

It is very slow hiking/scrambling up this part of the canyon. As can be seen in this photo, much of the route is small dryfalls with boulders above and around them. Since the terrain is so loose, extreme caution is necessary; it would be easy to dislodge a boulder and trap an ankle, for example, when bypassing a brush-choked dryfall:



We'd turned around before this point on our last trip to this canyon. Notice how the nearby peaks are becoming more visible and appear closer now:



Approaching this interesting formation. What made it seem a likely candidate for a bridge was the small drainage coming in from the other side, then going around the conglomerate formation. Who knows, perhaps in many, many years it will form a bridge:



Rounding a corner, we were able to see that the hole did not go through, and it appeared to have been formed by a large boulder falling out of the conglomerate rock (there was a likely candidate nearby, though I'm not entirely sure of this theory):



I continued up the canyon for a short distance. There are still numerous boulders in the wash at this point, though the wash is wider here and there aren't any small dryfalls yet:



Looking back down-canyon from here. I think the lower part of the ridge, to the far left, is where I photographed this possible bridge back in December of 2016:



There were surprisingly many small barrel cacti in the wash through here (so there probably hasn't been a lot of water coming down this canyon recently):



Looking up-canyon; since the wash has widened significantly and the boulders are smaller, the walking was much easier:



Looking back down-canyon again:



Up ahead, it appears that the canyon may narrow again and the boulders might get bigger. It would be interesting, however, to get closer to (or even to the top of!) the peak seen in the background here:



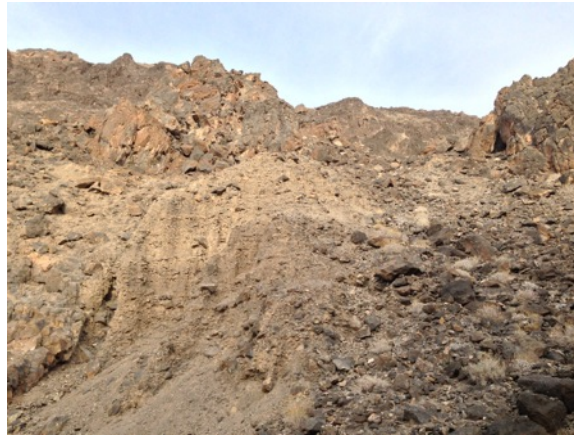
Panorama of this impressive bend in the canyon, which is where I turned around. This is still a very scenic canyon, and it would certainly be interesting to see more of it:



There were some small plants in between the boulders; I'm guessing these will produce nice flowers eventually:



As I continued back down the canyon and towards the "interesting formation" seen earlier, I noticed some more conglomerate formations on the north side of the canyon:



Looking back up-canyon from here, at some of the colorful rocks in the wash. Unfortunately, it was starting to get late in the day at this point:



Here I am looking back at the not-bridge from just up-canyon of it:



Notice the almost perfect bridge-like shape of this formation, except that it unfortunately isn't a bridge:



Looking back down and out of the canyon from here. The rock on the left with the white top may have come from the hole in the conglomerate formation, but I'm not sure:



Water does appear to drain from the hillsides behind this formation, and go around to the left side of it, so perhaps someday this might erode into a bridge—or, the formation might just erode away entirely:



Looking down the rockiest stretch of this part of the upper canyon; the evening lighting was giving some nice effects in the photographs here:



We spotted an occasional rock in the wash with snail fossils; it seems that many canyons through here have occasional snail fossil rocks, and it would be interesting to trace back where these rocks might have come from:



Here we are approaching the last stretch before the rockiest section ends. The ridge seen in the center of the photo is the one we ascended before dropping into this part of the canyon:



To exit the canyon, we ascended the bighorn sheep trail on the south side of the canyon, almost directly across from where we had dropped into the canyon:



The trail is not too difficult to find near the base, but at the top it nearly disappears, since the ground gets harder and more scree-like:



At the top of the trail, we were able to see across this small plateau to the upper Black Mountains again. However, the hike had taken us longer than expected, and it was getting late in the day:



On the other side of the plateau, you can drop into a side-drainage which you can then follow back to the main canyon wash:



Looking up the side-drainage towards a narrow spot; we had checked this out on our first trip to this area, in December 2015:





It was starting to get late at this point, so we decided it would be fastest to just follow the main canyon back, rather than regain the ridge. However, since we had seen remains of a bighorn skeleton in this part of the canyon on a previous trip, and there is a known mountain lion den some distance south of here, we were very cautious on the return trip back since it was so late in the day:



These two photos are from some of the more impressive sections of the canyon narrows; for more photos of this part of the canyon, see my report from December 2015 on this canyon:



We also spotted this interesting plant in the canyon wash, which has small puffy green buds and some yellow flowers:



The clouds cleared shortly before the sun set, and we got some nice views looking back towards where we had been hiking:



Here are some more rock markers on the trail we took back to where we had parked; I'm thinking these are more recently built rock cairns than the ones in the earlier photos. Also, note that this is a longer hike than it may appear from the maps, because, although we left the vehicle early in the day, the sun set at about the same time as we reached the Echo Canyon Road:

