

**NRS**N 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 CruzEstablished  
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**

10 ha (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**Margaret H. Fusari  
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# 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 inva-  
sive poison hemlock; development of a  
mature, diverse coastal scrub; some of  
this work performed by UC Santa Cruz  
undergraduates.

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

**Reserve website:** UCSC students helped  
create an extensive website with infor-  
mation, photos, and sounds: <[http://  
natsci.ucsc.edu/admin/ucreserve/  
YoungerLagoon/younger.htm](http://natsci.ucsc.edu/admin/ucreserve/YoungerLagoon/younger.htm)>.