



# In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



## Hello to Family & Friends

I plan to spend the morning at the Zoo. It opens at nine and I was there for the rope drop.

Last time I was here was sometime in the late 60's, or maybe the mid-sixties, I'm not sure. I know I was here because my parents told me so. That's how much I remember.

I can tell you this, it's not a wheelchair friendly place. There are some hills here that would test a marathon runner.

Since we have all been to a zoo at one time or another, most likely Milwaukee County which is one of the best in the world, I am including only animals I haven't seen or heard of before and some of my favorites.

I spent a good amount of time last night with the zoo map and internet sites of the most economical way to see the zoo.

After the flamingos I will take the sky glider to the back of the zoo and work my way forwards. As usual, opposite of the norm.

While waiting for the rope to drop I asked the attendant when the sky glider starts. 'It's down for refurbishing, sorry.' What can I say? Let's go this way and delete the photo of my carefully planned list from my phone.

Day 35  
Thursday,  
February 6th

San Diego  
Animals and Trains

Weather  
40's to 60's and Sunny

## In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

# Pygmy Hippopotamus

*Choeropsis liberiensis liberiensis*



## LOCATION

Rivers and streams in forests of west Africa

## FULL-GROWN

Adult pygmy hippos are just a sixteenth the size of a common hippo. (You can see common hippos at the Zoo too, in Ituri Forest.)

## THREATS

Logging, farming, and human settlements are taking over this small hippo's forest home.

I was not aware of Pygmy Hippos, and they did not want to get their picture taken.



Breakfast is a bone for this guy

It was very nice getting there early. I had the animals to myself most of the first hour or more.

Enjoying the 150,000  
gallon pool today:

