



Boating Guide



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Precautions

Tide and Currents

The change between high and low tide sometimes creates strong currents which can be dangerous for even experienced boaters. Be aware of the currents and tides, especially at the mouth of Tomales Bay and Drakes Estero. Low tides reveal mudflats not seen during high tides. Tides can be an hour different from the mouth of Tomales Bay to Marshall Beach.

Wind and Water

The winds can pick up unexpectedly, especially in the afternoon. Listen to the forecast on weather radio stations for the most useful information to boaters.

Both Tomales Bay and Drakes Estero can act as wind tunnels, making return journeys difficult. Water temperatures average 55°F in the ocean and Drakes Bay, slightly warmer during summer in Tomales Bay. Once in the water, hypothermia can set in quickly. Wetsuits are suggested.

White Sharks

Two white shark attacks occurred at the mouth of Tomales Bay in 1996 and one occurred at the mouth of Drakes Estero in 2005. Sharks may be found anywhere there is a seal haul-out area. In Tomales Bay, the area north of Tom's Point, Hog Island, and Pelican Point are the most likely areas to encounter white sharks.

Hypothermia

Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable fits of shivering, slurred speech, and frequent stumbling. Without treatment, the condition may lead to stupor, collapse, and death.

Preparation

Know the area and what to expect. Obtain maps, and park information. Bring adequate food and water. Have dry clothes and equipment to keep you warm and dry. Know some first aid and bring a first aid kit. If you plan to fish, purchase a California State Fishing License. All state fish and game regulations are enforced in the seashore.

NOTE: Personal flotation devices are required and should be worn at all times when on the water.

Wildlife

Often when people see a marine mammal on the beach, they attempt to pet, feed, or pick up the animal. These attempts usually frighten and sometimes injure the animal, and are against the law. **You can best help an injured or sick animal by leaving it alone** and reporting it immediately to those trained to deal with these situations.

Seals and sea lions often haul out on land to rest. They may stay on the beach for up to two weeks if they are molting

(losing and then growing new fur). Mother seals frequently leave their pups alone on the beach when they feed and will not return to her pup if people or dogs are within sight.

A sick or injured marine mammal will interpret an approach by a person or dog as a threat, and do its best to defend itself. In doing so, the animal could seriously injure anyone trying to help. At the very least, the animal will use up energy needed for recovery. Seals and sea lions can also carry diseases that are contagious to people and dogs.

If you come across an animal that is sick, injured, or dead, call the park dispatch center at 415-464-5170 or the park's visitor center at 415-464-5100. Report the location and identifying characteristics of the animal.

Never attempt to remove an animal from or return it to the water. Do not wrap the animal in blankets or clothing. Trembling animals are not usually cold, but they may be in shock.

Summer through winter, brown pelicans roost on islands and floats. They use Pelican Point and Hog Island as resting areas while they are at Point Reyes. Seabirds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Avoid areas where large numbers of birds are resting. Do not "flush" or harass birds from their resting areas.

Wildlife Protection Closures:

The east side of Hog Island is closed for overnight and day use to provide a haul-out site for harbor seals and a roosting area for pelicans.

Pelican Point is closed for overnight and day use to provide a peaceful resting area for pelicans.

South Blue Gum Beach is closed seasonally from March 1 to June 30 each year for seal protection.

Drakes and Limantour Esteros are closed seasonally from March 1 to June 30 each year for seal protection. They are closed year round to motorized craft.

Dogs are prohibited on most national park and state park beaches.

NOTE: The Marine Mammal Protection law of 1972 prohibits taking or harassing marine mammals with a civil penalty of up to \$10,000. Harassment is defined as any act that has the potential to disturb a marine mammal by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.



**IN AN EMERGENCY - CONTACT U.S. COAST
GUARD STATION BODEGA BAY ON VHF CHANNEL 16
OR PHONE 911 (MARIN COUNTY DISPATCH)**

OVERNIGHT USE

Boat-in camping by permit is allowed on Point Reyes National Seashore beaches on the west side of Tomales Bay, north of Indian Beach in Tomales Bay State Park. Camping on state park beaches or on Hog and Duck Islands and Pelican Point is prohibited. Potable water is not available. Weapons and fireworks are prohibited. Remove all waste. **No camping in Drakes or Limantour Esteros.**

State Park info: (415) 669-1140 or <http://www.parks.ca.gov/>
National Park info: (415) 464-5100 or <http://www.nps.gov/pore/>

Fees and Permits for West Side Camping

Reservations online at www.recreation.gov or call toll free 877-444-6777. The cutoff date for making reservations is 6 pm PT two days in advance of the first day of the trip. No reservations may be made online or by phone after the cutoff date. \$20 per night for 1-6 people; \$40 per night for 7-14 people; \$50 for 15-25 people.

DAY USE

Day use is permitted on national and state park beaches and on Hog and Duck Islands and in Drakes Estero. Access to Duck Island is permitted only on the south east side, and to Hog Island only on the west side. Hog Island's east side is an important seal haul out site. Wood fires are permitted on national park beaches with a free fire permit from a park visitor center, but are not permitted on state park beaches or on Hog and Duck Islands. Bring your own wood. **Hunting and personal watercraft are not allowed on the bay.**

Human Waste and Garbage

Never dispose of any waste in the bay. Use toilets located on the map or pack it out! Never pump boat-holding tanks into the bay. All human waste should be disposed of in sanitary sewage system, a pit toilet, or dump station. Dump stations: Lawson's Landing in Dillon Beach (707-878-2443) and Olema Campground (800-655-2267) in Olema.

ACCESS

Lawson's Landing 707-878-2443

The campground and boat launch are located in Dillon Beach. Gas, dump station, rest rooms, and water are available. Day use fee: \$8 per car, \$11 for RV's; overnight fee: \$30 tents, \$35 RVs. <http://www.lawsonslanding.com/>

Miller Boat Launch 415-499-6387

Also known as Nick's Cove. Located on the east side of Tomales Bay north of Marshall on Highway 1. The county park provides a two-lane ramp and docks for motorized and non-motorized boat launching. There is a charge for overnight parking for boaters. <http://www.marincountyparks.org/>

Tomales Bay State Park 415-669-1140

No overnight parking allowed.

The state park has two access points on the bay, Hearts Desire Beach and Millerton Point. <http://www.parks.ca.gov/>

Hearts Desire Beach, on the west side of the bay, is day use only.

Restrooms and water are available. Boats are carried 100 yards to beach launch site. If beach parking is full, unload and park in the picnic lot. Overnight parking is prohibited. Day use fee is \$8 per vehicle (\$7 for 62 and older). Exact change required for self-registration. In summer, orange floats indicate the swimming area. Boaters must take out south of the floats. Motorized vessels are prohibited within 100 feet of the swim area markers.

Millerton Point is on the east side of the bay, three miles north of Point Reyes Station on Hwy. 1. You carry your boat approximately 100 yards to the water, and access is best at high tide since this section of the bay is very shallow.

Tomales Bay Resort 415-669-1389

The marina and motel are located on the west side of the bay, north of Inverness on Sir Francis Drake Highway. A cement boat launch is available. Day and overnight parking is permitted with a \$10 fee along with a boat launch fee of \$5/kayak and \$10 for all other boats. <http://www.tomalesbayresort.com/>

MAP OF TOMALES BAY

