

# A LAND SHAPED BY DRYNESS

Life in these hills and valleys has been shaped by many forces, but perhaps most of all by a season—summer. High temperatures and rainless skies prevail from June through September, and every plant and animal of the region must pattern its life around these conditions.

Adaptations to seasonal drought are evident everywhere around you. In one way or another, all respond to the rhythm of the passing seasons—and to the limiting, overriding fact of dryness.

Soaring birds use sun-warmed updrafts to carry them aloft.

Even the park-like spacing of oak trees is a response to the available soil moisture.

Jackrabbits cope with high temperatures by dispersing body heat through veins in their large ears.

Leaves of shrubland plants often have shapes, colors or coatings that reflect light and minimize water loss.

Many grasses and flowers wither and die in late spring, but not before producing abundant seed to sprout in future rains.

Most mammals retreat to burrows or dens by day and confine their forays to cooler nighttime hours.

Reptiles are roused to activity by the heat.

