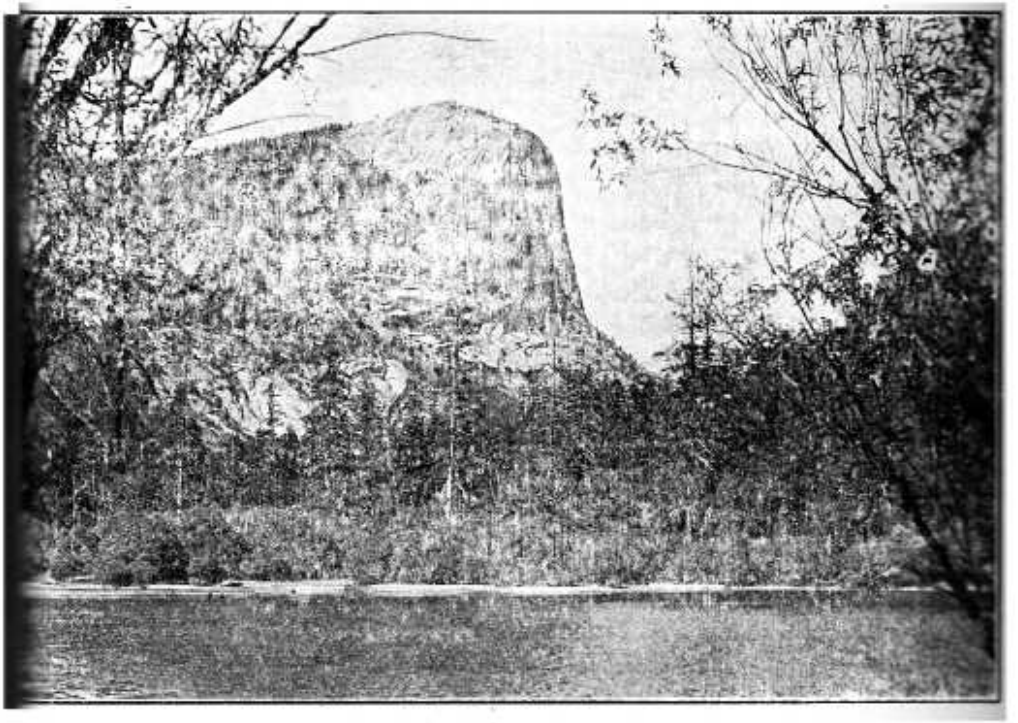
YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES



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Director Horace Albright to Leave National Park Service

Horace M. Albright, Director of the National Park Service has just announced his intention to resign from government service to enter private business. He will become vice-president and general manager of the United States Potash Co.

Mr. Albright has been associated with the government since 1913 when he acted as secretary to Secretary Lane of the Interior Department. In 1915 he was made an attorney in the park service division of the Interior Department. With the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916 under Stephen T. Mather, Mr. Albright was made Assistant Director. After serving as Assistant Director for two years Mr. Albright was made Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and field assistant to the Director. Besides acting as Superintendent he was assigned by Mr. Mather to handle general park problems from the legislative angle. He served as Superintendent of Yellowstone for nine years and during the winters of 1928 and 1929 he was acting Superintendent of Yosemite National Park.

His wealth of knowledge in park affairs and his unbounded energy made him the logical man to assume the directorship of the Park Service upon the retirement of Stephen T. Mather in the latter part of 1928.

Under his leadership the National Park Service has made great advances. People have become better educated to the purpose and use of our parks, not only as recreation areas but from an educational and aesthetic standpoint. The parks have been so developed that the improvements made necessary by the increasing thousands of visitors have not impaired their natural beauty.

Mr. Albright is mainly responsible for the establishment of many eastern National Parks close to the large centers of population and for the preservation and development of National Monuments of unusual historical value.

California may well be proud of her native son, for Mr. Albright was born in the little mining town of Bishop in Inyo County, January 6 1890. As a boy he explored the Sierras, where he acquired his great love for the out-of-doors. Later, while he was working in lumber camps and sawmills, his belief in the necessity for conservation of natural resources took root. He was graduated from the University of California in 1912, specializing in history, political science, and law and later took post-graduate courses in law at the University of California and Georgetown University in Washington, D. C.

Horace M. Albright's leaving the Service will be felt in all of the parks. His keen understanding of each park's problems from his intimate contact through many field trips has been of inestimable value. His spirit of friendliness and comradeship endeared him to every member of the park system, and while all regret his leaving, every individual wishes him success and happiness in his new work.

