Channel Islands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

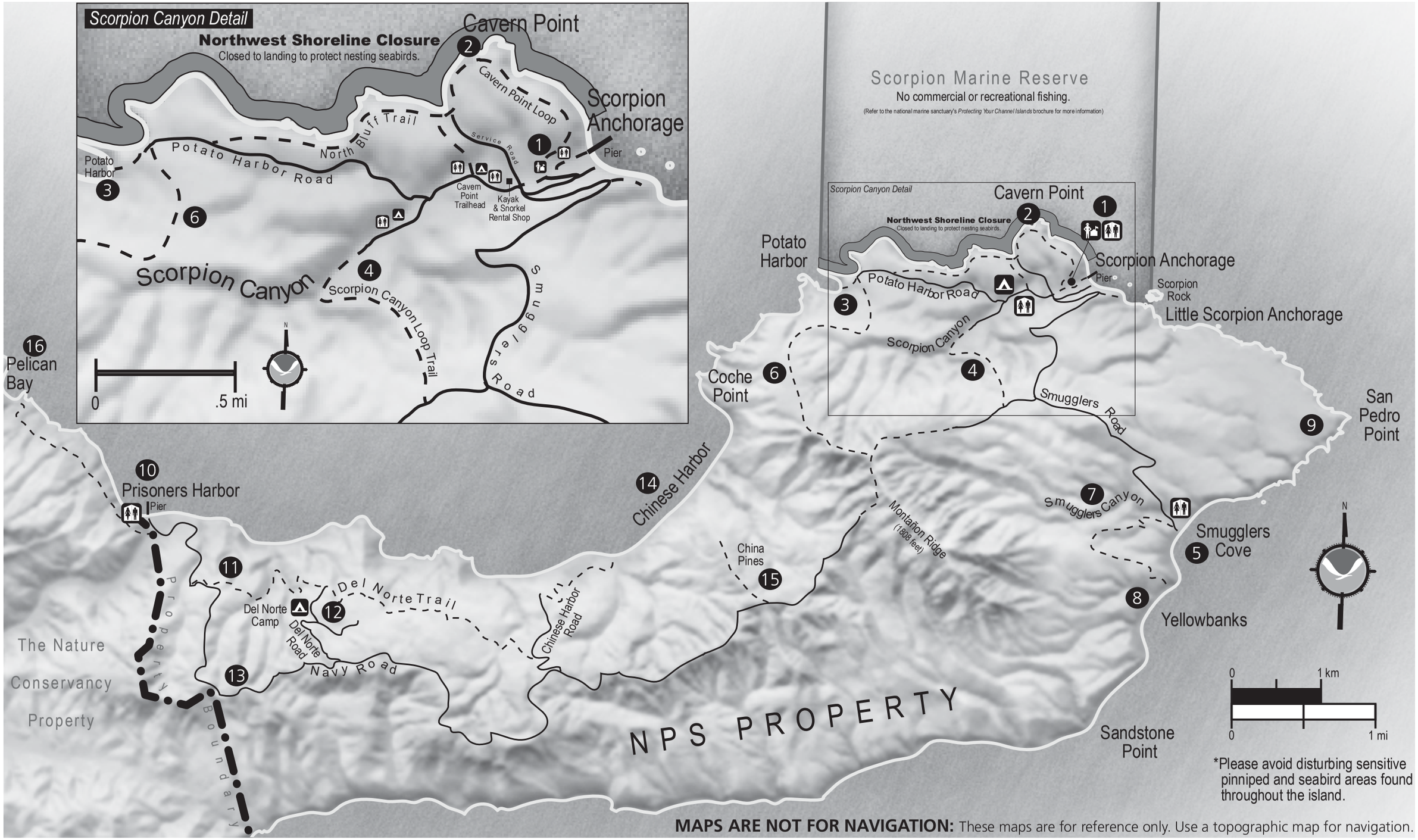
Channel Islands National Park

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 on the park website 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. Rock throwing from cliffs is not permitted as it can be dangerous for kayakers below.
- Hikers should avoid hiking alone—use the buddy system. This allows someone to go for help if you encounter trouble.
- No pets. Pets are not allowed on the islands. Pets can carry diseases that could harm the island fox or other animals that are unique to the islands. Service animals require a permit from the park superintendent.
- Carry plenty of water and drink it. One quart for short walks, more for longer hikes.
- In order to help prevent wildfires, do not smoke on trails or in brush areas. Smoking is allowed only on beaches.
- 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.
- No hiking is allowed beyond the national park boundary onto The Nature Conservancy property. The boundary is marked by a fenceline between Prisoners Harbor and Valley Anchorage.
- When departing from the islands, visitors are responsible for meeting the boat concessioner on time. Be aware of departure time by looking at your boarding pass or asking the ranger or concessioner employees.
- Pack out what you pack in, including your trash. There are no trash cans on the island so please take your garbage 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. Failure to store your food and trash properly or intentionally feeding wildlife will result in a citation.

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 orientation 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 Loop**	10	Strenuous	Great views, for experienced hikers only. Trail not maintained. Carry a topographic map. This loop can be accessed via Smugglers Road or via the North Bluff Trail near Potato Harbor.
From Smugglers Cove:			
7 **Smugglers Canyon**	2	Strenuous	Off-trail hiking in a stream bed (seasonal water) with steep canyon walls. Uneven terrain and loose rock.
8 **Yellowbanks**	3	Strenuous	This trail leads to an unmaintained route to the beach.
