

Речкалова Юлия Викторовна  
Тюменский государственный университет  
Институт наук о Земле  
Студент бакалавриата  
Группа 35Г143  
rechkalova-96@mail.ru

Фомина Елена Васильевна  
Тюменский государственный университет  
Институт математики и компьютерных наук  
Кафедра иностранных языков и межкультурной профессиональной  
коммуникации естественнонаучных направлений  
Доцент  
fev283@mail.ru

**ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ И ПРИРОДНЫЕ РЕСУРСЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО  
ПАРКА «ДОЛИНА СМЕРТИ»  
HISTORICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE NATIONAL PARK  
"THE DEATH VALLEY"**

*АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье рассматривается история происхождения названия парка. Описаны растительный и животный мир, климатические условия. Выделены и проанализированы экологические проблемы, как результат хозяйственной деятельности человека.*

*ABSTRACT. The paper discusses the history of the park as well as its original name. The flora and fauna, and climatic conditions are described. Environmental problems as a result of human activities are identified and analyzed.*

*КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: национальный парк, пустыня, уникальный ландшафт.*

*KEY WORDS: national park, desert, unique landscape.*

Death Valley National Park comprises more than 3.3 million acres of spectacular desert scenery, rare desert wildlife, complex geology, undisturbed wilderness and sites of historical interest. Death Valley National Park is a United States National Park located east of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, in California, and extending into Nevada. Covering some 5,270 square miles (13,650 square km—over 3.4 million acres), it is the largest national park in the country. It is unique in its depth, with portions of the valley floor being the lowest land area in the Western Hemisphere. It is the hottest and driest of the national parks in the United States.

The history of Death Valley National Park is very amazing. In December 1849, two groups of California Gold Country-bound pioneers with perhaps 100 wagons survived a difficult trek into Death Valley after getting lost on what they thought was a shortcut off the Old Spanish Trail. Known as the Bennett-Arcane Party, they were unable to find a pass out of the Valley for weeks and were forced to slaughter several of their oxen to survive, but were able to find fresh water at the various springs in the area. They used the wood of their wagons to cook the meat and make jerky. The locations of this event are today referred to as «Burned Wagons Camp» and are located near the sand dunes. After abandoning their wagons, the group was eventually able to hike out of the Valley through the rugged Wingate Pass. Just after leaving the Valley, one of the women in the group looked back for a final time and said, "Goodbye, Death Valley," a name that has survived to this day. But they left behind a "cheerful" place name: Death Valley, Funeral Range, Ridge Last Chance Canyon Coffin, Dead Man's passage, Hell Gate, canyon Rattlesnake and others. This place is probably due to its difficult to pass, some joker called the Devil's Golf Club (Devil's Golf Course). The name stuck other names are also used by the devil: "Hell golf" or "Devil's corn." Have been created and spread the legend of a poisoned water source of toxic fumes, poisonous mosquitoes and so on. In fact, the place is in the natural and historically remarkable.

Various mining operations used the valley afterwards, most notably for borax mining. When mining prospects went sour, the Pacific Coast Borax Company lobbied for federal protection of Death Valley, in order to develop tourism. President Hoover

declared about two million acres of the area a national monument in 1933. In 1994 the monument was expanded by 1.3 million acres and declared a national park.

The park includes the Valley of Salina, a large part of Panamint Valley, as well as the territories of several mountain ranges. To the west rises the mountain peak Telescope - Telescope Peak, in the east - Mountain View Dante - Dante's View, a height which offers a beautiful view of the entire valley. There are many scenic spots, especially on the slopes adjacent to the desert plain: the extinct volcano Beebe Canyon Titus depth.

300 m and a length of 20 km; small lake with very salty water, which is home to small shrimp; Desert 22 species of unique plants, 17 species of lizards and 20 species of snakes. The park has a unique landscape. This is an unusual wildlife, beautiful scenery, exquisite rock formations, snow-capped mountain peaks, scorching plateau salty, shallow canyons, hills, covers millions of delicate flowers.



