Channel Islands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

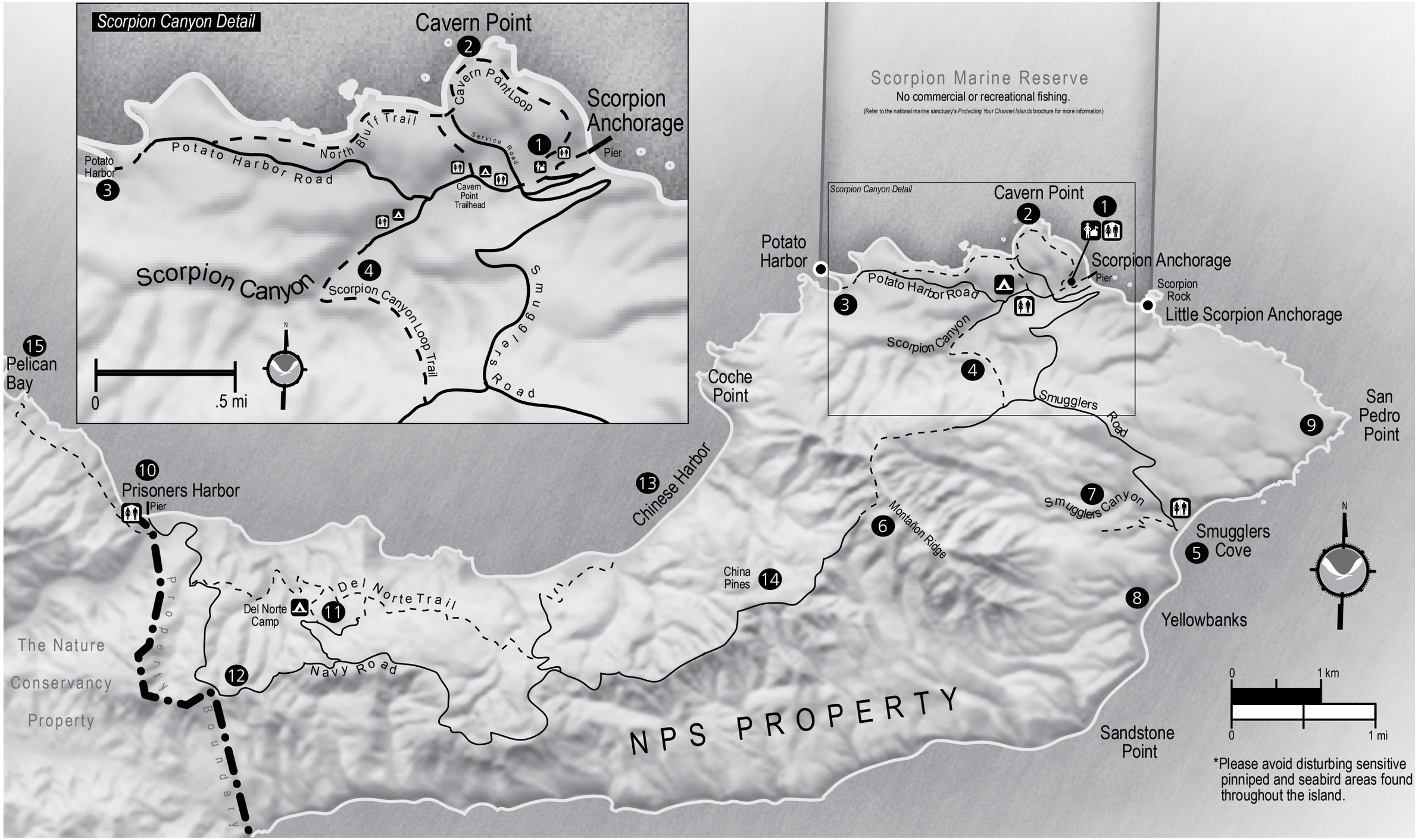
Channel Islands National Park

Hiking Eastern Santa Cruz Island

Several trails and roads traverse eastern Santa Cruz Island, providing visitors with spectacular hiking opportunities. These trails and roads range from the maintained, relatively flat, signed trails of Scorpion Valley to the unmaintained, rugged, mountainous paths of the Montañon area. Hikers need to assume individual responsibility for planning their trips and hiking safely. To increase your odds of a safe hike, decrease your disturbance to wildlife, and lessen damage to resources, visitors should be in good physical condition and must follow the regulations and guidelines in the "Limiting Your Impact" section of the park newspaper and those listed below:

