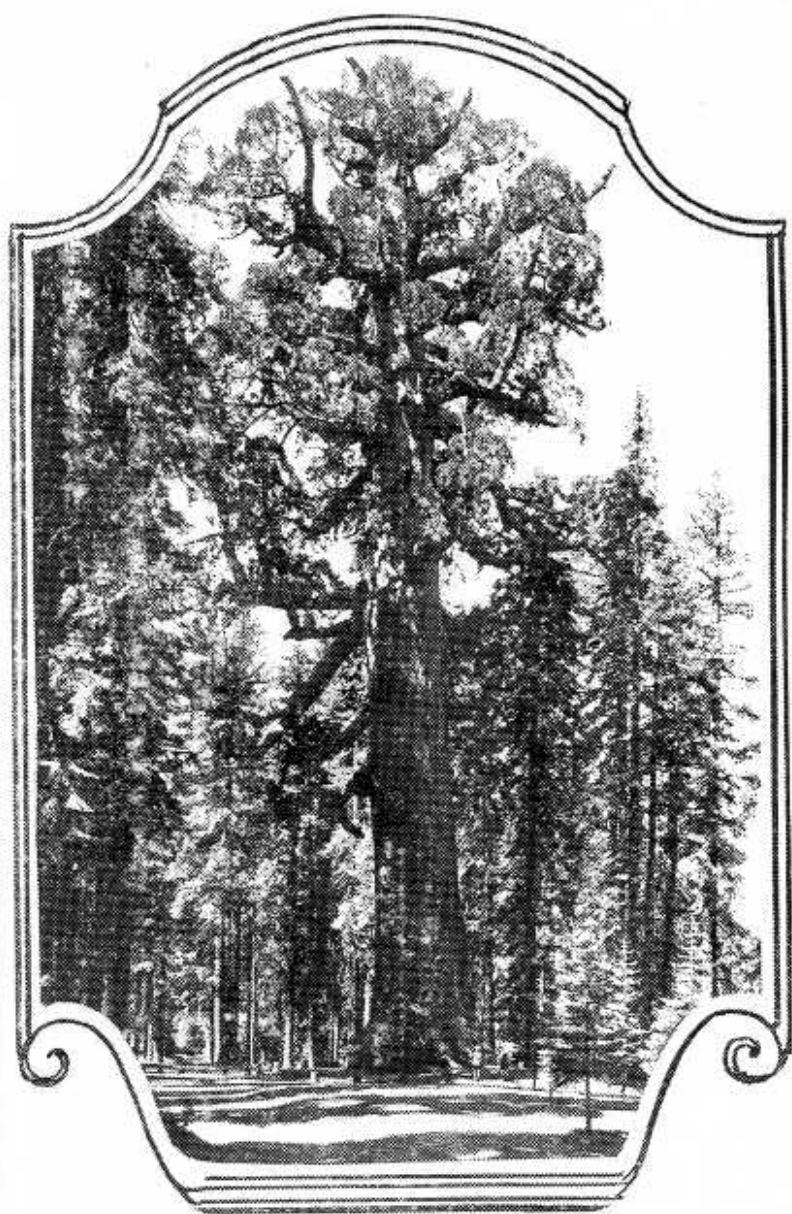


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The Black Swift (*Neophoecetes niger borealis*)

By Ranger-Naturalist Enid Michael

Once again I have had the joy of a visit with the Black Swifts, and once again I have heard the voices of these usually silent birds. Black Swifts arrive in Yosemite Valley about the middle of May, this year, 1935, they were first seen on May 26.

On the morning of June 3 a group of Black Swifts was seen sailing over the Sentinel meadow, often the birds came quite low. While the birds coursed the skies in company they were noticeably paired off; that is, the general movement of the flock was a movement of the whole flock, but within the flock the birds were paired. The conversational notes between birds of a pair was a soft twitter, not unlike the notes of the violet-green swallow.

As I sat in the shade of a cottonwood watching and studying the flight of the Black Swifts, a pair of

White-throated Swifts fairly hurtled into the scene, madly chattering as they came. Bewitched they were; mad feathered creatures of the air. With wild, erratic flight and hysterical laughter they dived among the Black Swifts. A game was on. The maneuvers of an aerial love dance was in progress. The pursued and pursuer flashed thru a series of whizzing zig-zags and came together in mid-air. In close embrace, four wings spinning as a pinwheel, the birds whirled downward. When within a few feet of the ground they parted, to speed away together into the high skies. They clung together so long that I thought they would surely hit the ground.

