The Indian Nature Trail starts near the restrooms. It's a short 0.5 mile hike through the forest to Indian Beach. Take the 0.6 mile loop trail that winds through the marsh back to Heart's Desire or return on the nature trail.

[Get details](#)

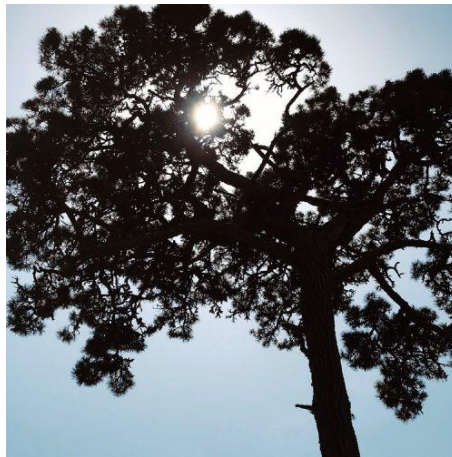


August highlights

The Tule Elk breeding season is in full swing. Visit the [Tomales Point Trail](#) or [Estero Trail](#) to see and hear elk bugling and sparring.

August is the start of shorebird, waterfowl and bird migration. Snowy plovers are finishing their breeding season.

The PRNSA full moon hike is August 17. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: Bishop Pine on the Jepson Trail. Bottom: Heart's Desire Beach. Right: Jepson Trail through oaks and bays. Cover: View to Tomales Bay from the Jepson Trail.

September

Olema Valley to Bolema

Hike through oak and bay forests and pass through grassy meadows. The open meadows are filled with bees, dragonflies, and butterflies such as the Mylitta Crescent (shown below). Insects use the narrow trail between the tall grasses as a flyway. The meadow can be intensely hot, reflecting heat off the dirt path and straw-colored dry grasses. The shaded forest sections of the trail are a welcome relief. Bring a hat and plenty of water. Bikes are permitted.

