



SANTA CRUZ ISLAND RESERVE

UC SANTA BARBARA NATURAL RESERVE SYSTEM

LOCATION

Nearly 100 square miles in size, Santa Cruz Island is the largest of California's eight Channel Islands. The most rugged and topographically diverse island in the archipelago, it lies approximately 20 miles off the Santa Barbara coast. Landscapes here reflect what California must have looked like a century ago, with large expanses of chaparral and oak savanna, and stunning beaches that resemble those of Baja California. The central valley that runs the length of the island follows the route of an earthquake fault.

RESEARCH AREAS

Santa Cruz Island supports more vascular plant species than any other California island. Of the 627 species in its flora, 37 are endemic to the Channel Islands and eight are found only on Santa Cruz Island. Its island scrub-jay is the only bird species in the continental United States whose range does not extend to the mainland. Areas of Chumash activity on the west end of the island are important archeological research sites. Campaigns spearheaded by The Nature Conservancy and National Park Service have eradicated feral sheep and pigs, brought an end to cattle ranching, removed feral European honeybees, and reintroduced bald eagles. These efforts were instrumental in the recovery of the island fox, which was removed from the federal endangered species list in 2016. Current restoration efforts focus on the removal of non-native vegetation.

FACILITIES AND USES

Santa Cruz Island Reserve offers a dormitory, common kitchen, dining areas, and a laboratory; internet access; and makes boats and land vehicles available to users. The reserve is a popular site for researchers, graduate students, and university-led classes from around the world who come to study island biology, geology, and archeology.



ORIGINS

The oldest of UC Santa Barbara's reserves, Santa Cruz Island Field Station was established in 1966. It joined the UC Natural Reserve System in 1973. Located on Santa Cruz Island, which is owned by The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service, the reserve has worked with these partners to support ecological restoration projects on the island.



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Visit us on the web at santacruz.nrs.ucsb.edu

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