**Otis**

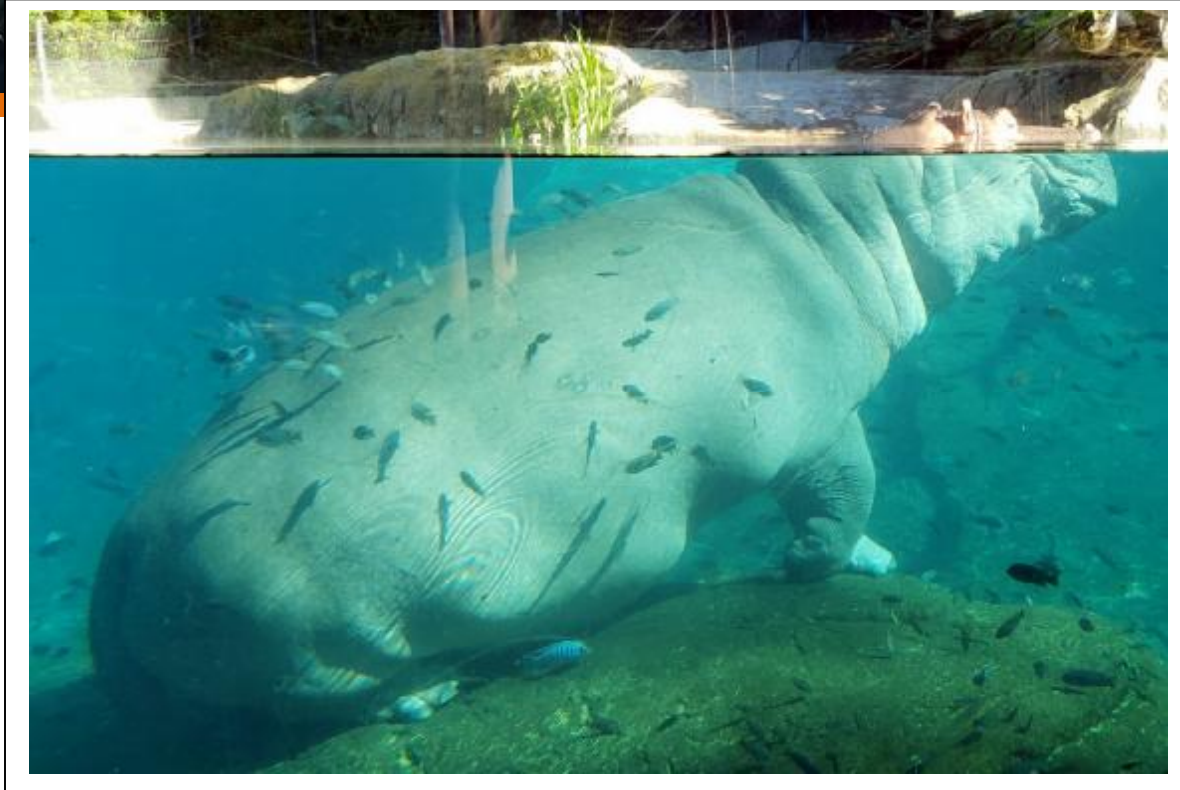
**Male, born March 1, 1976**

**Funani**

**Female, born July 30, 1984**



Otis left, Fulani below, in an 'above and below the water' shot



## The Other Panda

**Red pandas share a habitat, diet, and name with panda bears, but they're not related.**

With a bushy tail for balance and claws for gripping, red pandas are well-equipped tree dwellers. Their red coat and white face are great camouflage among tree limbs covered with red moss and white lichen. Although they eat bamboo and live in the same forests as giant pandas, red pandas are relatives of raccoons, not the black-and-white bears. The Nepalese name for this animal, *nigalya poonya*, became "panda" among English speakers, and the name stuck.



# Golden Takin

*Budorcas taxicolor bedfordi*

<b>RANGE</b> Qinling Mountains, China	<b>SIZE</b> Up to 7 ft (2.2 m) long; 770 lbs (350 kg)
<b>HABITAT</b> Deciduous and pine forests, subalpine meadows	<b>CONSERVATION STATUS</b> Vulnerable

羚牛  
(TAKIN)





## Harpy Eagle

*Harpia harpyja*

### Skilled Hunter

Huge and powerful, harpy eagles hunt large animals: sloths, monkeys, iguanas, parrots, and even domestic sheep. Harpies hit their prey with awesome force and speed, grasping the doomed animal with massive talons the size of grizzly bear claws. Harpy eagles are at risk when their forest homes are destroyed. Harpies hatched at the San Diego Zoo have been released in Central America.

### Wingspan

to 8.5 feet (2 meters)

### Weight

9 to 20 pounds (4 to 9 kilograms), females larger than males

### Location

Sparsely distributed from southern Mexico through northeast Argentina

● **THREATENED** ●



## Andean Condor

*Vultur gryphus*

### Ultimate Soaring Machine

Condors glide long distances in search of the remains of large land and marine mammals. These scavengers play an important role in keeping their habitat healthy by removing rotting carcasses. Andean condors tested the reintroduction sites and release techniques later used for California condors. Young Andean condors from the San Diego Zoo and Safari Park were released in Venezuela and Colombia.

### Wingspan

to 10 feet (3 meters)

### Weight

17 to 33 pounds (8 to 15 kilograms), males larger than females

### Location

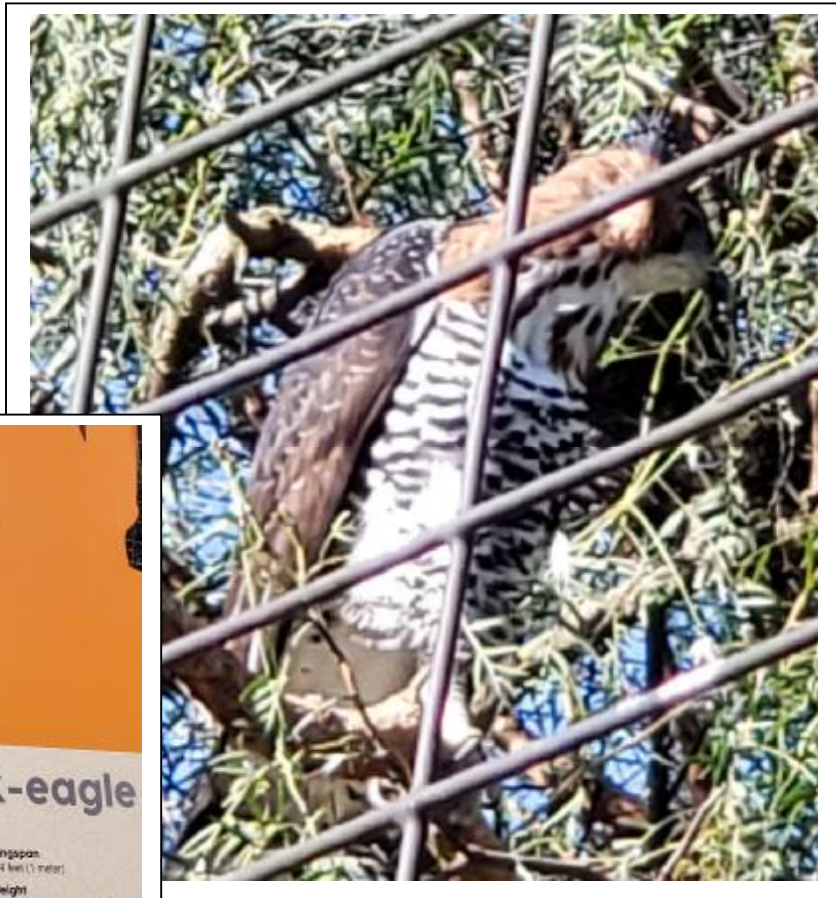
Andes Mountains and west coast of South America

