

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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YOSEMITE NATURE GUIDE SERVICE

The fourth season of the Yosemite Nature Guide Service comes to an end on August 31. From the standpoint of interest shown by the public and the attendance at lectures and field trips the past season has broken all records; in fact the attendance during the month of July was far in excess of that for the whole season four years ago when the work was started. Nearly forty-nine thousand have heard lectures and talks by Nature Guides and nearly four thousand have studied nature first hand along the trails. The all day field trips to the rim of the Valley on Saturdays have been particularly popular, a minimum of fifteen and a maximum of more than a hundred being reported. Thousands of questions put to Nature Guides during their office hours have been satisfactorily answered with consequent inspiration to learn more concerning living things. Two wild flower shows have furnished visitors a chance to get acquainted with the commoner varieties of plants within the Park and have at the same time stimulated interest in wild flower conservation.

Those who have come in contact with the Nature Guide Service have stated that it was one of the best things they had found in the national parks. It has been officially stated that the most needed development in the parks is that of the educational work. Such an educational program as has been worked out in Yosemite is needed in every national park and owing to enthusiasm of friends of the Nature Guide Service there is hope that another year will see equal development of this work in every national park adequately supported by Congressional appropriation.

SIERRA NEVADA RANGE A SINGLE MOUNTAIN

The whole Sierra Nevada Range, extending for more than four hundred miles roughly parallel to the eastern boundary of California is geologically but a single mountain. It is a single block of the earth's crust --- a block four hundred miles long and eighty miles wide --- that has been tipped up at the eastern edge. The western edge lies buried beneath the alluvial sediments of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, and the elevated eastern edge is represented by the crest of the Sierra Nevada from the Mount Whitney region in the south to the Mount Lassen district in the north.

A good simple account of the successive uplifts that finally raised the Sierra Nevada some 13,000 feet in the Yosemite region will be found in the admirable geological resume "The Story of Yosemite Valley" written by Francois E. Matthes and recently printed on the back of the Yosemite Valley Special Sheet. This map may be obtained from the United States Geological Survey for ten cents.

A HUMMING BIRD'S PRIVATE GARDEN

On the wall above Mirror Lake where a little stream trickles down the steep slope of Half Dome a wide ribbon of blooming Cardinal Mimulus forms a beautiful garden. A calliope Humming-bird lives here and claims a certain section of the garden for his very own. Two dead stalks of Lupine, standing above the blossoms, are his chosen perching sites, and here, when not feeding among the flowers, he sits on guard. Great black bees also like the nectar of the Mimulus, but they get no honey here, for the Calliope is ever ready to give battle to poachers. Time and again the Hummingbird was seen to chase a bee about, striking it with its bill until the bee was driven from the garden. Strange appearing is the Hummer that feeds among the Mimulus blossoms for he wears a crown-patch; a crown-patch caused by many dustings of golden pollen grains.

SNAKE ROOM AT MUSEUM POPULAR

Because of a gift of a friend of the Yosemite Museum it has been possible to exhibit six species of snakes: Pacific Rattlesnake, Gopher Snake, Coral King Snake, Rubber Snake, Blue Racer and two kinds of garter snakes. Most of these snakes have fed well and many persons have had their first opportunity of watching how a snake kills and eats its prey. The rattlesnakes and the gopher snake have been most dependable when a demonstration of feeding was requested. At the end of the season all but the rattlers will be liberated and other snakes will be captured for exhibition next year.

THE NUTTALL WOODPECKER

The Nuttall Woodpecker is a rare bird in the Yosemite Valley. This bird is one of the smaller woodpeckers. Like most woodpeckers it has a loud voice and its rattling call-notes might remind one of the blast of the policeman's whistle. The Nuttall has a series of white stripes across a dark back, and these markings account for his nickname: Little Ladder-back. Recently a Nature Study Class had the pleasure of seeing Little Ladder-back. A visit with this bird was an event as he had not been noted in the Valley since February, 1922.

NUTMEGS IN FULL FRUIT.

One of the rarer trees of the State, the California Nutmeg, is to be found in the Merced Canyon below Cascade Falls. The fir-like foliage is not distinctive enough to always acquaint the observer with the fact that he is seeing a unique tree, but when in fruit there is no mistaking it. In the pioneer days the wood of this tree was selected for bridges because of its durability and was known as Stinking Yew because of its odor. The peculiar nutmeg-like fruits are conspicuous at this time of year. The nuts were highly esteemed by the Indians who made them palatable by roasting.

SEASON'S LAST HIGH SIERRA FIELD TRIP

The last Nature Guide trip to the high Sierra Hikers Camps was a success in every way. Eight people, including the guide, took the walk. All were good hikers and although the daily marches were long and much climbing was done, each mile brought new scenes and new thrills to every member of the party. The miles of forest along the Merced Lake Trail, the high meadows of Fletcher Pass, the Mountain Lakes, the Waterwheel Falls of the Tuolumne, and the endless flower gardens brought forth expressions of delight. At the foot of the Tenaya Zig-zags, on the last day, council was held in the shade of a giant *Chrysolepis* oak. All expressed a hope that such camps would be extended into the little-known northern section of the Park.

THE LINCOLN SPARROW

The Lincoln Sparrow belongs to the Song Sparrow group, but is unlike most Song Sparrows inasmuch as he is a shy bird. Four or five pairs of these birds nest about the floor of Yosemite Valley. They are sweet singers, but so shy are they that their song is seldom heard by the tourist, and almost never are they seen. This year a pair of Lincolns chose to nest in a dense willow thicket on the bank of the Merced River. Just across from this willow swamp a camp was located. Day after day the occupants of the camp heard the song of the Lincoln Sparrow. Finally one day one of the young left its home and flew across the river. He discovered the "Bird Table" and thereafter he came daily to pick up crumbs from about the table.

BEARS MORE NUMEROUS THIS YEAR

Bears have been so numerous this past summer that few people have left the park without seeing a real live bear. They have often been met on the roads and trails and in the camps. If not encountered in broad daylight they are always to be found at the bear pits in the evening.

MOUNTAIN QUAIL

Although not common, the Mountain Quail may occasionally be seen above the rim of the Valley. In August and September, however, they may be encountered on the Valley floor. Several have been seen this past week below the Bridal Veil checking station. This is the handsomest of California's upland game birds.

WARBLERS OF YOSEMITE

Six different species of Warblers nest in the Yosemite Valley. The Audubon Warblers are the first to arrive, and in the early spring they are here in great numbers. Most of the Audubons move higher as the season progresses; only a few pairs remain to nest in the Valley. The six nesting species are represented, during the nesting period, in about equal numbers. About the first of August, or so soon as the season's young are able to fly, most of the warblers leave the Valley. The Yellow Warblers, however, remain through the season. Of all the song birds that frequent the Valley the Yellow Warbler is the only one that persistently sings throughout the summer months.



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