The “Western Deserts” Transect includes both the Great Basin and Mojave Deserts within California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. This transect focuses around five national park units within these regions, including [Death Valley National Park](http://www.nps.gov/deva/index.htm), [Joshua Tree National Park](http://www.nps.gov/jotr/index.htm), [Mojave National Preserve](http://www.nps.gov/moja/index.htm), [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](http://www.nps.gov/lake/index.htm), and [Great Basin National Park](http://www.nps.gov/grba/index.htm). Elevations within this transect are dramatic and range from -86 m at Badwater Basin to 3370 m at Telescope Peak within Death Valley National Park. The Mojave Desert is dominated by dramatic landscapes and climate and is home to uniquely adapted species. The Great Basin is the largest desert region within the US and includes valleys, lakes, basins and mountain ranges.

Historical surveys took place over many years by many different researchers. Most collecting occurred between 1931 and 1950, with more than 50% of specimens collected in the region during this time. Mammals were most commonly collected (48% of specimens) followed by herps (27%) and birds (25%). Over 2800 unique localities were surveyed, producing 11,376 specimens prior to 1970.

Working closely with national park staff, planning for resurvey work in these regions began in 2010. Specimen records from MVZ and regional institutions and field notes and images within MVZ’s archives were compiled. Projects highlighting specimens and media associated with each of the parks can be found below at:

[Death Valley NP](http://arctos.database.museum/project/historical-grinnell-survey-death-valley-national-park)

[Great Basin NP](http://arctos.database.museum/project/historical-grinnell-survey-great-basin-national-park)

[Joshua Tree NP](http://arctos.database.museum/project/historical-grinnell-survey-joshua-tree-national-park)

[Lake Mead NRA](http://arctos.database.museum/project/historical-grinnell-survey-lake-mead-national-recreation-area)

[Mojave NP](http://arctos.database.museum/project/historical-grinnell-survey-mojave-national-preserve)