● **THREATENED** ●



I felt really bad for these three birds. Here they are with wingspans from 4-10 feet wide and they're stuck in a net enclosure about fifty by fifty by forty feet high. How can these majestic birds, especially the Condor, even hope to spread his wings and take flight? I think I would rather see a stuffed version with wings spread instead of a captive one in a net.

There are a lot of similar situations here. Antelope especially have no room to run. I think as they kept adding more animals, the existing enclosures just got smaller and smaller, and there was no room to expand.



**Ornate Hawk-eagle**  
*Spizaetus ornatus*

**Striking Looks and Technique**  
In the dappled sunlight of the forest, the varied colors of an ornate hawk-eagle's feathers blend into its surroundings. This fierce hunter perches in the open without alerting its prey. It snatches large birds such as parrots, toucans, and pigeons and small mammals such as squirrels and rats. Ornate hawk-eagles depend on a healthy forest for survival.

**Wingspan**  
to 4 feet (1 meter)

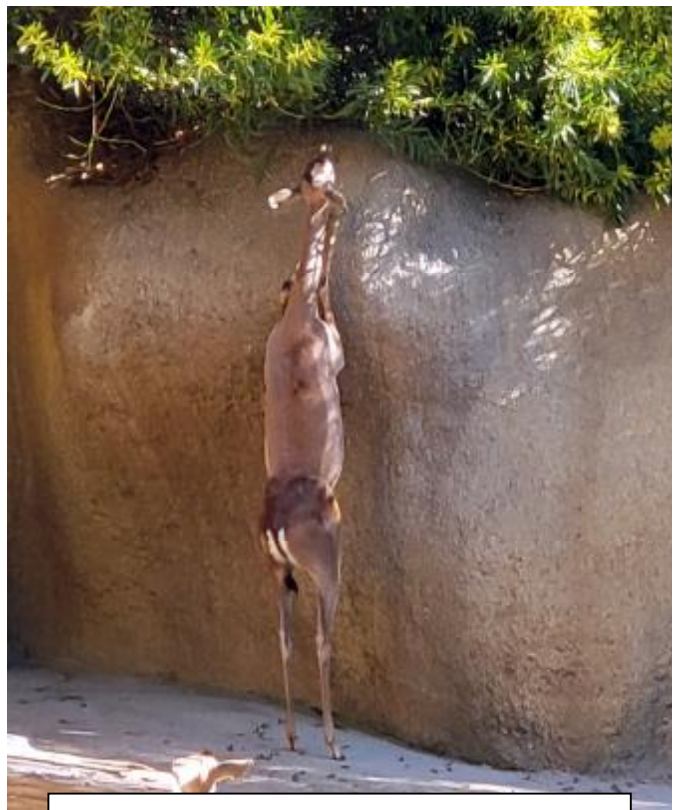
**Weight**  
1 to 3 pounds (1 to 1.5 kilograms), females larger than males.

**Location**  
Southeastern Mexico to Brazil.

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They said this statue is 10 feet two inches high, the actual height of a male Polar Bear, but I'm six foot and that bear looks twice my height.



