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Cliff Presnall Transferred to Zion

By C. A. HARWELL, Park Naturalist

Saturday, June 24, Clifford Presnall with his wife and small son Jack left Yosemite National Park to take up his new work as park naturalist at Zion National Park. His host of friends stationed at Yosemite and many park visitors who had come to know him well gathered at the rangers' clubhouse the evening before his departure to wish him well in his new position. As a token of appreciation and friendship his associates in the park service presented Mr. Presnall a Voightlander camera.

Mr. Presnall entered the National Park Service in 1929, after having attended a session of the Yosemite School of Field Natural History during the same year. During the last two and one-half years he has served as junior park naturalist in Yosemite National Park, assisting with all the varied educational activities here and specializing in preparation of exhibits. His most outstanding work in Yosemite was the establishment of the Mariposa Grove Museum, in which he was assisted by his wife, Ruby Presnall, who is an art student of promising

ability. This museum, housed in a replica of an old log cabin which has stood in the heart of this famous grove for half a century, contains the most complete exhibit on Big Trees to be found in any museum in the country. The original nature of these Big Tree exhibits, his Yosemite experience in building nature trails, and his general work as a museum man has given him an enviable reputation among the museum preparators of the country. Every naturalist has hobbies—special fields in which he is most interested. Presnall specialized on mammals at Oregon State College, from which he graduated in 1923 with the degree of bachelor of science, now he is especially interested in birds. He has just completed a bibliography on the birds of the Great Basin region which should prove valuable to him in his new position. He is a clear and forceful lecturer on numbers of natural history and national park topics and a clever writer in the nature field. We of Yosemite are proud of this advancement.

Saw-whet Owl in Yosemite

By C. A. HARWELL Park Naturalist

On the morning of May 3, while walking to my office at the museum, I observed a small brownish owl in flight being chased by two blue-fronted jays in the region of our government shops. The flight of this owl was direct but not rapid. It made no attempt to change course to throw off the pursuers. As the owl flew over my head I thought it might be a pigmy. To escape its silent pursuers the owl flew without hesitation into the open door of the electrical shop. The two jays perched above the door but made no attempt at further pursuit. They had not at any time tried to strike at the owl in the 50 yards of pursuit I had observed. My interest aroused, I entered the shop, closing the door behind me, and found the bird quite complacently perched on a rafter watching the movements of several of us who soon gathered to wonder which owl it was. It was too large for a pigmy, being about robin size and much lighter brown than that frequently observed species. It had no ear tufts. As it turned its head two small areas of white feathers in the solid brown pattern of the back of the head gave the effect of two eyes so that, like the pigmy owl, it might appear alert though asleep. It proved to be a rare bird, the saw-whet owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica*).

CARE IN STATE

Not more than a dozen or two observations of this species have been recorded in the State of California. Grinnell and Storer during their survey of the bird and animal life of the park, were unable to observe a single live specimen, but found

feathers of this bird in a kinglet nest. In our museum study-skin collection we have one specimen of this species taken in the valley by Mrs. Jack Gaylor in 1919. Assistant Postmaster Charles Michael and Mrs. Michael observed a saw-whet owl being bothered by juncos, August, 1920, and a nesting pair of this species in April, 1926, on the floor of Yosemite Valley.

This then was an unusual observation worthy of recording. I easily captured the bird with an insect net and found it much more docile than the pigmy or other owls I had attempted to handle. This fellow made no attempt to bite or fight back in any way. It was so gentle enough to pose for several portraits and many feet of movie film. In order to increase knowledge of this bird and to point out good points and beneficial traits, I carried him to the local school, where all the children enjoyed very much sharing this surprise encounter of mine with this uncommon species of owl. Children at once named him "Hugo." He was quite at home in our darkened work room at the museum and learned to accept raw meat from the hand. Pieces were seized by the bill first, then transferred to either foot or perhaps both feet to be held while smaller pieces were torn loose. Most often his foot was raised to the bill and the meat held or loosened by claws as nimble as fingers.

I kept this saw-whet owl at the museum a week and was always hopeful that I might hear his song, which some writers describe as being like the noise made during the operation of filing a saw. No note, however, was uttered except

the infrequent snapping of mandibles when suddenly approached or a soft rattle-like trill issued with head held low and mouth and throat open when really on the defensive, as when jays came too close to scold the owl as we made photographs.

