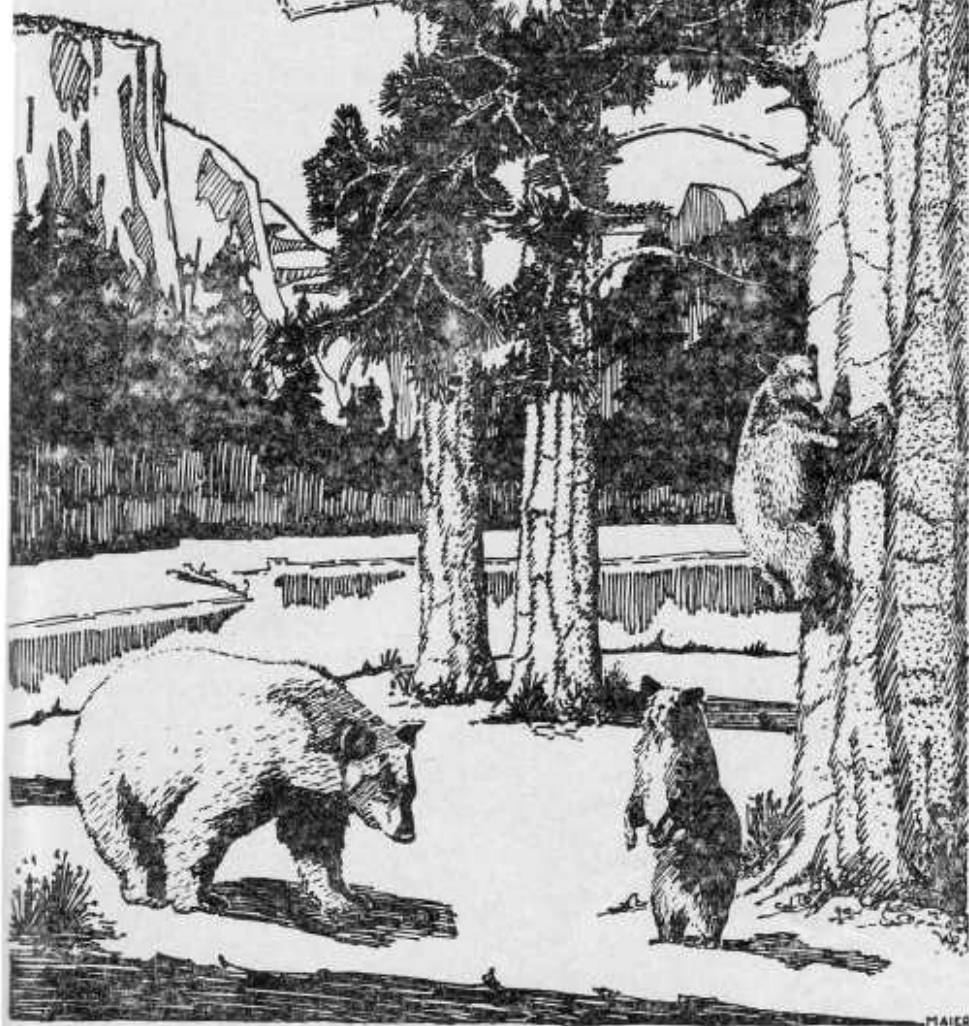


YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES



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No. 7



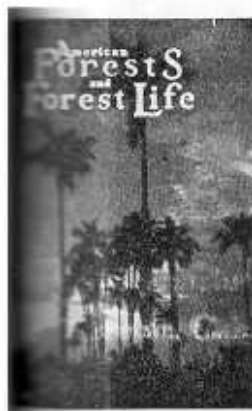
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C. A. Harwell
Park Naturalist

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the Park Naturalist,
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I am enclosing my check for \$1.00 (\$3.00 \$5.00). I desire to take out a membership in the Yosemite Natural History Association (the American Nature Association or the American Forestry Association). It is understood that I am to receive 12 numbers of "Yosemite Nature Notes" (12 numbers of "Nature Magazine"; and 12 numbers of "American Forests and Forest Life").