Animal life is varied, and numerous species of reptiles, birds and mammals populate Death Valley, adapting well to the desert environment. However, many of these animals have a nocturnal lifestyle in order to escape the searing climate and can

be difficult to spot. The largest native mammal in the area, and perhaps the best studied member of the fauna, is the desert bighorn sheep. Small herds of sheep are most commonly found in the mountains surrounding Death Valley but at least occasionally visit the valley floor. Look for these animals near the springs and seeps that can be found throughout the park. Over 350 species of birds are now known to inhabit or visit the area. And even native fish are to be found in Death Valley - several forms of desert pupfish of the genus *Cyprinodont* live in Salt Creek and other permanent bodies of water.

Death Valley is one of the hottest places in the world, and holds the record for the highest temperature ever recorded. Air temperatures over 120 °F (49 °C) are common during the summer months of June, July, August and September. Death Valley claimed the world record in 2012, after the 136 °F (58 °C) temperature taken in Libya in 1922 was de-certified by the World Meteorological Organization. Fortunately, temperatures from November through March are mild with highs averaging in the 60s and 70s (15-25) with winter nighttime lows usually in the 40s (5-10). This makes the winter and early spring the best seasons to visit.

For many years, National Parks have been increasingly feeling the effects of external factors caused by natural and human activities. Even the most isolated places on earth are being affected. Death Valley, even though it is more than 120 miles from the nearest major city, is no exception:

Firstly, plants imported from elsewhere in the world now flourish in Death Valley National Park—sometimes at the expense of native species. The salt cedar tree, for instance, is a source of intense frustration for environmentalists; it is replacing the native cottonwood and willow trees around springs and disrupting ecosystems. The giant cane is a perennial plant that crowds out native vegetation near rivers and springs. Biologists are currently developing plans to control invasive species such as these, while restoring native populations of plants.

Secondly, you might think that the remote location of Death Valley National Park would help keep its air pure and pristine. However, winds bring pollutants from metropolitan centers, industrial areas, and transportation corridors to the West. Sulfur

dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emitted by power plants and cars in Los Angeles reacts with other molecules in Death Valley to form sulfates and nitrates, which result in acid rain.

Thirdly, although Death Valley's skies are fairly dark compared to skies in more populated areas of the United States, they are still affected by noticeable glows from Las Vegas and the central valley. The National Park Service obviously has limited influence over the neon glows from Las Vegas; however, it is trying to reduce the amount of local light pollution from within the park by encouraging the use of outdoor light fixtures that direct light to the ground rather than sideways or upwards. There is also a strategy in place to eliminate outdoor lighting wherever possible. A plan to adopt these measures is currently being developed for Death Valley National Park. Collecting data on the current state and general trends of nighttime visibility is also important to solving the problem of light pollution. As a result, night sky conditions are monitored at the park annually by a team of scientists.

Fourthly, many of the larger cities within the boundary of Death Valley's regional ground water flow system—including Las Vegas and Pahrump—are experiencing some of the fastest population growth in the United States. Consequently, the region's water resources are straining under the pressure. Several of Death Valley's larger springs derive their water from a regional aquifer that extends as far east as southern Nevada and Utah. Today's climate is hotter and drier than it was thousands of years ago, however, and does not provide enough precipitation to recharge the aquifer at the rate the water is being withdrawn.

Fifthly, beginning in the late 1800s, a small number of burros escaped or were turned loose by prospectors. The burros quickly adapted to the desert conditions and flourished, reaching a population of nearly 3,000 animals. Although they may look cute and harmless, burros are actually quite destructive to the desert ecosystem. They gather in large herds and overgraze the scant plant resources. Furthermore, biologists have discovered that burros are driving bighorn sheep from their own grazing areas and reducing the populations of this prized species. Convinced that the needs of the

native bighorn are paramount, the National Park Service has embarked on a program to reduce burro populations, which now number more than 100.

Death Valley is one of the most popular tourists, they do hiking, photography, four-wheel driving, Scotty's castle tours, etc.

What can we say in the conclusion? Among the US National Parks "Death Valley" is not the biggest and not the most visited, but certainly one of the most interesting. This unique monument of nature as if magically tied to the number 3: it is the champion on three indicators and contains three secrets - a surprisingly different! But they are open only the most inquisitive. The harsh climate makes Death Valley inaccessible to ordinary tourists.

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