GIANT SEQUOIA HOUSES CHIPMUNK FAMILY

By RANGER NATURALIST

R. P. BEAL

The Sheridan tree growing beside the Museum at Mariposa Grove has become the home and training ground for a family of chipmunks. A huge fire scar runs up the tree for a height of 50 feet, and one of the members of the woodpecker fraternity has drilled several holes in the dead exposed sapwood at the top of the scar. These holes constitute the front doors of the chipmunk domicile. The fire evidently burned the heartwood under the sapwood, as well, thus giving the chipmunk a rear entrance to this home.

On bright mornings when the sunlight strikes the tree the chipmunks can be seen enjoying the warmth. There are five youngsters about two-thirds developed and they have the general appearance of being vest pocket editions of their parents. One morning six members of the family were visible at the same time. One little fellow has a private niche in the bark of the tree where he sits and dozes in the warm sunshine. Other members of the family are often visible with their heads projecting from the doorways. None of the younger chipmunks have been seen on the ground, although they often run up

and down the huge fire scar leading to their nest.

It is quite unusual for the Big Trees to serve as homes for our animal friends. The height of the nest above the ground is also unusual, as chipmunks generally nest at lower elevations above the ground. Several visitors to the grove have decided this family as having "cliff dwelling" tendencies due to the unique location of the nest.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW'S NEST

Ranger Naturalist Craig Thomas

Even the birds that spend most of their time in the air far above the passing people have become tame under the "hands-off" rule of Yosemite National Park. One hundred seventy-six persons, on a trip up the Ledge trail to Glacier Point on June 21, were able to watch a pair of violet-green swallows come down to their nest within 10 feet of them. A deserted woodpecker's nest in the limb of a black oak served the swallows as a nest. The crowd was thrilled at the sight of the two beautiful birds, swinging in wide, taut circles over the valley and along the walls as they gathered mouthfuls of insects. Then they would sweep down over the heads of the people to land at the nest entrance. One and then the other would go in, then returning, each would wheel back into the air. The first group of people moved on slowly to allow the rest to see the birds at close range; at no time did the birds seem conscious or nervous at our presence.



Glacial Pavements Near Yosemite Valley

RANGER NATURALIST CARL SHARSMITH

One of the most striking features of the Yosemite back-country are the great areas of glaciated granite, scored and polished, strewn with boulders or "erratics" which were dropped on their long journey on the glacier as the ice melted out from under them at the close of the glacial winter. These rock strewn polished pavements of Yosemite National Park are world famous, for there are few mountains in the world where such glaciated rock is more extensive or where the effects of glaciation on massive granite is shown to better advantage. They form one of the most impressive reminders of the recency of the great ice age.

The trail to Merced lake passes through some remarkable areas. The first are met above Lost valley which is just above the Little Yosemite. Much nearer to Yosemite Valley, however, are those on the northeastward facing shoulders of Liberty Cap and Mount Broderick. Liberty Cap and Mount Broderick are the great rock monoliths or domes to the north of Nevada Fall. These pavements are the nearest to the valley and are fine examples of those seen farther in the mountains.

The first indications of glaciated

boulder-strewn pavements are seen first above the Nevada Fall. Here along the trail are several erratic boulders of Cathedral Peak granite, readily recognized by their very coarse texture. The true extent of the pavement and its development is not realized, however, until one climbs up onto the northwest shoulder of Liberty Cap. From a point about halfway to the summit the area here and on the Mount Broderick shoulder is seen to its fullest extent, and is very impressive. Scores of huge boulders lie scattered about on the smooth rock. The texture and complete appearance of these rocks is so unlike the massive granite on which they stand that the fact that they are foreigners which have come from afar is apparent at once.

The climb to the summit of Liberty Cap is short from this half-way point. On the top of this rounded dome one again recognizes erratic boulders even here, a thousand feet or more above Nevada Fall. With this before us it is easy to visualize the time, long ago, when the entire dome was overswept by the slow moving ice flood. Liberty Cap as its companion, Mount Broderick, withstood the onslaught, and at the close of the ice age began to emerge

like an island in a sea, the boulders carried by the lowering ice becoming stranded on its summit.

