

# McAbee Beach Dive Guide

## Site Description

Located in the heart of Monterey's famous *Cannery Row*, this beach is an easy dive for all levels of diver. It's an easy entry from the beach, entering at the center of the beach, then a short swim before you are ready to descend into a diverse dive site.

The bottom composition near the beach, at around 6 feet, is mainly seagrasses, which changes briefly to a sandy bed, before transitioning to a more interesting rocky bottom composition with kelp forest. The rocky boulder field starts at around 17 feet depth, and the profile drops off very gradually so this rocky area can be explored without descending much deeper than 25 feet.

In addition to the natural features, there are a number of pipes that extend from the beach. These remnants of Monterey's former canning industry provide an additional artificial reef for marine life. These pipes, 10 inches in diameter, were used to deliver the sardine catch into the canneries, from boats moored offshore.

Expect to see numerous species of crab, stars, nudibranchs, sponges, anemones, urchins and small fish amongst the kelp, rocks and pipes.



## Driving Directions

Monterey is about 90 minutes drive from the bay area, via Highway 17 or Route 101, and Highway 1 South.

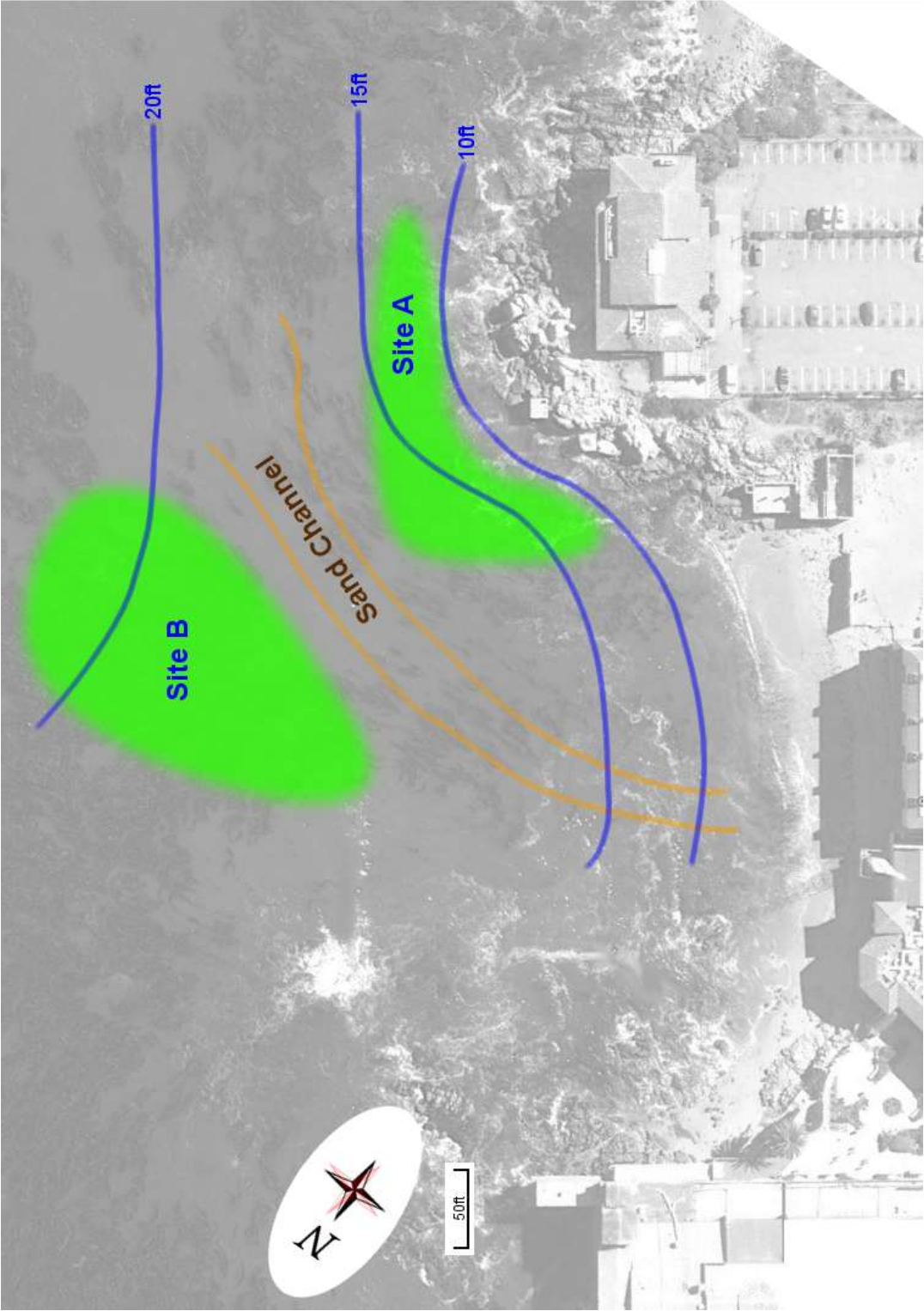
From Hwy 1 South exit at onto Del Monte Ave at exit 402B (signed "Monterey and Pacific Grove"). Stay on Del Monte Ave until you go through the tunnel. Immediately after the tunnel, get in the right lane, which turns into Foam Street. Take the second right, onto Reeside Ave, then left on Cannery Row. Continue on Cannery Row until you come to the El Torito restaurant. McAbee Beach is adjacent to El Torito.

