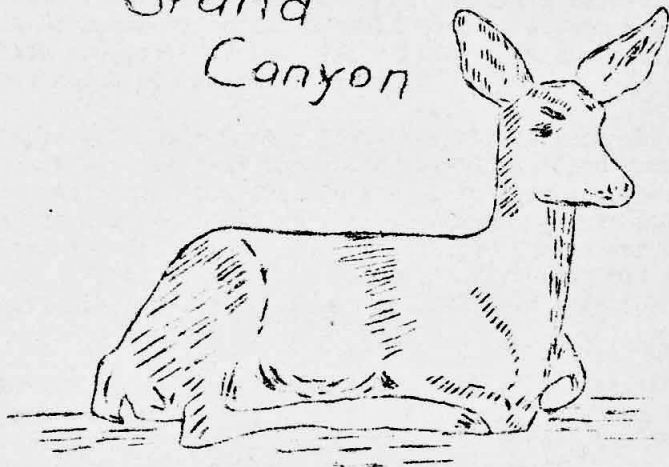


Nature Notes
of
Grand
Canyon



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GRAND CANYON NATURE NOTES

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This bulletin is issued monthly for the purpose of giving information to those interested in the natural history and scientific features of the Grand Canyon National Park. Additional copies of these bulletins may be obtained free of charge by those who can make use of them, by addressing the Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon, Arizona.

M. R. Tillotson, Superintendent. By - G. E. Sturdevant, Park Naturalist.

PAL KILLED BY MOUNTAIN LION

When a park ranger would prefer to lose a hundred dollar bill to a pet the misfortune of losing the pet must be keenly felt. Yet that is the way Ranger A. L. Brown expressed himself when he discovered that a mountain lion had killed and partly eaten "Pal," his pet fawn, barely one hundred yards from the north rim ranger station.

Pal disappeared while Ranger Brown was absent from the park. He was last seen on a side-hill near the ranger station. Upon Ranger Brown's return to the station he searched in the vicinity where the fawn was last seen. Tracks of a large mountain lion soon rewarded his diligent search. After following the tracks for a short distance the ranger discovered some of the remains of Pal. The cougar had evidently eaten his fill, dragged the carcass a short distance, eaten some more and then left the tell-tale evidence behind him.

Probably the most popular incident in Pal's life happened one evening during the past summer when he accompanied the park ranger to the hotel for milk. A particularly large crowd happened to be stopping there that night. As he accompanied Ranger Brown in the lobby, through the dining room and into the kitchen, an excited clamor was set up. Guests left their seats at the tables while those in the lobby jumped to their feet to see the rare sight of a wild deer following his master.

Not only Ranger Brown, but many of the visitors to the north rim of the Canyon, will miss Pal. Hundreds of pictures were snapped of him during the past season as he stood by the park ranger while registering autos.

CANYON WALLS ARE BARRIER TO MIGRATION

A mountain or a large body of water often acts as an effective barrier to migration, but one of the most formidable barriers to the raccoon is present in the form of the precipitous walls of the Grand Canyon. In

Havasu Canyon may be found a species of raccoon in abundance. Paths are worn smooth where the animals go and come on their nightly foraging expeditions. Curiously enough, however, this is the only side canyon within the park in which this animal is found.

ANTELOPE REVEAL GOAT TRAITS

The American Antelope - that vanishing inhabitant of the open plains - is often depicted as a most unique creature in which are combined the traits of both deer and goat. It can rival a goat in rambling over the roughest ground with remarkable speed. In the following instance there was a distinct reversion to the goat type which was based on habit rather than on speed.

The wife of the new caretaker at Indian Garden is fast becoming acquainted with the "taking ways" of the small band of antelope ranging around that vicinity. Recently she made a layer cake, frosted it, and after carefully wrapping it with paper, set it outside on a bench to cool.

"Nellie," along with several other members of the band, happened to wander near the cabin and espied the papers surrounding the cake. A few nibbles on the paper revealed the more appetizing cake beneath. When the cake was about half eaten the caretaker's wife appeared on the scene and her excited yells, at seeing her cake ruined, caused the antelope to depart.

"SMOKY" IS AN APT PUPIL

With wild animals behind a fence it is often possible to observe certain acts that would pass unobserved in the wild state. One of the most interesting incidents observed among the fawns at Grand Canyon was two fawns teaching a third to jump over a fence.

The fence, in which were penned three fawns, was about five feet high. Within a few hours the largest of the three learned to clear the fence with ease. Whenever she was excited or hungry she would return to the enclosure in the same manner. A short time later a second fawn learned how to clear the obstacle. The two older ones would then go on rather extensive trips around the village area much to the discomfort of the little buck "Smoky," which would bleat pitifully until the two larger fawns returned. This seemed to cause the larger fawns no small amount of concern for on two successive days they acted as teachers while Smoky was the apt pupil. At infrequent intervals during the course of two days they would jump from one side of the fence to the other as if to show Smoky just how it was done. Near the close of the second day of intense training Smoky surmounted the barrier with as much ease as his teachers.

At the present time the three fawns are a common sight as they wander from one enclosure to another and sniff noses with other fawns that have not yet been able to gain exit from their pens.

MOUNTAIN SHEEP OBSERVED ON CANYON RIM

The workmen constructing the observation station at Yavapai Point were recently treated to the unusual experience of seeing a large ram mountain sheep near the building.

Shortly after commencing work the ram was again sighted about thirty yards away. In order to obtain a picture of the sheep, several of the workmen tried to force him on a rock shelf below the rim. The ram evidently sensed their intention for he turned and faced his tormentors with lowered head and began pawing the earth. This caused the workmen to scatter and gave the mountain sheep an opportunity to descend into the canyon.

CROSSBILL WINTERS AT GRAND CANYON

By - Mrs. G. E. Sturdevant.

The little crossbill we have harbored since the early part of September is still with us.

The injured wing is mended but the feathers have not grown out as yet, and to make his plight more pitiful the little tail feathers have been dropping out one by one until that member has ceased to be.

Attempts to fly from the rung of a chair to some nearby object are rewarded by an awkward thud on the floor. Despite these discouraging experiences he still continues to practise the art of flying, or at least to exercise those members in preparation of the wonderful time to be when he can again wing his way through the air.

Since cold weather has set in our migratory pet seeks warmer climes. The southland of his choice is the living room where there exists a grass rocker made especially as he thinks for the grasping qualities of a bird's feet. Here he goes about his business of wing practise just as faithfully as if his life depended upon it (and it may at that). Nothing interrupts or interferes with this duty; for if a guest or a member of the household happens to occupy this coveted chair he must either leave it or put up with the daily dozens of the crossbill. Once in a while he ventures off to some Hopi or other Indian basket for wing practise but he invariably returns to his rocker where he can produce a light swinging motion by his antics more similar to that of swaying branches.

So far he has kept to his strict diet of pinon nuts and water, but last evening he decided the leaves on some artificial roses looked tempting so he proceeded to tear one off but the flavor evidently not being agreeable, he decided that his former diet was more satisfactory.

At present our greatest concern is what we shall do with our bird should he entirely recuperate before the summer months. An active flying bird would be Bedlam in the house and yet could a migratory bird stand the snows and freezing weather long enough to fly to some warmer haven? To cage a wild bird used to his freedom would be mad. We are hoping therefore that Mr. Crossbill will take his time about recovering in which case it will be more agreeable for all concerned.