There is no trail to the top of Liberty Cap, though "ducks" mark the way. The shoulder can easily be attained, provided one does not start the climb until well past the

dome, on the trail to Merced lake. Thus by going sufficiently east before turning back to ascend one can avoid the heavy brush which covers that portion of the dome facing the trail. By keeping on the ridge of the shoulder and bearing toward the Lost lake side, the way is clear.

New Method of Bird Study in Yosemite

RANGER-NATURALIST A. E. BORELL

Bird banding as a method of bird study has been practiced in various parts of the United States for over 100 years and in Europe since 1899. There are now about 1500 bird-banders in the United States and about one million birds have been banded to date. Last year Park Naturalist Edwin McKee at the Grand Canyon National Park began banding birds and by March, 1933, had banded 590. During 1932 Ranger Frank Anderson of Yellowstone banded 169 birds. So far as I can learn *Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite* are the only national parks using this method of bird study to further the knowledge of their birds.

On May 5 the first banding station in Yosemite was set up in Camp 19 on the floor of the valley. During the two following weeks 54 black-headed grosbeaks, 14 Sierra juncos, two short-tailed mountain chickadees, 2 western tanagers and one western robin were banded by Mrs. Borell and myself. Small aluminum bands made in various sizes to fit the different species of birds are issued by the Bureau of Biological Survey. Each of these bands has a number which is registered in Washington. Records of all banded birds are sent to the Bureau of Biological Survey head-

quarters in Washington, where they are filed. When a bird is trapped which has previously been banded by some one else the number of the band is sent to the Bureau of Biological Survey and the original bander and the one who recaptured the bird are notified as to the place and date the bird was banded and recaptured.

The traps are constructed so that the birds rarely injure themselves unless left in the trap too long. The alarm which birds often exhibit when trapped apparently does not last long as many of the birds are taken again and again. One female grosbeak which we trapped was back in the trap 10 minutes after she was banded.

What sort of information can we gain through banding operations? We may learn where our summer visitants spend the winter and something about migration routes which they follow. Certain species of birds such as the robin, jay and junco are in Yosemite Valley at all seasons of the year, but it may be that the individuals which nest in the valley move down to the foothills for the winter and the birds which winter in the valley are those which nested in the higher portions of the park. Banding both in winter and summer should prove of

disprove this theory. As the banded birds are trapped year after year we will learn more about the length of life of birds and the ages at which they take on the different plumages. We may also learn what birds return to the same nesting place year after year. Other members of the museum staff are setting up banding stations near the museum, at Mariposa Grove and at Glacier Point. The records from the various stations may yield some information regarding movements and population of birds within the park.

In addition to the general information which is gained from banding, the bird-bander has an opportunity to become very familiar with and learn much about the habits and dispositions of the many species and individuals which come to his traps.

THE WHITE SHRINE

By Ranger John Bingaman

O White Shrine so high
 A thing indeed to worship,
 Like silvery moonlight it
 Glistens like a beam from heaven,
 Tumbling and foaming it roars
 Down through its gorge,
 Its spray and rockets
 Shoot through the night,
 From far distant hills it flows,
 And rolls to lands below,
 Our life is but a span
 Beside this crystal Shrine,
 Long years have passed,
 But man has come and gone,
 Braving storms that swept the
 cliffs
 Upon the billows of the winds
 Trembling man stands beneath
 In reverence of this Shrine.

DOMES OF YOSEMITE

HELEN K. SHANN SMITH.

Yosemite Field School, '30.

The granite domes of Yosemite are familiar and never-ceasing wonders to the eyes of all visitors. North Dome, Basket Dome and, most magnificent of them all, Half Dome, which towers high to dominate all lesser domes, and indeed the entire landscape with its stupendous bulk.

But other majestic Yosemite domes await the keen sighted. To these we are led by that sage seer of nature's grandeur, John Muir. Amid Yosemite's Big Trees we go to gaze silently upward at the great sequoias which for countless centuries have battled nature's opposing forces. Here and there stands a patriarchal forest giant, still unbroken and undaunted, triumphantly weathering the storms of eons. Towering toward the sky, these stand, their plume-like foliage forming a round top "calm as a granite dome" (John Muir, from "Our National Parks"). Younger sequoias in full vigor and strength of approaching maturity, though lacking the colossal size of their companion progenitors, show gradually rounding tops, but only in the unscarred veterans is the dome-like top most perfectly exemplified.

