

# KING RANGE

National Conservation Area

## RECREATION GUIDE



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

### SIGHTSEEING, HIKING

An areawide network of paved, graveled and dirt roads is available for motorized sightseeing, giving access to numerous tumbling streams and wide ocean and mountain vistas. Most roads are signed indicating direction, mileage, and driving conditions. Be especially watchful for slides and washouts during the winter rain season.

Hiking is a popular activity in the King Range, both on the mountain trails and along the beach. The wilderness beach is one of the most attractive features of the conservation area, with the abandoned Coast Guard lighthouse at Punta Gorda, relics of early shipwrecks, and a variety of marine wildlife to be observed. Although the beach is owned by the State of California, hikers are cautioned that much of the land above mean high tide is privately owned. National resource lands at Punta Gorda, Randall Creek, Spanish Creek, Oat Creek, Big Creek and the north end of Big Flat are open for primitive camping. A cautionary note: several points along the beach may be impassable during daily high tides. Tide tables should be consulted when planning any hike along the beach. On hiking trips it is easier to travel with the prevailing winds, north to south. Visitors on foot should watch for rattlesnakes in driftwood and rocky areas. Vehicles may be parked at the mouth of the Mattole River on the north end of the King Range area, or at the Shelter Cove Marina (fee charged) in the south. The distance from the mouth of the Mattole to Shelter Cove is about 23 miles along the beach. Driving time by road between the two points is about 2 hours.

The King Crest



### KING RANGE CALIFORNIA'S "LOST COAST"

Along the northern coast of California, civilization has left its mark on all but the most rugged or remote stretches of coastline. Large areas which have not been touched by major highways, towns and subdivisions are few in number — Point Reyes National Seashore, Redwood National Park, Bear Harbor-Usal Creek, and the King Range National Conservation Area. Extremely steep and rocky terrain forced the coastal highway route, State Highway 1, about 30 miles inland from the King Range. This obstacle to transportation and settlement remains today as California's "Lost Coast."

The spectacular meeting of land and sea is certainly a dominant feature of the King Range National Conservation Area. However, it is also an area of mountain streams, trails and forests ideal for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting and sightseeing. There are four developed Bureau of Land Management recreation sites in addition to several water sources which serve primitive camps. The King Crest and Chemise Mountain trails have been designated as National Recreation Trails. The Chemise Mountain area has been designated as a BLM Primitive Area.

### LOCATION

The King Range National Conservation Area extends some 35 miles north and south between the Mattole River and Whale Gulch, and up to six miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The area is 230 road miles north of San Francisco, and 70 miles south of Eureka. The Redwood Highway, U.S. 101, provides access to within 20 miles of the King Range. Principal access routes in the area are paved mountain roads originating in Ferndale, Humboldt Redwoods State Park, and Redway.

Punta Gorda Lighthouse



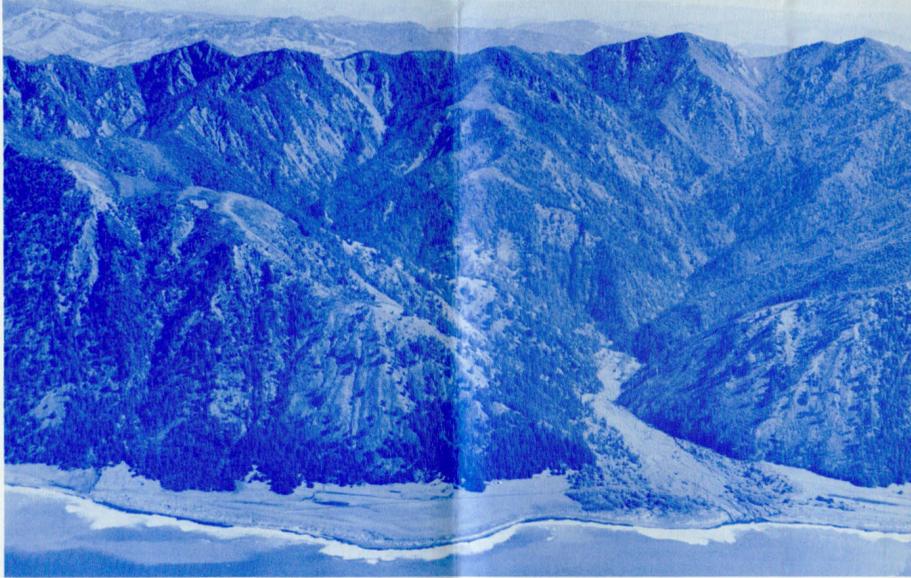
The King Range National Recreational Trail comprises two separate units: the King Crest Trail and the Chemise Mountain Trail.

