

4-300-A Site Summary - Morro Bay Sand Spit**4-300-A****County:** San Luis Obispo **ACP Division/Segment:** SL - G - S002**NOAA Chart:** 18703**Map Book:** 631**Decimal Degrees:** 35.34577 -120.86331**Site Description:**

The Morro Bay Sand Spit (approx. 5 mi. long) is the Morro Dunes Natural Preserve and is within Montana De Oro State Park. At the southeast end of the Morro Dunes Natural Preserve is the Morro Dunes Ecological Reserve. The beach is part of the Morro Beach Pismo Clam Preserve. It is a fine-medium grained sandy beach that fronts Morro Bay. Species of concern are present year-round. The beach is designated critical habitat for western snowy plovers. California least terns and peregrine falcons present. The Morro Bay kangaroo rat may still be found in the back dune area. The northern California legless lizard, Morro shoulder band snail, and Morro Bay blue butterfly are all sensitive dune species. Shorebirds include western gulls, willets, sandpipers. Sea birds include brown pelicans, pelagic cormorants, grebes, loons, scoters, and common murre. Southern sea otters and harbor seals common offshore. Kelp beds. Numerous listed plant species grow on the spit including beach spectaclepod, Jones' layia, Blochman's dudleya, Miles' milkvetch, and San Luis Obispo monardella. Leatherback sea turtle designated critical habitat offshore.

Resources at Risk:**ESI and Habitat:** 3A Fine- to medium-grained sand beaches**List of Resources at Risk:**

	Resource Name	Status	Presence	Sensitivity
Birds	Western snowy plover	FT, SSC	Year-round	
Birds	brown pelican	FP, SP	Year-round	
Birds	California least tern	FE, SE	Apr - Sep	
Insects	Morro Bay blue butterfly			
Invertebrates	Morro shoulderband snail	FE	Year-round	
Mammals	Southern sea otter	FT, SP	Year-round	
Mammals	morro bay kangaroo rat	FE, SE	Year-round	
Plants	beach spectaclepod	ST		
Plants	San Luis Obispo monardella			
Plants	Jones' layia			
Plants	Blochman's dudleya			
Plants	Miles' milk vetch			
Reptiles	leatherback sea turtle	FE	Aug - Nov	
Reptiles	California legless lizard	SSC	Year-round	

FT-Federally Threatened, FE-Federally Endangered, FP-Federally Protected, SE-State Endangered, ST-State Threatened, SP -State Protected, SR-State Rare, SSC-Species of Special Concern, BGEPA-Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, SSSP-State Special Status Species

List of Key Contacts:

Type	Name/Title	Organization	Phone
C	/	Central Coast Information Center	(805) 682-4711
C	/Coordinator	Native American Heritage Commission	(916) 373-3710
O	Brian Owens/Senior Environmental Scientist	California Department of Fish & Wildlife, SLO	(562) 370-4770
O	Ted Schiafone/Harbor Manager	Morro Bay Harbor Department	(805) 772-6255
T	SURCOM (24-hr)/	California State Parks (Dispatch)	(951) 443-2969
T	Justin Viezbicke/Marine Mammal Stranding	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 506-4315
T	Tina Fahy/Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-4023
T	/Spill Response Coordinator	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal T&E Species	(805) 644-1766

C – Cultural, Historic, Archaeological; E – Entry/Owner/Access; O – Other; S – Safety; T – Trustee; X – Exclusion or Security

Additional Site Summary Comments:

Western snowy plovers nest March - September and California least terns nest April - September; refer to Typical Sandy Beach Site Summary and Strategy pages (Site 4-000-A) for information on response operations when dealing with snowy plovers and least terns. Leatherback sea turtles are most commonly observed August - November. Sea otters pup year-round.

Concerns and Advice to Responders:

This beach has been designated by the USFWS as Critical Habitat for the Western Snowy Plovers. Refer to Typical Sandy Beach Site Summary and Strategy pages (Site 4-000-A) for information on response operations when dealing with snowy plovers and least terns.

Hazard and Restrictions:

At times the front gate can be locked. Normally vehicles can drive on this paved road to the parking area where there is another locked gate. To open gates call State Parks (805) 549-3312 or dispatch (951) 443-2969. This road ends but 4-wheel drive vehicles can access sand spit to the north and can drive south to Hazard Reef. WW II training area, heavy equipment could expose old ordinances. AT&T fiber optics cables under beach. Dept of Fish and Wildlife, USFWS, and State Dept of Parks and Rec. should be consulted before staging motorized vehicles.

Site Strategies:**Site Validation Level: II**

Strategy: 4-300.1 Objective: No Onsite Options: Consider Offshore Containment/Recovery/ART
Strategy: Offshore containment and recovery (OCR) are the preferred option although heavy surf may hinder these operations. No specific response equipment listed due to the many variables associated with each spill regarding OCR. Early consideration should be given to the use of applied response technologies.

Table of Response Resources

Last Page Update**Logistics:**

Directions: From the south: Take Hwy 101 N to Los Osos Valley Rd (LOVR) exit, just south of San Luis Obispo. Take LOVR until it turns into Pecho Valley Rd. Take Pecho Valley Rd. 2 miles to the "Sand Spit Beach Access Day Use Area" turn off. This road ends, but 4-wheel drive vehicles can access sand spit to the north and can drive south to Hazard Reef. At times the front gate can be locked. Normally vehicles can drive on this paved road to the parking area where there is another locked gate. To open gates call State Parks dispatch (951) 443-2969. From the north: Take Hwy 101 S (or 5 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 S) to LOVR exit . Follow directions from above.

Land Access: 4WD, foot or ATV access, 4-wheel drive with experienced dune driver.

On-Water Limitations: Limitations: Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Morro Bay boat launch.

Facilities, Staging Areas, Command Posts, Available Equipment: Staging Area: Parking area at Sand Spit Beach access Day use area (phone, electricity and restrooms available, no lighting). Command Post: State Parks Headquarters at Montana de Oro State Park (small building). U.S. Coast Guard office in Morro Bay. CDFW office in San Luis Obispo. Airports: SLO County Airport, approx. 30 min. south. Paso Robles Airport, approx. 30 min. inland.

Communications Problems: None.



CDFW - OSPR & USCG Site: 4-300 Name: Morro Bay Sand Spit

A. Caputo (OSPR) & J. Gold (OSPR) Date: 1/8/2024

**No shoreline strategies;
consider offshore strategies**