

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
1966; joined NRS in
1973.

Location

Santa Barbara County, in the Santa Barbara Channel; 31 km (19 mi) southwest of Ventura.

Size

18,624 ha (46,020 acres)

Elevation

0 to 742 m (0 to 2,434 ft); reserve field station located at 61 m (201 ft)

Average Precipitation

50 cm (20 in)/year in island central valley

Average Temperatures

Mean monthly maximum: 71°F

Mean monthly minimum: 50°F

Facilities

Field station w/ dormitory for more than 30, private rooms that sleep 6 to 12, kitchen, dining hall, laundry, electricity, propane, library/conference room; west-end trailer offers modest overnight accommodations; wet and dry lab; four-wheel-drive vehicles; 17-foot Boston whaler; 5-person inflatable boat.

Databases

Santa Cruz Island geographic information system (GIS) (part of Channel Islands GIS) on site and at UCSB; electronic Channel Islands bibliography; herbarium/invertebrate collections; Santa Barbara Botanic Garden published flora 1995.

Personnel

On-site reserve manager and steward.

NRS Publications

Reserve brochure published 1994.

Contact Information

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NRS Website

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

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Santa Cruz Island Reserve

The Santa Cruz Island Reserve is the largest NRS site and the biggest of the Channel Islands located off the Southern California coast. The island has two major mountain systems flanking a central valley that formed along an active fault zone. The mountains are rugged and cut by steep-sided canyons, some with perennial streams and freshwater springs. The coastline is mostly steep and rocky, with some protected coves and sandy beaches. Diverse habitats include rocky intertidal zones, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and bishop pine forests. The reserve contains breeding grounds for harbor seals, seabird nesting colonies, many endemic plant and animal species, and well-preserved archaeological sites. Santa Cruz Island Reserve is protected, owned, and managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC); the remainder of the island is managed by the National Park Service as part of the Channel Islands National Park.

Selected Research

Archaeology: Ongoing studies of the island's prehistoric Native American cultures; the evolution of cultural complexity in hunter-gatherer societies.

Terrestrial botany: Defense mechanisms of insular endemic plants; age structure in island chaparral communities; population genetics of endemic species.

Terrestrial zoology: Reproduction and kinship studies for two endemic species: island jay and state-threatened island fox (*Urocyon littoralis*).

Geology and geomorphology: Structure, diversity, and origin of the island's geological formations; fluvial system responses; sediment transport in island watersheds.

Aquatic Biology: Population studies of kelpbed fishes and selected intertidal invertebrates.

Special Programs

Rare and sensitive taxa: Inventory and monitoring of selected plant species; population genetic analysis; establishment of new outlying populations of selected taxa.

Habitat restoration: Management strategies for invasive nonnative species (feral pigs, feral honey bees, fennel); vegetation monitoring following removal of grazing impacts.

Fire research and prescribed burns: Impacts of fire on island plant species and communities; fire as a management tool for promoting native plants.

Long-term studies: Population studies of island fox, island jay, quail, native and non-native bees, and black abalone.

Field courses: On-site field schools in archaeology and geology; multiple-day field trips for mainland-based classes.