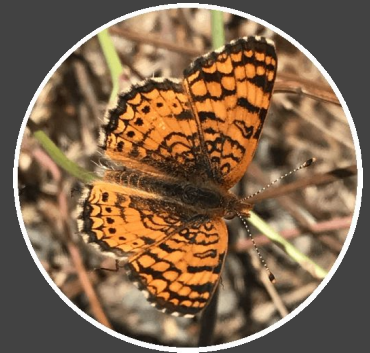
Avg temp: 55-80 F

Rain: 0 days, 0.1 inches

Daylight hours: 12.5

Full moon: Sep 17 at 7:34pm

No full moon hike



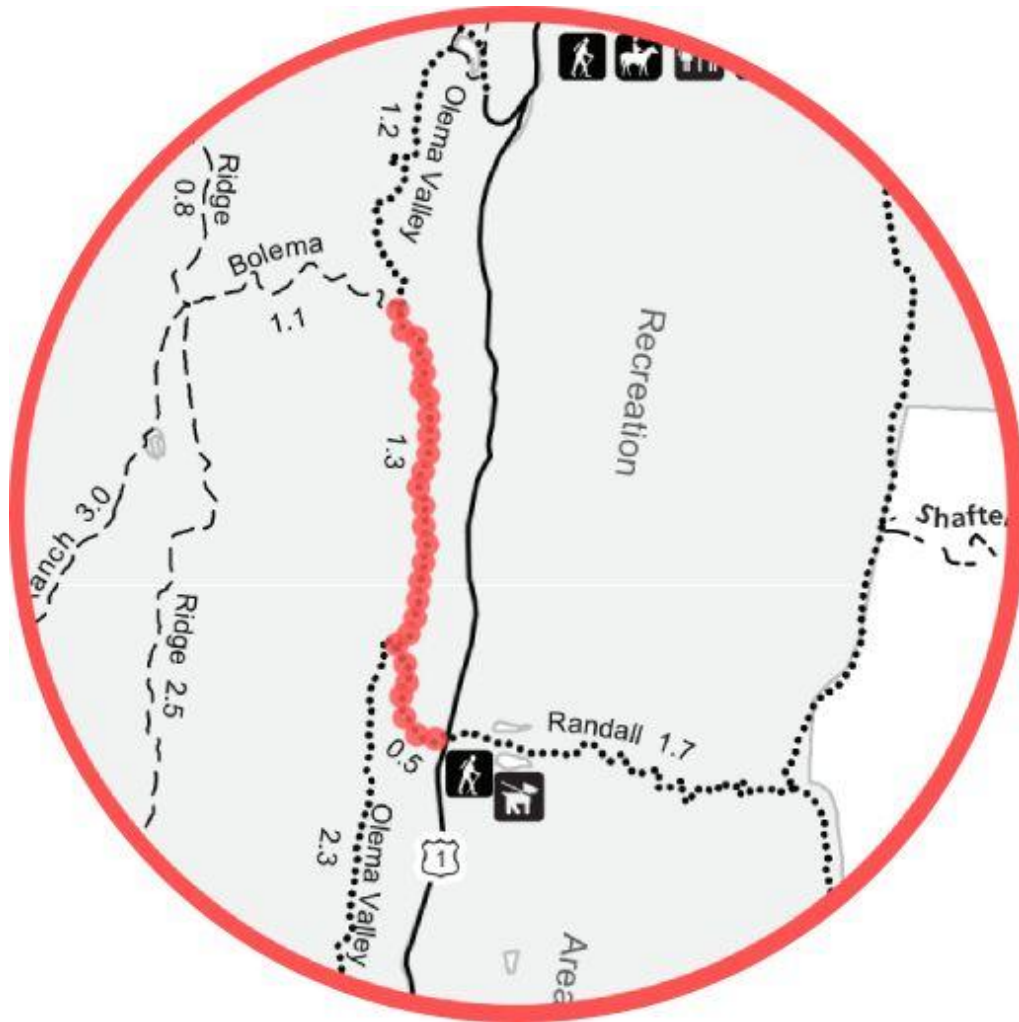
Hike: Olema Valley Trail to Bolema (via Randall Spur)

3.6 miles, out and back, easy to moderate

Park at the Olema Valley (Hagmaier) Trailhead turnout across the road from the Randall Trailhead. Coming from Olema, it's 6 miles to the trailhead and 2 miles past Five Brooks. Drive slowly and pay attention for the parking turnout area on the right - it's easy to miss.

1. Hike on the Randall Spur Trail for 0.5 miles. Watch for butterflies.
2. Turn right on the Olema Valley Trail toward the Bolema Trail and Five Brooks. Hike 1.0 mile to the Bolema Trail. At the intersection, look for [California Spikenard](#) (*Aralia californica*) with its striking purple clusters of berries that look like exploding fireworks.
3. Turn around at the Bolema Trail and return.

[Get details](#)



September highlights

Watch for majestic oaks with “eyes” in their bark along the Olema Valley Trail in the shaded section of trail between the Randall Spur and Bolema Trail.

Western Terrestrial Garter Snakes are common on this trail and throughout Point Reyes. They are likely to flee quickly into the brush as you approach giving you only a glimpse of their tail as they escape. The park does not allow you to catch or handle them unless you have a permit.

Join the [Coastal Cleanup day at Drakes Beach](#) on September 21.

Point Reyes National Seashore Association’s annual fundraiser **Party on the Pacific Plate on September 21**. Don’t miss it!

The PRNSA full moon hike is September 17. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: Oak tree with “eyes”. Bottom: [Western Terrestrial Garter Snake](#). Right: Olema Valley Trail view south.
Cover: View to Tomales Bay from the Jepson Trail.



October

Cross Marin-Jewell Trails

Hike or bike the paved Cross Marin Trail then ascend the Jewell Trail through oak hills with panoramic views. Bigleaf maple leaves are changing color from green to yellow and California buckeye trees are forming their iconic seed pods (shown below).

