

## Channel Islands offer something for everybody

By Hillary Hauser  
News-Press Staff Writer

They're called California's Last Frontier, a natural science laboratory, the Galapagos of the West and the best diving spot in the world.

Whatever the Channel Islands are labeled, they are ready and available for visitors — for scuba divers, day hikers, campers, hunters, sailors and fishermen.

Here is a look at the activities and services available to visitors to the islands:

### Diving

Some divers like Elda Castagnola — who recently took up the sport — love the islands more than any other place in the world.

The primary reason for this favoritism is the kelp forests around the islands — tall, towering underwater groves that are home for millions of colorful marine animals, invertebrates and fishes.

"The kelp makes the islands unique," she said. "The tropics may have brighter fish, but they don't have that wildness. There is a sense of aliveness and incredible energy out there. It's always different, always moving, always breathing."

### Favorite creatures

Among Elda's favorite underwater creatures are the tiny, iridescent nudibranchs (pronounced noodibranchs), delicate shell-less snails that cling to soft corals. She also looks out for bright red strawberry anemones and the kelp snails that graze on the long brown leaves of towering kelp plants.

Judging by the boom in recreational scuba diving around the Channel Islands, many share Elda's enthusiasm.

Roy Hauser, co-owner of Truth Aquatics and Sea Landing at the harbor, came to Santa Barbara in 1978 with the dive boat Truth.

In 1985, he and his partner, Glen Fritzier, launched a third dive boat, the 90-foot Vision — to meet the increasing demands for dive trips to the Channel Islands.

"When the Truth was the only boat going out, we went out 240 days per year with an average of 30 divers each trip," Hauser said. "Today, we have three boats, each making 200-plus trips every year, with 30 divers per trip. It's grown exponentially."

### Diversity the key

He said the lure of the islands is diversity.

"The Channel Islands are more diverse than anywhere else in the world," Hauser said. "There are rocks, reefs, steep drop-offs and kelp. The thing about kelp is you have fish swimming midstream, whereas in Australia or other tropical places, they're close to the bottom."

The average price for a one-day dive trip to the islands is \$50, Hauser said. Multiday trips (three- and five-day expeditions) are about \$90 per day, which includes lodging, meals and "as much diving as one can possibly do — including night diving."

Truth Aquatics also offers photography trips aboard the Vision. Diving photographers can process their film in a darkroom on the boat.

### Different trips available

Divers can book one- to five-day trips to the islands aboard the Truth, Conception or Vision, by calling Truth Aquatics at 963-3564.

Private charters also can be arranged through dive stores, including Underwater Sports at

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—Elda Castagnola

the harbor (962-5400), and Diver's Den (963-8917).

Island Packers, the National Park Service concessionaire in Ventura, also runs dive trips to the islands aboard the 65-foot vessels Peace and Bold Contender. The phone number for Island Packers is 642-1393.

Those who don't want to get wet, but who are interested in the underwater magic of the islands, can take an "underwater nature walk" at Anacapa Island.

### Underwater experience

This underwater interpretative program, installed last year by the Park Service at the east end landing, allows visitors on the dock to watch on a video monitor as divers move about the offshore kelp beds and underwater reefs.

As the divers go about their business on camera, they explain through a communications system what they're seeing. The visitors can ask the divers questions, too.

These underwater nature walks are part of the Anacapa day trip offered by Island Packers.

### Fishing

Depending on the time of year, the currents and the presence of El Nino, fishermen flock to the Channel Islands for everything from shallow-water rockfish to albacore.

Fred Benko, former owner of Sea Landing, operates fishing charters aboard his 88-foot Condor. Usually, he goes to Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands.

The Sea Hawk, which also operates out of the landing, occasionally goes to Santa Cruz "if fishing dictates."

More people go fishing during summer, because "it's an excellent way to see the islands," said Dave Kamens of Sea Landing.

### Angling's great

While they're viewing the island coves, the fishermen can angle for sea bass, bonita, barracuda, "maybe yellowtail and always a possibility of white sea bass," he said.

