

*Nature Notes*  
*of*  
*Grand Canyon*



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GRAND CANYON NATURE NOTES ----- No. 5  
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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. Tilletson, Superintendent. By - G. E. Sturdevant, Park Naturalist.

TAME DEER HERD STARTED AT GRAND CANYON

Who would not prefer a deer that eats from your hand, trails after you evincing unbounded joy at your companionship, and finally looks upon you as his big brother protector, to a pet cat or dog? Since the recent arrival of ten pet fawns - such is the opinion of several happy children living in Grand Canyon National Park.

Ordinary pets are denied the children living in our National Parks. Cats and dogs have been domesticated for untold generations but there still exists in the normal individual a desire for the flesh of his own kill. Knowledge of this innate tendency necessitated the rule barring dogs and cats from wild life sanctuaries. In a measure the lack of pets is offset by the increasing confidence placed in man by the furred and feathered creatures of our parks. A majority of the residents provide drinking and feeding places for birds, squirrels, and chipmunks. Especially during the winter, when hunger pangs seize them, is it a common sight to see the squirrels and birds return daily for their "hand-outs," taking food with diminishing fear from out-stretched hands. With the coming of spring, however, natural food becomes more plentiful, several species of birds migrate to their nesting places, and even the squirrels show less of an inclination to become wards of local residents. Distribution of fawns upon their arrival, especially among residents with children, has now adequately solved the problem of pets.

Deer of the Kaibab Plateau serve as a park attraction second only to the Grand Canyon itself. A desire to start a tame herd on the south rim of the Canyon led the Park Service to act upon the idea of transporting ten fawns to the opposite rim. Through a cooperative arrangement with the U.S. Forest Service, ten fawns were therefore captured in June, soon after birth, on the Kaibab Plateau. For a time their diet consisted solely of fresh cows' milk. Later, other food such as bran, cracked rye, and rolled oats, were added to their menu. The deer thrived and at last became large enough to partake of

a harder diet. After reaching this stage they were considered strong enough to make the trip to their new home on the south rim. Just how the journey was to be made was at first a problem. It was only eleven miles across the Canyon by air line, yet the nearest road required a journey of about 250 miles. The Fred Harvey Company volunteered their services and dispatched a truck around by Lee's Ferry to bring the ten fawns.

All of the fawns arrived in good condition. They were distributed among employees of the National Park Service, Fred Harvey Company, and Santa Fe R.R. Hasty enclosures were built by residents fortunate enough to receive one of these pets.

Two losses have thus far marred the experiment. Upon their arrival one of the larger fawns escaped from his pen and sought refuge in the oaks and buck brush near the Canyon rim. The smallest fawn of the lot died soon after his arrival. The only consolation to the losses is that both were bucks. The remaining eight members are all in splendid condition and apparently enjoy their new home quite as well as their old one. From this small nucleus it is hoped eventually that a tame herd will develop which will add to the joys of the nature-loving visitors.

#### CANYON HIKING.

In climbing a mountain both the experienced and inexperienced hikers generally turn back before they have reached the limit of their endurance. Ordinarily they are able to regain the bottom without assistance.

In descending into the depths of a vast canyon, however, one arrives at the bottom little realizing the arduous labor necessary to retrace his steps to the canyon rim, and often finds himself exhausted before accomplishing his feat. Such is the status in which the Grand Canyon hiker often finds himself. During the past season a German, who had climbed the Alps, visited the park and made the trip to the river and back. On his return to the rim he stated that the hike to the river and return was the most difficult he had ever attempted.

That fact that canyon climbing is the reverse of mountain climbing, except that it is more difficult, is often unheeded by the ambitious pedestrian. Several important factors should discourage the inexperienced hiker from undertaking a venture that would over-tax his strength. The descent is made

while one is fresh but the difficult ever-upward return part of the journey comes when one is tired. Little does one realize how sore and stiff seven-sleep-jolting-downward miles can make his muscles before his strenuous journey upward. The more rapid the descent, the harder the jolts, and therefore the greater the stiffness.