Mr. Arno B. Cammerer, now Associate Director, has been named to succeed Mr. Albright as Director. Mr. Cammerer's many years of experience as Associate Director under Mather and Albright makes him well qualified to fill the position.

HORACE M. ALBRIGHT

Photo courtesy Stockton Record

Willow Hunting in Yosemite

By MRS. H. P. BRACELIN Herbarium, University of California

There are hunters and hunters and what they will hunt is past imagination. We of the botany department of the University of California at Berkeley want others to join with us in our hunt for willows. We want all of the species of willows, and all of the leaf expressions, from as many localities as possible. We want to find out as much about them as we can. That means we need to have specimens to show all of their variations and their distribution.

To satisfy this craving we arranged a small party to go to Yosemite, in search of one minute species, which we suspected of growing there on the high peaks. There was no definite record of its ever having been found in California before; only a wee specimen with a label which we hoped belonged to it. When Dr. Carleton R. Ball saw this specimen, he quickly named it Salix nivalis Hooker, even though that species was not supposed to grow in our sunny State. This was not enough for us, however; it merely urged us to find the proof. Dr. Ball and I took some friends and started Yosemite-ward, the first week of August, 1931.

PARK CO-OPERATES

Everyone knows that collecting or hunting in a national park is not permitted. Through special permission from Supt. C. G. Thomson we were allowed to collect willow specimens for the university herbarium. At every willow patch we stopped to investigate and gather specimens where they were desired.

At Crane Flat, by the water's edge of a small steam, the elevation about 6300 feet, we found: Salix ligulifolia Ball, Salix geyeriana Anderson, Salix lemmoni Bebb.

On the middle fork of the Tuolumne river, about five and one-half miles west of White Wolf, elevation 7000 to 7500 feet, we found Salix eastwoodiae Cockerell, Salix Lasiandra var. Abrams) Ball, and what is thought to be Salix sitchensis var. augustifolia, but may be Salix jepsoni Schneider, after some study. At White Wolf Meadows we again saw Salix lemmoni and three and one-half miles west of Tenaya lake, Salix eastwoodiae again.

ASCENT OF MOUNT DANA

When we reached Tuolumne Meadows we found Mr. Harwell was there with the Field School on its High Sierra trip. We were very glad to have them join us on our trip up Mount Dana the next day, and considered ourselves fortunate to have Ranger Naturalist Carl Sharsmith as our guide. We made an early start in cars, which took us about six miles up the Tioga road to the beginning of Mono Pass trail, where we left the machine and started our climb. The trail is very easy to follow if one knows it, but there are places where it is difficult to see any trail and there a guide is welcome. The members of the school were anxious to help in the hunt. Willows stopped us several times on the way up. Between 9500 and 10,500 feet elevation we found Salix orestera Schneider, Salix monica Bebb, and at about 10,600 feet elevation we encountered the first dwarf species—Salix petrophila Rydb, Salix petrophila var. caespitosa (Kennedy) Schneider. The species was not known to grow in California at this time, although the variety caespi-

tosa had been reported. The variety occurred in several patches up to the saddle between Dana and Gibbs. It rises little above the ground, with catkins standing erect and higher than the foliage and is the common dwarf willow of our high mountains. We were quite delighted to find this species, because we thought we might soon after discover the one we especially wanted. We searched and searched, but not one plant of Salix nivalis did we see and were sorry to reach the lunch place beyond the divide between the two mountains, as the balance of the ascent was over rocks and we had little hope of any willow growing there.

HARD FOR TENDERFEET

After lunch and a rest the party moved on up the mountain. The naturalists and the class, who were hardened by weeks of climbing and the high altitude, went up quickly and easily, but those of us who were fresh from the bay region and whose muscles were soft, did not find it so easy. We were out to find that willow and we meant to cover Dana in the effort, so the climb to the top was made. There we were glad to sit down and feast our eyes on the superb views and listen to Mr. Sharsmith discourse on the geological formations and identify for us the peaks and lakes and valleys stretched out for miles about us. Our first day had brought us three species and one variety of willows, but not the all-important one, so we planned another route up Dana for the next morning.

Again we shortened the walking distance by driving a little east of the Tioga Pass, where we left the car. We spread out, so as to cover the area well, and kept our eyes on the ground as we went up Glacier canyon. We found a very large thicket of Salix orestera at the lower levels and at a somewhat higher altitude we again encountered Salix petrophila var. caespitosa. Dr. Ball told us not to expect to find Salix nivalis at a lower altitude than 10,000 feet, but we searched for it all the way up, perhaps more diligently after we had reached the minimum altitude.

