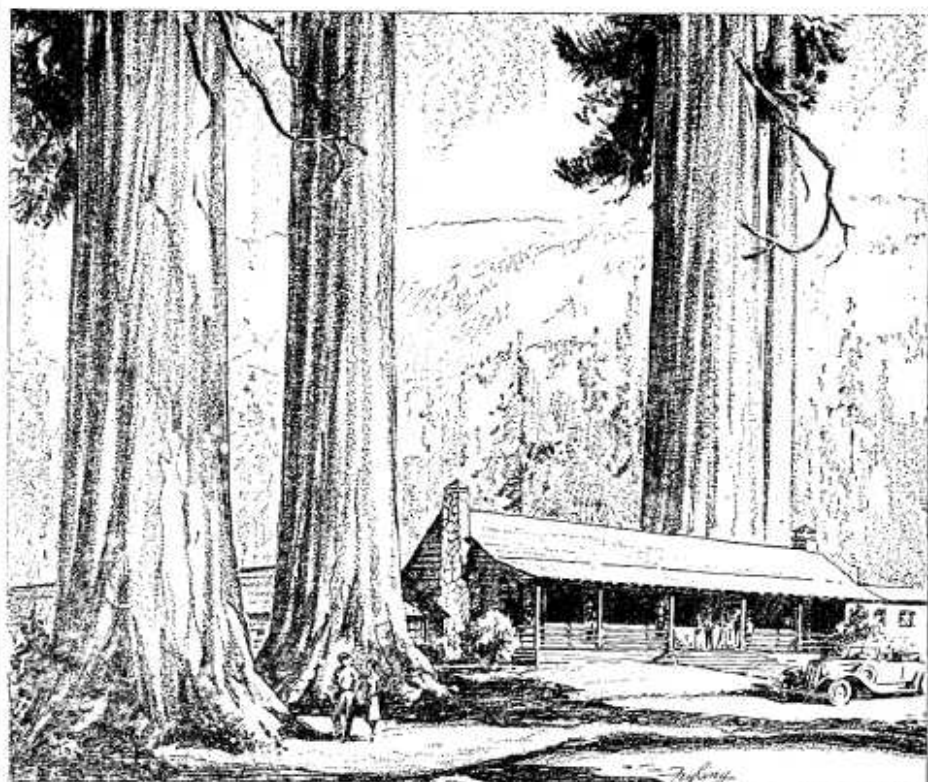


YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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AN OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER CATCHES A DRAGON-FLY

By Ranger-Naturalist Enid Michael

Every day I wander forth seeking adventure and being blessed with a keen interest in the out-of-doors, hardly a day passes that does not bring some sort of adventure. Of course there are days of slight adventure and days of big adventure. Days of slight adventure may be when the robin, the jay, or some other kind of bird first brings its young to the feeding tray. Or it may be that the magic of a rain has turned all the mossy walls freshly green. Perhaps a mother bear may lead her plump little cub through camp, or some mother deer may bring her twin fawns with her when she comes to the tent to beg a "handout."

It is an adventure to find a robin's nest built in some low shrub and to gaze on the beautiful robin-blue eggs. And I have seen the male robin when guarding the nest gaze upon the eggs as proudly as if he had laid the eggs himself.

It was a lazy sun-drenched morning toward the end of August, no breeze was stirring, Yosemite Fall drifted down like a lean misty ribbon. It had been long since a rain had washed the insects from the sky

and the dragon-flies were hawking high. I was lying on my back in the shade of a cottonwood watching the dragon-flies weave patterns against the blue sky, when suddenly the Olive-sided Flycatcher darted from his perch in the dead willow top and I heard his mandibles pop as he plucked a passing dragon-fly from the air. He had seized the dragon-fly by the head and as he returned to his perch the long body stuck straight out and the gauze wings of the victim glistened in the sunlight. On his perch the flycatcher proceeded to maul the dragon-fly and I thought he was trying to break off its wings, but finally after two or three minutes he managed to gulp it down wings and all. I was rather surprised to see the dragon-fly disappear wings and all because on several previous occasions I had seen the Olive-sided Flycatcher maul the wings off from a monarch butterfly before the soft body was gulped.