Fare for an all-day trip aboard the Condor (6 a.m. to 4 p.m.) is \$38 for adults and \$25 for children.

Elsewhere on the breakwater are "six-pack" charter operations that ferry fishermen out to the islands. Among these are Captain Don's (about \$375 for a boat, per day, includes tackle) and Zuma Charters. Carter's Sportfishing will also steer fishermen to private boats for hire.

### Heads to west end

"Capt. Don" Hedden said he usually goes toward the west end of Santa Cruz, around Painted Cave and the backside of the island near Forney's

## Anacapa

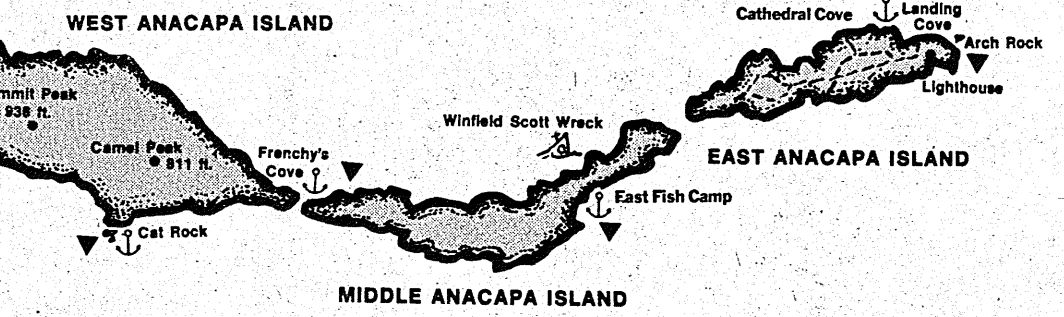
**Land Area:** 5 miles long; total land area 700 acres.

**Location:** 11 miles southwest of Oxnard, 14 miles from Ventura.

**Topography:** three small jagged, rocky islets; highest points, Summit Peak, 936 ft., and Camel Peak, 811 ft. Satellites: Arch Rock, Cat Rock, Keyhole Rock. Coves: Frenchys, East Fish Camp, Cathedral Cove.

**Ownership:** National Park Service.

**Public Access:** Boaters without permits can only go ashore at the east Anacapa landing and at Frenchys Cove, and numbers are controlled by the National Park Service. Permits are available through



the National Park Service, 1901 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura, 93001, 644-8262. Day hikes and camping (14-day limit) are permitted on the east island, with transportation and arrangements through Island Packers in Ventura, 642-1393. Island

Packers also conducts picnicking/snorkelling/tidepooling expeditions to Frenchys Cove and half-day, non-landing excursions along Anacapa's north shore. Private trips to Anacapa are also available through other commercial carriers.