- Stay on trails and roads while hiking—avoid animal trails which are narrow, uneven, unstable, and dangerous.
- Cliff edges should be avoided at all times since they tend to be crumbly and unstable. Stay well back. Children should be supervised.
- Hikers should never hike alone—use the buddy system. This allows someone to go for help if you encounter trouble.
- Carry plenty of water and drink it. One quart for short walks, more for longer hikes.
- Be aware of poison oak, "jumping" cholla cactus, ticks, and scorpions. Poison oak can be identified by its clusters of three shiny leaflets. Some ticks carry disease; check your clothing and exposed skin after hiking.
- In order to help prevent wildfires, do not smoke on trails or in brush areas. Smoking is allowed only on beaches.
- No hiking is allowed beyond the national park boundary onto The Nature Conservancy property. The boundary marked by a fenceline between Prisoners Harbor and Valley Anchorage.
- When departing from the islands, visitors are responsible for meeting the boat concessionaire on time. Be aware of departure time by asking the ranger or concessionaire employees.
- Pack out what you pack in, including your trash. There are no trash cans on the island so please take your garbarge with you.
- Do not directly or indirectly feed the wildlife. Secure your trash and food at all times. Use the storage boxes provided at the picnic tables or behind the kiosk in the orientation area. Gulls, ravens, skunks, mice and especially foxes have all gotten into visitors' food. Unfortunatley, foxes in the Scorpion area have become habituated to human food. Failure to store your food and trash properly or intentionally feeding wildlife will result in a citation and fine.

Destination	Distance (miles, round-trip)	Difficulty	Description
From Scorpion Beach:			
1 **Historic Ranch**	.5	Easy	View the historic Scorpion Ranch complex dating to the late 1800s. Exhibit areas include an orienation kiosk, blacksmith shop, farm implements, and a visitor center located in the Scorpion ranch house.
2 **Cavern Point Loop**	2	Moderate	Not to be missed. Magnificent coastal vistas and seasonal whale viewing. To avoid a steep climb, hike clockwise, beginning from campground (near site #22) and looping back to Scorpion Anchorage. From Cavern Point, you may also follow the North Bluff Trail west for 2 miles out to Potato Harbor
3 **Potato Harbor**	5	Moderate	A longer hike than the Cavern Point hike, but also with spectacular coastal views. No beach access.
4 **Scorpion Canyon Loop**	4.5	Moderate to strenuous	A scenic loop hike to the interior with a chance to see the unique island scrub-jay. To avoid a steep climb, hike clockwise starting on the Smugglers Road towards the oil well and eventually down into Scorpion Canyon and back out to the beach. Hike off trail into the right (or northwest) fork of Scorpion Canyon to see the island scrub-jay, but be prepared for extremely rocky conditions.
5 **Smugglers Cove**	7.5	Strenuous	Follow the Smugglers Road to the beach at Smugglers Cove. Carry water. No water available at Smugglers.
6 **Montañon Ridge**	8	Strenuous	For experienced hikers. Great views. This ridge can also be reached from Smugglers Cove (8 miles round-trip and off-trail hiking) and Prisoners Harbor (21 miles round-trip).
From Smugglers Cove:			
7 **Smugglers Canyon**	2	Strenuous	Off-trail hiking in a stream bed (seasonal water) with native vegetation and steep canyon walls. Be prepared for uneven terrain and loose rock.
8 **Yellowbanks**	3	Moderate	This hike along an unmaintained route leads to an overlook. No beach access without an off-trail scramble.
9 **San Pedro Point**	4	Moderate	This off-trail hike leads to an overlook. No beach access. For experienced off-trail hikers.
From Prisoners Harbor:			
10 **Prisoners Harbor**	.5	Easy	View the historic Prisoners Harbor area and search for the island scrub-jay (usually found in nearby trees or stream-side vegetation). Walk up the Navy Road for a short distance to get a nice view from above.
11 **Del Norte Camp**	7	Strenuous	Follow the rugged Del Norte trail east to the backcountry camp. Carry water. No water at this campground.
12 **Navy Road / Del Norte Loop**	8.5	Strenuous	Longer loop route which visits Del Norte Camp and provides views to the south side of the island. Route includes the Navy and Del Norte Roads and the Del Norte Trail.
13 **Chinese Harbor**	15.5	Strenuous	A long hike via the Del Norte trail or Navy Road that ends at a cobblestone beach.
14 **China Pines**	18	Strenuous	A long hike via the Del Norte trail or Navy Road with a chance to see the unique Santa Cruz Island pine.
15 **Pelican Bay**	4	Moderate to strenuous	This trail may only be traveled by those that have obtained a permit in advance from The Nature Conservancy or are accompanied by Island Packers (boat concessionaire) staff.


Scorpion Canyon Detail
Cavern Point
Cavern Point Loop
Scorpion Anchorage
Pier
North Bluff Trail
Service Road
Potato Harbor Road
Potato Harbor
Cavern Point Trailhead
Scorpion Canyon
Scorpion Canyon Loop Trail
Smugglers Road
0
.5 mi
N
Scorpion Marine Reserve
No commercial or recreational fishing.
(Refer to the national marine sanctuary's Protecting Your Channel Islands brochure for more information)
Scorpion Canyon Detail
Cavern Point
Potato Harbor
Scorpion Anchorage
Pier
Scorpion Rock
Little Scorpion Anchorage
Potato Harbor Road
Scorpion Canyon
Smugglers Road
Coche Point
San Pedro Point
Pelican Bay
Prisoners Harbor
Pier
Chinese Harbor
Smugglers Canyon
Smugglers Cove
Montañon Ridge
China Pines
Del Norte Trail
Del Norte Camp
Yellowbanks
The Nature Conservancy Property
Navy Road
Property Boundary
NPS PROPERTY
Sandstone Point
0
1 km
0
1 mi
*Please avoid disturbing sensitive pinniped and seabird areas found throughout the island.