

The Reserve, Visitor Center and bookstore are open Wednesday through Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free to the Visitor Center and picnic area. To walk the trail there is a \$2.50 day-use fee for adults 16 and older. Children are free. Document-led nature walks start every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Early bird walk is first Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. You can borrow binoculars and bird books from the Visitor Center!

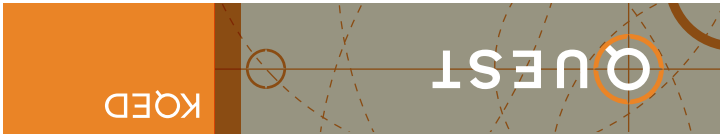
1700 Elkhorn Road
Watsonville, CA 95076
831.728.2822

Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

LATITUDE 36.800152 | LONGITUDE 121.786975

Otters and Elkhorn Slough

EXPLORATIONS PRINT AND GO



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Without sea otters, this marine ecosystem would be very different. Otters eat lots of sea urchins. If the otters weren't here, the sea urchins would eat up the kelp forests. The kelp forests serve as vital fish nurseries. Remove the otters and you decimate the fish population.

Watch as the sea otters groom their extremely thick fur. It's true these marine mammals like to stay clean, but they are also working air bubbles into the hairs in order to stay dry, warm and buoyant.

You know that primates use tools, but sea otters do, too! You might see one hold a rock on its chest as it floats on its back. It will crack open mussels and other hard-shelled food by slamming it on the rock.

It's home to two dozen threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Elkhorn Slough is one of the 25 most significant biodiversity hotspots in the world.

Know as you go



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DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Dolan Road from Santa Cruz or Monterey

- take Highway 1 to Moss Landing; turn east onto Dolan Road at the power plant
- go 3.5 miles, turn left on Elkhorn Road
- go 1.9 miles, turn left into Reserve

Alternate route

- take Highway 1 south to Salinas Road; turn left
- pass golf course; veer right onto Werner Road
- go to bottom of hill; turn right on Elkhorn Road
- go 0.25 miles, turn right on (again) Elkhorn Road
- go 5 miles; turn right into Reserve

North from Salinas on Highway 101

- on Highway 101 north, take San Miguel Canyon Road exit (after 156 West exit)
- go 0.7 miles; turn left on Castroville Blvd.
- go 2.9 miles; turn right on Elkhorn Road
- go 1.9 miles; turn left into Reserve

South from San Jose on Highway 101

- on Highway 101 south, turn right on San Juan Road (2 miles past 156 East exit)
- go 2.3 miles; turn left on Tarpey Road (becomes Hall Road)
- go 4.5 miles, through Las Lomas; turn left on Elkhorn Road
- go 5 miles; turn right into Reserve

