

# San Buenaventura State Beach



## Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(805) 968-1033**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact [interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov).

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### San Buenaventura State Beach

900 San Pedro St., off Hwy. 101

Ventura, CA 93001 (805) 968-1033

[www.parks.ca.gov/sanbuenaventura](http://www.parks.ca.gov/sanbuenaventura)

*A rock-studded beach  
with stunning ocean  
views entices swimmers,  
surfers, sunbathers,  
and picnickers to  
this popular seaside  
recreation spot.*



## A two-mile-long stretch of wide sandy beach beckons visitors to busy San

### Buenaventura State Beach

in the heart of the city of Ventura in Southern California. Surfers ride the waves while families picnic, groups play volleyball, and anglers drop their lines from the iconic Ventura Pier, known for its great fishing.

This celebrated recreation venue also offers swimming and cycling. Beachgoers enjoy strolling down the 1,700-foot wooden pier with its snack bar, restaurant, and bait shop. Beach visitors can gaze east to the mountains or look west across the channel to admire spectacular crimson sunsets.

The beach overlooks the Channel Islands, a necklace of five islands 14 miles off the coast. The Channel Islands are home to more than 2,000 plant and animal species.

### PARK HISTORY

#### Native Americans

Chumash people have lived along this coast and on the Channel Islands for at least 13,000 years. Occupation of a beachside village called *Shisholop*, meaning “port” in the Ventureño Chumash language, dates from the past 1,000 years. Indeed, this village along the northern border of the state beach was the western terminus of

an important trade route between the coast and the interior southern San Joaquin Valley. Unfortunately, much of the Shisholop site was destroyed by erosion and development.

Its proximity to the Northern Channel

Islands made the coast near today's Ventura

an important cross-channel launch point for the native people's plank canoes, called *tomol*. The

Chumash—a name derived from the

inhabitants of Santa Cruz Island (*Michumash*)—were well known for their production of shell beads. They paddled their *tomol* along the coast and islands, trading fish, shell bead money, and other goods with coastal villagers and Channel Islands communities. Modern Chumash descendants recreate the crossing in a traditional *tomol* from Ventura Harbor to Santa Cruz Island annually.

Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first encountered the Chumash living

in thatched houses, called ‘*ap*, at the edge of the Pacific Ocean in 1542. Other early visitors included Gaspar de Portolá in 1769 and Juan Bautista de Anza in 1776. In 1782 Father Junípero Serra founded Mission San

Buenaventura, which was built with Chumash labor.

Today, a small museum at the mission displays Chumash artifacts.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Geology

The state beach includes coastal sand dunes, which form when on-shore winds blow sand along the beach. The sand then piles up

around something that slows the wind, such as plants or driftwood. Dune formation can provide natural resiliency to rising sea levels and storm surges attributed to global climate change.

#### Flora and Fauna

Sand dunes support an array of plants and animals. Native plants, such as red and pink sand verbena, grow sparsely on the dunes, along with beach evening primrose, Coast buckwheat, and silver beach burr.

Courtesy of Wishotoyo Chumash Foundation/Suzie Kaplan



Chumash 'ap dwelling made of tule and willow



Beachgoers may spot sunning sea lions or wimbrels wading on the beach, along with killdeer, willets, and silvery legless lizards.

The nesting of the threatened western snowy plover—a sparrow-sized, well-camouflaged shorebird—is monitored at the beach. Heed warning signs erected near nest sites during the breeding season, which lasts from early spring to mid-fall.

## RECREATION

Swimming and surfing are popular pastimes. Seasoned surfers enjoy the wave action at Surfer's Point and farther out on a reef known as "Outsides," which is famous for its monster waves.

**Fishing**—Ventura Pier has been a favored spot for local anglers since its inception.

At the ideal place to catch Pacific thresher shark, fishing enthusiasts also hook yellowtail, Pacific mackerel, white sea bass, halibut, corbina, or turbot. A sand



*Western snowy plover chick*

playground next to the pier keeps kids happy while their parents fish or sunbathe.

**Picnicking**—San Buenaventura features the largest day-use picnic area at a state beach in Southern California. Set back behind the dunes are picnic tables, barbecues, restrooms, and an equipment rental shop.

One of the most popular picnicking opportunities is found at the Jolly Oyster in the day-use area. Families and oyster lovers from far and wide shuck raw, local,

farm-fresh oysters and clams by the dozens.

**Bicycling**—For those who like to cycle with a water view, a paved hike and bike path runs from the park entrance past the Ventura Pier, along the Ventura River, and back along the beach to north Emma Wood State



Beach. At the pier, a variety of bicycles can be rented to cycle along the beach and boardwalk, from mountain bikes to modern carriages—called surreys—complete with fringe on top.

**Volleyball**—Courts near the picnic area are popular for pick-up matches, youth camps, tournaments, and league play.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

The beach is the site for a number of special events throughout the year, including triathlons, festivals, volleyball tournaments, and cycling events. For an event schedule, visit [www.parks.ca.gov/sanbuenaventura](http://www.parks.ca.gov/sanbuenaventura).

Those looking for a memorable wedding or event locale with beautiful ocean views should contact the special events coordinator at (805) 648-4059 or email [ventura@parks.ca.gov](mailto:ventura@parks.ca.gov).

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Parking, restrooms, the picnic area, and the pier are accessible. Call (805) 648-3321 for information on reserving a beach wheelchair.

Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Emma Wood SB, W. Main St. and Park Access Rd., Ventura 93001 (805) 968-1033
- McGrath State Beach, off Hwy. 101 via Harbor Blvd., Oxnard 93035 (805) 968-1033
- Mandalay State Beach, 1601 S. Harbor Blvd. Oxnard 93035 (805) 968-1033

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- All park natural and cultural features are protected by law and may not be removed or disturbed.
- Except for service animals on leashes, pets are not allowed on the beach.
- Varying ocean conditions may become dangerous. Never turn your back on the ocean, and approach the shore with care.
- Campfires are not allowed.
- A fishing license is required to fish in all areas of the park. Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations apply. See [www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov).
- Permits must be obtained prior to all beach events and weddings.

*Red-tailed hawk*















*Junior Lifeguard program participants*

# San Buenaventura State Beach



## Legend

-  Major Road
-  Paved Road
-  Trail: Hike & Bike
-  Accessible Feature
-  Information
-  Fishing
-  Lifeguard Tower
-  Parking
-  Picnic Area
-  Restrooms
-  Surfing
-  Swimming

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