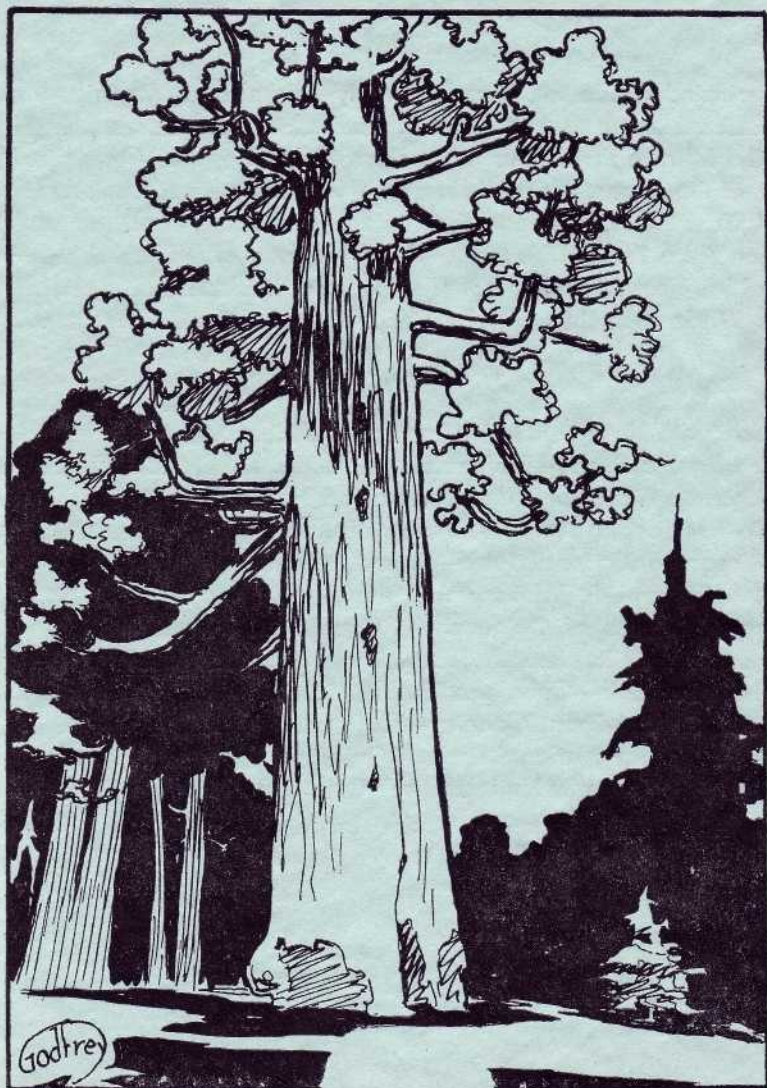


YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

Vol. XXV

November, 1946

No. 11



**BOOKS AND MAPS FOR SALE
AT THE YOSEMITE MUSEUM**

All mail orders should be addressed to the Yosemite Natural History Association, Yosemite National Park, California. The California Sales Tax of two and a half per cent (2½%) and postage should be included with check or money order. Please do not send stamps.

GENERAL

Adams Illustrated Guide to Yosemite Valley—Ansel and Virginia	
Adams	\$ 1.00
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(Continued on Inside Back Cover)

Yosemite Nature Notes

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF
THE YOSEMITE NATURALIST DEPARTMENT
AND THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

F. A. Kittredge, Superintendent

M. V. Walker, Associate Park Naturalist

Harry C. Parker, Assistant Park Naturalist

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WATER OUZEL

By Elizabeth H. Godfrey

I stood upon the riverside
Where meadowland was stretching
wide,

And saw reflected in the stream
The traceries of Autumn's theme.

A rainbow-tinted waterfall
Like gossamer on granite wall,
With azaleas brilliant hues
Were mirrored with October blues.

A water ouzel on its throne,
A smooth and barren river stone,
Was likewise visioned in the
swoon

Of mirrored scene; late afternoon.

