

# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Volume 1

July 31, 1922.

Number 4

W. B. Lewis, Superintendent.

Ansel F. Hall, Park Naturalist.

## THE "WHITE SNOW PLANT"

From time to time rumors have come to the Yosemite Valley of a white Snow Plant growing within the Park borders. It was difficult to picture the blood red Snow Plant in a simple garb of white, consequently the "White Snow Plant" remained a mystery until Dr. Monroe brought from the Wawona Grove of Big Trees a plant which answers very well the popular description. The specimen of the so-called "White Snow Plant" is now preserved and may be seen at the Museum.

This short fleshy saprophyte belongs to the heath family and while it is not *Sarcodes Sanguinea*, the true Snow Plant, it is a close relation. The peculiar arrangement of the red, thread-like stamens about the plump, rounded stigma give one the impression of a spider lurking in each individual blossom.

The name of this plant is *Pleuricospora fimbriolata*.

## WANTED: LIVE MICE AND GOPHERS

Recent accessions to the collection of live reptiles at the Yosemite Museum have brought the total number exhibited to more than a dozen species and almost two score individuals. Needless to say, such delectable dainties as live mice, rats, and gophers are voraciously greeted by the snakes. If you are clever enough to capture a small rodent bring it to the Museum; we have a snake to fit every one caught!

## EXHIBIT OF PAPOOSE CARRIERS AT MUSEUM

A comparative exhibit of cradle baskets is attracting much attention at the Yosemite Museum. The papoose carriers are of all sizes and many of them are ornately decorated with buckskin and beads. One is unique in having spangles of Chinese coins and beer slugs. The tribes represented by the various carriers are the Miwok, Piute, Shoshone, Ute, and Yuma.

### WHAT IS THE LIZARD WITH THE RED HEAD?

A lizard with a red head, olive green, smooth scaled body and bluish tail often attracts visitors. This skink restricted to the Yosemite region is properly called the Yosemite Skink. The Swift of "Blue-headed Lizard" and the Alligator Lizard are more abundant than the Skink. All lizards in California are harmless. In fact they are very useful insect destroyers.

### TAME BEARS DELIGHT VISITORS

Visitors to the bear pits are nearly always rewarded at this time of year. Furthermore it is sometimes possible to see bears feeding in broad daylight. As a rule one must watch bears by using a spot light. A fine large Cinnamon Bear may often be seen feeding in the bear pits below Yosemite Lodge as early as six P.M. A medium sized bear at Glacier Point has become so tame that it will take candy from one's fingers.

### THE SIERRA GROUSE

Early in the season hikers returned telling of the booming of the Sierra Grouse which was to be heard along most of the trails which lead through red fir forest. Then came the report of a nest discovered along the eleven mile trail to Glacier Point. The sitting bird allowed close approach. Now come reports of females with their broods of young. The Grouse, because of its large size, is one of the conspicuous birds of the Park. It is one of the few birds able to secure a food supply when snow covers the ground.

### POST-NESTING SEASON MIGRANTS APPEAR

Several species of birds which nest at lower elevations and some which usually nest above the rim of the valley have made their appearance. The Green-backed Goldfinch and the Western Gnatcatcher are now to be seen, having probably nest lower down, and the Mountain Chickadee, the Red-breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, and White-headed Woodpecker, have come down from the highlands. Still other species which do not commonly nest in the valley are to be expected during August.

### HERMIT THROUGH NESTS ALONG CAMP CURRY TENTS

For several years past a pair of Hermit Thrushes have built their nest among the tents at Camp Curry. From one nest discovered earlier in the season the young left several weeks ago. This past week a new nest was discovered which now contains three blue eggs. The sitting bird is very tame and many have been enabled to become well acquainted with this most interesting species. A fine singer has been heard many times from the inner trail to Happy Isles. Accompany the Nature guides on a field trip and they will show you the nest and the bird.

## UNLAWFUL LINKS AND

A nature group stood watching a small hummingbird probing deep into the scarlet tubes of a pentstemon. Without fear the tiny bird buzzed about the very feet of the onlookers. Suddenly the hummer rose and poised before the scarlet neckless worn by a young lady. The commotion this caused frightened the bird away. In a few moments it was again at the pentstemon and as the watchers stood their ground the bird again left the flowers to have a look at the red necktie of a gentleman and then descended to trace along the red edging to a lady's coat. Red flowers seem to be especially attractive to hummingbirds.

## THREE KINDS OF SQUIRRELS AT GLACIER POINT

When eating one's lunch on the porch at Glacier Point three different kinds of squirrels may be seen feeding on lunch refuse---the common ground squirrel, the golden mantled ground squirrel, sometimes called "red-headed chipmunk," and the common chipmunk.

## THE EVENING PRIMROSE

The beautiful Evening Primrose is now in bloom in Yosemite Valley. In the hour of sunset one may go into the meadow where the Evening Primrose grows and see it open its flowers. On the primrose plant are slender, pointed buds. The four petals are closely folded and held in place by four sepals. At a given moment all the closely folded petals loosen and part, then the flower rests, soon there is another movement and the petals part still farther. The supporting sepals suddenly spring back, the petals move quickly, and behold the beautiful flower has fully opened.

All through the night these great yellow flowers attract the big moths. Before noon the next day the blossoms close, never to open again. The buds at the bottom of the stalk open first, night after night the flowers bloom up the stalk leaving a chain of seed-pods behind them.

## THE SPICE BUSH

The Spice Bush grows along the Merced River between Yosemite Valley and El Portal. Its broad leaves have an aromatic fragrance when crushed. From June to August it bears many red flowers. These flowers have numerous petals and remind one of the small, old fashioned *Carysanthemum*.

This delightfully fragrant shrub with unusual flowers has attracted the attention of the mountain people. Each of a number of districts have a different name for it, as, Wine Flower, Spice wood, and Wild Poppy.

The eastern cousin of the Spice Bush is a similar shrub with smaller flowers and is often known as Carolina Allspice.



Digitized by  
Yosemite Online Library

<http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library>

Dan Anderson