## San Miguel

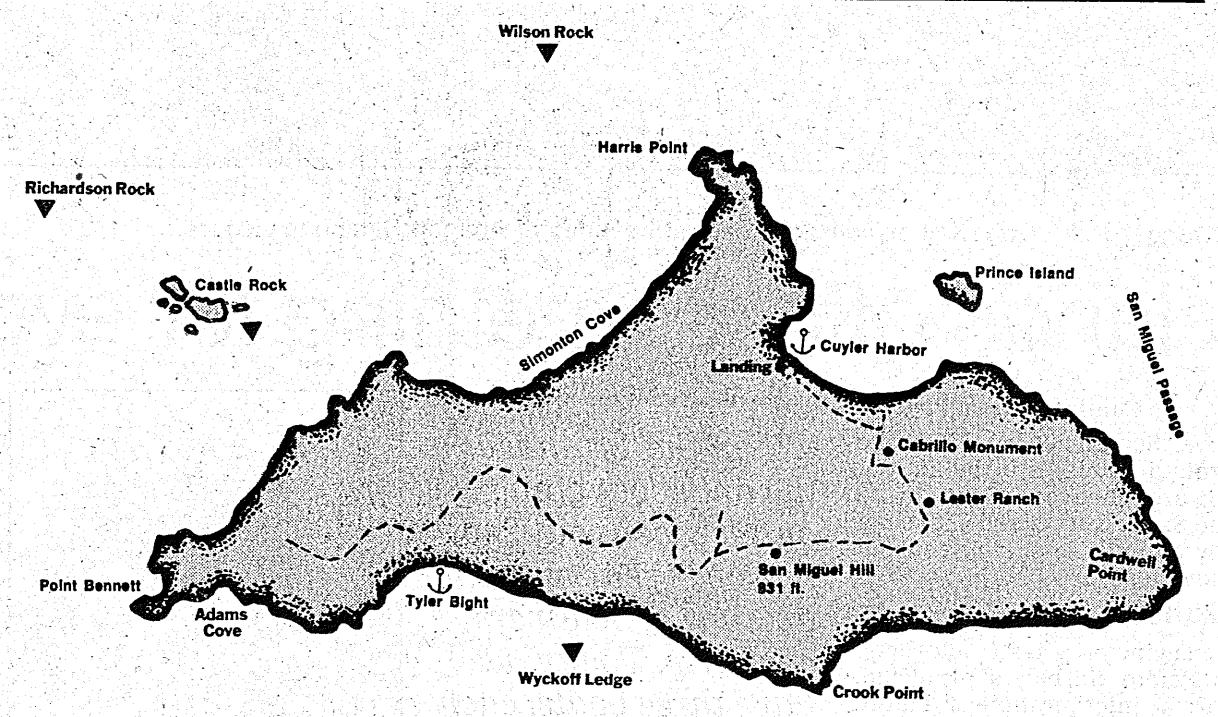
**Land Area:** 8 miles long, 4 miles wide, 9,325 acres.

**Location:** 23 miles southeast of Point Conception, 3 miles from Santa Rosa.

**Topography:** The island is primarily a plateau, 400 to 500 feet in elevation, but two rounded hills emerge from its sandy, windswept landscape. Highest point, San Miguel Hill, 831 ft. Satellites: Prince Island, Castle Rock, Wilson Rock, Richardson Rock, Judith Rock, Nifty Rock. Coves: Cuyler Harbor, Simonton Cove, Adams Cove, Tyler Bight.

**Ownership:** Administered by the Navy, managed by the National Park Service.

**Public Access:** Boaters without permits may land on Cuyler Beach, but may not hike beyond beach boundaries. To hike on the island, permits are necessary from the National Park Service; visitors travelling beyond the beach at Cuyler Harbor must be accompanied by a park ranger. Hiking arrangements may be



made the night before arrival at Cuyler by calling the ranger on marine radio (channel 16). Half-day hike to the top of the island, 5½ miles; full day hike to Point Bennett, 15 miles roundtrip from Cuyler Harbor. Island Packers in Ventura

runs one-day trips to San Miguel and a two-day trip is scheduled for Sept. 20 to 21. The Museum of Natural History runs two overnight trips to San Miguel each summer. Camping is not permitted on the island.

