

# Catalina Island Field Journal



*Photo: Marley Byles*

This Journal Belongs To:

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# Introduction

Welcome to Catalina Island! Rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, Santa Catalina Island is a unique place unlike anywhere else in the world. This journal will provide you with an introduction to many of the island's unique features, and will guide you on ways to explore the island yourself!

You'll find activities, reflection prompts, and information to help you get started on your self-guided learning experience on Catalina!

First, let's start with some background context!

Catalina is one of the eight Channel Islands, located off the coast of Southern California. It's the only island that is privately owned, with 88% of the island being stewarded by the Catalina Island Conservancy, and 11% belonging to the Catalina Island Company.

Catalina exists in a rare Mediterranean climate, one of five in the world! This temperate climate type means the island has warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters.

Santa Catalina Island exists on the Pacific Plate, and was formed when the Pacific Plate subducted (meaning slid under) the North American Plate. The combination of the oceanic Pacific Plate and the continental North American Plate means that Catalina is a unique combination of both types of tectonic plate, and is considered to be a 'continental borderland'. These two different types of plates also have different ages - generally, rock towards the west end of the island is about 150 million years old, whereas rocks towards the east end (including Avalon) are only 15 million years old!

The combination of Catalina's unique geology, geography, and climate allows the island to have a wide variety of plant communities or clusters of plants that are often found together in similar climate types. On Catalina, the two most common plant communities are Chaparral (about 30% of the island) and Coastal Sage Scrub (around 40%).



*Map of the eight California Channel Islands*

## ***Did you know?***

Catalina has around 60 unique species found nowhere else in the world!!

# Human History on Catalina

Humans have been on the Channel Islands for an estimated 13,000 years, potentially even thousands of years longer! Archeological records on Catalina show that people have been on this island for at least 8,000 years. The original stewards of the land on Catalina are the Tongva people, or the Pimuvits, who traditionally called Catalina Island 'Pimu'. The Tongva people were avid fisherman and had village settlements across the island. The Tongva also travelled via redwood plank canoe, called a "Ti'at". They were also known for their incredible soapstone bowls, called "Ollas".



*Tongva 'Olla'*

However, in 1542, Spanish explorers first arrived on Catalina, originally naming it San Salvador. Then in 1769, the Spanish first began to colonize California and began building missions, starting in San Diego. By the 1820s, active Native American villages are for the most part completely gone from the California landscape. Catalina was first owned by George Shatto in 1887, who started what would eventually become the town of Avalon. The ownership of Catalina traded hands several times, until the Wrigley family bought the island in 1919. Then, after large developments over 60 years, the Wrigley formed the Catalina Conservancy in 1972 and deeded 88% of land to protect and conserve in 1975.



*Photo from the Quarry  
(Catalina Island Conservancy)*

## Recommend Activity - Soapstone Quarry Hike at the Airport in the Sky

If you're interested in learning more about the Tongva people and their use of the island's natural resources, check out the short hike to a real Soapstone Quarry where the famous Catalina Soapstone Bowls are extracted from the earth.

# Catalina Flora - All About Plants!

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Catalina is home to 9 endemic plant species, as well as other unique Channel Islands species and native plants!

Due to Catalina's geographic distinction from the mainland, unique plant species have evolved over thousands of years and separated from their mainland ancestors to be suited to conditions here on the island.

Many native plants here on Catalina have a variety of different adaptations to surviving the long, dry summers and hot temperatures! One common adaptation you will see around the island is having hairy leaves. No, seriously!

Many native plants here have fuzzy hairs on the underside of their leaves, in order to prevent water from evaporating from the leaves when it's hot out! You can see this trait in the island endemic, St. Catherine's Lace!

Another interesting adaptation that native and endemic plants alike have on Catalina are having grey-tinted foliage to reflect sunlight and prevent water loss, which you can also see in St. Catherine's Lace

## *Endemic vs Native: Who's who?*

Two common words you might hear while learning about Catalina are *Endemic* and *Native*. Although they are similar, they mean different things!

Endemic means that a species is found nowhere else in the entire world except Catalina!

On the other hand, Native means that a species is found and has always been found on Catalina. So while all endemic species are native, not all native species are endemic!



## ***Want to learn more?***

Visit the Wrigley Memorial and Botanic Garden - see the next page for a guided activity!

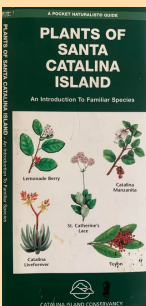
Download Seek & iNaturalist to identify species and collaborate with others!

Check out the Catalina Island Conservancy's Volunteer Workdays in the Native Plant Nursery and the Botanic Garden!

Stop by the Trailhead in Avalon and pick up a Pocket Naturalist guide!



The Catalina Island Conservancy offers free lectures on the last Friday of every month - check out some of the past plant-themed lectures, such as "Saving Catalina's Rarest Plants" (September 2023)!



# Native Plant Scavenger Hunt!

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Have you seen these native plants around? Keep an eye out! *Hint- Go to the Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden to check off all 5!*

Put an X here once you've found it!