RARE VARIETY FOUND

At about 11,500 feet elevation we found what we felt sure was our willow and waited very impatiently for Dr. Ball to come down from a high and dangerous place he had climbed in his effort to locate nivalis. When he did appear, and examined the small patch we had located, he declared it to be nivalis and we were happy. We were fortunate in getting both staminate and pistillate specimens and in finding two small areas, not far apart. The areas are so small that we trust others will not find them lest they exterminate the species. The whole plant is only about two centimeters high, growing in a wet, grassy, rocky flat, near the water which emerged from the Dana glacier but a short distance above our willow find. We were thrilled with our find and spent a couple of hours right there.

That evening after carefully putting away our precious plants we went over to Soda Springs, where the Sierra Club was assembled and Dr. Vernon Bailey gave Dr. Ball a specimen of nivalis he had collected at Parker Pass. Dr. Evans and Dr. Blasdale of the university staff, who took the high trip with the Sierra Club and who had been asked to watch for this species, found it at Koip Pass. They too gave their collections to us for the university herbarium, and we wish to express our appreciation. We

hope other Sierran localities may be discovered.

Some may think that hunting willows is not exciting, but we have a grand time doing it and oh how we do work! Try it some time and see how many things a willow can do. You may think you have a certain species so that you will always know it and the very next time you come to it, it will have different leaves or something! It is intriguing. We should be very grateful for well-pressed and dried specimens of willows; branches about 15 inches long, showing the leaves and especially the flowers or catkins, with data as to the date and locality of collections.

We are very grateful to the members of the park service for the assistance we received from them; to Dr. Bryant, who is ever ready to give aid in a research problem; to Mr. Harwell, who helped in the hunt and then placed us in the hands of a very competent ranger-naturalist, Carl Sharsmith, who did his best to make our stay at the Meadows a pleasure as well as a success, and to the lodge manager for making it possible for us to care for our plants.

Because of Dr. Ball, Yosemite has two species added to its flora and thereby added to the State. We all voted the trip a great success and were sorry to turn homeward.

Specimens of these two new species and of each of the other willows encountered on this trip were presented by us to the Yosemite Museum for their herbarium.

Yosemite Trout Hatchery Becomes Self-supporting

C. C. PRESNALL Museum Preparator

A notable advance in fish culture has been made in Yosemite National Park this year by the installation of an egg collecting station on Lake Eleanor, which is expected to supply the million or more trout eggs used annually by the Yosemite Fish Hatchery. Although all the eggs taken at Lake Eleanor will be from Rainbow trout it is planned to exchange many of them for eggs of Eastern Brook, Lock Leven and other species taken elsewhere, and thus make the local hatchery self-sustaining while continuing to raise several species for planting in the waters of the park. Over a quarter of a million eggs have already been taken at the Lake Eleanor station, in spite of retarded spawning due to unseasonably cold weather and it is expected that the full quota will have been taken by June 1.

Fishermen will be interested to know that the operation of the spawning station, although necessitating the closing of Lake Eleanor to fishing, does not affect the tributary streams to any gerat extent. During the 1933 season all the waters of the Lake Eleanor drainage system will be open for fishing except for the following closed waters: Lake Eleanor, Eleanor creek from the park line up to the dam and for one mile above the lake, and Frog creek (location of spawning station) from the lake up to the Laurel Lake trail crossing. This, in simplified terms, means that practically all areas north of Hetch Hetchy which can be reached by automobile are closed

to fishing, and all areas reached by trail are open.

A recent visit to the spawning station gave ample evidence of careful and efficient operation which, with abundant supply of trout, will insure the success of the new venture. A well constructed fish trap at the mouth of Frog creek is catching practically all the spawning trout in the lake, since they do not run up other tributaries to any extent. An attendant is stationed at the trap to remove the trout as rapidly as they are caught and place them in "cars" (long boxes through which water circulates) where they remain a few days until the eggs are "ripe." When several hundred trout have been accumulated, the eggs are stripped from them and they are then allowed to return to the lake. Milt is also taken from the male trout at the same time and mixed with the eggs to effect fertilization.

From 500 to 1400 eggs are taken from each trout, a total of 150,000 eggs being taken during the recent day's visit mentioned above. These eggs are immediately transferred by automobile to the Yosemite Hatchery, being carried in one-quart jars carefully packed in moss - about 10,000 eggs to the quart. At the hatchery the eggs are placed in hatching troughs to be hatched and reared in the usual manner.