## Santa Cruz

**Land Area:** 24 miles long, total land area 60,645 acres — largest of the Channel Islands.

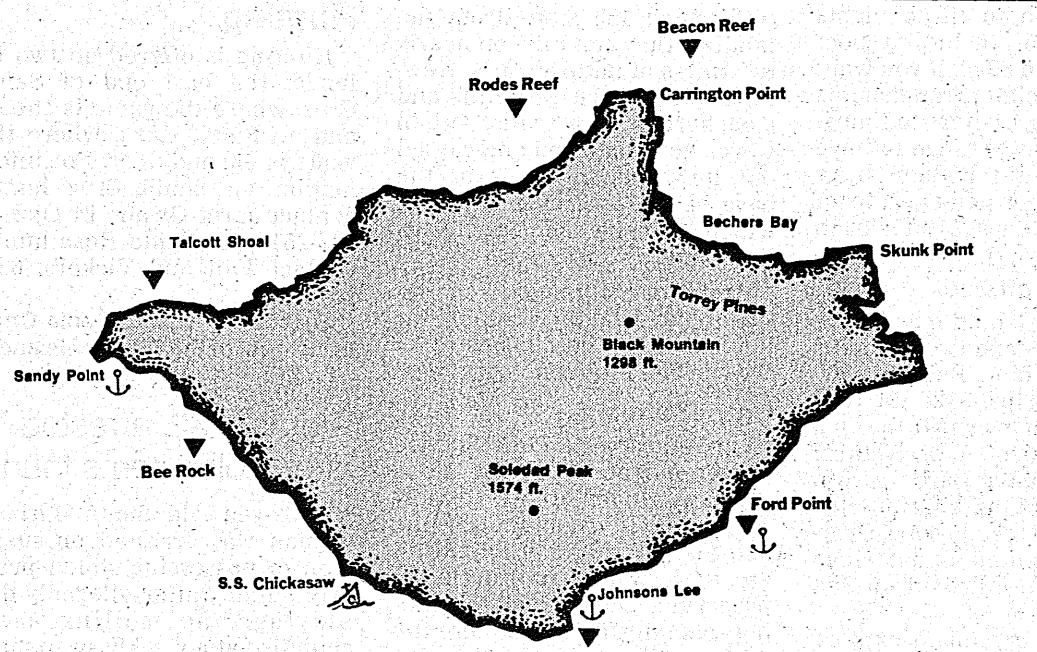
**Location:** 19 miles from the mainland, 5 miles from Anacapa and 6 miles from Santa Rosa.

**Topography:** 77 miles of varied coast line — steep cliffs, caves, coves and beaches. Central valley's north slope is a rugged ridge. Highest points are Devil's Peak, at 2,450 ft., and Sierra Blanca, 1,528 feet, on west end of island. Satellites: Gull Island. Coves: On the east end, eight anchorages — from Chinese Harbor, Potato Harbor and Scorpion Anchorage to Smugglers Cove, Yellowbanks Anchorage and Middle Anchorage. On the west end, 16 anchorages — from Prisoners Harbor on the north side, to Valley Anchorage, on the south side.

**Ownership:** East end, with property line between Chinese Harbor and Sandstone Point, is owned by the Gherini family (now negotiating sale to National Park Service). The rest of island is owned by the Nature Conservancy and Dr. Carey

Stanton. **Public Access:** The Gherini family no longer processes landing permits for the east end of Santa Cruz. For day and overnight visits to Scorpion Anchorage, contact Island Packers in Ventura. At Scorpion Ranch, groups of two to 12 may stay from two to four days. For Smugglers Cove, groups of 10 to 12 people can stay from three to four days. Multiday hunting trips to the east end of Santa Cruz may be arranged through Jaret Owens, 907 Daily Road, Ojai, 93023, 646-2513. For landing permits west of the Gherini property line, contact the Santa Cruz Island Co., 515 So. Flower St., Los Angeles, 90071 (213) 485-

9208. From May through November, the Nature Conservancy offers day trips to Pelican Bay, through Island Packers or contact the Santa Cruz Island Project, 213 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara, 93101, 962-9111. The Museum of Natural History also arranges public day trips to the island, which includes a hike with a naturalist; contact Mary Gosselin at the museum, 2559 Puesta del Sol Rd., Santa Barbara, 93105, 682-4711. Infrequent private and open-party charters operate during the summer out of Sea Landing, 963-3564, usually in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy. Camping not permitted on the island.