It sang a scale of rhapsody—
A burst of sweetest melody—
And then like a performing
clown;

It dipped; it rose; bobbed up and
down.

It gave a show, a thrilling one,
And then, alas, with shifting sun,
It made a bow and swift adieu,
And all reflections vanished too!

In the stream of recollection
There is a print of that reflection—
Of Autumn's theme; the rainbow
fall,

Enhanced by water ouzel's call.

A VISIT WITH TA-BU-CE

By Carl W. Sharsmith, Ranger Naturalist

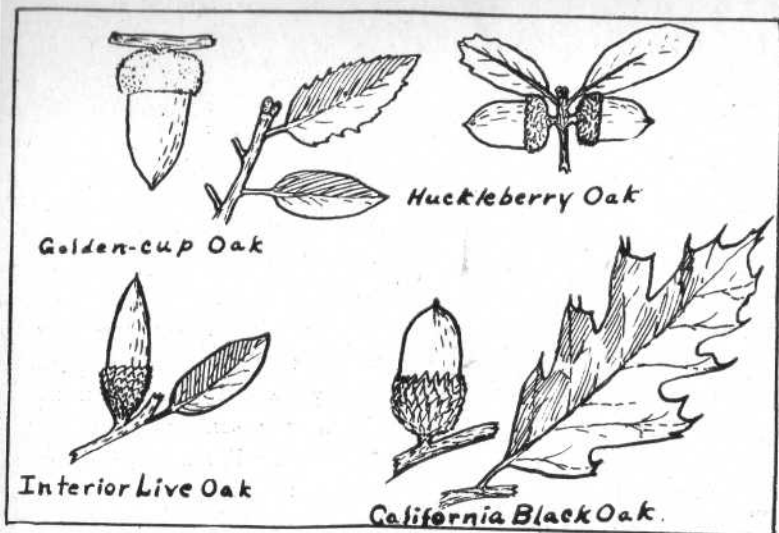
Many of the visitors to Yosemite Valley from 1929 to 1942 probably remember the Indian demonstration given in the small model Indian village situated just back of the Yosemite Museum. During the summer months an attempt was made by the Museum staff and a few of the local Indians to present, in a manner that was as attractive and interesting as possible, an authentic idea of the life and customs of the human inhabitants of Yosemite Valley before the white man came. The war interrupted this program; and,

although the u-ma-chas, chuck-ahs, and foot drum still remain, the Indians who participated have gone their various ways. Ta-bu-ce (Maggie Howard), one of the principals in this demonstration, has left Yosemite Valley because of her advanced age and has "retired" to her small home near Mono Lake.

For some thirteen summers Ta-bu-ce demonstrated daily her artistry in basket making and beadwork, or in constructing other artifacts. She could also be observed in one of the



Photo by Ralph Anderson



many steps needed in the preparation of acorns for food. All these activities were exemplary of an extremely interesting primitive culture, all of which depicted for the Park visitor the life of Yosemite Valley in the long ago. Matching perfectly in person and spirit her background of Yosemite trees, cliffs, and waterfalls, Ta-bu-ce gave a picture of industry and quiet contentment as she skillfully manipulated her native materials. These materials were of her own gathering from the adjacent forests and meadows or from her home surroundings near Mono Lake. In the latter instance she was continuing the trade in aboriginal resources established over the Mono trail into Yosemite Valley by the Indians of ancient times. The observant visitor could learn a great deal from Ta-bu-ce concerning the means and

methods of survival in an unmodified environment.