Avg temp: 53-75 F

Rain: 4 days, 1.9 inches

Daylight hours: 11.5

Full moon: Oct 17 at 4:26am

PRNSA full moon hike: Oct 19



Hike: Cross Marin-Jewell Trails

4.8 miles, out and back, easy to moderate

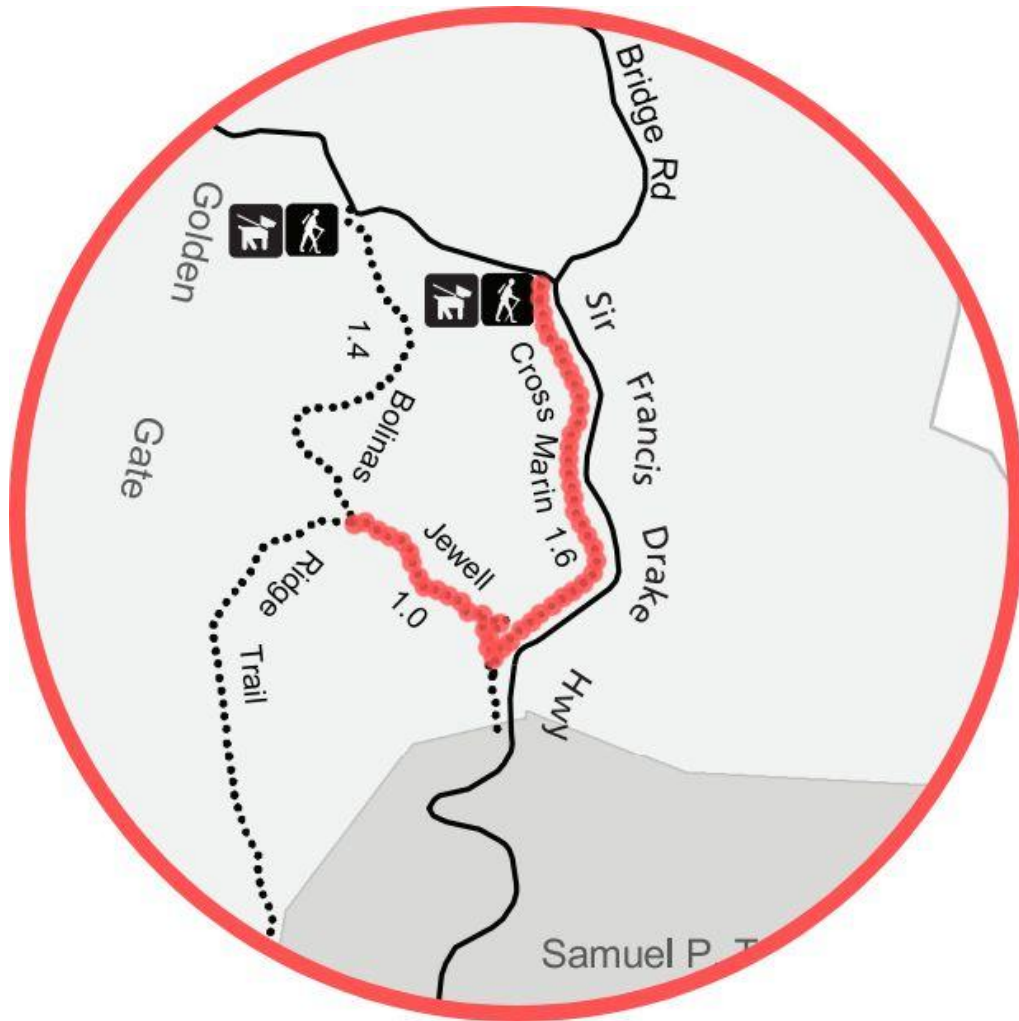
Park on Platform Bridge Road and cross the road to the Cross Marin Trailhead near the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Blvd and Platform Bridge Rd.

The Cross Marin Trail is a popular bike trail for families. It's a flat, easy ride - a vestige of its past history as a railroad track. It's a lovely, mostly shaded ride or hike through the mixed forest of Bay, Oak, Bigleaf maple, Coast Redwood and Douglas Fir.

The Jewell Trail is a short sloped trail connecting the Bolinas Ridge Trail with the Cross Marin Trail. As you ascend you'll be treated to views of the surrounding hills. Explore rocky outcrops for interesting lichen. Turn around at the Bolinas Ridge Trail and return to the Cross Marin Trailhead.