The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence

# Slender-tailed Meerkat

*Suricata suricatta*



## LOCATION

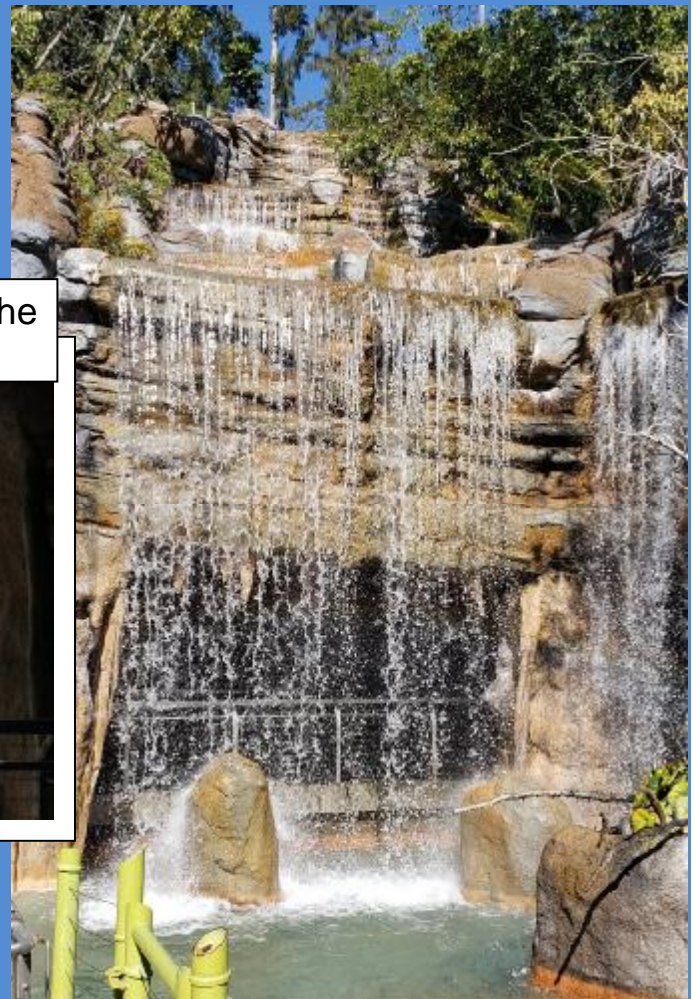
Burrows in dry, open country in southwestern Africa

## ON DUTY

Meerkats take turns being a lookout for predators while the others eat, play, or sun

## DANGER!

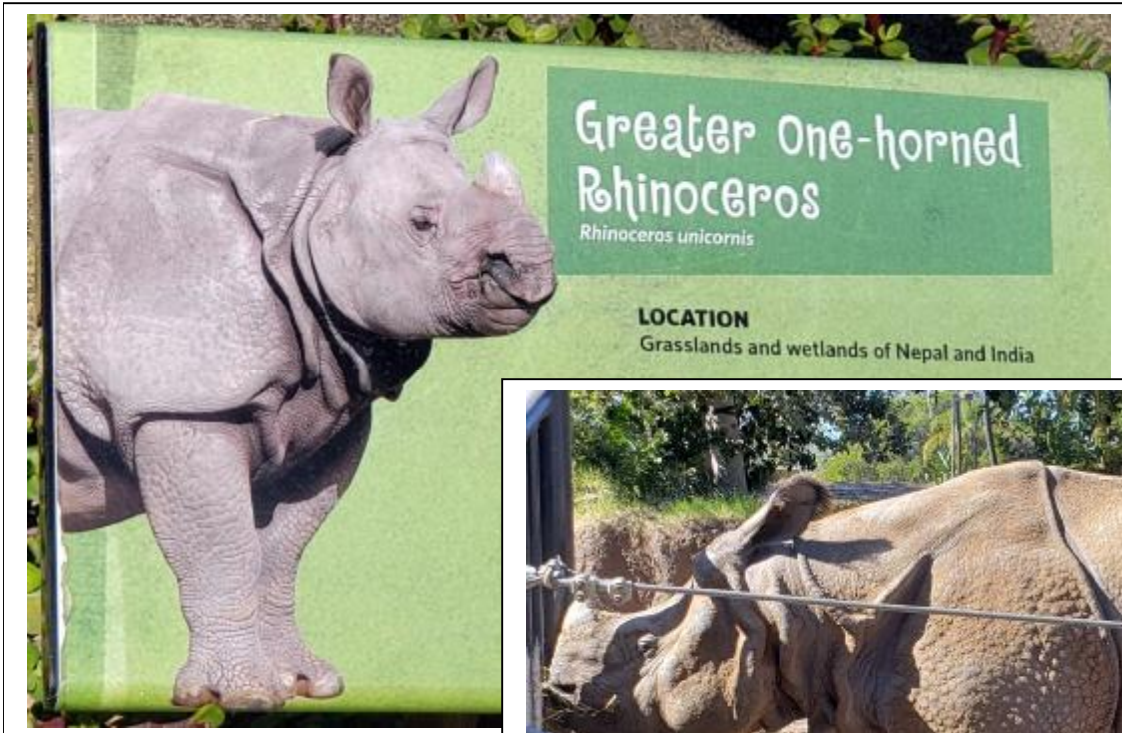
When a meerkat lookout spies a predator, it barks an alarm that sends the whole group running for cover.



A waterfall from the outside.....and the inside.









This little Wallaby climbed up here and then started grunting

I saw pretty much everything in just a little over three hours, then took a thirty minute tram ride, had lunch, and headed over to the museums which were closed on Monday.