## Santa Rosa

**Land area:** 18 miles long, 12 miles wide, 52,974 acres — second largest of the Channel Islands.

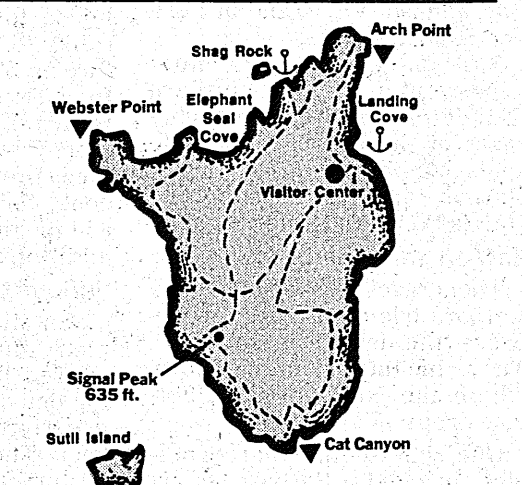
**Location:** 27 miles from the coast, 6 miles from Santa Cruz Island and 3 miles from San Miguel.

**Topography:** Cliffs on northeastern shore, high mountains with deeply cut canyons, gentle rolling hills and vast

grasslands blanket about 85 percent of the island. Highest points, Soledad Peak, 1,574 feet, and Black Mountain, 1,298 feet. Satellites: none. Coves: Bechers Bay, Johnsons Lee.

**Ownership:** Vail and Vickers (currently negotiating a sale of the island with the National Park Service).

**Public Access:** Day visits to the beach at Bechers Bay only. For free permit, write Vail and Vickers, 123 W. Padre St., Santa Barbara, 93105. Camping not permitted on the island.



## Santa Barbara

**Land Area:** 652 acres. **Location:** 46 miles offshore from Ventura, 24 miles from the west end of Catalina Island.

**Topography:** A marine terrace with steep cliffs. Highest points: Signal Peak, 635 ft. and North Peak, 562 ft.

**Ownership:** National Park Service.

**Public Access:** Boaters without permits may go ashore at Landing Cove. Hikers on the island may make arrangements through the National Park Service to explore island trails. Island Packers runs day trips from Ventura May 23 to Sept. 1, on Fridays and Saturdays. Camping (maximum 30) allowed in designated campground through Island Packers.



# Rangers' solitude mixed with discovery, excitement



Ranger Heidi Cogswell explains the natural beauties of Anacapa Island to visitors.

News-Press photo by STEVE MALONE

By Hillary Hauser  
News-Press Staff Writer

A day in the life of a ranger in the Channel Islands National Park is like a day nowhere else on earth.

Except the Galapagos, maybe. Santa Barbara, Anacapa and San Miguel islands have rangers living on them most of the year. At Smugglers Cove, at the east end of Santa Cruz, a ranger occasionally sets up housekeeping in temporary quarters near the beach.

## Watch over islands

Rangers watch over the islands, do scientific and maintenance work (they are archaeologists, biologists, botanists, researchers, or maintenance mechanics), and they lead visitors around the islands.

For as long as 20 days (the maximum shift for island rangers), the only conversation with another human being may be the daily radio call to park headquarters in Ventura.

On rainy, windy days a ranger will stay indoors, do paperwork, check in with mainland headquarters, read — and wait.

## Monotony, excitement

"The day is monotonous, filled with periods of great excitement," said one ranger.

"There are no typical days out there," said another. "You have to be versatile. If something needs to be done, you do it."

"The TV reception is great!" said another.

Watching television may seem like the ultimate paradox to those who consider the Channel Islands to be one of few available escapes from industrial automation.

But for rangers, life on the islands is business as usual, especially if that business is research.

## Visitors a treat

When the visitors arrive, rangers drop what they're doing to lead tours. On the islands where camping is allowed, they'll wander over to the campground at the end of a day to visit.

There is a cliché they quote — "We protect the visitor from the resource, and the resource from the visitor" — that reveals the double-duty nature of their job.

Island accommodations for rangers are as imaginative and different as the islands they're on.

## Imaginative housing

On Anacapa, the ranger station is a white house that served as a Coast Guard station when the Anacapa lighthouse was unautomated.

On Santa Barbara Island, the ranger station is a spacious Quonset hut at the top of Landing Cove, where visitors disembark. It was built during World War II by the Navy, which used the island as an early warning outpost.