[Get details about the Cross Marin Trail](#)

[Get details about the Jewell Trail](#)



October highlights

Notice the different ferns along the Cross Marin trail including Coastal Woodfern, Polypody, and Giant Chain Fern. Look closely on the top and underside of the Giant Chain Fern fronds (top left) to see the short strips of oblong spores that form a chain. The Polypody fern (bottom left) has round clustered spores.

At the Great Beach, Drakes Beach, and Chimney Rock, Northern Elephant Seal juveniles are hauling out of the ocean to molt and spar onshore. Consider volunteering as a [Winter Wildlife Docent in Point Reyes](#). Training starts in the late fall.

The PRNSA full moon hike is October 19. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: [Giant Chain Fern](#) (*Woodwardia fimbriata*). Bottom: [Polypody](#) ferns. Right: Coast Redwoods on Cross Marin Trail. Cover: Cross Marin Trail.

November

Sky - Z Ranch Loop

On a misty day, this hike is a transcendent experience. On a clear day, the views are extraordinary. On a perfect day, you would experience fog on the Sky, Horse and Z Ranch Trails clearing to blue sky as you reach the Mt. Wittenberg Trail to enjoy views all the way to the ocean. Look for the bright red berries of Pink honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula*) in the fall (shown below).

Avg temp: 49-66 F

Rain: 6 days, 3.3 inches

Daylight hours: 10

Full moon: Nov 15 at 1:28pm

PRNSA full moon hike: Nov 16



Hike: Sky - Z Ranch Loop

4.1 miles, lollipop loop (more of a deflated balloon!), moderate to strenuous

Trails: Sky, Horse, Z Ranch, Mt Wittenberg

Park at the Sky Trailhead off Limantour Road

1. Hike Sky Trail 0.8 miles to the Horse Trail
2. Take Horse Trail 0.4 miles to Z Ranch Trail.
3. Turn right and hike the entire Z Ranch Trail 0.7 miles to Mt Wittenberg Trail. It's uphill for about two-thirds of the way.
4. Turn right and hike Mt Wittenberg Trail toward Sky Trail for 0.4 miles.
5. Turn right on the Sky Trail and return 1.8 miles to the trailhead.

The hike is level or downhill from the last third of the Z Ranch Trail to the end. Alternatively, reverse the loop for more rigorous ups and downs throughout the hike.



[Get details](#)

November highlights

The southward migration is going strong in the sky and in the water. Humpback Whales are beginning their ocean journey south, and birds are headed for warmer wintering grounds. Beaches and marshes host flocks of shorebirds and waterfowl.

The fall mushroom season will be in full swing after the first rain in the fall. Go out a day or two after a rain to see the newly sprouted fungi.

The fifth anniversary PRNSA full moon hike is November 16 at Bear Valley. [Hikes are posted on the website a month in advance.](#)



Top: Sky Trail in fog. Bottom: Mt Wittenberg Trail with view to Chimney Rock. Right: Z Ranch Trail with view to Tomales Bay. Cover: Z Ranch Trail with view to Tomales Bay in the fog (same view as above right!)



December

Shafter Trail

The Shafter Grade Trail is a 1.7 mile connector trail between the Bolinas Ridge Trail and the Leo T Cronin Fish Viewing Area in Lagunitas. The trail is a steep ascent through a shaded forest of second-growth redwoods, bay, oak and firs. Stop at the bridge to look for spawning salmon. Bring your binoculars. Bikes allowed.

Avg temp: 45-59 F
Rain: 9 days, 5.0 inches
Daylight hours: 9.5
Full moon: Dec 15 at 1:01am
No full moon hike



