



ADMINISTERING  
CAMPUS  
UC Santa Cruz

ESTABLISHED  
1987

**LOCATION**

Santa Cruz County, 7 km (4.5 mi) from main Santa Cruz campus in Westside Santa Cruz; adjacent to the UC Santa Cruz Long Marine Laboratory (LML).

**SIZE**

11 hectares (26 acres)

**ELEVATION**

0 to 15 m (50 ft)

**AVERAGE TEMPERATURES**

Winter: 12°C (54°F)  
Summer: 15°C (59°F)

**AVERAGE PRECIPITATION**

62 cm (24 in) per year

**FACILITIES**

Observation platform and access trail provide wheelchair access and full view of beach area without disturbance to wildlife or plants (and another overlook is planned); no on-site housing or laboratory facilities; site best suited for day use.

**PERSONNEL**

Reserve director and steward on Santa Cruz campus.

**DATABASES**

Annotated checklist of over 100 bird species documented on site available through the reserve director (see Contact Information below). Observed/expected lists available for vertebrate species and plants as well.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**UC NRS WEBSITE**

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

# Younger Lagoon Reserve

One of the few relatively undisturbed wetlands remaining on the California Central Coast, the Younger Lagoon Reserve encompasses a remnant Y-shaped lagoon on the open coast just north of Monterey Bay. Portions of a free-standing sea wall remain. Most of the time, the lagoon is cut off from the ocean by a barrier sand and rock bar. Infrequently, the mouth of Younger Lagoon opens to ocean waters. The lagoon system provides protected habitat for 100 resident and migratory bird species. Approximately 25 species of water and land birds breed at the reserve, while more than 60 migratory bird species overwinter or stop there to rest and feed. Opossums, weasels, brush rabbits, and harvest mice are known to occupy the lagoon; gray and also red foxes and bobcats have been sighted. Reserve habitats include salt and freshwater marsh, backdune pickleweed flat, steep bluffs with dense coastal scrub, pocket beach, grassland, and dense willow thickets. These provide outstanding opportunities for research and teaching. Diverse university courses using the site include environmental field methods, field sketching, restoration ecology, ornithology, environmental planning and policy, biology, natural history, environmental toxicology, plant systematics, independent studies, and senior theses.

**SELECTED RESEARCH**

Effects of adjacent developments on vegetation communities and resident and migratory wildlife.

Environmental impacts of lagoon isolation.

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

**Habitat restoration:** Removal of invasive poison hemlock; development of a mature, diverse coastal scrub; some of this work performed by UC Santa Cruz undergraduates.

**Water-quality monitoring:** Future development of a sampling program for lagoon waters.

**Reserve website:** UCSC students helped create an extensive website with information, photos, and sounds: <<http://natsci.ucsc.edu/admin/ucreserve/YoungerLagoon/younger.htm>>.