

The New York Times

52 Places to Go in 2014

Witness a city in transformation, glimpse exotic animals, explore the past and enjoy that beach before the crowds.



A rocky coastal view from the Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands. Jim Wilson/The New York Times

3. North Coast, California

A glorious new preserve for the public.

One hundred and thirty miles north of San Francisco, the moody bluffs of the Mendocino Coast have long been a spectacular place from which to observe marine life: passing humpback whales, sun-happy sea lions, foamy waves strewn with kelp. The incorporation of the [Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands](#) — nearly 1,300 acres — gives hikers new access to a contiguous 12-mile stretch of coastline and fields of wildflowers, cypress forests and cliff areas (some overlooking dramatic blowholes, pinnacles and sea caves), much of it previously off-limits to the public. And Congressional proposals to include the north coast lands as part of the [California Coastal National Monument](#) have been introduced, which would mean better protection and more funds for maintenance; plans also exist to extend the [California Coastal Trail](#) through the new preserve. — *BONNIE TSUI*