

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Olympic NATIONAL PARK

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*Biological Reports by Coleman Newman*

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OBSERVATION ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE CONDITIONS  
in  
CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT  
1955

by  
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Park Biologist

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK  
Port Angeles, Wash.

July 7, 1955

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Craters of the Moon National Monument

From: Biologist, Olympic

Subject: Observations on Wildlife and Wildlife Conditions in  
Craters of the Moon National Monument

I arrived in the Monument in the afternoon of June 13 and left early June 16 for Crater Lake.

All but a few hours of this two and one-half days were spent in the field actually checking on wildlife. Of primary interest was the deer and much evidence of them was found throughout the Monument. They seem to range everywhere except on the barren lava flows, and no doubt these flows are sometimes crossed without hesitation.

Three young fawns were located, two in an aspen thicket in the sedimentary section that was not effected by the volcanic action and one near the south boundary on a cinder cone. Even though permanent water was not found south of the highway, it must be there or otherwise the high deer population for this section would not be possible. Sage brush and buck brush seems to be the most common food plants. A willow thicket was noted to have been highlined, probably during the winter. Most of the aspen groves were severely damaged by a fire that came into the north end of the Monument several years ago. It was also noted that the sheepherders were very respectful of the Monument boundary and apparently never trespass. The superintendent should be commended for this fine attitude of cooperation.

There is evidence that deer migrate during the winter from the sedimentary mountain areas south through the Monument, and many appear to spend the winter in the sage brush flats and broken lava flows. Suitable ranges outside the Monument also have a high population of deer each winter as they move out of the mountains to avoid the deep snows.

It is certain that each year several deer are killed by automobiles along the highway at the western edge of the north flow.

Apparently, the deer follow the edge of this flow in their north-south movement pattern. The remains of four kills were found at this point on the highway on June 15.

Well defined deer trails were found on many of the cinder cones. Some of these trails are used frequently by the resident animals but the majority have been deeply cut by the seasonal migrations.

Very little work on the mammals of the Monument has been undertaken. Actually the only published report located was by Dr. Earl J. Larrison, Assistant Professor of Zoology, University of Idaho. Dr. Larrison studied the small mammals during the summer of 1949, 1950 and 1951. He found a high population of small rodents in 1951.

The Monument is extremely interesting, biologically. I am sure a bulletin written on the wildlife of the area would be of much interest to the average visitor. Some research into just what wildlife frequented the area in pioneer days would be of value to the Park Service and should be of interest to the visiting public.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A wildlife survey as to range, frequency of occurrence, food plants and migration traits should be prepared and presented in booklet form as information to the public.
2. Basic information for a publication of this type could probably be obtained over a period of two or three months. At least a portion of the field work should be done during a period when the deer are migrating.
3. Information on the plants of this unique area would also be of interest and value to the public.
4. A survey of the watering places should be tied in with the wildlife investigations. Whether additional wildlife investigations are made or not, the present permanent watering sites should be determined. No doubt permanent water is now less plentiful than in years past.

Coleman C. Newman  
Biologist

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Four (2 copies) ✓

PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENT  
to  
OBSERVATION ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE CONDITIONS  
in  
CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT  
1955



The monument is composed of about 48,000 acres that contain numerous features of former volcanic activity. Evidence of a fair size deer population is found throughout most of these volcanic features.



The west side of the North Flow terminates in a sage brush-buck brush flat. Sedimentary ridges in the background support numerous deer during the summer.



The "Devil's Orchard" area is very popular with the visiting public. Deer are frequently seen at this site.



Looking east from Crescent Butte across a sagebrush flat  
broken with an occasional lava flow.



Looking south from the flat west of Crescent Butte thru  
a scattered timber pine forest.



While in the monument three young mule deer fawns were found. One was in the southern portion on Crescent Butte, and the other two (twins) were in an aspen grove on the slope of the sedimentary hills.



Well worn deer trails are present on several of the Cones. These trails receive much use as the deer move into and thru the monument in the spring and fall migration.



Usually the north and west sides of the Cinder Cones are timbered. Timber pine is the most common tree. Six large mule deer bucks, in velvet, were observed on this timbered slope on June 14.



A willow thicket in the flat near the water supply that has been high-lined by deer.



A Cinder field dotted with one of the buckwheats.



A conspicuous deer trail through a Cinder.