The 16 mile King Crest Trail provides foot and horse access along the main coastal ridge north of Shelter Cove. There are two trailheads — one at the end of the Saddle Mountain Road and one near the end of the King Range Road. A relatively easy walk from the Saddle Mountain trailhead gives the hiker excellent views of the ocean and the Eel River Valley. The second trailhead gives access to a steeper route on the east slope. Both trails lead to the top of King Peak.

Access to the coastal ridge south of Shelter Cove is available on the five-mile Chemise Mountain Trail. Trailheads are located at the BLM's Wailaki and Nadelos Campgrounds. The attractions along this trail are similar to those available on King's Peak, although the views are less spectacular because of heavier brush and lower elevations.

Water sources are scarce along the entire trail system and some of those shown on the map may dry up in late summer. Hikers should carry drinking water and plan to occupy dry camps. Throughout the King Range, extreme care should be taken with fire.

Hikers who wish more detailed maps than this recreation guide may wish to obtain the following U.S. Geological Survey topographical maps which cover the King Range Area: (15 minute:) Point Delgada, Cape Mendocino. (7½ minute:) Honeydew, Shelter Cove, Shubrick Peak, Bear Harbor, Briceland, Cooskie Creek, Petrolia.



Big Flat and the King Range

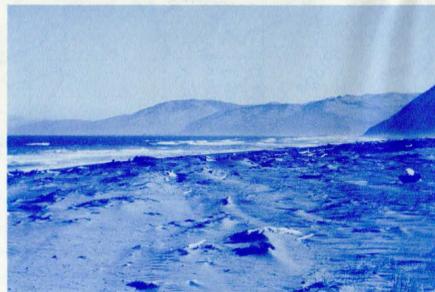
### CLIMATE

Along the coast, at or near sea level, the climate is mild and equable. Freezing temperatures are almost unknown, and snow is rare at lower elevations. In the summer the persistent ocean fogs counteract the heat which blankets the inland valleys. The inland areas are also colder than the coast in winter. The predominant feature of both the coast and inland in the King Range is rain. From October to April the King Range is one of the wettest spots on the Pacific Coast. Honeydew, immediately to the north of the conservation area, records an average of more than 100 inches of rain a year, and as much as 200 inches may fall at higher elevations.

### TOPOGRAPHY, VEGETATION

The King Range rises from sea level to 4,087 feet elevation at the summit of Kings Peak in less than three miles. Certainly the King Crest is the dominant feature of the sea. On the western slope of this range, many short, steep streams run directly into the ocean. A combination of steep slopes, high rainfall, and unstable soil and rock formations has created many cliffs, huge rock slides and talus piles. With few exceptions, the steep slopes extend to the beach. The beach is usually narrow and, where a number of rocky points jut into the surf, may be nonexistent.

The eastern slopes of the range, while also steep and rugged, are not as precipitous as the western side. Streams drain less



King Range Beach

### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Portions of the King Range beach receive off-road vehicle use, and this will continue although changes in use patterns are planned. The BLM management program proposes mechanized recreation beach use areas and separate areas for non-mechanized recreation to ease conflicts among mechanized use and such activities as hiking, picnicking and sunbathing. The BLM program, developed with widespread public participation, proposes that dune buggy use generally be limited to the northern and southern ends of the beach, with the middle 17 miles closed to this use. Implementation of off-road vehicle plans will depend on future land acquisitions and decisions made as a result of the California Coastal Zone Management Plan.

### CAMPING

The Bureau of Land Management has developed recreation sites at four locations in the south end of the King Range National Conservation Area: Wailaki, 16 units; Nadelos, 14 units; Tolkan, 9 units; and Horse Mountain, 9 units. Each site has table, fire grills, and sanitary facilities. Potable water is available at all but Tolkan Camp. (Water will be available at Tolkan after summer 1976.)

### WILDLIFE

Offshore rocks, kelp beds and tidal areas are inhabited by seals, sea lions, and a variety of marine birds. The terrestrial Douglas fir and coastal chaparral habitat supports significant populations of black-tailed deer, as well as black bear and such upland species as California or valley quail, mountain quail, blue grouse, numerous raptors, and such furbearers as river otter and mink. Threatened species present in the area include brown pelicans, bald eagles, the spotted owl and possibly peregrine falcons.

abruptly into the northerly flowing Mattole River.

