

716 *Peregrines nesting in Alamo*

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS

WILD LIFE DIVISION

328 HILGARD HALL, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

April 18, 1934

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WLD neg. #15

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Director:

Re: Wild Life of Bandelier
National Monument, New Mexico

March 27 and 28 were spent in Bandelier National Monument. The twenty-eighth. Custodian M. O. Evenstedt, Lyle Bennett and I hiked over the mesa portion of the monument from Frijoles Canyon to Alamo Canyon, for several miles along the rim of Alamo and back to Frijoles, gaining thereby a cross section view of conditions in the plateau portion of the monument.

Characteristic vegetation of the area is (see Figs.) a ponderosa pine forest with an under-story of juniper (spp.) and occidentalis Cowania, Quercus of various species, Cercocarpus, Amelanchier, Salix of various species, numerous Cacti and a dense stand of Mountain Muhlenbergia -- a tall variety of coarse bunch grass of little forage value -- and the more palatable gama grass.

Overgrazing

Cattle and horse tracks are common in the forest and the browse shows heavy grazing a few years ago with some recovery since. Because of the small area of the monument, entirely surrounded by national forest and private grants wherein cattle, sheep, and horses are constantly grazed, the monument is left without any protection from trespass stock. Southwest of Alamo Canyon whence we were unable to go, is the area most critically over-grazed, according to the report of the hotel proprietor who has been in the region for many years.

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Range of the area is valuable and none too abundant as cover and forage for the native life of the monument. It is therefore recommended that a four or five wire cattle-proof fence be constructed along the west and south boundaries of the monument to exclude trespass cattle and horses and to permit deer and other native animals of the monument free movement in and out. The bottom wire should not be barbed and should be on an average of twenty-four inches from the ground. Such protective measure would also save the

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countless prehistoric ruins which dot the mesa top from being further trampled by domestic stock.

Because of the relatively small size of the monument, its wild life is largely dependent upon absolute protection within the monument and upon conditions surrounding the monument. Wild life of the forest, however, is sufficiently varied, numerous and interesting to add greatly to the enjoyment of one hiking or riding through it.

Three deer, Odocoileus hemionus macrotis were flushed from one of the forest glades as we came quietly over the pine needles.

Few porcupine scars were seen. Porcupine have been poisoned at various times in the past and are now rare.

Few coyote tracks were seen, but coyotes are normally abundant in the area.

The status of cougars is doubtful, but it is improbable that this small monument can adequately protect this animal which is constantly hunted in the surrounding region.

There is no running water in Alamo Canyon and no evidence of former beaver workings. It is, therefore, doubtful whether the beavers of the Rio Grande penetrate these side canyons except as transients.

Feathers of wild turkey were found which indicate the presence of the Merriam turkey within the monument; and numerous reports of the laborers and workmen tell of flocks of wild turkeys seen from time to time along the entrance highway.

A pair of duck hawks was found nesting in the cliff of Alamo Canyon.

Birds of the forest are numerous.

Because of previous and more detailed reports from this office on the wild life of Bandelier, it is thought that these brief observations will be of value as additional data.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben H. Thompson

cc Custodian M. O. Evanstead



Figure 1.

Characteristic view across mesa top.
(W.L.D. Neg. No. 3755)

