



National parks are intimately linked to the surrounding world, leaving them vulnerable to threats such as pollution, invasive species, and climate change. Understanding the status of natural resources, the dynamic nature of park ecosystems, and how these may be influenced by human activities is essential to managing our parks for the enjoyment of future generations.

San Francisco Bay Area Inventory and Monitoring Network

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About Us

The San Francisco Bay Area Inventory and Monitoring Network currently serves five national parks along the Pacific Coast and in the Coast Ranges of Central California. These parks sit in one of the most biologically rich areas in the world, with habitats ranging from lush redwood forests to rolling oak woodlands and dry chaparral. They also have complex management challenges due to their close proximity to densely populated urban areas and a history of changing land uses. Network staff collaborate with biologists at:

- Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- John Muir National Historic Site
- Muir Woods National Monument
- Pinnacles National Park
- Point Reyes National Seashore

What We Do

Our mission is to collect, analyze, and provide information about the natural environment. We use rigorous scientific methods to better understand current conditions and trends in ecological processes.

- Conduct inventories to gain baseline knowledge of biological and physical systems
- Collect long-term monitoring data to assess the ecological health of parks
- Run multi-park analyses to gain understanding of regional threats

Ecologists in the network study a range of sensitive resources in order to discover changes that may be taking place in streams, tidal pools, and other habitats that may be vulnerable to climate change, invasive species, and other impacts from a changing world. The data we gather assists park managers with making science-based management decisions that will help protect our parks. We also present the information to park visitors, educators, and other people interested in these parks to inspire a deeper understanding of our natural environment.

Long-Term Monitoring

Network ecologists and park managers chose key indicators for long-term monitoring. Together, these “vital signs” describe the changing ecological health of the parks.

Sensitive Species – Assess trends in abundance, distribution, and reproductive success of coho salmon, steelhead trout, harbor seals, elephant seals, western snowy plovers, northern spotted owls, and prairie falcons.

Landbirds – Determine trends in abundance, distribution, reproductive success, and survival of riparian-associated landbirds.

Invasive Plants – Identify locations and abundance of newly-established problematic species and help track the influence of management actions.

Plant Communities – Assess the composition, structure, and health of key plant communities over time.

Rocky Intertidal – Assess population trends for select rocky intertidal species and document changes indicative of environmental stressors.

Steamflow – Monitor variability and trends in stream flow during normal and peak flow events to understand watershed and stream health.

Water Quality – Establish baseline information for use in detecting instances of pollution or contamination and assess trends in water quality measurements for priority streams.