## SAN DIEGO MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM



The SDMRM boasts the largest operating model train display in the world, I think, maybe just the USA, so I was looking forward to this. That title is just in square footage. There are five different layouts here: one N gauge (the photo above with no trains running); two Lionel O gauge (like the one on Sunday in Old Town); and two HO gauge layouts, my favorite, and what I think can have the most realistic scenery. Glance through the photos below and form your own opinion.



The Western Metal Supply building, modeled here before PETCO Park incorporated it as the left field foul pole. HO gauge



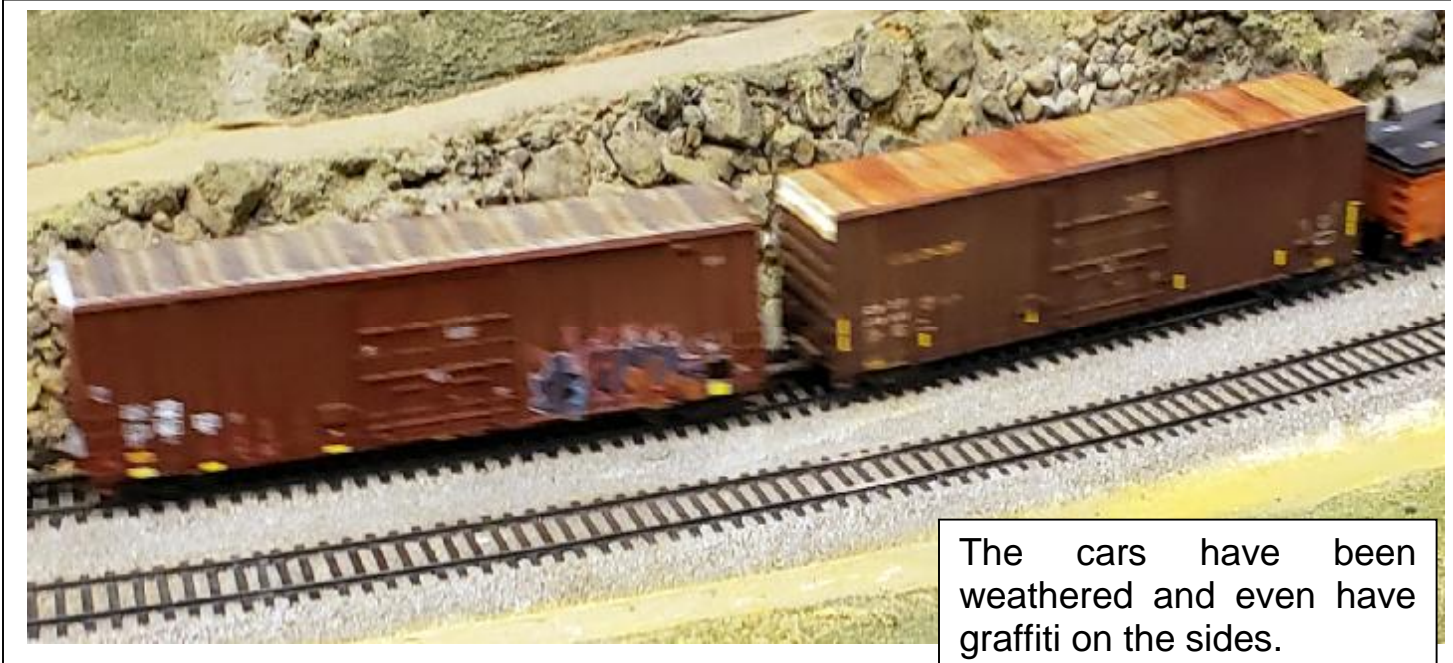
Now THAT'S what I call a model train layout. This PORTION of the HO layout is about forty feet long and eighteen feet wide. Then it continues through the wall in the bottom right corner to the next room, and on the far side climbs up and turns around the wall to the Tehachapi Loop, a famous engineering and trainspotter sight in California. A little farther north than I'm going this trip, unfortunately. The Tehachapi Loop is in both photos below.



The arrow indicates the same hill seen in both photos. They used aerial photographs and copies of the original specs to build the entire Loop to scale, including valleys, rocks, dirt roads, trestles, everything. Truly amazing.



Once again, this is a replica of an actual train location and construction of tunnels and hills.



The cars have been weathered and even have graffiti on the sides.

Below - the unseen train yards below the scenery.



