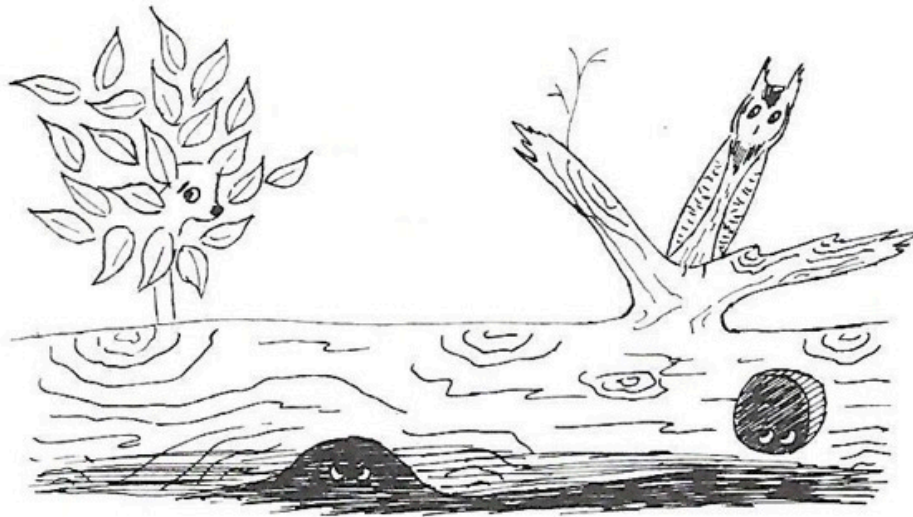


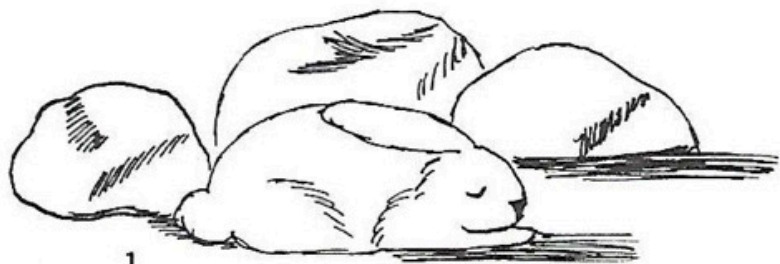
**“... But We Didn’t  
See  
Any  
Animals . . .”**



A common disappointment of park visitors! But the animals are really there. Seeing them is more than being in the right place at the right time. Here are some sight and sound suggestions that will help you. It *is* a disappointment to miss them and the chance to find out something about them. This pamphlet discusses many of the animals you can see on your trip through the Southwest. Read through it before you leave and use these suggestions to awaken your senses to the stir of a leaf and the story of an overturned agave.

Generally, wildlife is more active from evening's onset into the early morning hours. But be alert at all times! And while you're looking for the animals, recognize the clues along the way that tell you something about their habits.

Most animals blend in well with their surroundings — your eyes may not readily pick them out. Your first hint at their presence may be the clatter of falling rocks or the rustle of leaves in their paths as they travel. Learn to orient your attention automatically to animal sounds, or you may miss them.







You could easily step on this harmless camouflage artist. The "HORNED TOAD's" eyes and spines may be barely visible as he lies partially buried and motionless. This lizard is easily injured. When excited or angry, capillaries near the corners of its eye sockets may rupture or

bleed. It will not survive long in captivity as it must live near enormous supplies of live ants.

The ability to see is one of our best developed senses. Our other senses are usually at work too, amplifying our perception of the environment around us. When your sense of smell is masked by a cold, your food has little taste. If you cover your ears as a train passes, does it seem the same? When there is a breeze, you feel it and see its motion. But do you also hear it?

Stand close to a big Ponderosa pine...it will be tall, with 3"-6" needles in bunches of two or three. Do you smell something vaguely familiar? Vanilla? Butterscotch? Step closer and sniff the bark. As you move on, you may be able to tell just by the fragrance that you are near other Ponderosas.

When you touch a rock, its warmth or coolness tells a story about the warmth of the sun, or the shadows in the canyon where it lies. Does the feel of a smooth rock in a streambed compared to a rough one on a hillside testify to the power of the water that caused the difference?

Sharpen your senses as you travel through the area. Make all of them work to give you the total picture. Your world would never be the same if you could no longer see it. It will never be the same again once you learn to experience it with all of your other senses.