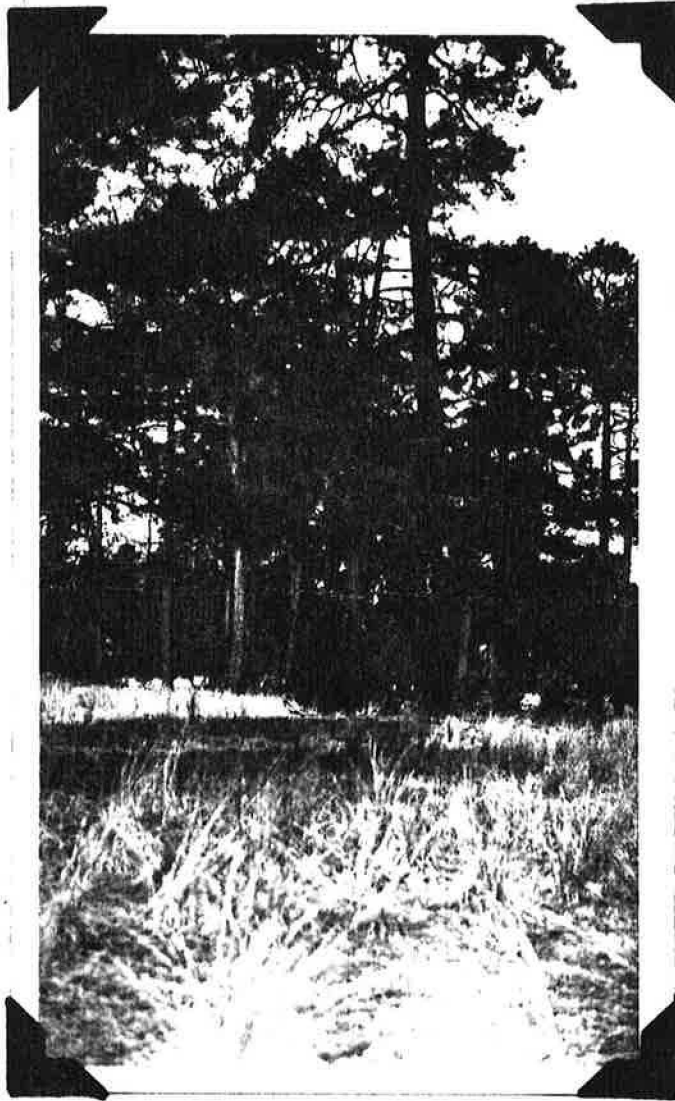


Figure 2.

Mountain Muhlenbergia, a poor forage grass,
with a mat of grama grass intermixed. This
is the Merriam turkey habitat. (W.L.D. Neg.
No. 3756)



Figure 3.

Mountain Muhlenbergia, a poor forage grass, with a mat of grama grass intermixed. This is the Merriam turkey habitat. (W.L.D. Neg. No. 3757)



Figure 4.

Ponderosa pine reproduction along the rim of Los Alamos Canyon. This forest is an ideal place for the natural presentation of wild life along the trails. (W.L.D. Neg. No. 3758)

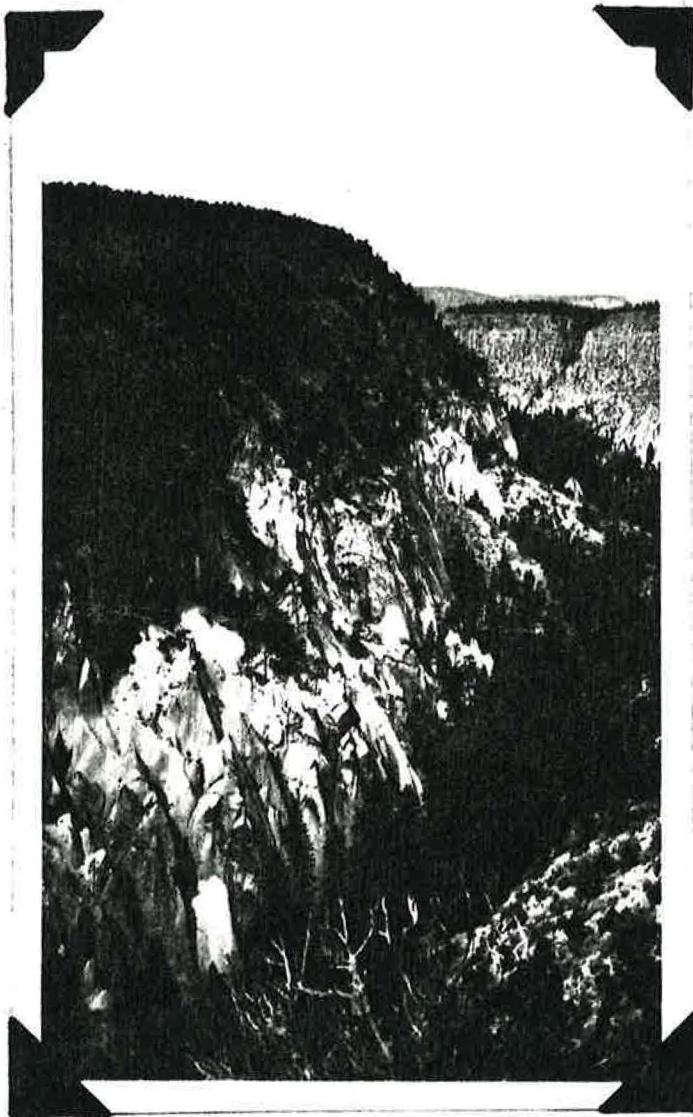


Figure 5.

Los Alamos Canyon, where the duck hawks (Falco peregrinus anatum) were nesting. Note the dense stand of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine in the bottom of the canyon. (W.L.D. Neg. No. 3759)

(Actually
Alamos
Canyon)

cf. Text.
Note faint
rocks.