## Catalina Ironwood

The Catalina Island Ironwood, is what we call a relictual endemic - its species range used to extend throughout the Southwest!

*Lyonothamus floribundus*



## Catalina Manzanita

This Manzanita is also an island endemic! It's fruit is eaten by the island foxes, and their small green shape and bitter taste give it the name "little apple" in Spanish

*Arctostaphylos catalinae*



## St. Catherine's Lace

Another island endemic, this amazing plant is actually the largest buckwheat species in North America! It can grow up to 10 feet tall!

*Eriogonum giganteum*



## Catalina Island Mountain Mahogany

Not be confused with the Mountain Mahogany, this endemic tree is the rarest in North America - there are only 6 organisms left in existence!

*Cercocarpus traskiae*



## Catalina Liveforever

Although this endemic succulent species is small, it's mighty! Catalina Liveforever are excellent at preventing erosion on hillsides.

*Dudleya hassei*



## Island Bush Poppy

This Southern California native produces beautiful yellow flowers. Make sure to give them a smell - many notice a watermelon candy scent!

*Dendromecon harfordii*



|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                |                                                                                        |                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Date & Time of Day:                                                                               | Location:                                                                                                      | Season/Time of Year:                                                                   | Author Last Name & Year |
| Weather: (Temperature, Precipitation, Cloud Cover, etc)                                           |                                                                                                                |                                                                                        |                         |
| Does the plant have any kind of smell? What if you crush one of it's leaves?                      | What color are the plant's leaves? Are the dark, waxy green? What about light silver gray? Describe them here: | Observations:<br>Include any and all observations here!                                |                         |
| What kind of plant is this? Is it a tree, or a succulent? List features of the plant as evidence. | To you, what is most interesting about the plant? Why did you choose to journal about this one?                |                                                                                        |                         |
| Include an illustration below of the plant as a whole!                                            |                                                                                                                | Now, pick a small part of the plant (leaf, flower, etc) to do a close-up illustration! |                         |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                |                                                                                        |                         |

# Catalina Fauna - Mammals, Birds & More!

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Catalina Island is home to a plethora of unique animal species, from the adorable Channel Island Fox, the spindly Catalina Walking Stick, and the elusive Catalina Two Striped Garter Snake. In fact, there are five sub-species (not quite an entirely new species, but also not similar enough to be considered the same species) of mammals, three sub-species of birds, one sub-species of reptile, and *forty-five species* of invertebrates that you can only find on Catalina Island!



So, why are there so many endemic species and sub-species here on the island?

For starters, Catalina is geographically isolated, meaning that when a plant or animal species makes it way to Catalina (either by wing, wave, or wind), it can no longer interact with members of their species outside of the island population. This means that only species individuals on the island can reproduce with each other, limiting the genetic pool! Eventually, over thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of years, species populations on the island will start to slowly evolve away from their mainland ancestors. These species may start to change to fit in with their new environment, leading to phenomena such as *Island Dwarfism* and *Island Gigantism*. These terms mean that species will either shrink or enlarge when living on an island to better suite their habitat! For example, the Catalina Island Fox is about a quarter smaller than it's mainland ancestor the Gray Fox - therefore, it is an island dwarf!! Or, our Catalina California Quail are about a third larger than the mainland quail - it's an island giant!

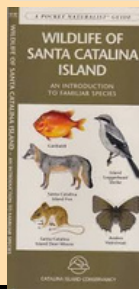
## Want to learn more?

Seek & iNaturalist are also great tools for identifying and learning about wildlife!

Check out some wildlife-themed Last Friday Lectures on the Conservancy Website! Recommended: "The Catalina Island Fox" (July 2024), and "Catalina's Charismatic Herptofauna" (March 2023), and

This Pocket Field Guide to Catalina Island is available online and at the Conservancy Trailhead in Avalon!

For more information on foxes, check out the Friends of the Island Fox website!



|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                    |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Date & Time of Day:                                                                                         | Location:                                                                                                           | Season/Time of Year:                                                               | Author Last Name & Year |
| Weather: (Temperature, Precipitation, Cloud Cover, etc)                                                     |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                    |                         |
| Pick a spot, and sit quietly for 15 minutes. How many different species did you see? What did you see?      | Noise is important in the animal kingdom! Describe what kind of noises you hear, and what you think is making them. | Observations:<br>Include any and all observations here!                            |                         |
| Notice the environment around you - what evidence of animals do you see? Tracks, scat, or woodpecker holes? | What is your favorite animal or insect species you have seen on Catalina? Why? Describe it.                         |                                                                                    |                         |
| Include an illustration below of an animal you have seen!                                                   |                                                                                                                     | Now, envision the type of 'track' or footprint this animal has, and sketch it out! |                         |
|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                    |                         |

*Still looking to learn more? Check out these opportunities with the 8 Catalina Conservancy!*

### **EcoTours**



Want to travel beyond Avalon and explore Catalina's rugged interior?

Check out our EcoTours, a two or three-hour driving tour led by Conservancy-trained Naturalists! Embark on an adventure to see wildlife such as bison, unique plants, and incredible views of the island!

### **Naturalist Trainings**



*Naturalist 1:* A free virtual webinar that encompasses a brief overview of Catalina's geology, island species, human history, and the work of the Conservancy.