We visited Ta-bu-ce at her little home near the base of Bloody Can-

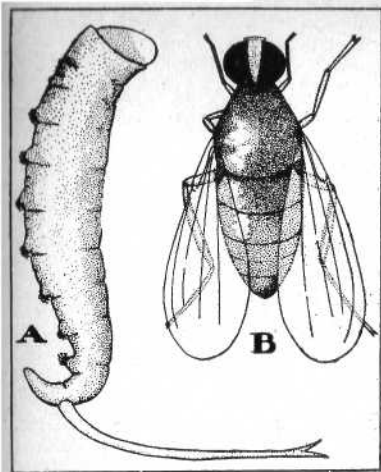


yon to the east of Yosemite National Park in July, 1946. She greeted us—my wife, our two small children, and myself—with the same fine characteristic smile that has endeared her to many. Ta-bu-ce has aged considerably in the last four years. Probably well over eighty years of age, and with her eyesight considerably dimmed, she nevertheless manages, unusually well, to move about her domicile and to carry on her household tasks. A small outdoor bower of willows, with a comfortable couch on the ground, leaned against a wall of her tiny house. In its shade she no doubt indulges in basket work during the warm, sunny days. To our delight she presented us with a quantity of excellent pine nuts, and promised each of the children a toy hickey

(papoose carrier) for our next visit.

On our return late the following month we brought her a few necessities. Rummaging in her willow bower she produced the little basket work hickies. One had a diamond patterned shade signifying girl-baby for our little girl, the other a diagonal patterned shade signifying boy-baby for our boy. The color of the dolls' cheeks was made from a native rock pigment obtained from the nearby Sweetwater Mountains. The hair was gleanings from Ta-bu-ce's own head. For my special pleasure she produced a handful of precious Ka-cha-vee. This, the dried larvae of a small fly (*Ephydra hians*) which breeds in the saline waters of Mono Lake, is a nutritious, good-tasting food. It is rich in fats and proteins and to my taste resembles pure wheat





germ with a tender, nutty texture. In appearance it is like little parched rice grains; and it constitutes a rich, concentrated, palatable food. Ta-bu-ce explained that not much Ka-cha-vee had been gathered this year, and that she was treasuring hers as a reserve against the winter.

The interest in Yosemite Indian ways which Ta-bu-ce aroused among the many visitors to Yosemite National Park was always of a very high order. Likewise, high is the respect and affection with which she is esteemed by those privileged to know her more intimately. Her abil-

ity to adapt herself to the mannerisms and difficulties imposed by throngs of people—many sincerely interested, others merely curious or perhaps unknowingly aggressive—was remarkable. To each of these her response was undoubtedly appropriate. She had a rare sense of humor, and could turn a question she did not care to answer in such a way as to put the questioner "on the spot." Two of the men on the museum staff who knew her best and who had her closest confidence have aptly said that although she was born in the Stone Age of human culture, she could, as a participant in Camp 14 programs face the microphone and an audience of thousands with unruffled composure and poise. The fine photographs of Ta-bu-ce in the short, excellent account of Yosemite Indians (1) will recall these virtues and abilities to many. Now retired, Ta-bu-ce is devoting her remaining years to the scenes of her childhood, her ancient tribal grounds, Dignified, self-contained, self-sufficient, she nevertheless radiates warmth and good cheer with her wonderful smile to those who in her keen discernment are worthy of it.

(1) See "Yosemite Indians, Yesterday and Today," by Elizabeth H. Godfrey, Yosemite Nature Notes, July, 1941.





PLAYFUL TUOLUMNE WEASELS

By Robert W. Prudhomme, Park Ranger

One of the most unique of our smaller Yosemite mammals is the mountain weasel, (***Mustela arizonensis***) a lightning fast, sinewy animal, possessing moods of cunning, curiosity, savagery, and friendliness. Shortly before sundown on July 30, I happened upon three of these weasels playing in front of the Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Station. Their antics were a source of intense interest and amusement to those of us who happened to be fortunate enough to witness such a rare show.

Completely in ignorance of their human audience, the weasels busied themselves in animal games; boxing one another with their tiny fore paws, and chattering in soft animal tones. They would weave and dart over the ground and in sudden spurts scurry in and out of the rocks and over the logs and hummocks in single file, moving as smoothly as the eddying and undulating of waves among the tide pools of the sea.