**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO APPROACH  
OR FEED WILD ANIMALS.**

**THEY CAN INFLICT WOUNDS AND OFTEN CARRY DISEASES.  
HUMAN FOOD IS NOT SUITABLE FOR THEM, AS THEY HAVE A  
SPECIFIC DIET JUST AS WE DO.**

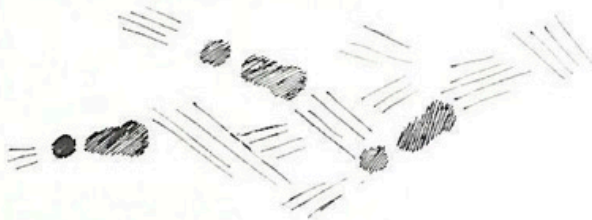


It's very quiet where you've stopped to rest. Nothing here! But suddenly you're aware of something crunching, something gnawing. Look up—into the branches of nearby trees. Is there a rather shapeless, bushy object? Maybe now it's starting to move further up the tree, slowly, carefully. Listen for the sound of claws grasping bark—it could be your clue to this animal's presence.



Can you see the prominent orange teeth? They easily strip bark (the PORCUPINE'S basic winter diet) from a tree, which often kills it. Look for scars on the trees you pass. Look too for small sections of pine branches on the ground, with the needles chewed off close to the base. They were probably tossed to the ground by a porcupine, and if he remembered them he later feasted on these needles. If he forgot, as often happens, a passing deer or elk took advantage of the handy snack.

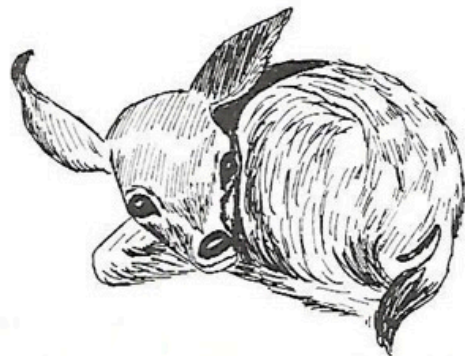
Numerous pellet-shaped droppings surround a porcupine's den in rocks or a small cave. Its home is often quite some distance from the tree you find it in.



This large rodent's tracks may show brush marks of its dragging quilled tail.

**YOUNG ANIMALS ARE SELDOM ABANDONED. A PROTECTIVE AND OFTEN DANGEROUS PARENT IS USUALLY NEARBY.**

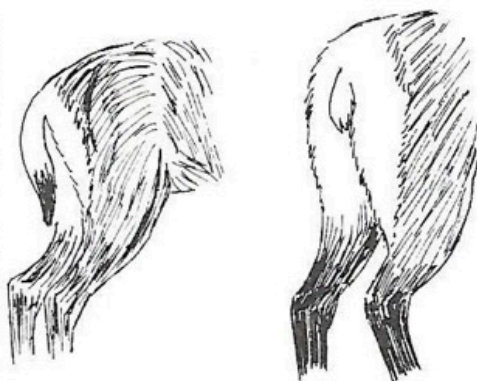
**DO NOT DISTURB DENS AND OTHER ANIMAL HOMES, OR REMOVE BIRD NESTS.**





A short, loud, unmistakably “animal” sound rings through the air. You stop...silence. Then again—sharp and clear, and incredibly loud for what it is. A MULE DEER sounding the alarm that you are approaching, with a quick and powerful expulsion of air through its nostrils. The sound carries a long way, and you may now hear the clamor of escape as other deer in the area flee from the enemy, real or imagined, that they have not yet even seen. Now you may catch sight of their movement, probably in an uphill direction if you are in a canyon. Watch carefully when one or two deer begin to move quickly—a whole hillside may come alive!

With practice, you will learn to easily see the white rump patches of many animals (deer, elk, antelope, and the white tail of a cottontail rabbit) which stand out against their background. They are thought to aid the animals in seeing and following each other.



Deer are surprisingly vocal, and if you think you hear a goat or sheep bleating, look for a distressed doe or buck, perhaps frightened by an eagle overhead. The early morning or evening sound of “mewing”, much like that of a kitten, will mean that a fawn is near.

Mule Deer (adult)  2"-4" long

Mule Deer (fawn)  1"-2" long

In the heat of a summer day, deer as well as many other animals move into the cool canyons, or rest in the shade of a boulder or tree. Look for areas of trampled, flattened grass. In winter, they may stay at lower elevations, where living conditions are generally milder.

**BECAUSE IT IS SCARCE IN THE DESERT, A WATER SOURCE IS A GOOD PLACE TO WATCH FOR WILDLIFE.**

Of course, the sound of falling rocks or movement in leaves can mean a herd of large animals is on the move—but be ready for other possibilities. The amount of noise a busy squirrel or lizard can make in loose rocks or dry leaves will continually amaze you!