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"Trailitis" - A Cure

By Helen K. Sharsmith and Jane Morton McIntire

An acute attack of "trailitis" developed in the co-authors of this note last July and diagnosis indicated that prompt remedial agencies were necessary to abate the affliction. Always a chronic ailment when in Yosemite, the crisis of this particular attack was precipitated by a prolonged incautious, and unjudicious perusal of the "topo" map. Emergency relief was promptly initiated by piling food and sleeping bags into our pack-frames for a 4 day trail trip into the Ten Lakes Basin. Automobiles can dispel so little of the mystery from a map; pack-trips, with burros patiently carrying the burden, make prearrangement of itinerary necessary. But with grub and sleeping bags upon our backs, we were equipped to yield to the lure of every inviting topographic contour.

Momentum gathered by the first stimulating effects of our emergency relief plan carried us up and

over the hump of the zig-zags to the top of Yosemite Falls. Momentum gathered as the cure began to "take" carried us on for a day and a half of gentle travel up the trough of the Yosemite Creek Canyon. Approaching the head of the Yosemite Creek watershed, tantalizing glimpses of the sheer northern face of Mt. Hoffman made pulse and temperature mount in anticipation; but these mounted even higher in response to the upward trend of the trail, as we approached the summit of the divide between the Yosemite Creek drainage and the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.

For the time, as we sat on top the divide, our wanderlust was quieted. All the preparatory perusals of the "topo" map, during the symptomatic stage of our disease, had failed to prepare us for the enormity of the panorama which was suddenly revealed to us. From Tower Peak to Mt. Conness the sky silhouetted

a succession of billowing clouds and castellated peaks. The Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne dropped below us to Muir Gorge and Pate Valley, its full, wild depth hidden, however, by the intervening level stretch of Colby Mt. Across the gorge the tributary canyons of Piute Creek and Return Creek stretched back to their mountainous beginnings. Between us and the Park boundary, marked by Matterhorn Peak, lay the crumpled, irregular masses of rock which we know from our map towered above Benson, Rodgers, Smedberg and innumerable smaller lakes.

Turning eastward, our trail brought us to the edge of the Ten Lakes basin, a giant hollow overhanging the Tuolumne Gorge. Only four of the lakes were visible here, the others hidden on higher benches or lying behind the enfolding arms of a protecting cirque. One of the lower lakes, encircled by huge and venerable hemlocks, gave admirable setting for our evening's camp, and soon we were seated at our little campfire, in the blissful haze induced by the mountain morphine of tired muscles and satisfied appetites.

From Ten Lakes through the deep, glaciated canyon of the South Fork of Cathedral Creek, up to 10,000 feet and around the turretted summit of Tuolumne Peak, down the mountain side to May Lake at the foot of Mt. Hoffman lies a new trail, an alpine route of continuous

yet varying scenic beauty. Though not yet completed or posted with signs the trail is easily followed.

Zig-zagging down the steep and glaciated canyon side of the South Fork of Cathedral Creek, we came into view of the deeper canyon of Cathedral Creek, which lies almost parallel with and drains into the Tuolumne Gorge just after it is joined by the South Fork. Our preparatory explorations via map had not been thorough enough to indicate the ruggedness and depth we would see in these two side canyons. A legion of patriarchal junipers, gnarled and twisted veterans, flanked the trail as we descended.

Going slowly up the trail, we ascended the opposite canyon wall. Raindrop spatters in the dust of a trail marred only by the imprints of a lumbering bear, complete absence of human footprints, linked us closely with the wilderness we traversed. The breathless feeling of alpine height soon became tangible as we reached cassiope, white-bark pines, alpine sorrel, and a lingering snow-bank. Our exaltation, as we stood at the highest pass, in the shadow of Tuolumne Peak, was punctuated by the piercing bark of a cony. This tiny animal, hay-making pika of alpine rock-slides, paraded before us but a few feet away, giving us a climatic touch of delight in our rarified environment.