The San Miguel ranger station is a portable building, tucked away in a canyon near Cuyler Harbor.

For rangers, Anacapa is the busiest assignment, because the island takes the largest number of visitors — up to 75 day hikers and 30 campers. Here, rangers work 10-day shifts, with four days off in between.

## Anacapa routine

The ranger at Anacapa may have the morning alone, but at 10:30 a.m., an Island Packers boat will arrive, and he or she will be busy with people until 2:30 p.m., when the boat departs for the mainland.

# Ex-insurance executive elected foreman of jury

Dodd Young, a retired insurance company executive from Solvang, has been elected foreman of the county Grand Jury for 1986-87, Superior Court Administrator Gary Blair announced.

Young, 58, a UCLA graduate with a master's degree in economics, was president of Rowan-Wilson Insurance Services in Los Angeles — which later became Corroon and Black Insurance Co. — from 1975 until he retired in 1985.

He was chosen by fellow jurors to head up this year's 19-

There may be some afternoon time for research, and at the end of the day, the ranger will probably visit campers at the nearby campground.

On Santa Barbara, life is more isolated, because the island receives fewer visitors. Island Packers makes the 46-mile trip from Ventura in about three to four hours, compared to the 90 minutes it takes to get to Anacapa. Rangers staying here have more time for research.

## San Miguel most isolated

Of all the islands, San Miguel offers the most isolated life, since only six scheduled charters come to the island during the year. These trips are mainly during the summer months, coordinated by the Museum of Natural History, Island Packers, and the Cabrillo Marine Museum in Los Angeles.

Winds and frequent rough weather keep many sailors from making the trip to San Miguel.

When visitors arrive at San Miguel, the ranger walks to Cuyler Harbor to meet the visitors for either half-day (3½ miles, to the caliche forest), or all-day (15 miles round trip, to Point Bennett) hikes.

Don Morris, an archaeologist with the Park Service, was recently stationed on San Miguel for a seven-day stretch when an expected party of hikers failed to show up.

"I was disappointed they didn't make it," Morris said. "Out of seven days, it would have been fun to explore the island for one day. It's neat to do. For one thing, you have to get your act together and explain your work in an understandable manner. It forces you to make it clear and make it accurate."

## Safety first priority

Rangers spend a lot of time outdoors doing scientific work, and if they're alone on an island, they must take special care about their safety.

"The first game is to take care of yourself, then you go on with your work," Morris said. "You don't want to go down some cliff and break your leg, because you'll be stranded." As an afterthought, he added, "maybe even dead."

Morris said a recent stay on San Miguel had enabled him to verify the final resting place of the lumber ship Comet, which wrecked on the island in 1911.

Every day, he would hike from the ranger station above Cuyler Harbor to Simonton Cove, where he studied ship wreckage on the beach.

Working with a local report from island expert Peter Howorth, and with documents and photographs from the Museum of Natural History, Morris finally pinpointed the place where the Comet had wrecked.

## Sinking documented

The Comet, built in the mid 1800s as a coastal lumber schooner, sank near its sister ship, J.W. Coleman, which wrecked on the island in 1893, Morris said.

The lumber from the Coleman was used in 1900 to build the ranch house eventually occupied by Herbert and Elizabeth Lester from 1930 to 1942. It was a 100-foot long structure, built in the shape of a "V" with the vortex pointing into the wind.

In the islands, the reconstruction of history, archaeology, biology, and geology goes on every day — and is part of the challenge that makes the park one of the most popular among rangers looking for a spot in which they can do their work.

# Islands offer something for everybody

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Cove. Sometimes he'll fish the "Potato Patch," a turbulent-water area between Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands, for shallow-water rockfish, ling cod and sheephead.

## Cruising

Imagine a private afternoon in Potato Harbor, a protected, narrow inlet on the east end of Santa Cruz Island — lazing around on the deck of a boat.

If it's winter or spring, you'll look up into green, unspoiled hills, and if it's summer, those same hills will be California golden.

