

**CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAND INTERIORS:
A CASE STUDY FROM THE CENTRAL VALLEY OF SANTA CRUZ ISLAND**

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Archaeological investigations on the California Channel Islands have been oriented primarily around littoral settings, marine resources, and maritime transportation. Absent from these inquiries is a comparable emphasis on interior contexts, terrestrial resources, and land-based travel routes. Citing recent data from the Central Valley of Santa Cruz Island, I challenge embedded assumptions of island interiors as being marginal, peripheral, and largely irrelevant to late Holocene developments. Instead, I argue that the Central Valley is an example of an interior space that may have been vital to intra-island subsistence, transportation, and community interaction.

If it's island tales you want, lads and lassies
Filled with middens and tools of your fancies
You're in the right place
To learn of the trace
Of a prehistory that will entrance thee

On the Channel Islands not far off our coast,
Is an arch record that is worthy of boast,
Its stratigraphy,
Is gopher-free,
Leaving a timeline to which we should toast

Much do we know 'bout marine exploitation,
And much has been said 'bout boat transportation,
But what we don't know,
Is far from the shore:
The evidence of inland habitation

To Santa Cruz Island we now turn our sights,
Largest island of the California Bight
Its topography
And diversity
Includes a Central Valley, that does invite

In old Aught 7, I started excavations
At different midden locations
To find evidence
Of their subsistence
And of land and sea transportation

Central Valley sites help to unravel
Island resources, their use and travel
The lithics attest
That chert is the best
The eastern quarries are truly a marvel

The trio of mammals, shellfish, and fish
Were common to the prehistoric dish
Ease of harvest
And of transport
Explain the faunal exploit, plus they're delish!

With signs of bead-making in excavations
And products that came from mainland locations
Obsidian stone
And tools of deer bone
Say: "This ain't no backwater destination!"

Finding these items in the Central Valley
Suggests it was used as a central alley
For moving resources
And freshwater sources
That add to the tally that's well worth the dally

So, if you take anything from today's tale
It is that islands leave challenging trails
Of both land and sea
And, finally,
For your two minutes, I am grateful!