Park either in the parking lot at El Torito, in the lot opposite, or on the metered street parking.

**If you're parking on the street, bring plenty of quarters.**

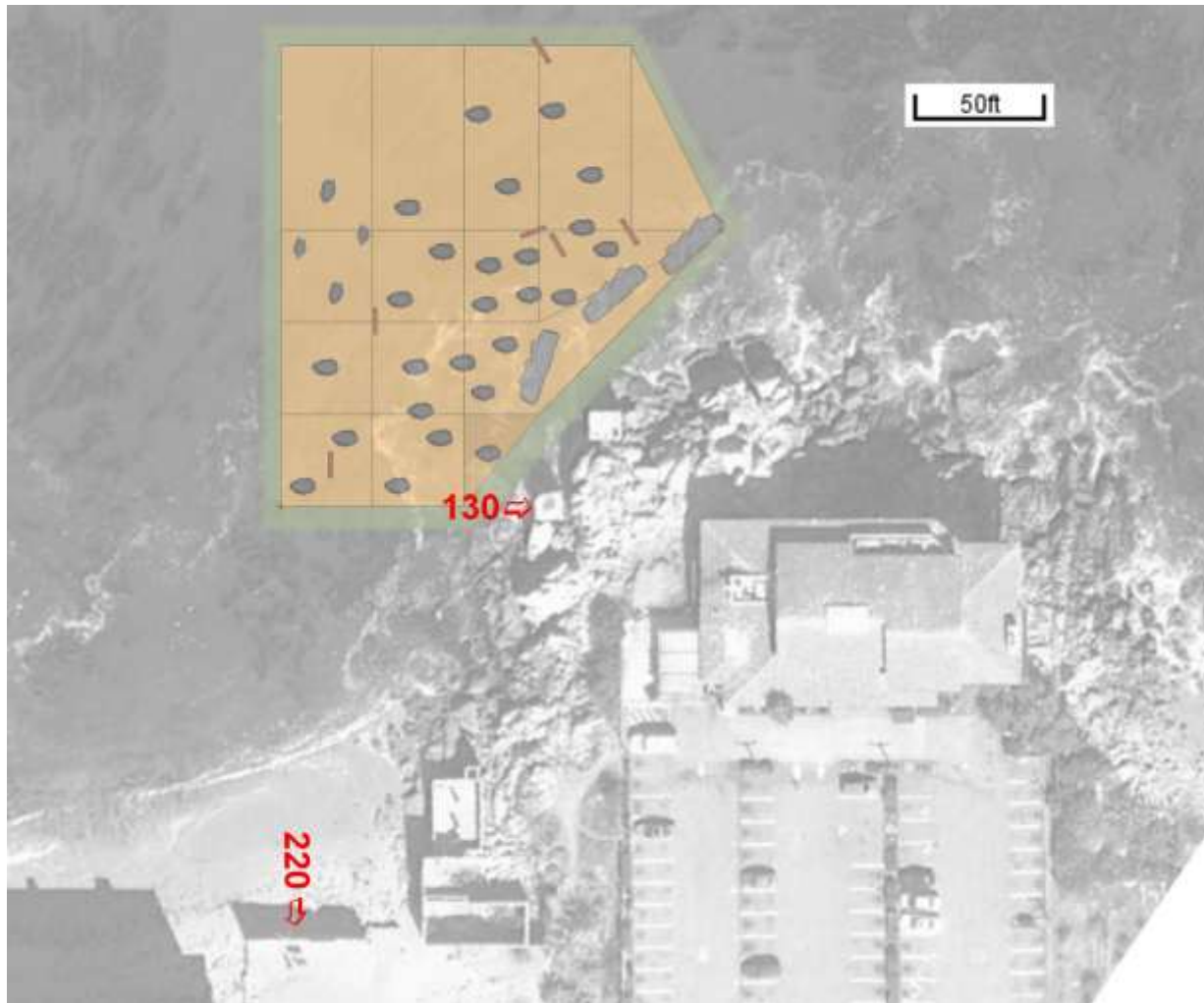


# Dive Site Details

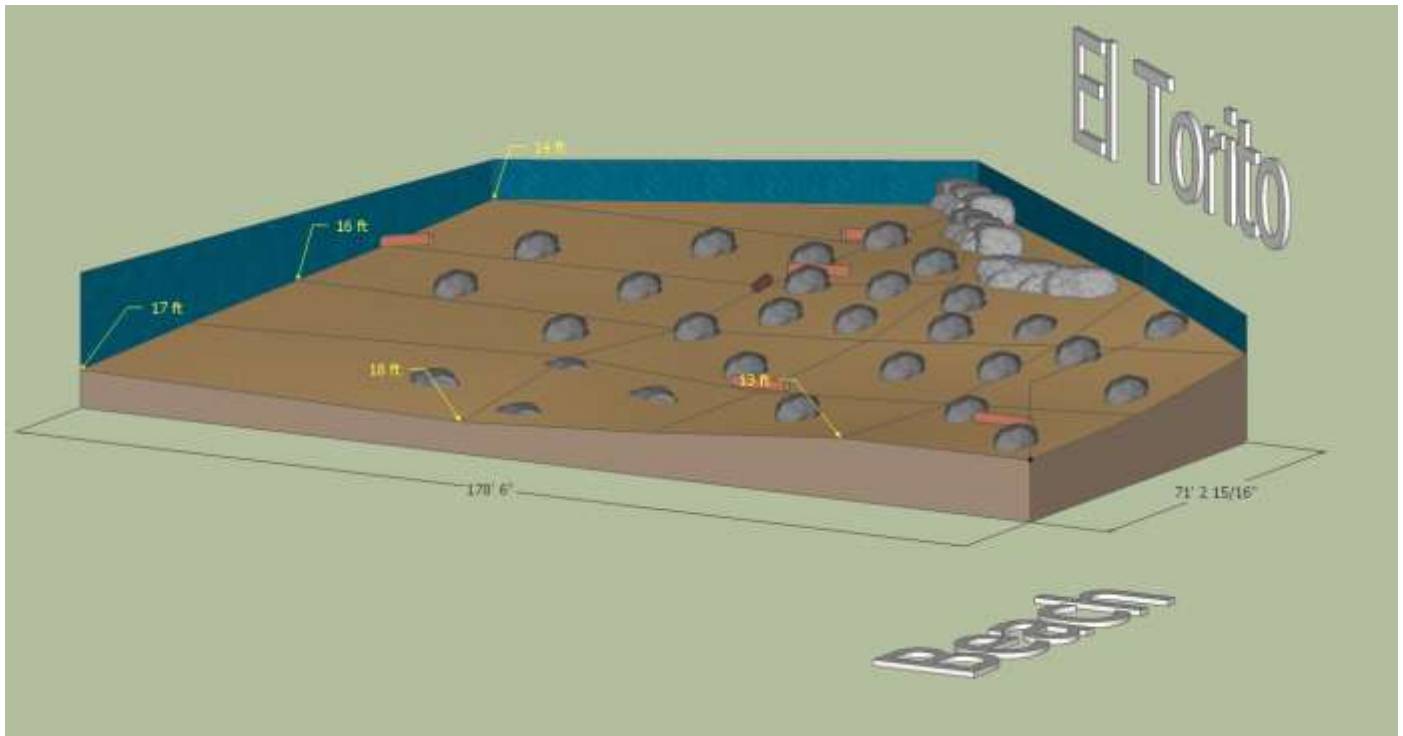


## Dive Site A

Enter the water at the center of the beach and swim out and towards El Torito. Use the old cannery structure on the beach and the concrete tower on the rocks beside the restaurant as visual references for the descent point of the dive. The concrete tower should be at a  $130^\circ$  bearing, and the bunker on the beach  $220^\circ$ . Drop down into approximately 13 feet of water.



The bottom composition here is sandy, with some rocks and light kelp. Swim away from the beach ( $40^\circ$ ) for approximately 100 feet, exploring amongst the rocks and kelp to find hermit crabs, decorator crabs and sea stars. After about 100ft, turn to take a  $130^\circ$  bearing. You will start to encounter a rockier bottom, with some larger boulders and remains of the cannery pipes, which are home to nudibrachs, invertebrates and rockfish.