That a flycatcher can so easily pluck a dragon-fly on the wing speaks well for its agility. Dragon-flies themselves are noted flycatchers; they too have speed of wing and great agility.



YOSEMITE TREES

TREE RATIO AT GLACIER POINT By Ranger Naturalist E. L. Lucas

The average visitor is impressed by the Red and White Firs upon arriving at Glacier Point. Many times the following question is asked. "To what extent do the firs dominate?" So an attempt was made to determine the approximate percentages of all trees found in the area between Glacier Point and Sentinel Dome.

A tree count was made along the Sentinel Dome Trail. The trees were counted in a two hundred foot wide strip, extending to about one hundred feet on either side of the trail. The one and one-half mile trail was divided into three sections. The first section involved the trees from Glacier Point to the Glacier Point Camp ground; the second extended to the head of the foot trail which leads down to the Four Mile Trail;

and the third section ends at the top of Sentinel Dome. The 1205 trees



White Fir *left*, and Sugar Pines

counted along the trail represent six species divided as follows:

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Average
White Fir.....	75.5%	84.8%	28.0%	62.7%
Red Fir.....	3.0	11.1	49.0	21.2
Jeffrey Pine.....	15.0	3.0	9.3	9.1
Lodgepole Pine.....	3.0	.6	8.7	4.0
Sugar Pine.....	3.5	.5	0.0	1.4
Western White Pine.....	0.0	0.0	5.0	1.6

This count reveals that about eighty-four per cent of the trees along the trail to Sentinel Dome are firs, of which about sixty-three per cent are white and about twenty-one per cent are red. The ratio of White Fir to the Red Fir is about three to one. The Jeffrey, Lodgepole, Sugar, and Western White Pines make up the remaining sixteen per cent. A study of the trees on the western side of Sentinel Dome indicates a somewhat higher percentage of the Lodgepole and Western White Pines.

There are a few Douglas Firs close to the valley rim just north of this Sentinel Dome Trail, a Western Juniper grows just below the Lookout, and Western Hemlocks have been transplanted about the Glacier Point Hotel so there are nine kinds of conifers in the immediate Glacier Point region.

BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS AGAIN VISIT YOSEMITE

By Jr. Park Naturalist James E. Cole

The third known visit of Bohemian Waxwings to Yosemite Valley was recorded this winter. These beautiful northern birds only occasionally invade California but then generally in considerable numbers. They are boreal birds that breed in northern Canada nearly to the limit of trees and sporadically make southern migrations as far south as California. Several such migrations are recorded in the literature, but it is not known whether the previous appear-

ances of Bohemian Waxwings in Yosemite correlates with the appearances of the birds in other parts of the State.

The Bohemian Waxwing which constitutes the third park record was found dead in Yosemite Valley on December 23, 1938. Its presence was made known by Mr. Wendell Otter, a resident of the valley, who saved the specimen and brought it to the attention of the naturalist staff as a bird he could not identify.

The cause of its death was not definitely determined. However, when it was being mounted as a study skin for our scientific research collection, it was noted that the back had received a considerable blow which caused internal hemorrhages.

NATURE NOTELETS

Ranger Vernon Lowery reports that while on night patrol on April 10 he was notified by the telephone operator at 4 a.m. that someone had just removed the receiver from the hook of the telephone located at the foot of Four-Mile Trail. The operator further stated that she could hear someone moving around although no one answered her.

Investigation showed that the phone box had been clawed open by a bear and the receiver knocked off the hook. Ranger Lowery's report closed with the following statement: "He (the bear) wasn't there when I arrived, so I couldn't help him get his number."