It is not often that one has such an opportunity to compare the two species of swifts. The striking differences between the species were size and speed. The much smaller

White-throated Swifts apparently flew with much greater speed. The wingbeat of the White-throat was much faster and more twinkling. The White-throated Swift voiced



White-throated Swift



Violet-green Swallow

hysterical chatter, like the wingbeat the notes were hurried and erratic. The Black Swifts flew in a more leisurely fashion, doing much

more sailing on set wings. Also the Blacks maintained a more even keel—not dipping and side tilting so much. And in banking the turns the Black Swifts spread their tails in the manner of a red-tailed hawk, a trick which is seldom employed by the White-throated Swifts. In silhouette against the sky the wings of the White-throated curved in a perfect semitar, while in the Black Swift the perfect curve was broken by shoulder humps.

On this morning the White-throats were sailing above the Blacks, and this I have found likely to be the case when the birds are scouring the same skies.

Calif. Ground Squirrel and Sierra Chickaree

By Enid Michael, Ranger-Naturalist

Five and a half feet above the ground on the feeding tray that is supported by a wooden standard sat the Sierra Chickaree enjoying a feast of hot cakes and watermelon. Jays, robins, grosbeaks and tanagers perched in the bushes waiting for the boss of the feeding tray to finish his meal. Eager-eyed, yet quietly the birds awaited their turn. Even the loud-mouthed jay was silent while the Chickaree, sitting on his haunches, ate in a leisurely fashion, washing his hot cakes down with melon juice.

The ground squirrel who was picking up crumbs from under the

table often stood up on his hind legs and sniffed longingly. Urged on by greed and hunger, he finally made up his mind to have some of the food that was so temptingly near. He started to climb to the feeding tray, but at the first sound of his claws on the standard the Chickaree dropped everything, leaned over the side of the tray and gave the ground squirrel such a look as to cause him to change his mind. The big ground squirrel was apparently bluffed. Back on the ground again he continued to search for crumbs among the brown pine needles. But he was rather dilatory

in his tactics; he could not keep his mind on his work, often he paused to rise up on his hind legs and sniff. Irresistible odors came to his nostrils. Time and again he started up the standard, only to be routed by a dirty look from the Chickaree.

Although twice the size of the Chickaree I could not blame the ground squirrel much for being a bit shy in his approach, for really, with whiskers bristling about melon-stained lips, the Chickaree did appear ferocious. And no doubt the ground squirrel knew from past experience that the Chickaree was truly a tough customer. The ground squirrel, however, did not give up in despair—he still had hope. It got to be a sort of game between the squirrels; the ground squirrel would hitch up the standard, the Chickaree would leap to the edge of the feeding tray and stamp his forefeet and scowl, which bluff for awhile always caused the ground squirrel to turn tail. Chickaree apparently was enjoying the game for there appeared at times a devilish glint of joy in his eyes. Chickaree held his tail aloft or saucily curled over his back. The ground squirrel's tail hung limp in a gesture of shame or disappointment, but he was persistent.

Finally Chickaree seemed to tire of the game, for there at last came the time when he did not spring to the side of the tray when the ground squirrel's claws came scratching up the standard. But

when the ground squirrel got his front paws and his nose over the edge of the feeding tray there was sudden action. Like a flash Chickaree leaped and nipped the ground squirrel on the nose. The ground squirrel loosened his hold on the tray and dropped to the ground with belly low to the ground and tail dragging as he scurried away to his burrow.

The Chickaree is still boss of the feeding tray.

PRAIRIE FALCON FOR YOSEMITE VALLEY

by Jack Sturgeon and Geo. Stilwell

On the morning of June 24, 1935, about 10:30 o'clock, a medium-sized hawk was observed flying in the general direction of Indian canyon with quick wing beats. When it was still far from the canyon wall, it circled back over the museum grounds where we were standing. Being that it came low and directly toward us, we could easily see the long, pointed wings, the light buff coloration (being very light on the throat and upper breast); the comparatively small tail, and above all the very dark "mustache" extending down from each eye. We are positive of identification, for when it turned we could see (with the aid of eight-power binoculars) that it was brown on all upper parts, including the head.