The site runs in front of the restaurant and you can explore for easily over 200ft. At the halfway point of the dive, you can follow the contour back to the starting point, staying at approximately 15 feet. Alternately, follow a reciprocal path to get back to the sand channel and back to the beach from there on a 220° heading.

## Dive Site B

Site B is a little deeper and a longer surface swim. Swim out on the surface about 300 feet before descending. For a rough guide, the bearing to the washrocks by the Fishhopper restaurant should be on a 270° heading, and the tower on the rocks outside El Torito are at a 180° heading.

The bottom here is more rocky than the first site and the kelp a little thicker, though there are still patches of sandy bottom. Again, expect to find the remains of old pipes. The marine life is much the same as the first site, but with the possibility of some larger additions. Cabazon, Seals and Otters are likely to be spotted out here.

Avoid swimming North-West from the entry point, as the shallow, exposed water in front of the Fishhopper tends to have a strong surge and bigger waves. A square or “U” pattern towards the South-East will be a better dive.

## Facilities

**Parking:** Park in the El Torito lot for \$10 all day. Meter parking is available on the street. There is also a parking lot across the street from El Torito, with all day parking for \$10.

**Restrooms:** Two blocks up from the beach on Hoffman Ave, at Wave St.

**Drinks/Snacks:** *Trailside Cafe*, across the street from El Torito, on the bike trail. *Starbucks*, a block down Cannery Row, towards the aquarium, at the corner of Prescott Ave and Cannery Row. Plus numerous restaurants on Cannery Row.

**Payphones:** Outside the Spindrifft Inn, adjacent to McAbee Beach.

## Other Things To Do

After you finish your day's diving, there are numerous things to do within walking distance of the dive site.

**Monterey Bay Aquarium:** 886 Cannery Row

**Steinbeck Wax Museum:** 700 Cannery Row

**Take a bike ride:** Rent a Surrey from *Bay Bike Rentals*, right across the street from McAbee beach. Then enjoy a ride along the Peninsula Bike Trail

**Shops and Restaurants:** Cannery Row has many shops and restaurants to explore.

**Wine Tasting:** Learn a little about *viticulture* and enjoy a wine tasting with an excellent view over the bay. 700 Cannery Row # Kk