YOSEMITE ANIMALS

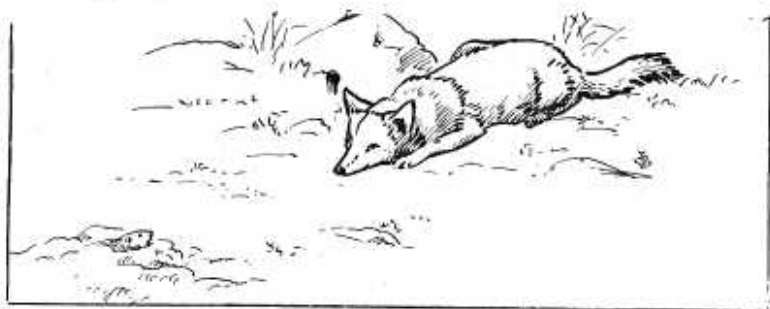
HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS FOR COYOTE IN A YOSEMITE MEADOW

By Ruth Kales Knowles

My attention was drawn to the meadow in front of our house at noontime March 7, a cold, snowy, rainy day, by some passers-by. The ground was flecked with small snow patches, making it difficult to find the cause of their interest. Looking through my binoculars I saw a coyote in the middle of the area, about one hundred yards distant. I watched it as it trotted along a few paces. Suddenly it stopped, crept stealthily, close to the ground, then pounced, bringing up in its mouth a black looking creature with a long tail, about the size of a gopher, evidently a meadow mouse. With several swift jerks and snatches with its teeth, the coyote managed to gulp down the wriggling animal.

I watched the coyote for twenty minutes, while it repeated the performance. During that time it consumed seven rodents. Only three pounces proved unfruitful. Four almost got away, but the coyote managed to keep them dangling by their tails till it could flip them up and into its mouth, always gulping them down in two or three quick snaps. There is no telling how many mice it had eaten before my attention was directed to it.

In the meantime, several cars passed by on the road around the meadow but the coyote paid no attention to them. Apparently considering it had fared well the coyote paused a few moments and trotted across the road over toward the



church bowl. This gave me an opportunity to note the tawny shades of brown on the top and back of the head and ears. The light caught it so that the same shade showed up on the legs, and also accentuated the black flecks on the body and tip of the tail.

COYOTES

By Ranger-Naturalist Enid Michael

Mr. Michael and I were wandering down the bridle-path with no special object in view but just to enjoy the lovely sunny August morning when glancing up the open wash that comes down through the timber we caught a glimpse of some animal that was moving along over the boulders behind a curtain of low-hanging oak branches. We stopped and when I made squeaking sounds out stepped a pup coyote. We were in plain view in the bright sunshine, but as we remained quite motionless the pup could not make out just what we were and besides my squeakings piqued its curiosity.

It kept moving closer and was soon joined by a second pup. Both animals moved slowly and cautiously forward, stopping from time to time to sniff the air. Finally the bolder one of the two was within thirty feet of us and we could see the white of its eyes. The leading pup was evidently becoming suspicious, it stood posed on a boulder, presenting a perfect picture — like a mounted specimen in some up-to-date museum. It stood still so long (perhaps only five minutes, but it seemed much longer) that I began to wish that I had sat down before I began my squeakings. I believe the pup would have come closer had it not been for a series of warning "yips" that came from farther up the talus slope. With the first "yip" the young coyotes slowly turned tail and reluctantly loped up the wash. Looking up the wash we saw three more coyotes—one old one, or possibly two old ones and another pup. Coyotes are rare in the valley and usually very shy. To Charles and to me it was a thrilling adventure to have such a nice visit with a family group of coyotes.





RARE YOSEMITE FLOWERS
By Ranger Naturalist J. C. Shirley

Due to unusually favorable conditions several species of plants have flowered in the park this past year which are quite rare for the locality.