The pass widened, and, in sudden relief, a panoramic spread of moun-

tains confronted us, summits bathed in the rosy tints of alpine glow, bases shadowed by distant blues. From Matterhorn to Cloud's Rest, swung a semi-circle of peaks, the arc broken by the individualistic outlines of Mt. Conness, White Mt., Mt. Dana, Mt. Gibbs, Kuna Crest, Cathedral Range, Mt. Lyell, Mt. Maclure, and Clark Range.

A long, continually downward trail consumed time and energy as, in gathering dusk, we hurried toward the McGee Lake trail and Lake Tenaya. Still impelled by the rapid metabolic rate brought on by our self-inflicted "trailitis" cure, we chose to head toward Lake Tenaya, rather than take the shorter trail to May Lake. However, the harsh noises of automobiles and accompanying distractions close to our Tenaya Camp drove us next morning to the quiet serenity of May Lake. From here a new cut-off to the Tenaya Lake trail took us through familiar surroundings to the head of the Tenaya zig-zags.

The seemingly unending and precipitous drop down to Valley level should certainly have been an efficacious cure for even the most virulent case of "trailitis." But although our four-day trip resulted in abatement of the acute phase of our disease, the chronic ailment still persists in insidious form. This brief yet strenuous excursion did not lessen our desire and hope for future, more extensive pack-trips into Yosemite's high mountains.

"A MOUNTAIN TRAGEDY"

By Ranger Naturalist Joe Burgess

In the continuous quest for food by predaceous animals many tragedies occur to innocent victims. To a bird lover, the loss of every small egg or fledging cannot fail to excite regrets, especially when the loss comes to one of the rarer birds. When the nest is by a public trail and one has had the pleasure of showing it to other bird lovers, a raided nest seems like a real tragedy.

The nest in question belonged to a Townsend Solitaire and was beautifully situated in the crack of a large boulder close to the top of the Ledge Trail at Glacier Point. On July 1, 1934, the nest contained four whitish eggs, speckled with brown. The mother seemed absolutely fearless, in fact, on one occasion she had to be lifted off the nest so that a visitor could photograph the eggs. Twice after this I passed by, once stopping to listen to the song of the male from a nearby fir. On July 1, 1934, however she was nowhere to be seen and wishing to see if the eggs had hatched I found only an empty nest. All signs of mother and eggs had disappeared leaving but a pile of twigs as a mute reminder of what might have been.

But on succeeding days, Solitaires were seen and heard singing in the neighborhood. Mother Nature seems to maintain her balance in spite of seeming tragedies.



MUSEUM NOTES

Naturalist Staff For 1935

By M. E. BEATTY
Assistant Park Naturalist

The Yosemite naturalist staff is now entering another busy season of guided trips, lectures and other service to the public, under the direction of C. A. Harwell, park naturalist, and M. E. Beatty, assistant park naturalist. The position of Museum Preparator left vacant by the resignation of Claude A. Wagner, Jr., is being filled temporarily by Ranger-Naturalist Jas. E. Cole.

Lovers of the Tuolumne Meadow region will be happy to learn that Ranger-Naturalist Carl Sharsmith has again been assigned to that area. The daily hikes from the meadows to nearby peaks, glaciers and lakes are greatly enjoyed by those who camp in Tuolumne Meadows.

Ranger-Naturalist Clifford Shirley returned to the branch museum at the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. Mr. Shirley has made a special study of the Sequoia and is the author of a new booklet on Big Trees, soon to be printed.

Ranger-Naturalist Herbert A. Anderson has taken over the Glacier Point position this summer. Mr. Anderson in the past has been station-

ed on the Valley floor.

The six-week session of the Junior Nature School started June 24, under the direction of Ranger-Naturalist Reynold Carlson, who has conducted the school for the past two summers.