Hike: Shafter Trail

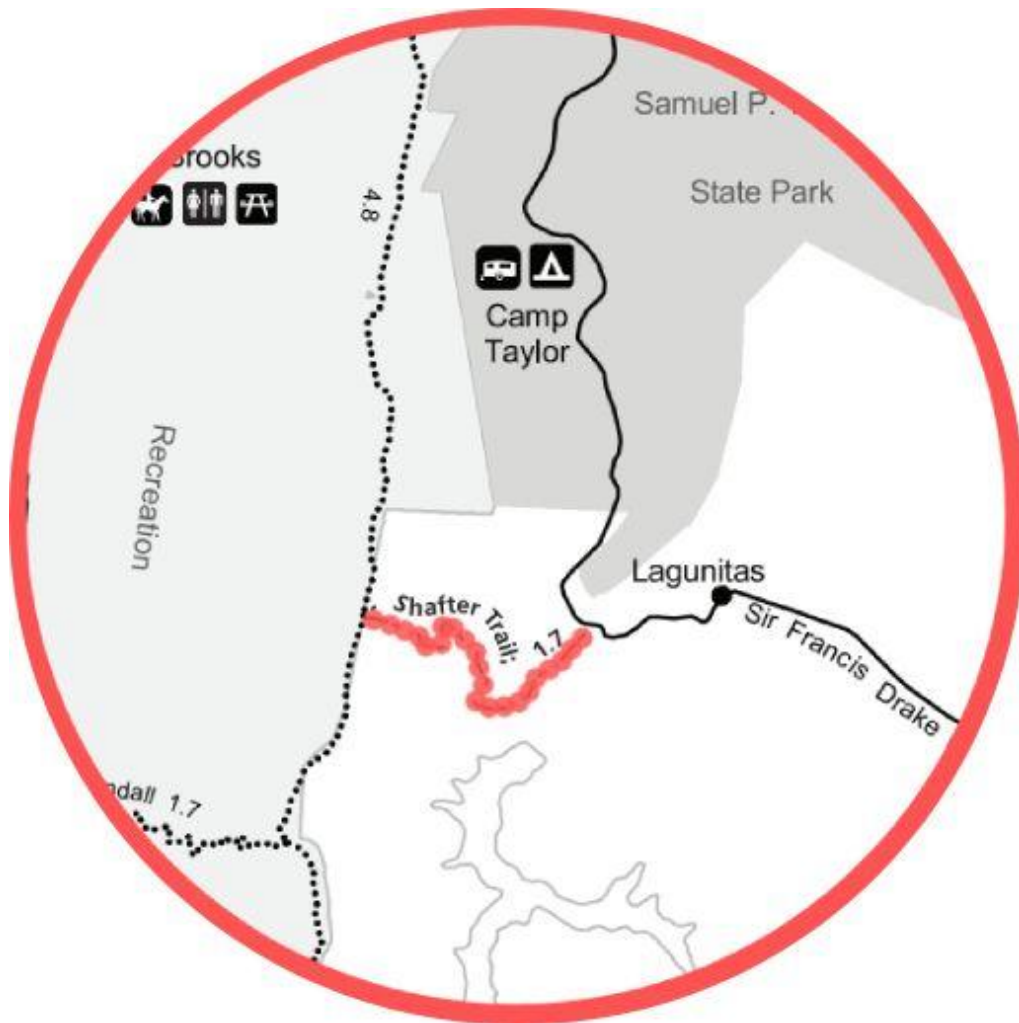
3.4 miles, out and back, strenuous

Starting at the Leo T Cronin Fish Viewing Area parking lot

1. Walk from the parking lot along the creek about 10 minutes to the Shafter Grade Trail on the right toward the [Bolinás Ridge Trail](#).
2. Hike 1.7 miles on the Shafter Grade Trail through the forest on a steep ascent to the Bolinas Ridge Trail.
3. Turn around and hike back.

Watch for Coho salmon in the creek. [Learn more about where to observe salmon.](#)

[Get details](#)



December highlights

In winter November-January, [Coho salmon](#) are spawning in area creeks and The Leo T Cronin Fish Viewing Area is a popular destination for spotting them. Read my [blog post on Coho salmon](#) from January 2020 to see what to look for and why it's easier to spot female salmon.

Take an informative [creek walk tour](#) with local non-profit SPAWN.

Join a [Marin Tracking Club](#) exploration. It's a free morning of community tracking led by Richard Vacha. MTC meets on the last Sunday of every month.



Top: [Stereum](#) growing on Bay roots. Bottom: Shafter Trail in the afternoon light. Right: Shafter Trail in the afternoon light. Cover: Coast Redwoods and moss-covered stump on the Shafter Trail.