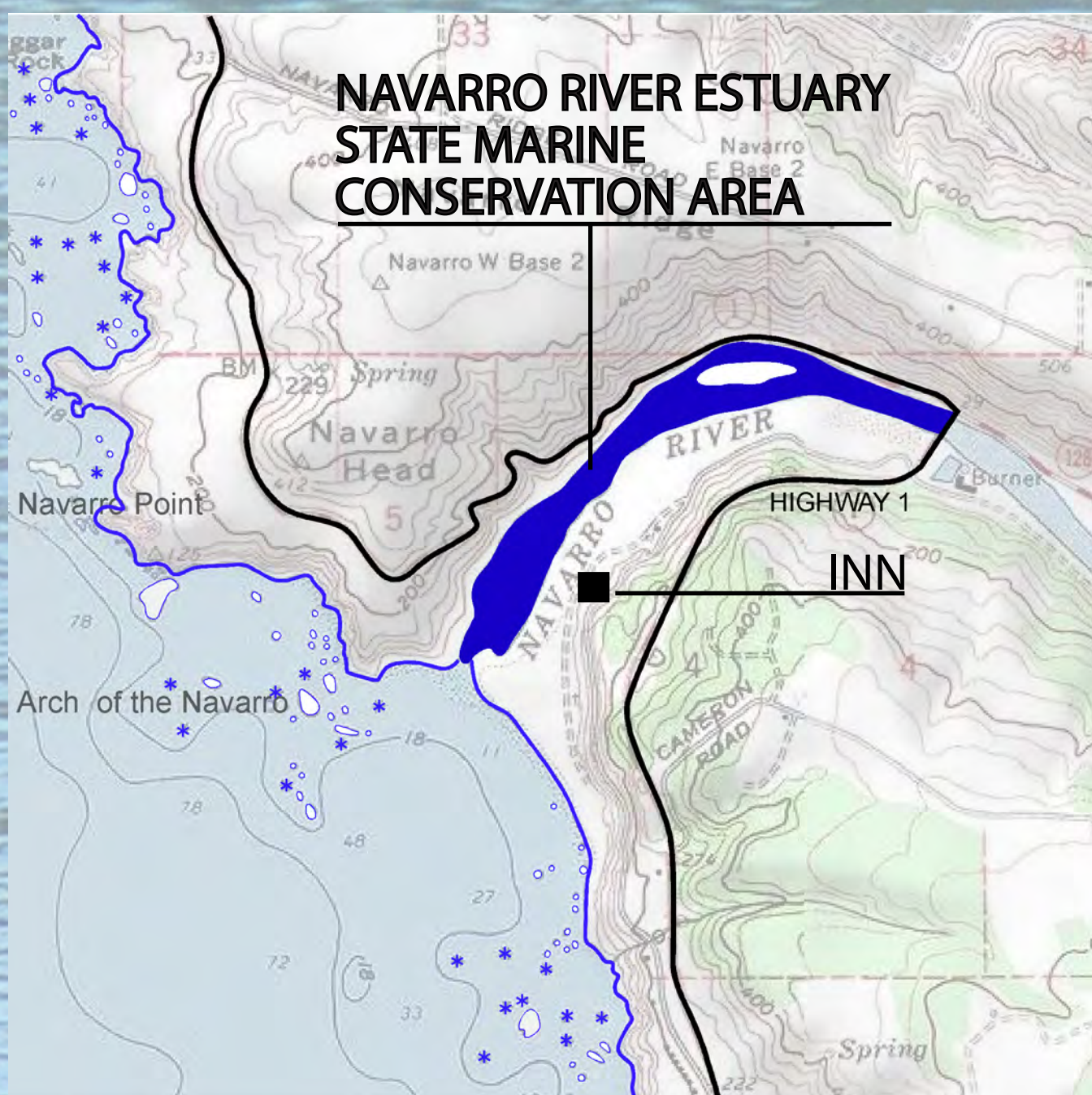


Navarro River Marine Estuary

State Marine Conservation Area • California Coastal National Monument

DID YOU KNOW?

Located off the entire state coastline, the California Coastal National Monument comprises more than 20,000 small islands, rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles like the Arch of the Navarro.



Harbor Seal
Phoca vitulina

- up to six feet long and adults can attain a weight of 300 pounds (or more).
- brown, tan or gray, with distinctive V-shaped nostrils.
- short side flippers serve as propellers for movement.
- favor familiar resting or haul-out spots near foraging areas that are protected from adverse weather and predators.
- enjoy sunning on rocks.
- will haul out on Navarro beach at night and when river flows limit human access.



Northern River Otter
Lontra canadensis

- up to four feet long (including tail) with water-repellent fur and clawed webbed feet for versatility in both water and on land.
- when diving, nostrils and ears close to keep water out; can stay underwater for up to four minutes.
- a diet of fish is favored, but may also feed on amphibians, turtles, crayfish and rodents.
- quite playful; often seen frolicking in the water.
- builds burrows with many in-and-out tunnels near the water's edge.
- found throughout the Navarro River Watershed.



Common Merganser
Mergus merganser

- large ducks up to 28 inches long with a 3-foot wing span.
- males visually striking in breeding plumage, white bodies with black heads covered by glossy green; females have richly colored cinnamon heads.
- float gracefully on small rivers or shallow shorelines; typically use both salt and fresh water.
- dive for food, mostly fish but also other aquatic life such as mollusks and small crustaceans; serrated bills help to grip prey.
- often fish in a group forming a semi-circle to drive prey into a shallow.
- permanent resident of the Navarro River Estuary

An estuary is a partly enclosed coastal body of brackish water where the mouth of a river or stream meets the tide of the open sea. In December 2012, a portion of the Navarro River Estuary extending to the Highway 1 bridge was designated as a State Marine Conservation Area, which will conserve valuable natural resources while still allowing public recreation, with certain restrictions. Some of the aquatic life protected in the Navarro River Estuary, their characteristics, and their habits are summarized to the right.

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CHALLENGE

This area, its species and habitat benefit from the 1999 Marine Life Protection Act, that was a result of a public-private partnership initiative. How could you be involved in ensuring its implementation?