*Naturalist 2:* A 7 hour field excursion from Avalon to the interior, expanding on topics from Naturalist 1 and new information on geology, human and natural history and more!

### **Catalina Island Conservancy Volunteer Program**



*One of many greenhouses at the James H. Ackerman Native Plant Nursery!*

Still looking for more ways to get involved? Consider joining the Catalina Island Conservancy's volunteer department, where you can get involved in a range of activities! For example, volunteering in our native plant nursery or helping out at the Wrigley Memorial and Botanic Garden! You can also get involved in volunteer trips that take you around the island doing restoration and conservation work!

# Leave No Trace - The Seven Principles

## 1.) Plan Ahead & Prepare

Planning ahead ensures your safety and enjoyment. Be sure to do your research on the terrain, weather, and hazards of Catalina, including bison, rattlesnakes, heat, and how much water to bring. It's also important to know the rules and regulations of where you are traveling!

## 2.) Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

This principle ensures the protection of natural spaces and slows environmental degradation. Be sure to follow an established trail, or if off trail to spread out as a group to stop the creation of a new path. Durable surfaces include rocks/sand/gravel, and non-durable surfaces include vegetation. Be sure to pitch your tent either in a designated campsite or if in remote areas, to not re-use an old campsite to reduce the impact on that spot.

## 3.) Dispose of Waste Properly

Not disposing of waste properly pollutes and damages the environment. If you have trash in a place with no trashcans, 'Pack In, Pack Out' - whatever you bring, you must take out with you! Also, research what human waste disposal is mandated on island and prepare accordingly. A common misconception is that food scraps (orange peels, apple cores) will biodegrade, but they are damaging to ecosystems and take a long time to break down.

## 4.) Leave What You Find

As tempting as it can be sometimes, be sure not to bring anything from the outdoors home with you (rocks, shells, sticks, etc). Avoid damaging live trees and plants, and leave natural and cultural objects. Taking natural resources negatively impacts ecosystems and wildlife.

## 5.) Minimize Campfire Impacts

When in the backcountry, be extremely aware of the potential damage of a fire, either from flames or if collecting wood will drain the resources of the area. Also, be aware of the season and area you are in, and whether or not fires are allowed. In campsites, always use pre-established fire rings, buy firewood locally, and properly douse your fire when done.

## 6.) Respect Wildlife

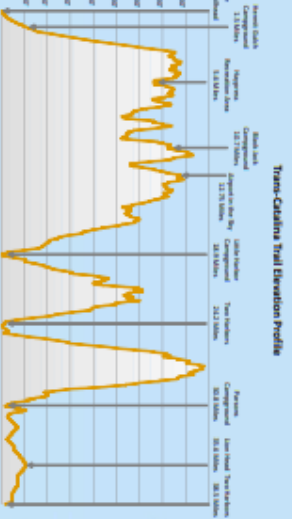
Always observe wildlife from a safe distance so as to not disturb/scare wildlife and put yourself at risk. Being quiet around wild animals also ensures their (and your!) comfort and safety, and if you have pets, keep them out of harm's way and prevent them from disturbing animals. Never touch, feed, or pick up wild animals. Be sure to store your food correctly so as not to let wildlife get to it!

## 7.) Be Considerate of Others

When enjoying the outdoors, do not prevent others from doing so! Being excessively loud, letting pets and children damage or disturb areas, and not cleaning up after yourself are all ways to disrupt the enjoyment of others. When on a trail, people traveling uphill have the right of way!

Please be sure to visit the Leave No Trace website ([Int.org](http://Int.org)) for more comprehensive descriptions of each principle!

# SANTA CATALINA ISLAND



- Legend**
- Campground
  - Back to Campground
  - Picnic / Shade Structure
  - Food
  - Information
  - Outdoor Shower
  - Public Water
  - Restroom
  - Telephone
  - WiFi Access Point (Availability Not Guaranteed)
  - Primary Road: Hiking & Biking
  - Secondary Road: Hiking & Biking
  - Minor Road: Hiking Only
  - Single Track Hiking Trail
  - Closed to Public
  - City or Town Road
  - Trans-Catalina Trail
  - Aviation City Limits
  - Cross Island Fence
  - Not Consensus Property
  - Communication Tower
  - Road/Trail Distance to Miles
  - TCT Mile Marker
  - Locked Gate
  - Unlocked Gate
  - Ocean Depth (ft)



**Catalina Geography**

San Juan Island  
Santa Cruz Island  
Santa Rosa Island  
Santa Barbara Island  
Santa Monica Island  
Santa Catalina Island  
Santa Barbara Island  
Santa Cruz Island  
San Juan Island



- Trailheads**
1. San Juan Island
  2. Santa Cruz Island
  3. Santa Rosa Island
  4. Santa Barbara Island
  5. Santa Monica Island
  6. Santa Catalina Island
  7. Santa Barbara Island
  8. Santa Cruz Island
  9. San Juan Island

- Helpful Contacts**
- 1. Santa Catalina Island Conservancy
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  - 3. Santa Catalina Island Conservancy
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# Sticker Page

