

**4-300-A Site Summary - Morro Bay Sand Spit****4-300-A****County :** San Luis Obispo **ACP Division/Segment :** SL - G - S 002**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. Beach 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 shoulderband 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, 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:**

	<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Presence</b>
Birds	Western snowy plover	FT	Year-round
Birds	brown pelican		Year-round
Birds	California least tern	SE	Apr - Sep
Insects	Morro Bay blue butterfly		
Invertebrates	Morro shoulderband snail		Year-round
Mammals	Southern sea otter	FT, SP	Year-round
Mammals	morro bay kangaroo rat	FE, SE	Year-round
Plants	beach spectaclepod		
Plants	San Luis Obispo monardella		
Plants	Jones' layia		
Plants	Blochman's dudleya		
Plants	Miles' milkvetch		
Reptiles	leatherback sea turtle	FE	Aug - Nov
Reptiles	northern California legless lizard		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, BGEP-A-Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, SSSP-State Special Status Species

**List of Key Contacts:****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 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:**

**Strategy: 4-300.1 Objective:** No Onsite Options: Consider Offshore Containment/Recovery/ART

*Strategy:* Offshore containment and recovery (OCR) is 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.



Imagery: NAIP 2010 (Summer) 4-Band