Upon the distant horizon, far beyond these noblest of all living things, far beyond the granite domes, amass other domes, drifting with the gentlest zephyr pure white or ominously gray-black against the brilliant blue of the sky behind.

Granite domes, sequoia domes, cloud domes—all Yosemite domes.

NATURE NOTELETS

GROUND SQUIRREL
SNARES ROBIN

There have been many instances where California ground squirrels have caught and devoured baby robins, but not many observations of them catching mature birds.

Capt. C. E. Wood of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company observed a ground squirrel pounce on a mature robin near the ranger's clubhouse recently. The robin's shrill cries brought a group of robins and jays to the scene where they darted at the squirrel in the attempt to cause him to release his victim. He calmly proceeded to devour the bird and by the time the museum was notified all that remained was a wing and a score of feathers.

M. E. B.

WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKERS
NEST IN LOG SEAT

The remains of the old Big Trees Lodge at the Mariposa Grove have all disappeared with the exception of one of the old log seats from the campfire circle. This seat remains due to the fact that a pair of white-headed woodpeckers decided that the back of the seat would make an ideal home. They proceeded to dig out a hole and now "are at home," with a family of young. The visitor to the grove may, upon approaching the log, be greeted by the chirping youngsters, which have not as yet showed themselves. Evidently they are growing rapidly as the parents are busy all day long, flying from tree to tree in the efforts to keep the family fed. The ranger naturalists at the grove are expecting the departure of the young ones at anytime.

R. P. B.

TAME GREEN-TAILED
TOWHEE

On the first all-day hike to Glacier Point on June 7, the party witnessed a very pleasing demonstration of what wild life protection means in our national parks. Golden-mantled ground squirrels and chipmunks were as usual taking salted peanuts from the hand, but the big surprise was when a green-tailed towhee deliberately walked up to the writer's outstretched hand and helped itself to a small peanut. This gave the crowd an unusually good opportunity for close observation.

M. E. B.


OAKS IN LEAF IN EIGHT DAYS

The role of rising temperatures in governing plant growth is a matter of great importance which is often overlooked. The black oaks (*Quercus kelloggii* Newb.) of Yosemite demonstrated this fact in a striking manner this spring. Until about the third week of May most of the oaks were still bare of leaves, apparently in a completely dormant condition. Cold and wet weather prevailed up to this time. Then the temperature suddenly took an upward spurt, the days became really warm for the first time in the year, and remained so for over a week. In three days leaves of the black oaks were nearly a third grown, many completely blossomed in a 24-hour period following, and by eight days practically all the trees in the warmer dryer places were in full tender leaf. The transformation from winter bareness to summer garb was thus accomplished in slightly more than a week, and was in direct response to the sudden onset of rising temperatures.

C. W. S.

THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
ITS PURPOSES

1. To gather and disseminate information on the wild-life of Yosemite National Park.
2. To foster the activities of our Yosemite Museum (in cooperation with the National Park Service), adding to its collections by the purchase of exhibit materials.
3. To promote the educational program of the Yosemite Naturalist Service.
4. To assist in the publishing of "Yosemite Nature Notes".
5. To study living conditions, past and present, of the Indians of the Yosemite region; to encourage their arts and perpetuate their traditions.
6. To help maintain in Yosemite Valley a library of historical, scientific, and popular interest.
7. To further scientific investigation along lines of greatest popular interest and to publish, from time to time, bulletins of non-technical nature.
8. To strictly limit the activities of the association to purposes which shall be scientific and educational, in order that the organization shall not be operated for profit.

 We invite anyone interested in Yosemite to join our Yosemite Natural History Association. Membership is two dollars a year which includes a year's subscription to Yosemite Nature Notes. Substantial savings are offered members through combination club offers with the American Nature Association and the American Forestry Association. If you are already a member of either of these associations, we hope you will renew through us. Help us double our membership before winter.





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Dan Anderson