

# Characteristics of Walking Paths at Point Lobos

[ Have the Point Lobos map handy as you read this. ]

## **POINT LOBOS LOOP TRAIL (the entire park)**

The Point Lobos hike is a loop trail that circles around the coast of Point Lobos State Reserve. The entire loop is 5 miles long.

Elevation Gain: 741 feet

Route Type: Loop

Difficulty: Moderate

The Point Lobos Loop Trail is made up of a network of other hikes in the park. Throughout the hike, you will go on the Bird Island Trail, South Plateau Trail, Cypress Grove Trail, Seal Rock, and the coastal trail.

Where does Point Lobos Loop Trail start?

You can start the loop anywhere in the park where you can find parking. The parking lot near Bird Island or the first parking lot are good places to find parking. Once you have found parking, the trail won't be too far away because the trail goes throughout the entire Point Lobos State Park.

## **SAND HILL TRAIL AND SEA LION POINT**

Length: 0.4 miles

Elevation Gain: 16 Feet

Route Type: Loop

Difficulty: Easy

The Sand Hill Trail offers sweeping views of the Sea Lion Cove and Sand Hill Cove. The highlight of this trail is the walk out to Sea Lion Point.

You could see the sea lions and otters out in the ocean. Look for whales too!

This is a great spot to **bring your own compact binoculars** if you have them.

## **OLD VETERAN CYPRESS**

The much-photographed Old Veteran Cypress is a short walk from the Sea Lion Point parking lot.

Old Veteran Cypress is one of the most photographed trees in the park. It stands alone, clinging to the rock wall. The tree is about 230 years old and is well worth the short walk to see it.

There is a map at the parking lot that we found very useful in navigating to the tree.

## **NORTH SHORE TRAIL**

Length: 2 miles

# Characteristics of Walking Paths at Point Lobos

Elevation Gain: 70 feet

Route Type: Out & Back

Difficulty: Moderate

This hike has great views along the northern shoreline of Point Lobos, including Whaler's Cove and Coal Chute Point. If you continue on the trail, you can visit Bluefish Cove.

The trail starts at the Cannery Point parking lot. From there you will head up the incline. A short loop on the right will take you to the views of the cove. After turning left to stay on the trail, Bluefish Cove will be on the right. From here, you will hike through a beautiful and shaded pine forest.

This trail does cross the Old Veteran Trail and is a great opportunity to see the Old Veteran Cypress. It is a quick detour to see this amazing tree.

## **GRANITE POINT TRAIL**

Length: 2.8 miles

Elevation Gain: 70 feet

Route Type: Out & Back

Difficulty: Easy

This is a beautiful trail that will show you a lot of the highlights in the park – shaded woods, ocean views, and dreamy meadows. In the spring and summer, wildflowers line the trails. Keep an eye out for wildlife and birds.

This hike starts at the Whaler's Museum and will take you above the bluff to see Whaler's Cove. After that, you will hike through a meadow to a loop that will take you to Coal Chute Point.

On your way back, take the ravine that goes to the Pit to see the harbor seals and otters.

## **SOUTH PLATEAU TRAIL**

Length: 1.4 miles

Elevation Gain: 30 feet

Route Type: Out & Back

Difficulty: Easy

This is the fastest way to get from the park entrance to the southern shore near Gibson Beach. If you are parking on Highway 1, you can take this .7 mile (one way) trail to start exploring the coastal area of Point Lobos State Reserve.

## **To see China Cove**

Hike the South Plateau trail from the free parking, which is to the left of the entry booth.

## Characteristics of Walking Paths at Point Lobos

**Bird Island Trail is a loop**, 0.8 mile long. It is a relatively flat and easy trail, mainly packed dirt. It is suitable for most visitors to Point Lobos State Reserve.

What are the black birds at Point Lobos?

Cormorants. Three species of cormorants are seen at Point Lobos, and two of them nest there in different types of terrain. Brandt's Cormorants nest on the top surfaces of offshore rocks, and the slightly smaller Pelagic Cormorants nest on the sheer sides of cliffs.

### **POINT LOBOS TIDE POOLS**

The best place for tide pooling in Point Lobos is Weston Beach. Rowen and Raven love exploring the sea life in the tide pools when we visit the ocean. The beach is halfway between the Sea Lion Point parking lot and Bird Island.

Make sure you visit at the lowest tide possible. You can the tide levels online. We love finding the colorful starfish, hermit crabs, sea urchins, and anemones.