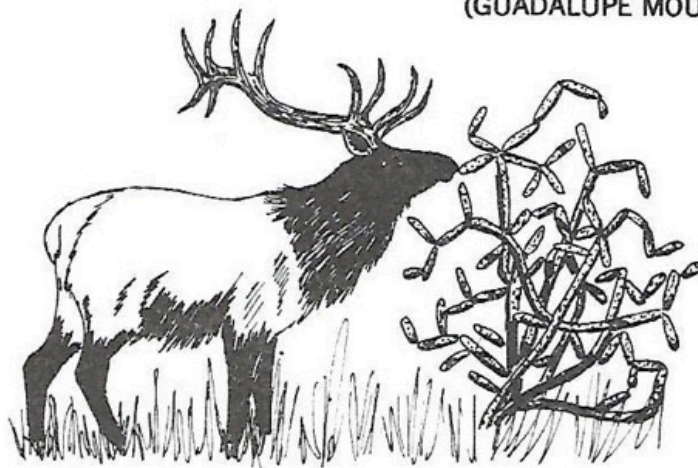
It is hardly possible to duplicate the sound of a bugling bull ELK on paper. But if you hear it echoing through the crisp air of autumn, you will not mistake it. Heard often during the "rut" or mating season, this eerie whistling call is as much a part of fall in the Guadalupe Mountains as the autumn display turning the canyons into ribbons of color. In the fall, the bulls are massive and in prime condition, necks enlarged and antlers fully grown. They are aggressive, challenging; taken to "mock battling" with trees. Check trees for scrape marks on the trunk, limbs broken off and scattered. That thrashing you hear may be a bull engaged in this "warm up" activity. This display may be unnerving, but he will usually flee at your approach. Around water, check for tracks and signs that this large animal has wallowed in the mud.



4"-5"

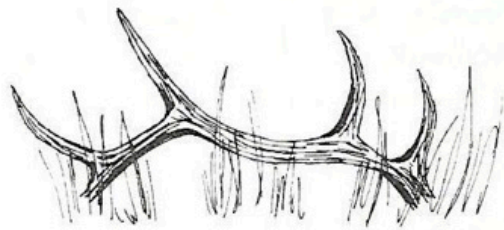
Watch for elk on shrubby hillsides where mountain grasses grow. They may be resting, with just their dark heads visible above the grass. Another favorite habitat is open meadows. In the fall, elk eat acorns. Look among the oaks. In winter, you may find elk among cholla cactus, feeding on the yellow fruit. On an early summer morning, a sharp "Crack!" may tell you that elk are feeding nearby. Look for an agave stalk swaying on the hillside—an elk may be bending it back and forth until it snaps, bringing the sweet flower buds into reach. Check for missing buds on broken stalks.

(GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS)

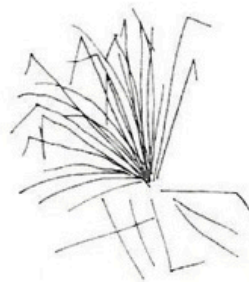
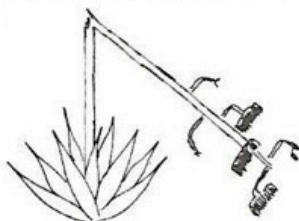
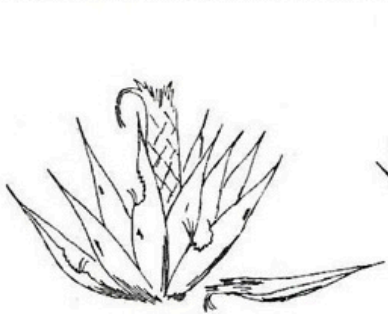


Was that a dog yelping? It came from over there, but what you see is...a cow elk! Yes, it's her, and you may suddenly find yourself the center of attention as heads raise quickly from feeding and all ears and eyes are upon you. Much as the mule deer signals your presence with an instantly heeded snort, the elk is issuing a warning to all. Deer and elk react to each other's alarms—you could seldom sneak up on an elk when a deer is watching you!





The animals in the area use hiking trails as well as trails of their own. Watch for **TRACKS** and other signs that they have traveled the route you follow. You may find the **ANTLERS** that a deer or elk has shed late in winter in preparation for growing new ones in the spring. Are the tips of the antlers smooth and sharp, or splintered and chewed? It doesn't take long for skunks, squirrels and other small mammals to find this excellent source of calcium and other minerals essential for their diet. And it is not unusual for a deer to gnaw on an antler as contentedly as your dog enjoying his favorite bone! Leave the antlers where you find them—they will contribute much more where they are.



