Death Valley Facts

Death Valley is a desert located near Nevada and California's border, and it is North America's hottest, driest, and lowest region. Death Valley has been home to Native Americans for at least the last 1000 years, originally known as the Panamint Shoshone but now known as the Timbisha. However artifacts have been found dating back 9000 years, proving that humans were there long before the Panamint Shoshone. Death Valley got its name from prospectors during the California Gold Rush in 1849, after several pioneers died during an expedition. On February 11th, 1933, United States President Herbert Hoover proclaimed much of Death Valley's area as Death Valley National Monument, which put the region under federal protection. It became Death Valley National Park in 1994 and was expanded to include Eureka and Saline Valleys.

Interesting Death Valley Facts:

Death Valley National Park is 3.4 million acres and the largest national park in the U.S.

Death Valley is located in the Mojave Desert.

The climate of Death Valley is created because of the mountains on all sides which trap dry, hot air masses.

On July 10th, 1913 the temperature at Greenland Ranch (formerly Furnace Creek) in Death Valley was recorded at 134° Fahrenheit. This is considered to be the highest ambient air temperature ever recorded on the earth's surface.

Despite its hot and dry climate Death Valley is home to a diverse range of fauna (which grows after it rains), more than 300 bird species, as well as many different species of lizards, snakes, reptiles, amphibians and even bighorn sheep and mountain lions.

Death Valley has been a popular shooting location for the Star Wars movies.

There is a crater in Death Valley called Ubehebe Crater. It is 500 to 777 feet deep and half a mile wide, and despite previous research that dated the crater to up to 7000 years old, current research suggests it is only 800 years old.

Death Valley is considered to be the driest region in the United States. There was no rain recorded there in 1929 at all!

The lowest point in the United States is Badwater Basin, located in Death Valley. It is 282 feet below sea level.

The highest point in the United States in at Mt. Whitney, at 14,505 feet. Death Valley, which has the lowest point in the U.S., is only 76 miles from Mt. Whitney.

The lowest golf course in the world is located in Death Valley. The Furnace Creek Golf Course, with 18 holes, sits 214 below sea level. It is not as popular with golfers during Death Valley's hottest summer days. In August the average temperature is 113.9°F.

February tends to be the wettest month in Death Valley, with an average of 0.51 inches of rain.

Joshua Trees and Bristlecone Pines can be found in some of Death Valley's higher areas, but most of the vegetation growing in the region consists of low lying shrubs.

In mid-2004 to mid-2005 Death Valley received more rain than usual and wildflowers bloomed more than usual.

In January 1922 some snow accumulation was recorded but usually the only sign of snow in the region are scattered flakes.