



BREAKING Rogue wave sends people running on Calif. coast, injures 8 people



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NEWS | WEATHER

Dramatic flooding in Santa Cruz County as storm breaches coastline

By **Stephen Council**
Updated Dec 28, 2023 4:40 p.m.

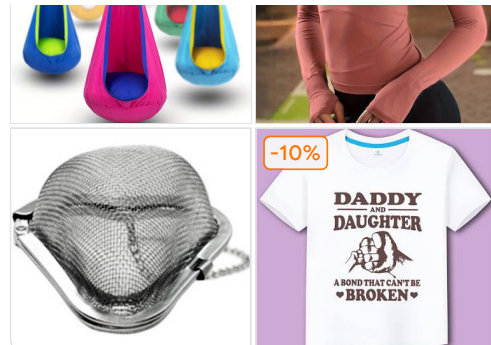




Floodwater pushed driftwood and other debris onto the Rio Del Mar esplanade and Seacliff State Beach in Santa Cruz County on Dec. 28, 2023. Officials announced an evacuation warning for the area.

Courtesy of California Highway Patrol, Santa Cruz

LATEST Dec. 28, 4:35 p.m. Officials lifted evacuation warnings in Santa Cruz County for the areas near Rio Del Mar esplanade, Capitola's beachfront and Pajaro Dunes, the county announced on social media Thursday afternoon. The coastlines were inundated with water earlier in the day as huge waves pushed debris onto the land, but more widespread flooding was so far avoided.



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Santa Cruz's East Cliff Drive, which was blocked earlier in the day by a log, is now "open and passable," according to a county post.

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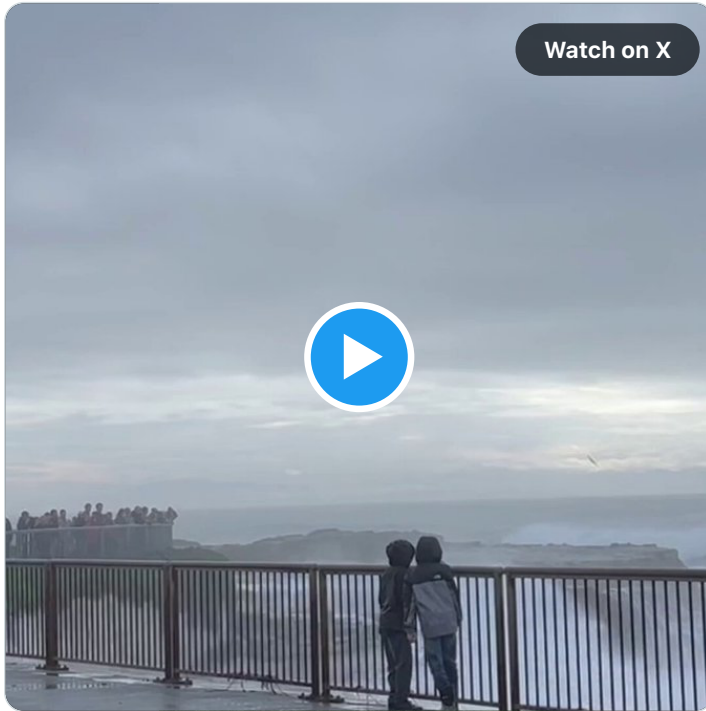


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WIPEOUT! Kids watching the waves in Santa Cruz were tossed when a big one crashed into the rocks.



12:50 PM · Dec 28, 2023



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Dec. 28, 11:40 a.m. Waves flooded the Santa Cruz County coastline Thursday morning, closing sections of East Cliff Drive and blocking off the Rio Del Mar esplanade. Residents along the coast from Las Olas Drive to just past Hidden Beach County Park were being told to prepare for possible evacuations.

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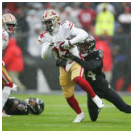
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“The area of Rio Del Mar typically sees flooding whenever we get some sort of substantial rainfall,” said Ashley Keehn, the public information officer for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office. “That’s what we started seeing this morning around 7 o’clock, with that high tide and rain coming in.”

Evacuation warnings were also in effect for Capitola’s beachfront area and for Pajaro Dunes, near Watsonville. In the city of Santa Cruz, officials closed the Santa Cruz Wharf, Main Beach, Cowell Beach and a half-mile stretch of West Cliff Drive.

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9:57 AM · Dec 28, 2023

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Videos and images shared by the sheriff's office and the California Highway Patrol showed mounds of driftwood pushed onto the Rio Del Mar esplanade and waves hammering the old cement ship by Seacliff State Beach's Aptos Pier.

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The High Surf Warning is in effect through 3am Friday. Breaking waves of 28-33 ft are possible at the coast. Please use extreme caution and stay far from the water. NEVER turn your back on the ocean, stay off jetties, rocks, or piers, and do not go into the water! [#CAwx](#) [#HighSurf](#)

**CHP Santa Cruz** @CHPscrz

 Due to a high tidal surge, numerous closures are in place today. Pls exercise extreme caution near the ocean and stay safe. Here are some views from the Rio Del Mar Esplanade and Seacliff St. Beach. Remember to respect the closures and avoid these areas for your own safety.



10:20 AM · Dec 28, 2023 

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The water, logs and debris on the roadway prompted the road closures, CHP spokesperson Israel Murillo told SFGATE. In a [post](#) on X, CHP said residents should, “exercise extreme caution near the ocean.”



A video still shows the flooded Rio Del Mar esplanade in Santa Cruz County on Dec. 28, 2023.

Courtesy of Santa Cruz County

Multiple rounds of rainfall, powerful winds and the full moon's gravitational pull are contributing to the surges of seawater, SFGATE reported Tuesday. The National Weather Service's Bay Area office warned of deadly conditions, and wrote in a high surf warning for Thursday, "Never turn your back to the ocean!" Further up the coast from Santa Cruz, evacuations were in effect around Stinson Beach. The high surf warning will remain in effect until 3 a.m. Friday.

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Dec 28, 2023 | Updated Dec 28, 2023 4:40 p.m.



By **Stephen Council**



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