

Canyon trek

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"My idea is that this bird did become extinct everywhere in the inland states at the close of the Pleistocene, when most large mammals died out," he says.

"But I think it was able to survive by having a subspecies that lived along the coast of California and Oregon, that fed on coastal carcasses and, therefore, wasn't quite as affected as inland birds were by the extinctions of large mammals. They depended on a different food source, and survived the extinctions."

Other New Answers

If the species problem is settled by the skull found in Stevens Cave, a host of other questions may be answered by the condor remains found in another cave, dubbed Sand Blast Cave.

In this cave, one of four in which the team did extensive excavation instead of simply collecting what was found on the surface, the scientists dug up the remains of at least five condors.

Some of the wing and leg bones

were still connected, indicating that the birds died in the cave. Nearby, Emslie and the Meads found large feather fragments and thick pieces of eggshell.

"I think this was a Pleistocene nesting cave for condors, probably the first that's ever been excavated or recorded for its fossils," Emslie says. "Condor bones have been found in caves before, but never has there been a site with feathers and eggshell fragments."

The team also found bones of large mammals in Sand Blast Cave, perhaps the remains of food the condors scavenged from carcasses outside and brought into the cave.

For Jim Mead, whose doctoral dissertation dealt with an extinct species of mountain goat known only in the Grand Canyon, the caves invariably produced bones and skulls of the goat, enabling him to collect several new specimens and considerable new evidence about the behavior of the extinct goat.

For both Emslie and the Meads, the physical difficulties of the expedition, including climbs of 150

feet up sheer cliffs, were worth living through, given the scientific results.

Hard, Long Days

"Some of the caves were really hard to get into," Emslie admits. "We had to backpack quite a way up to get above the sharp Redwall, then climb down or across ledges to get into the caves. So we had to carry all the climbing equipment, plus food and camping gear and Emilee's cameras, just to get up there in order to be ready to go."

"Once we got up to the cave site, it would take a couple of hours to get into the cave, set up the ropes, get us secure and protect us from falling."

Several times, Emslie acknowledges, Coats managed to find a way to reach caves he thought unreachable; one such climb took Coats six hours. Once the climbers reached a cave, they would lower ropes to assist the scientists.

After the expedition, Emslie made a helicopter trip over other parts of the canyon, seeing additional cave sites.

"I'm convinced that's the only way to go now," he says wryly.

Apollo cook takes top prize at Pa. Vegetable Recipe Contest

ROCK SPRINGS — An Apollo woman won first prize at the 5th annual Pennsylvania Vegetable Recipe Contest, held recently at Penn State's Ag Progress Days. Sandra Nocivelli took first place for her Summertime Pasta, a combination of broccoli, tomatoes, zucchini, green onions and pasta that can be served hot or cold.

Nocivelli created the recipe this summer, trying it out on friends before entering it in the contest. She received a check for \$100 from the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, one of the sponsors of the event. The other sponsors are the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and Penn State.

Second prize, a check for \$50, went to Nancy Messinger of State College for her Pennsylvania Mushroom and Spinach Soup. A

graduate student in horticulture at Penn State, she was entering her first cooking contest. She got the initial idea from a friend and developed the combination of mushrooms, spinach, chicken bullion and cooking sherry.

Third prize of \$25, went to Leslie Rush of Gulph Mills for her Cream of Summertime Soup, a chilled cucumber soup. Fourth prize, also \$25, went to Kathryn Haney, Valencia, for a casserole she calls Colonial Zucchini Bake. It features zucchini, tomato and cheese layers in a cornbread base.

More than one hundred and fifty recipes were entered in this year's contest, which was open to all Pennsylvania residents with non-professional food status. Twelve finalists were invited to bring their prepared dishes to Rock Springs for the final judging.

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