

Sea Kayaking

Channel Islands National Park

Santa Cruz Island

National Park Service
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Kayakers Rescued After Being Stranded on Santa Cruz Island

This morning at 7:30 a.m. the National Park Service and U.S. Coast Guard rescued five kayakers who were stranded on a beach at Valley Anchorage on the south side of Santa Cruz Island.

The five kayakers were first reported overdue and missing after 8:30 p.m. on Thursday by other members of their camping party. Park staff on the island conducted a hasty search of the shoreline on the east end of the island prior to calling the Coast Guard at about 9:25 p.m.

The Coast Guard dispatched 41-foot and 25-foot vessels out of Coast Guard station Channel Island and a rescue helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Los Angeles. Each arrived within the hour and searched the land, shoreline, and waters surrounding Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands throughout the night with no results.

Search efforts continued Friday morning with an NPS patrol vessel, a 41-foot Coast Guard vessel and a helicopter. The Coast Guard helicopter located the kayakers at approximately 7:10 a.m. on a narrow beach at Valley Anchorage on the south side of the island.

Channel Islands National Park rangers worked together with a Coast Guard rescue swimmer to rescue the kayakers off the beach. The five kayakers had signs of mild hypothermia but suffered no injuries and required no medical treatment. They were transported by vessel to Scorpion Anchorage where they rejoined the rest of the party and plan to return to the mainland on Sunday.

The five kayakers were part of a group of nine students from the University of California at Berkeley who were camping over the spring break at Scorpion Anchorage on Santa Cruz Island. They were novice kayakers and were ill equipped and unprepared for their kayak outing. They were apparently trying to circumnavigate the island without realizing that Santa Cruz Island has over 77 miles of coastline.

After dark on Thursday they landed at Valley Anchorage, a beach located about 11 miles from their departure, and set up a shelter with their kayaks for the night. They were aware that a search was being conducted because they saw searchlights from the Coast Guard vessel and helicopter but they were not provisioned to signal their rescuers.

The weather on the island was mild at the time of this incident with calm winds and seas and air and water temperatures in the low 50's.



Did You Know?

Island foxes are the smallest North American canids and occur only on the Channel Islands. The average weight for an adult male is 5-6 pounds, about the size of a house cat.

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