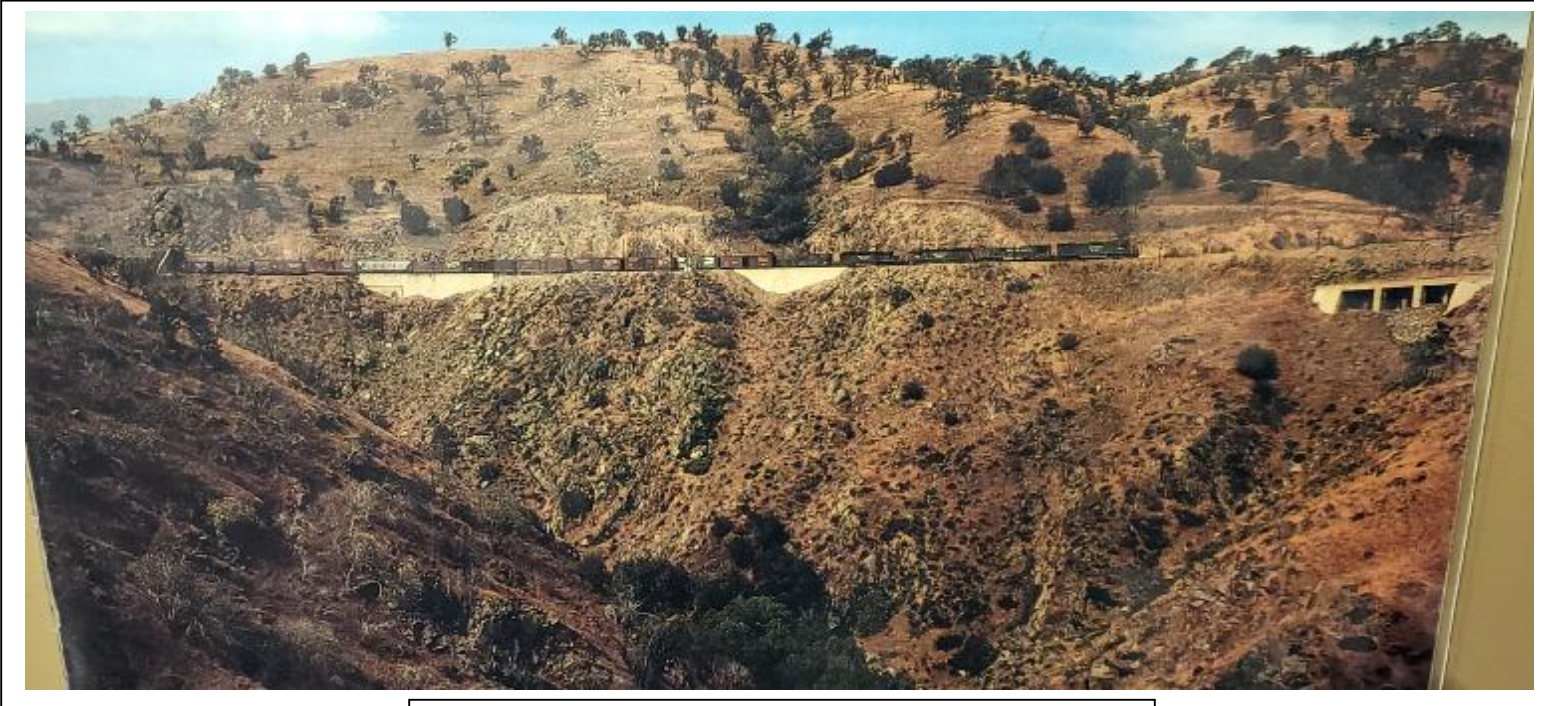


This layout also has an outdoor theatre and a baseball diamond, both much more realistic than the O gauge



Except for the guy in the photo, I could be standing alongside a real track taking this picture.





Above – A photograph of the real thing  
Below – How well they duplicated it on this layout







Above is how an industrial area is modeled in HO.