It will be quiet, except for the screeching of the gulls and the lapping of the waves on the beach.

The greatest number of safe anchorages are found on the north side of Santa Cruz Island, facing the channel.

## Various anchorages

They include Scorpion Anchorage, Potato Harbor, Chinese Harbor, Prisoners Harbor, Pelican Bay, Twin Harbors, Fry's, Diablo Anchorage and Cueva Valdez.

Navigating around San Pedro Point at the east end of the island, mariners will find Smugglers Cove, Yellowbanks and Middle Anchorage.

On the backside of the island, there is Valley Anchorage (now restricted by the military and requiring permits from the Coast Guard to enter), Albert's, Coches Prietos and Willows.

## Two main points

On Anacapa, the principal anchorages are at Landing Cove, near the lighthouse on east Anacapa, and East Fish Camp, on the backside of the island.

Anchorage also can be found at Frenchy's Cove, on the channel side of Anacapa Island.

On Santa Rosa Island, the best anchorages are in Bechers Bay, Johnsons Lee, and at Ford and Sandy points.

San Miguel, the most windswept of the four northern islands, offers the fewest anchorages of the group — but safe spots can be found at Cuyler Harbor, Simonton Cove (behind Harris Point) and Tyler Bight.

## Few on Santa Barbara

Anchorage on far-off Santa Barbara Island also are few because the island is so small. They include Landing Cove, where the National Park Service drops off visitors.

One sight-seeing charter service in Santa Barbara offers overnight trips to Santa Cruz Island aboard a 37-foot catamaran or 31-foot trimaran. Capt. Jim Tompkins, who operates out of Sea Landing, charges \$300 per boat and can take up to six people.

After a day of sailing, the boats anchor in one of the island's many coves, and passengers can "cook for themselves or be catered to," Tompkins said.

## Check regulations

Private boaters should check state Fish and Game Department regulations about anchorage in certain areas of the islands. For example, no entry is allowed within one-third of a mile off an area of west Anacapa Island from Jan. 1 to Oct. 31,

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—Roy Hauser



Elda Castagnola  
Loves island diving

which is the brown pelican nesting season.

Off the Point Bennett rookery on San Miguel, no entry within 300 yards of shore is allowed the entire year — except for March 15 to April 30, and Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, when boaters can approach to within 100 yards of shore.

## Hiking/overnighting

A hike on the Channel Islands is a unique experience, a dip into the California of the past, and arrangements for island exploration are easy to make.

Santa Cruz, Anacapa, Santa Barbara and San Miguel islands may be explored on one-day trips with Island Packers in Ventura, which, as the National Park Service concessionaire, provides all the arrangements for going ashore.

Extended overnight stays also may be arranged for the east end of Santa Cruz Island through Island Packers. At the Scorpion ranch house, groups from two to 12 may stay from two to four days (\$100 to \$160 per person, including boat fare, and you bring your own food). At Smugglers Cove, overnights may stay in the adobe ranch house for two to three nights (\$160 to \$175, including boat fare, or \$225 to \$240, if you want to make special arrangements to fly in). Also, visitors to Smugglers Cove may arrange to have food prepared for them by a cook, for a per-person rate of \$50 for three days, \$10 for each additional day.

## Various trips offered

San Miguel Island may be explored on one- and two-day trips offered by Island Packers, \$60 for one-day trips, \$125 for two-day trips, with overnights on a boat. The Museum of Natural History in Santa Barbara also arranges about two charter trips to the island each year. Overnights is also on a boat, since camping is not allowed on San Miguel.

Boaters who want to explore San Miguel may call the Park Service ranger on the island (on marine Channel 16), to arrange a guided tour of the island. All visitors traveling beyond the beach at Cuyler Harbor must be accompanied by a ranger.

A half-day hike on San Miguel is 5½ miles. A full-day hike to Point Bennett, where the seal and sea lion rookery is located, is 15 miles round trip from Cuyler Harbor. Along the way, visitors will see the Cabrillo Monument, the Lester ranch site, the caliche forest, and fi-

nally, the seal and sea lion rookery at Point Bennett.

