

Grand Canyon National Park's Ranger Audio Tour **Life Zones**

Welcome to Grand Canyon National Park's park ranger cell phone tour. This is Ranger Andrea.

Many people come to Grand Canyon National Park to view and study the geology. The rock layers of limestone, sandstone, and mudstone and other rock types tell a story of what happened long ago, but they also reflect different natural life zones. While each plant, animal and insect has its own habitat and niche at various elevations, many species' habitats overlap as one hikes up and down the canyon trails.

You are currently standing at about 7000 feet or 2100 meters. Between 6000 and 7000 feet a forest life zone exists with Utah juniper, Colorado pinyon pine and ponderosa pine being the dominant tree types. The pinyon and juniper trees are well-adapted to a climate of strong winds and an average of 15 inches of rainfall or snow each year.

Notice the twisting of the trunks. Listen to the creeks and moans as they move in the wind. As these trees grow, the trunk twists to become stronger. Try all of your senses as you walk the canyon rim...smell the furroughed bark of the tall, old, ponderosa pines. Is it vanilla? Or cinnamon? Hmmm... Scattering across the rocks and trail, look for tassel-eared squirrels, chipmunks, lizards and an occasional scorpion. See and hear the buzz of a carpenter bee or the whisper of a silk moth as it passes you by. Mountain bluebirds, pinyon jays, nuthatches, swallows, ravens, California condors, flutter, dart, and soar through the air as you continue along and below the rim.

Enjoy the journey.