In the spring, the **AGAVES** send up tall stalks to bear the fruit of their one-time reproduction effort. But what about this one by the trail that has been chewed off just above the spiny leaves? Apparently a delicacy, many of the young agave shoots never finish their journey skyward, but serve a purpose of plants...nourishing a passing deer or elk. You may find an entire agave uprooted—evidence of a root-munching pocket gopher below. Even the leaves of this imposing plant will sometimes show the scars of teeth—small and large, or have neatly shaped mouthfuls entirely removed. Many seemingly inedible plants offer nourishment to the animals equipped to eat and digest them. Watch for signs that even the spiny prickly pear has been fed upon.

Animal droppings will often indicate what is being eaten. When berries and the fruit of various cacti are ripe, droppings, or "scats", may have a purple tinge and be full of seeds.



In the canyons, twigs and branches may catch against a fallen tree, where they pile up and eventually become the home of a SKUNK. Pay special attention to these places! Have you found evidence of digging along the trail? Much of it is attributable to a skunk's search for insects and grubs. All animals have a scent. Predators use this when hunting and you may learn to recognize many also. That skunk you smell may actually be a collared peccary's musk gland emitting a skunk-like odor.

Skunk



1"-1¾"

Claw marks  
may show



2"-2½"

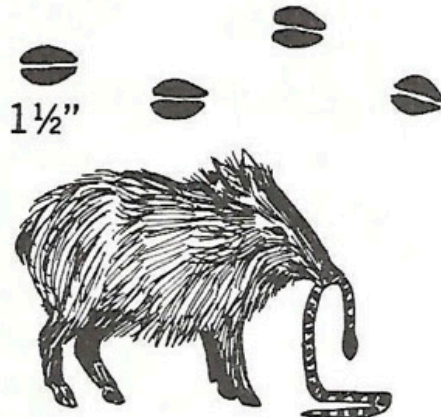
Fox claw  
marks show  
(unlike cat)

Hair snagged on a branch at the entrance to a hollow indicates that a FOX or other small mammal has found shelter there. Look for fox signs in dense, brushy areas where this animal is able to hide from enemies, rather than run long distances to escape.



If COLLARED PECCARIES live in the area you are visiting, check the tracks closely around a digging site. A hole dug in search of insects, roots, or nests of mice and rats could be traced

P  
e  
c  
c  
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y



to the peccary. A large shallow hole rooted in the earth in a shady canyon could be its mid-day resting place. The ability to eat all types of food helps the peccary survive in its seemingly harsh habitat. However, if it approaches you, you needn't worry—the animal just does not see well and is trying to get a better look!

USE WIND TO YOUR ADVANTAGE IN ANIMAL WATCHING. IT CAN COVER YOUR SOUNDS AND CARRY AWAY YOUR SCENT.

MANY ANIMALS DO NOT READILY SEE STATIONARY OBJECTS. IF AN ANIMAL SEES YOU, BE STILL—IT MAY CONVINCE ITSELF THAT YOU ARE NOT THERE!

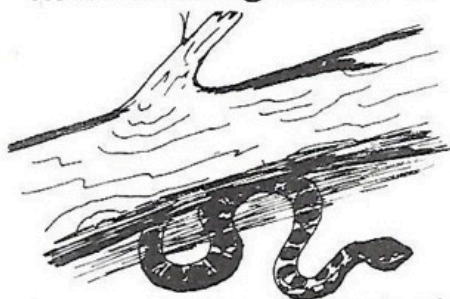




It is unusual to see a BOBCAT, MOUNTAIN LION, or BLACK BEAR in the Southwest. Evasive and wary, they skillfully avoid humans. The bobcat is the most commonly seen of the three, but don't expect more than a glimpse of a surprised cat that will be more careful next time!

Should you come across a dead deer or other animal (your nose may help you here!) careful examination of the carcass as well as the ground around it may reveal that one or more of these predators has caused its demise. In some cases, particularly in snow, you may find enough tracks, blood and other signs to reconstruct an actual attack. Predators (animals which kill and feed on other animals) help to maintain healthy and balanced populations of the animals on which they prey.