## Hikers welcome

At the east end of Santa Cruz Island, Scorpion Anchorage may be explored by hikers making arrangements through Island Packers (\$36.50 adults; \$24 children). Duane Owens, who operates a tour and hunt club on the Gherini property, leads the tours through the Scorpion Ranch.

The Museum of Natural History also offers a day hike on the Santa Cruz Island east end, with a naturalist, for about \$40 to \$45.

The west end of Santa Cruz may be visited through arrangements with the Nature Conservancy. Landings are at Pelican Bay (\$33 to non-Conservancy members, \$28 for members).

## Most visited

Anacapa is the most frequently visited of the islands. Visitors booking trips with Island Packers land at the east island landing, near the Anacapa lighthouse.

Climbing 153 steps from the landing, they can hike on nearly two miles of nature trails, viewing Anacapa's rugged cliffs and treacherous lava walls. Ocean waves have battered and carved out networks of caves at the base of these rocky abutments, which are echo chambers to sea lions and surf.

Arch Rock, at the easternmost tip of the island, is a familiar landmark, continually beaten by the sea and often photographed.

## Cruise narrated

On Anacapa, a Park Service ranger narrates a cruise along Anacapa's north shore to view seals, sea lions and bird life, and visitors may participate in an underwater interpretative program at the east island landing, watching divers explore the reefs nearby. Price for the one-day trip is \$28 for adults, \$14 for children. Island Packers also offers tidepooling expeditions to Frenchy's Cove (\$28 adult, \$14 children).

Santa Barbara Island may be explored by day hikers arranging trips through the National Park Service (\$40 adults, \$27 children).

## Camping

Camping on the islands is best provided by the National Park Service information sheet sent

to those interested in the overnight experience:

"(It is an experience which may only be described as unique. Most campers find this experience enjoyable, but for others it can be boring, miserable, or both.

"If you would like the experience of being on a small, desert-like island, with its many moods, you will appreciate the opportunity these islands offer. If you need space to roam and run and explore without inhibition, or a place to play touch football or toss a Frisbee, perhaps these islands are not large or diverse enough for you; and the experiences these islands offer — those of solitude, quiet and subtle interaction with nature — might not be the type of experiences you are presently searching for."

## Campers advised

And the flier advises campers about unexpected weather — mainly wind and rain — and suggests extra clothing, "in case you take an unexpected swim."

The National Park Service has provided for camping on Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands.

On Anacapa, campers may stay for as long as 14 days on the east island (Island Packers charges \$38 for adults, \$19 for children for transportation).

On Santa Barbara Island, campers may stay up to 30 days in designated campgrounds (\$60 adults, \$45 children, transportation also through Island Packers).

At present, no hiking or camping is allowed on Santa Rosa Island.

To go ashore at any of the islands without permits or prior arrangements with the Park Service or private landowners is strictly prohibited — except at the specified Park Service landings at Santa Barbara and east Anacapa islands.

## Hunting

Hunting is offered on two islands: the east end of Santa Cruz, where the game is sheep, and on Santa Rosa, where the game is elk and deer. For information on Santa Cruz hunts, contact Jaret Owens in Ojai at 646-2513; for Santa Rosa hunts, contact Vail and Vickers, 682-7645.

Tuesday: A visit to Santa Cruz, the largest of the Channel Islands.

## Woman, 32, arrested after stolen items found

A 32-year-old Santa Barbara woman was arrested on suspicion of possessing stolen property Sunday after allegedly displaying and selling merchandise at a weekly swap meet that had been taken from several stores, police said.

Officers went about noon to the swap meet at a drive-in theater on South Kellogg Avenue on a report by a theft victim that items taken from a downtown business were on display. The officers said they found merchandise, some with store price tags attached, in the possession of Lucille Lashley of 922 N. Milpas St.

Police said the merchandise was confiscated.