

# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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## HOW THE INDIANS MADE THEIR ARROW POINTS.

Yosemite visitors often ask about the black glass chips that are found abundantly in several parts of the Valley. This is obsidian, a volcanic glass which occurs in the Mono Lake region east of the Sierra. The Yosemite Indians used it almost exclusively for their arrow points, knives, and other cutting implements. For it they traded acorns which grow at the lower elevations on the west slope but which are lacking east of the range. Certain trading places in the High Sierra are marked by acre upon acre of black chips where the barter was consummated and the crude material was fabricated by its new owners into points or into small pieces that could be easily worked. One of these localities is near Fletcher Lake.

In making arrow points, flakes were first chipped from the crude material by the use of a hammer stone. These flakes, when held in the maker's hand could be accurately chipped by pressure with a bone point, the palm being protected by a piece of leather. Examples of completed arrow points and pictures of the process of manufacture may be seen at the Yosemite Museum.

## DO YOUR BOTANIZING AT THE FLOWER EXHIBITS.

The picking of wild flowers is restricted only that all may enjoy them. Much picking of wild flowers is already causing the disappearance of several species in the state and certainly in a National Park nature should be seen at her best and entirely undisturbed. Inspect the flower exhibits (at the Museum and at Camp Curry) and you will likely find the flower which caught your interest along the trail. Do your botanizing at the flower exhibits.

## WEASELS OCCASIONALLY SEEN

A slim, brownish animal with a black tipped tail may sometimes be seen about the camps. Its short legs and arched back as it bounds along helps to identify it. The Weasel preys upon mice and other rodents and sometimes on birds. Often it is the disturbed calls of birds that call our attention to the presence of a Weasel. Weasels usually satisfy their hunger with the blood of the animal killed rather than with the flesh.

## MOUNTAIN LIONS MAY BE SEEN IN ZOO

Two splendid examples of the Mountain Lion, the largest member of the cat family found in California may be seen at the Zoo near the government barns.

The darker colored one is a female that was reared from a kitten captured near Wawona. The lighter colored one, a male, was secured from Yellowstone National Park. The Mountain Lion is an enemy of the Deer and the state offers a substantial bounty for scalps and hires a mountain lion hunter who rids game refuges of this animal.

#### THE BLUE-FRONTED JAY

The saucy top-knotted bird that visits your camp is the Blue-fronted Jay. It differs from the common jay of the valleys in having a top-knot and being a darker blue. Whereas the California Jay is associated with brush and live oaks, the Blue-fronted Jay is associated with forests. Although jays are black-listed by state laws because of their attacks on the eggs and young of other birds yet there are few birds that have more interesting mannerisms. The whispered song of the Blue-fronted jay is very much worth while and the bird seems to be of use as a tree planter for it is to be seen tucking acorns and pine seeds into little holes in the ground as well as into crevices in the bark of trees.

#### THE SCARLET MONKEY FLOWER

Several snap-dragon like flowers go under the name of Mimulus or Monkey Flower. The commoner yellow monkey flowers are to be seen in moist places everywhere but the bright scarlet one is not so often seen. A clump of this less common one may be seen just west of the zoo where drainage water furnishes proper moisture. The Pink Monkey Flower grows in moist places higher up, as for instance along the Ledge Trail.

#### THE SWIFT.

While you rest along the trail a small lizard may inspect you from the sunny side of a rock. He may even do some setting up exercises for you, raising and lowering himself on his front legs and often showing bluish patches underneath. This "blue-bellied Lizard" of the small boy is properly called "Swift" or "Fence" Lizard. Watch him as he captures flies and other insects and you will be convinced of his value. None of the lizards found in California are poisonous.

#### BIG TREES IN VALLEY

Although groves of the Big Trees flank the Yosemite Valley yet none grow naturally on the valley floor. One is enabled to study young trees, however, for several dug up in nearby groves have been planted here. Three stand opposite the Sentinel Hotel in the village and several surround the grave of Galen Clark the discoverer of the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PINE CONE.

Some of the lodgepole pines on the floor of the valley show interesting stages in the development of the cone. These trees may be recognized by the scaly bark and the two needles in a bundle. There are some good examples on the north

bank of the river just below Yosemite Lodge at the upper end of Leidig Meadow. Near the tips of some of the branches may be seen the clusters of the remains of the male flowers (staminate catkins) in which the pollen was produced. Small cones, slightly purple, may be seen near the tips of other branches. These have developed during the present season. Last season at this time there were similar cones on the trees and these were fertilized with pollen carried by the wind.

Those cones of last season have grown and may be seen on the trees now. They are green, their points are turned downward, and their scales are pressed close together. These cones will produce ripe seeds this fall, when the scales will separate, the seeds fall out and the cones turn brown. Two years are thus required for the development of the pine cone. In the case of the Lodgepole pine, the old cones may remain on the tree for several seasons after the seeds have been shed.



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Dan Anderson