

Sharing the Park

Please follow these riding guidelines so that we can balance resource protection with great coastal riding experiences.

- Stay on trails. Keep horses out of dunes, salt marsh, and fenced areas. The endangered California Least Tern and threatened Western Snowy Plover are in the dunes. The endangered Light-footed Clapper Rail and sensitive Belding's Savannah Sparrow live in the marsh.
- Encourage horses to ride on hard packed sand to avoid stepping on small chicks, nests, or eggs.
- Plover and Least Tern chicks hatch out at the size of a walnut and camouflage with the beach. Look out for them March through September.
- Dogs are only allowed in the picnic area on Monument Mesa and must be on a leash that is 6 feet or shorter. Dogs are never allowed on the trails or on the beach.
- All plants, animals, and physical features (shells, rocks, etc.) are protected and may not be removed or damaged.
- No weapons or fireworks are permitted.
- No hunting is allowed.
- Waste must be disposed of properly.
- Smoking is not allowed on the trails.
- Barbeques are only allowed in defined picnic areas on Monument Mesa.

For more information, call or visit:
Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach, CA 91932
619.575.3613
www.TRNERR.org

What is the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve?

Encompassing 2,500 acres, the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (Tijuana Estuary) is the endpoint of the Tijuana River Watershed. It consists of the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Border Field State Park, Navy lands, Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, and San Diego City property. Designated as a Research Reserve by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, it is one of 28 reserves in the country devoted to education and research.

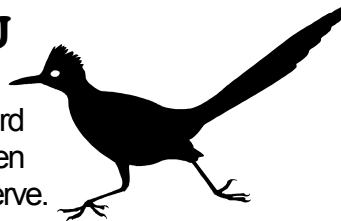
The Tijuana Estuary and Border Field State Park (located inside the Reserve boundaries) are scenic remnants of old coastal California. This Reserve is co-managed by California State Parks, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and San Diego County Parks. Visitors come here to hike, bike, picnic, and ride horses.



The threatened Western Snowy Plover nests on the beach. Riding on the hard-packed sand reduces risks to chicks, nests, and eggs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 370 bird species have been sighted at the Reserve.



Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve & Border Field State Park



Tijuana River
National Estuarine
Research Reserve

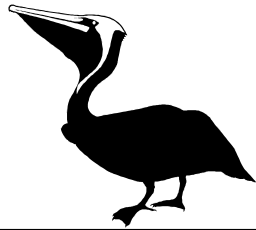


What is an estuary?

An estuary is a partially enclosed body of water where saltwater from the sea mixes with freshwater from rivers, streams, or creeks. These areas are affected by the tides, but sheltered from the full force of ocean wind and waves. Estuaries are areas of transition where the three major habitat types on Earth - land, sea, and freshwater - come together. They contain elements of each of these habitats, forming an ecosystem that brims with a diversity of life.

DID YOU KNOW?

Southern California has lost over 90% of its coastal wetland habitat.



Why are estuaries important?

Estuaries are among the most biologically productive ecosystems on the planet. More than two thirds of the fish and shellfish we eat spend some part of their lives in estuaries. Estuaries act as filters for terrestrial pollutants and provide protection from flooding. They also have economic importance. These dynamic bodies of water provide us with an important source of food, and are also a popular tourist destination.



The endangered California Least Tern makes its home in the dunes.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Tijuana Estuary was designated "a wetland of international importance" by the International Ramsar Convention.



Why is the Tijuana Estuary special?

The Tijuana Estuary is the end-point of the 1,739 square-mile Tijuana River Watershed. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the watershed lies in Mexico. This 2,500 acre, NOAA-designated Reserve has been designated by the International Ramsar Committee as a "wetland of international importance." It represents one of only two estuaries in Southern California not bisected by roads or railways. It is an excellent example of the wetland habitat that used to be a prominent feature along Southern California's coast. Today, more than 90% of wetland areas in the region have been developed or degraded due to urban encroachment. The Reserve protects this area for a variety of species, including threatened and endangered birds, plants, and invertebrates. It also provides habitat for more than 370 bird species. In addition to its habitat value, the Tijuana Estuary filters water flowing from the Tijuana River to the Pacific Ocean.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Tijuana Estuary includes riparian, coastal sage scrub, salt marsh, salt panne, and sand dune habitats.

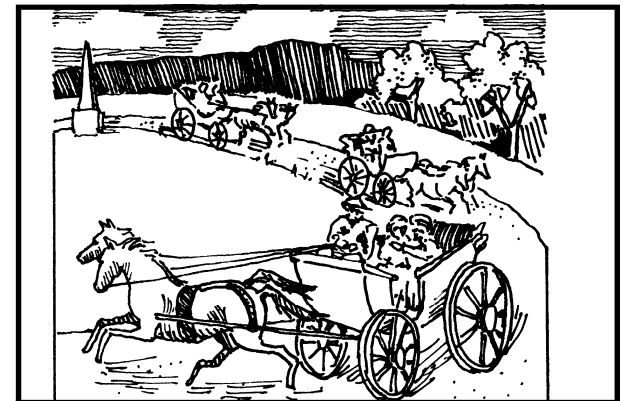
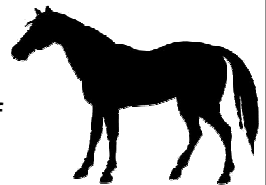


Early Ranching History at Border Field State Park

After Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, missions were secularized. This led *Californio* (Mexican Californians) families to petition the Mexican government for deeds to mission lands for ranchos as a reward for service in the military. Horses and horseback riding were a valued part of the *Californio* culture, and the Kumeyaay Indians were some of the best *vaqueros*, or cowboys, around. For many years the nearest town to the Tijuana River Valley was Old Town San Diego, some 30 miles away. In the early American period (1850s), the Argüello's held on to the Tia Juana Rancho for a while. Farming took over ranching in much of the valley during this period.

DID YOU KNOW?

Horses and horseback riding were a valued part of *Californio* culture in the Tijuana River Valley.



By the late 1800s, Monument Mesa became a major tourist destination, with many visiting by horse-drawn carriage.