YOSEMITE TREES

Knob-cone Pine Found in Yosemite

By RANGER NATURALIST CARL W. SHARSMITH

Within the bounds of Yosemite National Park, an area of 1,176 square miles, there are now known to exist no less than nine different kinds of pines. Until but recently we thought there were eight, but a discovery made near the Wawona Road Tunnel by Ernest Ewoldsen, a foreman of the ECW insect control organization from the Cascades CCC camp on April 23, 1935, disclosed the presence of the Knob-cone Pine (*Pinus attenuata*, Lemdon). But one tree was found, situated in the very rough area slightly west of and below the west portal of the tunnel. It is about 65 feet high and 14½ inches in diameter 4½ feet from the ground. This is a rather large individual for this kind of tree at best. The species was verified by Ranger-Forester Emil Ernst and Forest Technician S. T. Carlson.

The elevation at which this individual Knob-cone Pine occurs is about 4,500 feet above sea level.

The nearest known specimens of this same tree are to be found at El Portal, a distance of approximately six miles by air line from the one discovered near the tunnel.

One of the most marked features of this pine is the great persistence of the cones on the tree. They remain on the branches or even the trunk for years, often becoming embedded in the bark, or sometimes even becoming completely overgrown by the growth of the trunk, so that boards opened at the mill may disclose deeply buried cones in the wood. The cones usually develop in whorls, and due to their persistence a tree may be almost covered with them, the whorls being spaced apart along the main trunk or trunks and out on the larger branches. Such trees present a very curious appearance, and with the pale green, rather loose foliage is an unmistakable character of this tree.

Still another characteristic of the

Knob-cone Pine is that the cones seldom open until the tree dies or is killed, or on branches removed from the tree. Under these conditions the cones open only very slowly. They can be forced open, however, by moderately roasting them; after this treatment they open readily enough and the seeds may thus be obtained. Together with this long retention of the seeds within the cone, the seeds remain viable for many years.

These facts lead us to surmise the important role of fire in governing the existence and reproduction of this tree. Indeed, fire is an exceedingly important factor controlling the present distribution of the Knob-cone Pine. The seeds have a high percentage of germination in barren areas, particularly in ashy soils. By virtue of all the characteristics we have enumerated, the tree is remarkably adapted to fire conditions, gaining the ascendancy over other pines within its range, in areas where intermittent fires are the rule. We might even go further to suggest that so close is the connection between forest fires and reproduction that cessation of all fires might lead to its gradual disappearance. It represents a rather unique type of specialization seen in comparatively few pines. It appears to us as an "adaption" to

fire conditions, and what has aptly been called the "fire-type pine." This so-called "adaption," however, must be looked upon as a special feature of this type of tree which permits its survival under adverse conditions, and hardly anything toward which the tree has actively striven in order to overcome these adverse conditions. "Adaptions" seem often so complete in the organic world that it is easy to slip into this pitfall of error.

The unique characters of the Knob-cone pine suggests the highly important value of this tree for reforestation purposes in fire-swept areas within its range. As such it is being considerably used. It also finds a large amount of horticultural use.

The discovery of this tree species within the bounds of Yosemite Park marks its first known occurrence here. It indicates not only the probable existence of others between this individual tree by the Wawona road tunnel, and El Portal, or other reaches of the Park boundary in lower altitudes towards the west, but that still other botanical discoveries lie as a reward to the keen-eyes naturalist-minded observed in the Park. We must also add that this is the first time the species has been reported from any of the National Parks.





YOSEMITE ANIMALS

“Old Bill”, A Deer

(Ranger-Naturalist Paul W. Nesbit)

Thousands of visitors to Glacier Point have become acquainted with “Old Bill,” a friendly California mule deer buck. One is likely to notice him at any time of day near the porch of the Glacier Point hotel stalking among a group of admirers, and investigating one outstretched hand after another.

He has a sweet tooth, or perhaps a whole face full. Candy and pastries please him most, but he will eat a wide variety of lunch foods. One would think that he would relish a little cabbage or lettuce at least, but according to Mr. William Facio, the manager of the hotel, from whom much of the information for this article was obtained, he must be coaxed to eat them.