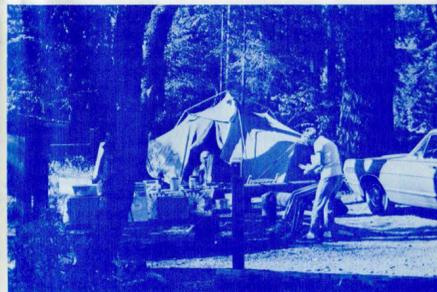
To the north of the King Range and within the northern boundaries of the conservation area there are broad expanses of grass, especially near the coast. Inland and to the south, coastal chaparral and Douglas fir forest predominate. A wide variety of riparian vegetation is found along the banks of most streams.

### CHEMISE MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREA

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the 3,941-acre Chemise Mountain zone has been designated a primitive area and is managed for its wild qualities and to provide opportunities for solitude.

The Chemise Mountain Primitive Area lies just south of Shelter Cove. Nearly impassable cliffs rise from the ocean to great heights. The narrow strand of beach at the base of the cliff is impassable at high tide both north and south of the primitive area. The area is a "Class V-Primitive Area," under the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's classification system for outdoor recreation areas. Such areas are those where the natural environment has not been disturbed by commercial utilization and there is no mechanical transportation.

BLM plans to realign the existing trail near the crest to provide better views of the ocean, and to develop self-guided nature trails, but no camping or other facilities will be built within the Primitive Area. Some of the present trail is impassable because of land slides near the ocean.



King Range Campground

### HISTORY

The first inhabitants of the King Range were the Whilkut, Sinkyone and Mattole Indians. These tribes used the area for hunting and gathering over a span of at least 2,000 years. Although the Indians have been gone for more than 100 years, cultural remnants in the form of shell mounds remain scattered along the beach. These mounds, or middens, are protected by the Antiquities Act, and visitors must not disturb these links with the past.

The first white settlers came in the 1850s, attracted by good grazing land. For nearly 100 years livestock products were the cornerstone of the local economy. Some tanbark — bark from the tanoak tree, used as a source of tannin for leather making — was sent to market as were apples from orchards in the Mattole Valley. One interesting but unsuccessful effort to develop industry is commemorated in the name of the town of Petrolia just north of the King Range National Conservation Area: the first oil well in California was drilled there. Petroleum products were shipped to market in 1865 for the first time, but the quality and volume were low and very little commercial production ever took place.

Logging of Douglas fir boomed during the 1950s and 1960s, but there is little commercial timber left on private lands in the area today, and the sawmills near King Range have closed. In spite of the proximity of the King Range to the great stands of redwood, by a curious combination of climate and topography only a few redwoods grow within the area.

### HUNTING

Hunting is allowed on national resource (BLM) lands within the King Range National Conservation Area during state hunting seasons. Big game species are the black-tailed deer and black bear. Upland game species include quail, blue grouse, gray squirrels and brush rabbits. Hunters should be extremely careful to avoid shooting around residential areas such as Shelter Cove and Whale Gulch. Permission is required to hunt on private property intermingled with national resource lands within the area.

### FISHING

Sport fishing of two types is found in or near the King Range National Conservation Area: salt water angling for salmon, bottom fish and rock fish; and inland stream fishing for salmon, steelhead and rainbow trout. Shelter Cove is one of the few protected harbors on the northernmost coast of California. On most days in summer, boats can be launched directly into the surf. Boat launching and rental facilities, fish cleaning facilities, supplies, motel and restaurant are provided by private interests at Shelter Cove.

Beaches within the King Range area offer surf fishing for such species as surf perch and rock fish.

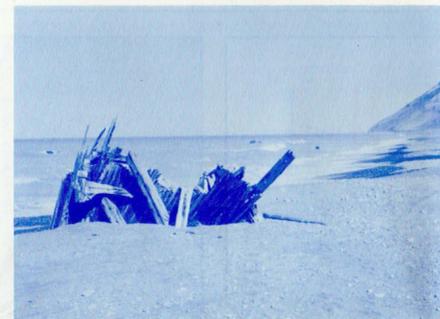
The Mattole River, north and east of the King Range, is one of the finest salmon and steelhead streams of the north coast. A section of the river from near Petrolia to Honeydew is open from mid-November through February. Anglers should check California Department of Fish and Game regulations and license requirements. As on most northern rivers, good fishing days are limited by turbid water conditions following frequent rains.

Small streams within the King Range National Conservation Area provide trout fishing opportunities during the state's general trout and salmon fishing season.