Cancer Root (*Orobanche fasciculata* Nutt.) is a root parasite which grows in only a few localities of the Yosemite region. One specimen was found this year in the talus slope between the Ahwahnee Hotel and the Indian Caves. The flower appeared at first glance to belong to the Figwort family but it really belongs to the Broom-Rape family. The corolla is dull yellow and about one inch long.

Steer's Head (*Dicentra uniflora* Kell.) is recorded by Jepson, *Manual of Flowering Plants of California*, p. 405, as occurring on rocky slopes, 6,000 to 12,000 ft. Sierra Nevada from Fresno County, north. Several clusters of these plants were observed on the Ledge Trail, June 26, by the Yosemite School of Field Natural History. Although there were several plants, only four flowers were actually in bloom. The flowers were almost white.

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha biflora* DC.) although not so rare a plant as the two mentioned above, yet has not been observed during the past five years at the time the Field School has taken the Pohono Trail trip. This year, on June 30, we found



Marsh Marigold *Caltha biflora* D. C.

many of the flowers in bloom in a very wet meadow between Glacier Point and Bridalveil Creek. Collections were made for the herbarium at the Yosemite Museum.

BRIDALVEIL RAINBOWS**By Ranger Naturalist V. Baysinger**

One of the most popular and well-received features of the Naturalist program in Yosemite is the "Auto Caravan." If one should record the expressions of appreciation made by the visitors who join these motorcades, an unending list of commendation would result.

Possibly I have an unusual esthetic appreciation of the beauty of Bridalveil's rainbow. And yet, I find that the visitors enjoy the beauty of this spectacle without exception.

As we watch, a lovely rainbow is formed in the mist which varies momentarily. Each gust of wind changes the natural refractive screen and as the sun's angle of elevation in the west lessens, the band of colors raises up on the mist and soon it is gone until the following day.

Once again the auto caravan gets under way, each participant feeling that this stop was an excellent one. And as the long string of automobiles winds down the road to Bridal-

Bridalveil Fall
from
Valley View



Each afternoon as the motorcade winds its way over the roads of the lower valley a high point of beauty is reached in mid-afternoon. The stop at the east portal of Wawona Tunnel gives the spectator a view of mountain grandeur unsurpassed. Each of us is thrilled by the spectacular scene and can readily appreciate the emotion of Dr. Bunnell when the Mariposa Battalion reached Inspiration Point above the tunnel on that discovery day back in 1851, when the doctor named this fall the Bridalveil.

veil a last view of the rainbow ends this beautiful show, a colorful memory for each individual to keep.

THE WATERWHEEL FALLS**By Ranger-Naturalist M. D. Bryant**

When a fast rushing stream passes over a stream-bed that is pitted with concave depressions an up-thrust of water resembling an old-fashioned waterwheel results. There is no better example of this type of waterfall than the Waterwheel Falls

of the Tuolumne River below Glen Aulin. These falls were first called to the attention of the visitors to Yosemite by John Muir and have become increasingly well known with the passing of the years. I doubt that anyone has previously had the good fortune to see the Waterwheels displaying such majesty and beauty as they have shown this past season. The large snowfall of the previous winter coupled with the warm days of the summer brought the falls to perfection.

While with a party to the Waterwheel Falls on July 23, I studied the falls closely and secured a number of interesting facts concerning them.

At that time there were twelve

wheels in which the mass of water, exclusive of the spray, was thrown to a height of ten feet or more. The largest waterwheel, which is well toward the lower portion of the falls, was at least thirty-five feet high and the water was making a clear horizontal leap of over fifty feet. A stick thrown into the river at the brink was found to pass to the foot of the falls with an average velocity of thirty miles per hour. When the rapid flow and large volume of the water is taken into consideration, is it any wonder that the Waterwheels have perhaps awed and thrilled fortunate visitors more this year than ever before?



WATERWHEEL FALLS



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Dan Anderson