

Fern Canyon

Millions of years ago, a retreating sea left these coastal bluffs behind. Waters draining to the ocean sculpted the rocky formations into sheer canyon walls. Some of the exquisite ferns now clinging to the steep, shadowy cliffs are ancient species whose ancestry can be traced back 325 million years.

The canyon is now shrouded with lush five-fingered ferns, dark green sword ferns, and delicate lady ferns. Scouring winter floods periodically rush through the canyon, sweeping debris from its floor. Spruce and red alder saplings often survive for a few years on small terrace ledges, but they rarely reach maturity before falling off or being swept away.

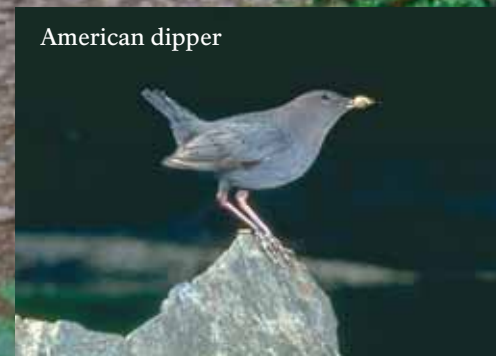
Seeping waters supply year-round dampness for the dense foliage and provide habitat for a diverse mix of moisture-loving creatures such as salamanders, tree frogs, and dippers. Several perennial waterfalls cascade from the canyon rim, adding to the cool, moist canyon microclimate.



Green tree frog



Five-fingered fern



American dipper



Monkey flower



Oregon salamander