

NRSN A T U R A L
R E S E R V E
S Y S T E M

University of California

Site Specs

Administering
Campus
UC Santa BarbaraEstablished
1977

Location

Santa Barbara County, due west of city of Carpinteria; 32 km (20 mi) east of Santa Barbara campus.

Size

49 ha (120 acres) owned by UC;
93 ha (230 acres) total habitat area

Elevation

1 m below mean sea level to 3 m above mean sea level (-3 to 10 ft)

Average Precipitation

38 cm (15 in) per year

Average Temperatures

August maximum: 24°C (75°F)
January minimum: 6°C (42°F)

Facilities

Interpretative area, teaching amphitheater, and nature trail at CSM nature park on Ash Ave.; some facilities available at UCSB; no on-site research or housing facilities.

Databases

Bibliography of marsh-based inventories/research; historic/current aerial photos; species lists; synoptic collections; geographic information system (GIS); marsh management plan w/extensive site information; selected databases at website.

Personnel

Reserve manager/NRS office on Santa Barbara campus; no on-site personnel.

NRS Publications

Reserve brochure published 1991;
Management plan published 1997.

Contact Information

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NRS Website

<<http://nrs.ucop.edu>>

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Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve

The Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve contains a critically important Southern California estuary, which supports many sensitive plant and animal species. The site includes extensive wetland and channel habitats along with some uplands and is adjacent to a sandy beach, subtidal rocky reef, and kelp beds. The reserve provides habitat for migratory waterfowl along with several plants and animals listed as endangered, such as the salt marsh bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus*ssp. *maritimus*), light-footed clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris levipes*), and Belding's savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*). It is also an important regional nursery for halibut and other marine and estuarine fish. As part of the Ash Avenue Restoration Project, an on-site interpretative center, teaching amphitheater, and nature trail have been provided to enhance public outreach at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh (CSM) Nature Park.

Selected Research

NSF-funded, long-term investigation of watersheds and nearshore marine environments; new EPA-funded wetland toxicity center.

Impacts to estuary from runoff/effluents; nutrient dynamics in estuarine ecosystem; long-term vegetation sampling in relationship to soil texture, salinity, tidal inundation, and competition or facilitation among species.

Size/distribution of estuarine fish populations; competition/resource allocation among marine/estuarine fish.

Effects of parasites on hosts and spatial distribution of trematode populations; demographic, competition, and resource allocation studies of bivalves and other invertebrates.

Special Programs

Field courses: University courses, including plant ecology, environmental studies, marine biology, and a research-mentorship program.

Bird studies: Ongoing monthly bird surveys provide census data, information on habitat-use and species-density changes.

Habitat restoration: Extensive marsh restoration at CSM nature park; removal of invasive exotic plants.

Public outreach: Class visits from local elementary/secondary schools; field trips through such local organizations as Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; interpretive panels along nature trail in nature park; weekly docent-led tours.