



Explore Bird Migration in the Irish Countryside, Mountain Bike in New Zealand, and Hike Coastal Mountains in South Africa all on California's Central Coast

February 1, 2018, San Luis Obispo County, CA – The quaint towns of Los Osos and Baywood Park located on the CA Highway 1 Discovery Route in San Luis Obispo County (SLO CAL) are hidden gems offering other-worldly experiences without the cost of airfare. Surrounded by a tidal national estuary to the north housing over 250 local and migratory birds, a coastal mountain region to the south offering views of the mighty Pacific for avid hikers and mountain bikers, and, one heck of a CA state park, the best advantage is all these bucket list items are located in California.

There's a lot to do in the area, especially if you like spectacular ocean and bay views while you hike, bike, paddle, surf or sail. Montaña De Oro is one of the largest coastal state parks in California and offers an abundance of hiking and biking trails where finding the ultimate in peace, quiet, and tranquility abound. Birders visiting this region will want to check out the "Pecho Road Willows," a primitive trail that offers a number of rare birds throughout the year. From pelicans and long-billed curlews to finches and sparrows, many of the birds live here year-round, while other species visit during their annual migrations along the coast. Trails and parks are a great place to watch our feathered friends, or you can always take up a hike along the coastal sand dunes or kayak the bay to explore the abundant shore birds.

Los Osos and Baywood Park make the perfect base camp to explore the entire Central Coast because they're centrally located and easy to access from Highway 1 or Highway 101. And, Baywood Park is becoming known for great local live music performances in the afternoon and early evening hours at the local pier, restaurants and pubs.

Check these items off your bucket list in Los Osos and Baywood Park:

Get Active at Montaña de Oro State Park – Connect with nature when you explore this park filled with views of the Pacific Ocean, coast and mountain trails, tidepooling, miles of beaches and sand dunes, and so much more. The park features rugged cliffs, the spectacular Spooners' Cove, coastal plains, streams, canyons, and hills, including 1,347-foot Valencia Peak and some of the best mountain biking on the central coast.

Hike the Audubon Sweet Springs Nature Preserve – Offering visitors amazing hiking trails and excellent views of Morro Bay and the Rock, The Morro Coast Audubon Society trails lead among Monterey Cypress and eucalyptus to two freshwater ponds, and around a salt marsh to the edge of Morro Bay. Birds are attracted to the variety of habitats in the preserve, and many shorebirds and ducks spend their winter in the adjoining bay. From late October into March, monarch butterflies traditionally cluster here. The 24-acre preserve is the home of several threatened and endangered species, and no plants or animals may be collected. The reintroduction of native species is a continuing goal of the Morro Coast Audubon Society.

Learn about the El Moro Elfin Forest – The El Moro Elfin Forest in Los Osos is a beautiful 90-acre natural area. Its plant communities include coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe, pygmy oak woodland, maritime chaparral, coastal dune scrub, and oak and manzanita complex. The Elfin Forest supports more than

200 species of plants, as well as 110 kinds of birds, 22 species of mammals, and 13 species of reptiles and amphibians. Second Sunday and third Saturday Walks in the Elfin Forest are docent-led nature walks that focus on different topics. For information call (805) 528-0392 or visit the [website](#).

Go Birding at the Morro Bay Estuary – Morro Bay was designated a state estuary in 1994 and an “estuary of national significance” in 1995. Today, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program is one of 28 National Estuary Programs around the country working to safeguard and improve the health of our nation’s most important coastal waters and is home to over 250 bird species throughout the year.

Dance, Kayak or Imbibe at the Baywood Park Marina – The Baywood Park Pier and Marina offers serene kayak and paddle boarding perfect for birding, as well as live music concerts and is located just steps away from delicious cuisine and craft beer tasting. The current pier in Baywood Park is the fourth built in the small community. A group known as the Baywood Navy has taken over maintenance of the pier and paints it every year prior to their annual Boatart in the Bay concert, which is held on the pier every spring.

Wildlife Watch a The Whale Trail – See the magnificent Orcas and other sea wildlife from shore at the official Whale Trail viewing site along the Bluff Trail in Montaña de Oro State Park. A premiere location for wildlife viewing, the park offers one of the best locations for spotting sea otters, seabirds, seals and dolphins. Now is one of the best times of year for whale watching – mid December through early April.

Go Tide Pool Exploring – The rocky shorelines of Montaña de Oro make for plentiful tide pools. Go exploring and you'll find them full of life - crabs, starfish, shells and more. Look for pools along the Ocean Bluffs Trail and you're likely to see giant, fluorescent lime green sea anemones, turban snails, rock crabs and sea stars. This is a fun way for the whole family to explore, with something for everyone.

As you can see, Los Osos and Baywood Park are the perfect towns to call your base camp for exploring the entire Central Coast. Check out the official [visitor guide](#), which is also available for free in print format at all Los Osos and Baywood hotels and vacation rentals as well as any of the advertisers found here. Happy exploring!

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About the California Highway 1 Discovery Route

Breathtaking natural beauty, preeminent wine regions, monthly events, amazing outdoor adventures and delicious restaurants boasting culinary excellence dot the **California Highway 1 Discovery Route** along Coastal San Luis Obispo County (SLO CAL). With 10 amazing destinations featuring over 800 extraordinary accommodations, including hotels, motels, B&Bs and vacation rentals with unique specials and packages, the California Highway 1 Discovery Route offers the best of Highway 1, and a fantastic vacation anytime of the year. The iconic 101-mile road trip through prime Pacific coastline is conveniently located midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and offers diverse artisan towns, charismatic seaside villages, scenic rural road trips rich in character and history and two world-class wine regions. Leaders in [Stewardship Travel](#), the CA Highway 1 Discovery Route offers 50 brief, award-winning experiences that enhance visitor’s immersion in the natural and cultural heritage of California’s central coast.

Highway 1 & 101 Road Alerts

If you're heading to the Central Coast, be sure to be mindful of the stretch of Highway 1, located 21 miles north of Cambria. Caltrans is busy with a major construction project to make traveling along the stunning Pacific Coast Highway a safer journey. Cambria is easily accessible from Highway 101 and Highway 46. **Please note that Highway 1 is still open from Morro Bay to Ragged Point. For those traveling past Ragged Point, check out these [Sights to See Along the Detour](#).**

Find enriching multi-day tours and discover a plethora of fun and relaxing itinerary ideas in these 10 CA Highway 1 Discovery Route destinations: Ragged Point & San Simeon, Cambria, Cayucos, and Los Osos/Baywood Park, to Avila Beach & Valley, Edna Valley, Arroyo Grande Valley, Oceano and Nipomo. Every February, the towns along the California Highway 1 Discovery Route celebrate Coastal Discovery & Stewardship, offering unique lodging packages, coastal activities, events and entertainment. For the latest news on the region join us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/Highway1DiscoveryRoute> and follow us on Twitter twitter.com/Hwy1DiscoveryRt. For more information on the **California Highway 1 Discovery Route**, visit www.Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com or contact Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Cuming at 805-547-CBID (2243), admin@SLOcountyBID.com.

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