Another factor to be considered is altitude. In going from a high to a low altitude breathing becomes easier and one is enabled to reach the bottom with apparent ease. In doubling back on his tracks, however, the reverse is true. Breathing becomes more difficult, heart action is more pronounced, and one tires more quickly as the canyon rim is neared.

Other important factors closely associated with altitude, are heat and water. The bottom of the Grand Canyon is from twenty to thirty degrees warmer than the temperature of the rim. Profuse perspiration follows physical activity. The mouth is unconsciously opened as the spent hiker gasps for air at the higher elevations. The throat and tongue become parched which results in a never-ending desire for water. An excess amount of water often proves detrimental to the hiker.

Failure to understand his own physical condition, over-confidence, and a lack of knowledge of factors, so important in canyon hiking, often results in a person sending in a call for a mule and special guide to assist him in his predicament. Such service is termed a "drag-out." During the summer there is an average of about one drag-out per day. Perhaps most of those who fail to make the round-trip without assistance agree with an elderly gentleman who had descended nearly a mile in going the seven miles to the river. While being assisted out he remarked, "I believe it is seven miles to the river but it is at least seventy-seven miles back."

#### PET FAWNS INTRODUCES TO SNOW AND RAIN

Most forms of wild life probably realize that conditions do not remain irrevocably unchangeable throughout their lives. Seasons change and numerous incidents are undoubtedly registered on their small brains. Unquestionably these events appear on a much lesser magnitude of scale where several members of the same species are associated together or where the maternal parent calmly introduces the young to the wondrous aspects of seasonal changes peculiar to their environment. But isolate a single young of some species and he will at first view each change of weather as if it were some monstrous beast about to destroy him. Particularly has this been observed among the pet fawns within the Grand Canyon National Park.

The first snow of the season fell on the Kaibab Plateau at daylight on October 28th. In the absence of Ranger Brown, Assistant Chief Park Ranger Winess has become the adopted protector of "Pal," the fawn deer. When excited in any manner he seeks safety by gaining close contact with the Assistant Chief Ranger. Winess was the sole slumberer in the Bright Angel Ranger Station when snow commenced falling. A sudden banging at the door rudely awakened him. Peering out of the open window, he saw Pal panting from fright at his first snowstorm. Winess opened the door and the deer bounded in. Pal rested his head on the bed and chewed his cud complacently while Winess returned to his interrupted slumber.

After breakfast Pal was taken for a walk in the snow. Winess states that at first Pal walked as though he were stepping on eggs but he soon enjoyed the snow when he discovered it was not going to harm him.

Again an interesting reaction to a change of weather was noted in the case of one of the fawns brought to the south rim. "Lady" appeared contented in her small enclosure in spite of isolation from the remaining nine members who accompanied her to this side. A heavy downpour of rain visited this region a few days ago and Lady made frantic efforts to escape from her supposed enemy. A dish of warm oatmeal accompanied by a few gentle pats and kind words seemed to instill in her young brain the idea that a storm is not a dreaded foe, calling for a sudden burst of speed to carry her to a region of safety.

#### A CANYON CULPRIT

What use has a trade rat for spectacles? Has he followed the example set by human beings of straining his eyes to such an extent that he is now in need of glasses to repair his dimming vision? These are perhaps the foremost questions in the mind of the architect for the Observation Station at Yavapai Point since spending a night in the Grand Canyon at the Pipe Creek cabin.

He retired to his cot on the porch after having placed his effects within easy reach. Thoughts of his contemplated peaceful repose, however, were soon disturbed by a bumping noise on the floor. He raised up on his elbow in time to see a trade rat trudging across the floor with a potato and disappear beneath the house. All of the food was locked in the house and again the architect retired. A few minutes later he heard a noise by the side of his cot. This time it was plain that the trade rat did not desire food for he was hurriedly bearing the architect's spectacles across the floor. A loud yell caused the perpetrator to drop them and again seek safety under the cabin.

Two attempts at thievery were enough to convince the architect that it is best to retire behind locked doors even in an apparently un-inhabited side canyon, if one cares to enjoy a good night's rest.