9 **San Pedro Point**	4	Strenuous	This off-trail hike leads to an overlook. No beach access. For experienced off-trail hikers.
From Prisoners Harbor:			
10 **Prisoners Harbor**	.5	Easy	Walk through the ranch area, wetland and up the Navy Road for a short distance to get a nice harbor view.
11 **Del Norte Overlook**	3	Moderate	Hike 1 mile up the Navy Road to the Del Norte Trail junction and then follow the trail for .25 miles to an overlook of the northeast coast.
12 **Del Norte Camp**	7	Strenuous	Follow the rugged Del Norte trail east to the backcountry camp. Carry water. No water at this campground.
13 **Del Norte / Navy Road Loop**	8.5	Strenuous	This loop provides views to the south side of the island. Follow the Del Norte Trail to the Del Norte Road that leads south to the campground. Continue south on this road to the Navy Road and return to Prisoners.
14 **Chinese Harbor**	15	Strenuous	A long hike via the Del Norte trail and/or Navy Road that ends at a cobblestone beach.
15 **China Pines**	18	Strenuous	Follow the Del Norte trail and/or Navy Road to an unmaintained trail to see the Santa Cruz Island pine.
16 **Pelican Bay**	4	Moderate to strenuous	This trail may only be traveled by Island Packers (boat concessioner) passengers that are accompanied by Island Packers staff. Access to The Nature Conservancy coastal property, including this trail, is permitted to private boaters who have a valid landing permit.


Scorpion Canyon Detail
Northwest Shoreline Closure
Closed to landing to protect nesting seabirds.
Cavern Point
Cavern Point Loop
Scorpion Anchorage
Pier
North Bluff Trail
Service Road
Potato Harbor Road
Potato Harbor
Cavern Point Trailhead
Kayak & Snorkel Rental Shop
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
Northwest Shoreline Closure
Closed to landing to protect nesting seabirds.
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
(1808 feet)
China Pines
Yellowbanks
Del Norte Trail
Del Norte Camp
Del Norte Road
Navy Road
Chinese Harbor Road
The Nature Conservancy Property
Property Boundary
NPS PROPERTY
Sandstone Point
0
1 km
0
1 mi
*Please avoid disturbing sensitive pinniped and seabird areas found throughout the island.
MAPS ARE NOT FOR NAVIGATION: These maps are for reference only. Use a topographic map for navigation.