### CONSERVATION

Conservation and management of the natural resources of the King Range have been the subject of discussion and preliminary planning since at least 1929, when public lands along this stretch of coastline were recognized as outstanding and were reserved from disposal until the highest and best uses could be determined. This assured that these lands were not sold or otherwise passed out of public ownership. Increasing interest among local residents and conservation organizations led to the introduction of the first King Range Act by Congressman Clem Miller in 1962. After Miller's death, Congressman Don Clausen carried on the effort to achieve special recognition of the unique values of the King Range. His goal was reached on October 21, 1970, when Congressman Clausen's act "to provide for the establishment of the King Range National Conservation Area . . ." was signed into law.

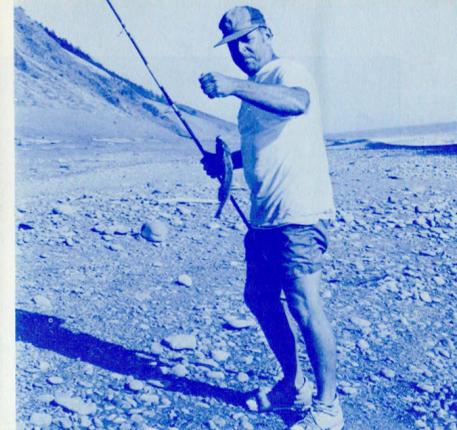
"The Shipwreck"



### ADMINISTRATION

The King Range Act (Public Law 91-476) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior " . . . to consolidate and manage the public lands in the area with the purpose of developing for the use and benefit of the people of the United States the lands and other resources therein under a program of multiple usage and of sustained yield." This means there will continue to be such multiple uses as timber harvest and livestock grazing in some zones under strict environmental safeguards.

The Bureau of Land Management, as managing agency for the King Range, developed the land use and management plan required by the act and is responsible for putting it into effect. For management purposes, the King Range has been divided into zones to meet a requirement of the King Range Act that "the plan will indicate the primary or dominant uses which will be permitted on various portions of the area . . ." Briefly, the Punta Gorda, Pacific Slope north of Shelter Cove and Point No Pass zones will have recreation as their primary use; Shelter Cove and Whale Gulch will remain primarily residential under private ownership; the Bear Creek Zone will have forest management and timber production as its primary use; and Honeydew Creek's primary use will be for wildlife habitat.



Catch from the Surf

### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Caretaker of 450 million acres of national resource lands, the Bureau of Land Management looks after America's "last frontier."

An area twice the size of France, covering twenty percent of our Nation's total land base, the land administered by BLM contains some of America's most spectacular desert, mountain and canyon scenery. Every year millions of people hunt, fish and camp on the lands.

But recreation is only one reason our national resource lands are so valuable. They're also a storehouse of natural resources, of minerals, forests, waters and wildlife vital to the future of the country.

In addition, the national resource lands are a substantial source of income — from oil and gas leases, grazing rights, and the sale of timber, minerals, and other raw materials.

### ADMINISTRATION

The King Range boundaries encompass some 54,200 acres of which 37,100 are national resource lands administered by BLM. Private lands within the conservation area will be managed by private interests as long as such uses are compatible with the intent of the enabling legislation. If an owner is willing to sell or exchange, BLM is authorized to acquire private land for purposes of consolidation and more efficient management. The management plan envisions total permanent private ownership in the King Range of approximately 6,500 acres upon completion of the BLM's land acquisition program. To date, some 7,000 acres of private land have been acquired by BLM.

Additional information on the management program on the King Range is available from:

District Manager  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
555 Leslie Street  
Ukiah, California 95482

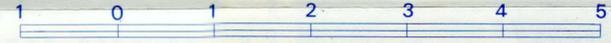
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Honeydew Creek



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
**KING RANGE  
NATIONAL CONSERVATION  
AREA**

SCALE IN MILES



UKIAH DISTRICT OFFICE CALIFORNIA



**LEGEND**

- National Conservation Area Boundary
- Chemise Mountain Primitive Area
- National Resource Lands
- Paved Road
- All Weather Road
- Dirt Road
- Primitive Road
- Jeep Road
- Bureau of Land Management Trail
- Bureau of Land Management Recreation Site
- Water Source
- Trail Head
- Locked Gate
- Residence

**WARNING**  
BEACH SOUTH OF SHELTER  
COVE IMPASSABLE TO HIKERS

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T 4 S  
T 5 S  
T 24 N