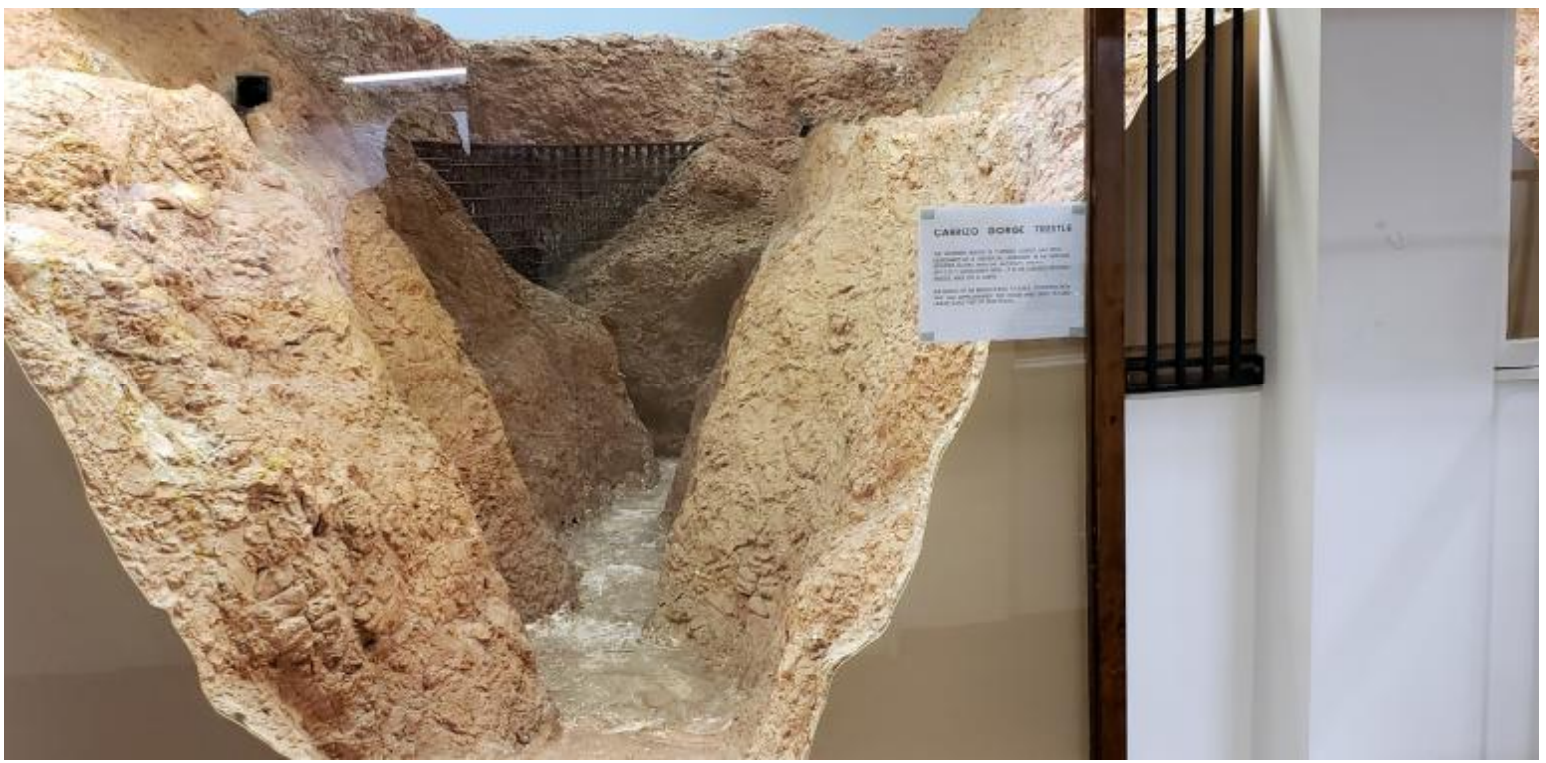
Left – Remember the turntable that was on a flat car back at the museum in Campo? This is the type of turntable it was.

Below – I also mentioned the Carrizo Gorge trestle that day in Campo. Here it is below on the second HO layout.

## CARRIZO GORGE TRESTLE

THE WOODEN TRESTLE IN CARRIZO GORGE HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS A HISTORICAL LANDMARK IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER ALONG WITH THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE. 597-1/2 FT. LONG/200FT. HIGH. IT IS THE LONGEST WOODEN TRESTLE, BUILT ON A CURVE.

THE MODEL OF THE BRIDGE IS BUILT TO SCALE. CONSTRUCTION TIME WAS APPROXIMATELY 300 HOURS AND USED 157,000 LINEAR SCALE FEET OF REAL WOOD.



## SANTA FE DEPOT

Built in 1915 in the Spanish-Colonial motif (replacing the original Victorian wood depot) specifically to accommodate visitors to the *Panama-California Exposition*, the Santa Fe Depot served both the Santa Fe and San Diego & Arizona Railroads as well as the San Diego Electric Railway. The name was changed to San Diego Union Station in 1919 to honor the completion of SD&A's own transcontinental line that opened on November 30, 1919. The depot currently serves AMTRAK and the Coaster.