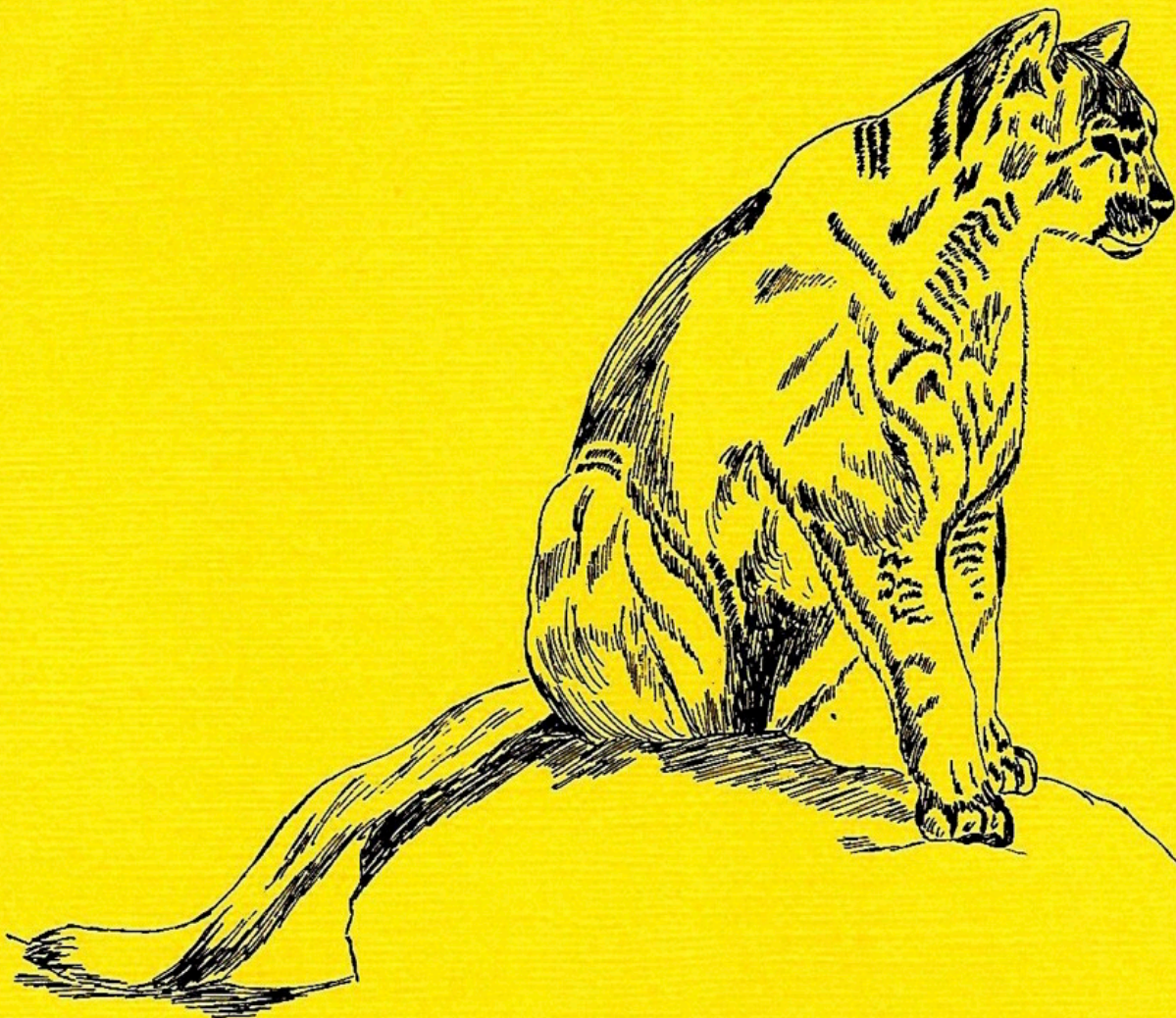
Many predators are also carrion eaters, feeding on the carcasses of animals they did not kill. This "cleans up" dead animals and speeds the process of scattering and breaking down the remains, and recycling them into the soil. During the summer, a group of TURKEY VULTURES circling overhead or perched together in a tree could lead you to a carcass where interesting tracks may be found. Do not be surprised to find a skunk or even an eagle or hawk feeding on the carcass.



Snakes are predators, and along with owls and hawks control the number of small rodents. Be careful near logs and rocky areas where RATTLESNAKES may be resting during the heat of a summer day. During cooler weather, you may encounter them stretched out in the sun, often right on the trail. Like other creatures, given a chance to avoid you, they will. Remember that all animals, including rattlesnakes, are a vital part of the environment.



NIGHTWATCH! WHILE DRIVING THROUGH THEIR HOME AT NIGHT, BE ALERT FOR ANIMALS CROSSING YOUR PATH.



HAVE A SAFE AND MEANINGFUL VISIT. BE CONSIDERATE OF THE CREATURES WHO SHARE THEIR HOME WITH YOU. DON'T MAKE A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AN UNPLEASANT ONE FOR THEM.

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