While Old Bill is having his un-failing appetite appeased, the surrounding folks are appeasing their curiosity and desire for snapshots. Frequently Old Bill is enticed to an empty hand, but he retains his dignity and stalks scornfully away. At other times when picture takers maneuver to get him into the desired pose, Old Bill is likely to be-

come impatient. Then he will paw the earth and shake his antlered head, or make a striking motion by



raising a front hoof. Many persons then change bold fronts into hasty retreats, and they are wisely interpreting the signs that would call for such action. Deer are capable of striking wickedly with those sharp

front hoofs, and it is a successful means of defense against such animals as coyotes. However, it seems that Old Bill has never struck or harmed anyone, and even frequently allows himself to be petted.

Old Bill makes his appearance each year at about the time the visitors begin to arrive and remains through the season. At first his antlers are short, tender stubs. They gradually become larger and branched, being nourished by a rich blood supply close to the surface. When the antlers become fully formed, the outer velvety covering dries and is scraped off on the bushes. Many people are afforded an opportunity to see at least one stage in this development at close hand.

By fall Old Bill is always fat and ready to migrate with other deer to lower altitudes where the snow does not get so deep. He must then live as other deer and is probably not recognized in his winter haunts. Perhaps he does not go outside the Park boundaries, or he would likely have fallen prey to hunters, being so tame. Old Bill is only one of many deer that are likely to be seen around Glacier Point hotel, but he is the tamest and the one most frequently observed. However, there is a doe that is almost as tame and shares many honors with Old Bill. The other deer keep their distance to a much greater extent. They may often be seen in the evening eating scraps from the kitchen laid out for them, or trying to obtain salt from the ground where the ice

cream freezers are emptied.

Old Bill may easily be recognized because his left hind foot is badly spread. Also because his left antler droops a little. In 1934 he had three full points, which seems to agree with the statement that he first appeared in 1931 as a fawn. The story is that at that time he and a sister fawn were brought there by their mother. Perhaps the doe that is so tame is that sister. No one knows what became of the mother, but there is a chance that she was the doe that six or seven years ago walked about among the tables while the people were dining and fared with the best. At least there was such a doe who was famous in her day when the guests dined on an open porch which has since been enclosed.

In 1933 Old Bill was quite friendly with Min, a large dog kept at the hotel to keep the bears away. Min was punished at first for chasing deer. Later Old Bill and Min would eat together and lay down together. But the doe had a fawn and seemed to fear Min. She would chase him on to the porch, striking with her sharp front hoofs. Perhaps Old Bill developed a dislike also, for he too became a chaser of Min. It must have been a bewildered dog, chased, but not allowed to retaliate.

For many, Old Bill has done what pictures and books can never do. He has given them an intimate acquaintance with actual nature. Undoubtedly many have had to revise their conception of deer size

and characteristics due to close contact with an actual specimen. Who can number his friends, or sum up his influence upon the visitors to Yosemite?

**NEW
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION**

A publication of interest to scientists and laymen alike is just off the press of the Government Printing Office.

It is the second in the series of Fauna, prepared and written by George M. Wright and Ben H. Thompson, chief and assistant chief, respectively, of the Wildlife Division of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

The foreword by Arno B. Cammerer, director of the National Park Service, summarizes the purpose and scope of the pamphlet, as follows:

"The national parks of the United States have come to play a unique and major role in wildlife conservation, that of perpetuating representative examples of the primitive American wilderness. The extreme difficulty of preserving these precious wildlife remnants as to the completeness of species, numbers of each kind, and naturalness of environments in the face of a mushrooming growth in park travel and an alarming depletion of wildlife resources throughout the land, caused former Director Horace M. Albright to order a national parks wildlife survey. The results of this invest-

igation were published by the National Park Service in Fauna Series No. 1, "A Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks."

Under the title, "Wildlife Management in the National Parks," the present volume continues the subject, and develops valuable and practical suggestions on how man may profit by the mistakes of the past in adapting himself to future restoration of wildlife and utilization of these magnificent solitudes in such fashion as will cause the minimum of disturbance to its native denizens in feathers and fur and scales. The intimate glimpses presented of the creatures of the wild in their native status and habitat give the book a wide appeal. Even a vocational guidance value inheres in its pages, in that their contests reveal something of the opportunities for the youth whose love of nature inclines him to such a career.

America today is increasingly aware of the duty owing to the America of tomorrow in preserving and conserving the irreplaceable features of our fast vanishing wilderness. For this continuing duty a variety of expert scientific study and guidance will be needed. This publication fully outlines wildlife management and wilderness technique.

The 142-page book is priced at 20 cents, and is for sale through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, or through the Yosemite Museum.



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Dan Anderson