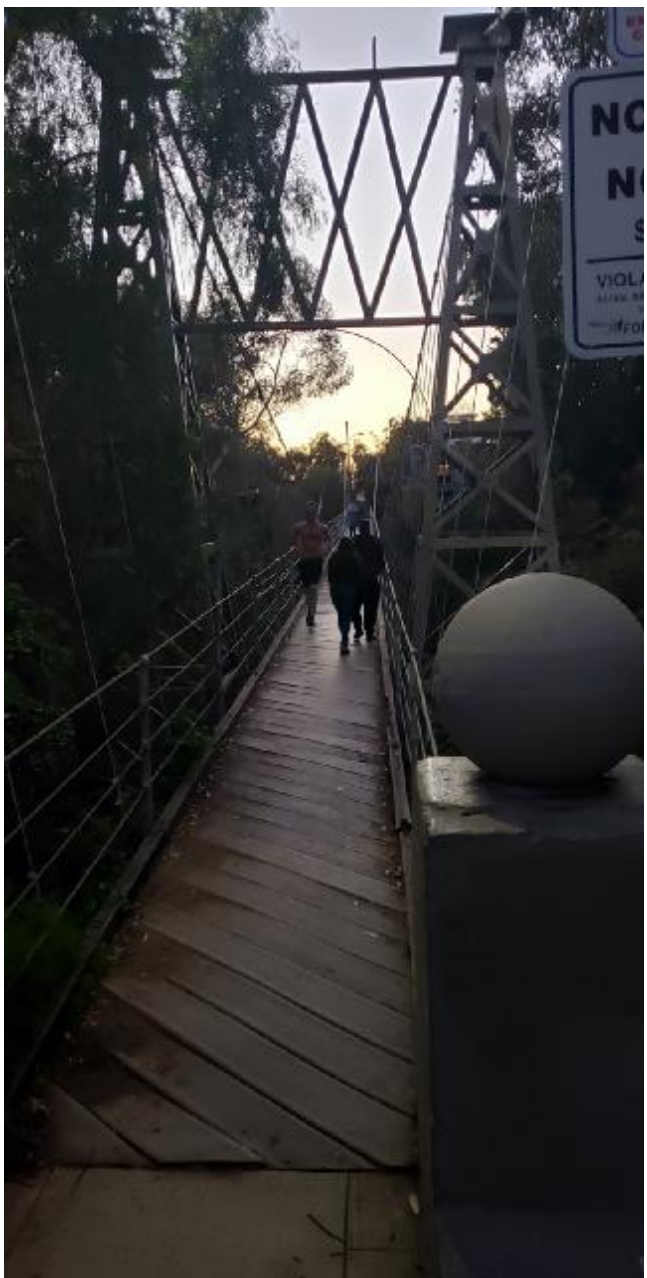


Below is one of the O gauge layouts, crowded and unrealistic.

I'm not sure how much time I spent here, an hour, maybe ninety minutes. The only disappointment was not being able to access the aisles within the scenery and see everything possible. Very enjoyable.



This bejeweled, enameled egg holds a miniature replica of Balboa Park's beloved carousel. Each hand-carved animal depicts one of the actual 56 that revolve on the real carousel. The egg took 18 years to create—and yes, it really plays music. The real carousel is outside behind you, beyond the giant fig tree and the parking lot.



From atlasobscura.com

Once you think you've checked everything off your list of places to visit in San Diego, you will find a hidden pedestrian suspension bridge 375 feet long, with a beautiful vista of the Sessions Canyon 70 feet below. This charming bridge is inconspicuous, but truly special.

Located in the residential Bankers Hill neighborhood, the Spruce Street Suspension Bridge is supported by cables embedded in massive concrete slabs beneath the soil. Walking over the long bridge isn't for those with a fear of heights—the bridge literally suspends over the canyon, and a sharp wind gust can make it swing slightly.

Build in 1912, and engineered by Edwin Capps, this footbridge was initially designed to provide pedestrians a passage across the deep canyon, to get between the new trolley lines built on Fourth and Fifth avenue. It now serves as a secret, serene, and very romantic spot, beloved by locals and visitors to San Diego alike.

**Below - The view of the canyon from the middle of the bridge**



After a little shopping I ate dinner in the Trader Joe's parking lot, then moved over to the Corvette Diner lot again for the night. No problems. However, this morning there was a note of violation on the windshield, but it was from the Marriott Hotel telling me I was unregistered and could get towed. Not official from law enforcement so no worries.

Whale watching tomorrow then a full circuit on the Trolley, then maybe Little Italy again.

Until next time....