The Museum Wildflower Garden is again under the supervision of Ranger-Naturalist Enid Michael. Daily flower walks through the garden are attracting large numbers.

The remainder of the staff has been assigned to the Valley floor where the major part of the program is carried on. This includes Paul Nesbit, who handled the Tuolumne Meadow station in 1934, A. D. Buck, Granville Ashcraft, Edmund Godwin and Harold Perry, who are the new members of our naturalist staff.

Do You Know?

1. There are no poisonous lizards in California.
2. There is only one poisonous lizard in the United States—the Gila Monster.

3. Some lizards do not have legs.
4. A rattlesnake will die from its own bite.
5. The Blue Heron (Blue Crane) eats gophers.
6. The Barn Owl (Monkey-faced Owl) is probably the most beneficial bird in California.
7. The common skunk is one of America's most valuable fur producers.
9. The Dogwood flowers of Yosemite are larger than those of the eastern states.
10. The rainbow was the only species of trout found in Yosemite National Park until 1892, when Eastern Brook were introduced.
11. There were no trout in lakes and streams above the major waterfalls in Yosemite until planted there.
12. Yosemite National Park is approximately the same size as the State of Rhode Island.

—Compiled by the Naturalist Staff.



8. Tamed bears are more dangerous than wild ones.

NOTICE

BACK NUMBERS OF YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES NEEDED

In order to complete our files and those of others, we are anxious to secure the following back numbers of Yosemite Nature Notes:

- Vol. 1 - No's. 2 to 8 incl.
- Vol. 2 - No's. 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 16.
- Vol. 3 - No's. 1, 3, 11, 13, 16 to 18 incl., 20, 21.
- Vol. 4 - No's. 3, 4, 6, 7.
- Vol. 5 - No's. 3 to 6 incl., 10, 12.
- Vol. 8 - No. 4.
- Vol. 10 - No. 7.

Please send us any of these numbers you can spare or have no further use for. For every three of the above numbers you send in, we will extend your Nature Notes subscription one year.



YOSEMITE ANIMALS

New Bats Found in Yosemite

By A. E. Borell
Naturalist

In 1924 Drs. Joseph Grinnell and Tracy I. Storer published "Animal Life in the Yosemite." In preparation for this report field work was conducted over a six-year period. During this work six species of bats were recorded inside the boundaries of Yosemite National Park.

Since 1924 at least five species of bats have been added to the list. Two of these, the Mastiff Bat (*Lasiurus californicus*) and the very rare Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculata*), have already been recorded. Yosemite Nature Notes, June, 1933, P. 64, and Journal of Mammalogy, May, 1932, P. 162, respectively.

On July 9, 1934, Dorothy Transchel found a dead bat in Camp 12, Yosemite Valley, 4000 feet elevation, Mariposa county, California. It was a stranger to her so she brought it to the museum for identification. It proved to be a Pacific Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus pacificus*), which had not been pre-

viously recorded inside the boundaries of the Park. As a matter of fact Yosemite Valley is somewhat out of its zonal range. This species is found usually in the Lower or Upper Sonoran Zones. The specimen in question was found among yellow pines and black oaks in the east end of the Valley which is typically Transition Zone.

In looking over our study skin collection, I noted a little Long-eared Bat (*Myotis evotis*), taken in Yosemite Valley on June 27, 1927, by Dr. H. C. Bryant and Dr. G. C. Ruhle. There seems to be no other record of this species in Yosemite.

As I was crossing Hetch-Hetchy Dam on June 27, 1931, I heard bats squeaking in one of the concrete posts which supported the guard rail. Examination revealed a small hole leading into a larger cavity at the union of the post and cross beam. With the aid of a piece of wire I extracted five small dark brown bats which proved to be

Myotis yumaensis sociabilis, a new species for Yosemite. On July 22, 1934, I was again at Hetch-Hetchy Dam and found that bats were still occupying the same post.