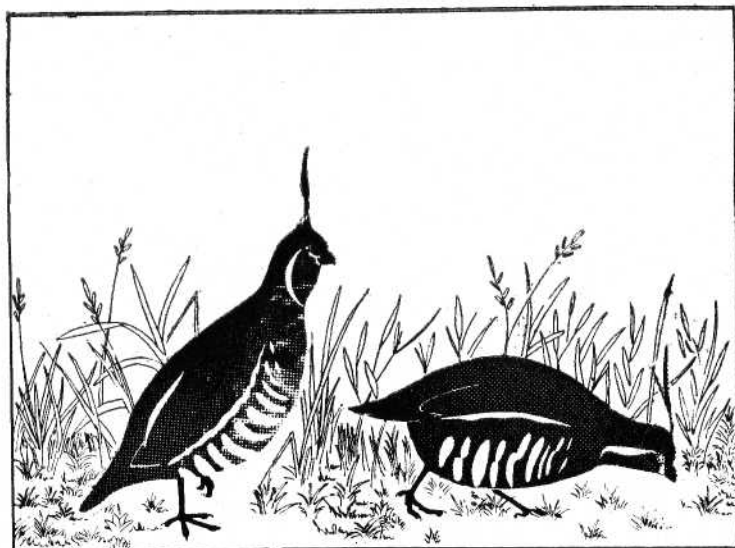
Experimentally, with pursed lips, I called to the weasels. They stopped in an instant flash to wheel about and bounce over the ground, as if on coil springs, in their rush to identify my call. One of the weasels, evidently the leader of the three, came up to my extended hand, nipped the tip of one finger, and then scampered off to join his two companions in an ecstatic animal ballet, wheeling and whirling along the top of a trailside log. Each time that I called they would stop like statues and then hurry back to where I stood, one following directly behind the other.

Occasionally stretching their long necks, and rising on their hind paws to expose the velvety-white fur of their under sides, the weasels would stare at me curiously with flashing black eyes and hiss like snakes. Then in a line they would rush away in swift, excited movements, finally to disappear into the pine woods—their game of daring ended.

NATURE NOTELETS

In addition to furnishing the permanent employees with a place to spend a little of their leisure time, the community vegetable garden has a second important use for it attracts a large number of native birds. This does not please the gardeners, however, unless they are also interested in birds and are willing to share a portion of their crop. On a recent

visit to the garden the following birds, in addition to our common summer residents, were observed:—white-crowned sparrow, (abundant); fox sparrow, (1); green-tailed towhee, (1); goldfinches, (abundant); yellow warbler, (1); chipping sparrows, (abundant); wren, (1); and juncos, (abundant). (M. V. W.)





BOOKS AS GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS TIME

A large number of books are ordered each year through the Yosemite Natural History Association for use as Christmas Gifts. For the first time in several years we now have on hand a good stock of popular books, many of which have been out of print for some time. (See list "Books and Maps for Sale at the Yosemite Museum" on inside front and back cover of this issue.)

We again ask your cooperation in the handling of these special mail orders at Christmas time. It would be appreciated if we could receive your order well in advance of the holiday rush. We especially request that you include in your check or money order the 2½% state sales tax which we are required to collect on our book sales.

CLUB MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Few people realize what a saving they make when they enter their magazine subscriptions through the Club arrangement provided by the Yosemite Natural History Association. A number of years ago the American Nature Association and the American Forestry Association indicated their willingness to cooperate and assist the newly formed Yosemite Natural History Association when they made available this greatly reduced annual subscription rate. American Forests alone is priced at \$4.00 annually, and the Nature Magazine is \$3.00 annually. The Club offer provided by the Yosemite Natural History Association is as follows:

Yosemite Nature Notes	\$1.00 yearly
Yosemite Nature Notes with Nature Magazine	\$3.00 yearly
Yosemite Nature Notes with American Forests	\$3.00 yearly
Yosemite Nature Notes with both the above	\$5.00 yearly



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Dan Anderson