In from two to five months the eggs taken from Yosemite waters will be returned to streams throughout the park as young trout, which in two years will furnish good sport for the angler. Thus from one lake, which offers inadequate natural spawning grounds, the entire park can be stocked by the improved artificial hatchery methods now in use.

Do Bears Attack Deer?

B. A. THAXTER RANGER NATURALIST

As visitors walk or drive around the floor of the Yosemite Valley and see the bears and deer occupying the same general territory they often ask "Don't the bears ever attack the deer?"

These two animals do seem to get along pretty well together here because the bears find plenty of other food and the deer seem able to keep away from their hereditary enemy. A full grown deer, unless injured, is seldom molested by bears, although we well know bruin is not at all averse to a good meal of venison. It is the very young fawn, however, that most frequently is the victim.

In early July as a rule the fawns

are born. The does hide them carefully in the grass or the thickets that border our meadows and leave them there perhaps several hours at a time while they are off feeding. The young are said to be born without scent, so they are, as a rule, safe from preying enemies, except as one by chance may stumble upon them. If the old doe is near by she may try to lure or even to drive away an enemy from her fawn's parking place. A few summers ago the writer was greatly interested one evening in watching a doe chase a huge black bear across the Sentinel Meadows. The old fellow was getting away just as fast as his means of locomotion would allow him with a thoroughly angered deer close at his heels. He had, no doubt, in his prowlings come too close to where her baby was parked and mother was resenting in no uncertain way.

WILD LIFE TRAGEDY WITNESSED

Yet, on rare occasions, bears are seen eating a fawn or carrying one off. On July 19, 1932, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Walker of Pasadena were returning to their car from Glacier Point to Yosemite Valley. When about five miles down the road, at 2:30 p. m., they noticed a young doe with her still wobbly-legged new born fawn near the roadside. As they stopped to watch them a rather small brown bear rushed out of the woods, seized the fawn and started off with it. The mother, with a piteous cry, leaped high in the air. Mr. Walker jumped from the car to drive the bear away, but instead of running away as was expected of him, he turned on Mr. Walker and drove him back to his car. Then picking up the dead fawn he went off leisurely into the forest, followed at a distance by the helpless and disconsolate mother.

CASSIN PURPLE FINCH NEST

By Ranger Naturalist Craig Thomas

On June 14, members of a hiking party going up the Four-Mile trail to Glacier Point were startled to see a small brown bird dart from the edge of the trail almost at their feet. Some comment was aroused at the time, but in the effort of the hike the incident was forgotten. But when the same thing happened at the same place on the return trip we started to investigate. The trail had been cut through a hill side of manzanita and other bushes and the roots of these hung down over a hollow beside the trail, making an effective screen. Behind this screen a nest of grasses and fibers had been constructed and at this time held two bluish eggs, sparsely spotted with dark brown around the larger end.

We waited some minutes for the female to return, but fortunately the male came first and he was recognized as the Cassin purple finch. So far as we know, it is rather unusual for this "redhead" of the higher mountains to nest so near the ground, or, in fact, on it. The female resembled the female house finch and the California purple finch so closely that had it not been for the male's return and nervousness we should have been at a loss to identify it.

NIGHT LIFE AS SEEN BY YOSEMITE RANGERS

By RANGER SAM KING

On the evening of March 16 Ranger Carl Danner and the writer, while making the nightly patrol down to El Portal, were surprised to see a ring-tailed cat coming up the road with his evening meal in his mouth, which consisted of a very large wood rat. The first thing that we noticed was the comically dignified gait the cat was taking in order to hold the rat high enough off the ground to keep from stepping on it. He held his head high, as though on parade, and walked cautiously to keep from swinging his heavy burden from side to side. Stopping the car within about 50 feet of the cat, we watched the performance. Mr. Ringtail was not the least bit disturbed by our presence, nor was he excited. He seemed to have a definite purpose in mind. After walking back and forth across the road twice he jumped to the rock wall alongside and walked for a distance of some 60 feet, then he stopped and surveyed us with no concern beyond that of curiosity. We played the spot-light on him all during this performance until he finally meandered off through the rocks toward the river.

Ring-tailed cats are commonly observed in Yosemite Valley, but it is seldom that we have the opportunity of seeing one with his catch in his mouth.

Rangers on night patrol have unusual opportunities of observing many interesting animal episodes, because night, especially after midnight, belongs to the animals in the forest. Coyotes, skunks, foxes are often seen by us at close range; now and then a flying squirrel glides gracefully across the road in the beam of the headlights. A ranger is never lonesome on patrol so long as he has such interesting animal company.

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