Since bats are nocturnal and the different species look much alike as they fly about at night it is difficult to determine just how many species inhabit the park. This together with the fact that bats are able to fly long distances make it probable that as time goes on we will add several other species of bats to the list of mammals found in Yosemite.

seeds were extracted at the base of the tree much to the amusement of visitors. Jeffrey pine cones at this stage are particularly gummy and the chickaree was more than "stuck up."

One morning while conversing with a visitor, a cone fell between us, barely missing either one. It weighed 10 3-4 ounces on the hotel cook's scale. On placing it back on the road, down came a squirrel and apparently deciding that dragging was too slow he picked it up and carried it to his "middens" at the base of the tree.

Using Grinnell & Storer as authorities, a Sierra Chickaree weighs 7 3/8 to 10 1/2 ounces. Watching this fellow carry more than that in his mouth I at once called him the weight-lifter.

A WEIGHT-LIFTING SQUIRREL

By Ranger Naturalist
Joe Burgess

The Sierra Chickaree, (*Sciurus douglassii albolimbatus*) commonly known by such names as red, pine, douglas or bumper squirrel, deserves still another. Watching one work at Glacier Point during August, 1934, I felt that some name denoting weight lifting should be added to the already lengthy list. When I saw a chickaree pick up a green Jeffrey Pine cone, apparently bigger than himself, and stagger off with it, I was curious to know just what both of them weighed.

The chickaree in question was at work dropping cones from a Jeffrey pine at the back of the hotel. The cones on the east side of the tree fell on the road and had to be carried or dragged off for safety. The

THE GULL IN A NEW SUMMER HOME

By Paul Nesbit
Ranger-Naturalist—Tuolumne
Meadows

To many people, gulls are ocean birds, and for the most part they are right. But a visitor to the high mountain lakes of the Tuolumne Meadows region, must take the Californian Gull (*Larus californicus*) into account as a bird of Yosemite National Park. Indeed one of the most noticeable, for when questioned, nearly everyone who visits any lake tells of seeing them.

Sometimes one; sometimes more. The writer saw eight at once on Saddlebag Lake.

Some of the fishermen have still more to tell of the gulls. On several occasions it has been reported that the gulls have stolen hard-earned fish. Sometimes from fish laid on the bank for a few minutes; once from a creel; and once snatched from right beside a fisherman when he was cleaning his fish. Fishermen, beware! Ranger John-ly Reymann has found the gulls to be a nuisance when planting young fish. These reports make the California Gull not only a Yosemite National Park species, but also somewhat of a wild life problem.

A usual comment about the gulls is that they fly over Mono Lake where they are known to breed in large numbers. But there are grounds for questioning the supposition that they are merely daily visitants. Being seen almost without fail on each lake, would seem to indicate that the birds have taken up their abodes there, as would also the fact that they are seen there at dawn and at dusk.

Grinnell and Storer's account in the "Animal Life in the Yosemite" seems to indicate that the gulls were not nearly so numerous at the time of their observations some fifteen to twenty years ago. The

rangers also say that they have recently become much more numerous. The reason is hard to understand. Perhaps the fish planting program has attracted them. Joseph Dixon reports (Grinnell and Storer P. 240) that the gulls at Mono Lake seemed to be bothered by the heat. Perhaps some hardy individuals are solving that problem by breeding in our high mountain lakes. The problem is also suggested as to what may be the effect on the breeding of these gulls if Los Angeles takes the water flowing into Mono Lake and causes it to dry up.

No account of the inland habits of the gull would be complete without mentioning their influence around the Great Salt Lake and other interior districts. In the early days gulls saved the Mormons from ruination by swooping down upon swarms of locusts that were devouring their crops. It was the answer to their appeal to Divine Providence, say the Mormons, and they erected a monument to the gulls in Temple Square in Salt Lake City where one may see it today. It is a regular thing for gulls to migrate in the early autumn as far east as the western parts of the Great Plains, doing a great deal of good throughout a vast territory through their appetite for locusts or grasshoppers.





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Dan Anderson