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W. B. LEWIS

Superintendent



"LEARN TO READ THE TRAIL SIDE"

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Volume VI

August 31, 1927

Number 8

FISHING IN YOSEMITE

By H. C. Bryant

MANY people coming to Yosemite valley complain that the streams are fished out; others that the Merced river trout are so educated to the incantations of the angler that they are uncatchable. In spite of such reports there are many that are having excellent sport a few miles down the river. Those who are willing to go into the back country are richly rewarded. Illilouette Creek easily reached from Glacier Point has furnished many a limit this year. The Tuolumne river from Hetch Hetchy Valley to Tuolumne Meadows will be excellent fishing grounds for many years to come. It is to be made more accessible this year by the placing of a hikers' camp at Glen Aulin, about seven miles down the river from Tuolumne Meadows. Of course, the drop of 2000 feet down past the Waterwheel Falls to Return Creek will keep it from being over-fished. Yet the large-sized fighting rain-bows taken from the pools should be enticing. Few seem to find Cathedral Creek which is crossed by the Magee Lake trail. Here fine large Eastern brook trout are available. Lake fishing, which is such a great attraction to many anglers, is beginning to furnish fine sport. Several lakes which appeared to be fished out several years ago now teem with fish. Automatically lakes get a rest. As fishermen have no success the word is passed around and everyone avoids that body of water. After a few years the lake again comes into prominence as a fishing ground. Tenaya Lake has been systematically planted for many years and is now showing the results. An old story was to the effect that trout could not thrive in Tenaya Lake because it was populated with suckers. This has been proved a myth for fishing has continuously improved. Fine large trout are now taken in numbers, whereas a few years ago no one, even the most expert angler, could catch a trout.

Even the increased travel is likely to reduce angling opportunian automobile. As a consequence ties only near the valley. The new those who are willing to seek the

Yosemite fish hatchery will be able streams and lakes of the back counto plant a half milion or more trout try may expect as great a thrill as a year in Yosemite streams. Then, a certain party that visited back too, more and more men seem country streams the past week and afraid to move very far away from found excellent sport.

MORE ABOUT PIGMY OWLS

Enid Michael

On the morning of June 20, 1927, more the show was on; and the approached the nest site we realshow, as our ears caught the sound of weakly trilled notes parent birds must be in the neighas we have learned to consider it, somewhat resembles the trill of the Western Chipping sparrow, but the notes are more squeaky and lack the metalic quality. Looking up high in the branches of a Kellogg oak we caught sight of a parent owl feeding what appeared to be a full-grown young one. The old bird was perched on a limb and held in her talons a chipmunk. Bit by bit the old bird tore the flesh from the body of the chipmunk and passed it to the youngster that snuggled close beside her on the limb. The young bird was plied with food finally to the point of distention, then he drew back and refused all further offerings. The parent bird flew to a higher branch and began stuffing a second youngster. When in a few minutes this second young bird was satisfied, the parent bird left the oak and flew across an open space, to disappear into the dense foliage of a great yellow pine.

The parent bird carried with her the remains of the chipmunk, and its tail swung beneath her. The parent bird was soon followed by her young, and then it was that we young instead of two.

Nevada Falls in the afternoon we seek met C. A. Harwell of the nature grounds, the neighborhood of their guide service, and all three of us home tree being sadly depleted of went together to the owl tree. Once small song birds.

we again visited the Pigmy owl best show ever. Four owls were haunt in the oak grove at the edge huddled together in a row in plain of the Stoneman meadow. As we sight and silhouetted against the skv. The old bird was holding, ized that we were just in time for clamped down on the branch, the body of a chipmunk, but now she did not pass out the food bite by Young Pigmy owls were calling for bite, as she had done in the mornfood, and we felt sure that the ing. Each young owl in turn helped himself, and all the while the meal This trill, or food call, progressed there was a constant trill of young voices. Apparently the young birds were being taught to take care of themselves.

A chance to study young Pigmy owls is rare, indeed, and so to take advantage of the opportunity we again headed toward Camp Curry early on the morning of June 21. As we approached the owl tree, early as we were, we realized that we were not to be the only observers at the haunt of the owls. for there, lying on the ground, with a pair of binoculars glued to his cycs and a note book handy at his side was C. A. Harwell.

This morning the young owls were eating quite independently. Each had his own perch and each had his own choice morsel. One was feeding on the remains of a young robin; one had a lizzard consumed, all but the tail. One parent bird and one young, apparently through with the morning meal, were sitting in the sunshine preening their feathers.

After seeing the owls finish their breakfast, we went on, and we were all three of us much pleased at having learned so much about the habits of Pigmy owls. Now that discovered that there were three the young owls are full fledged we cannot expect another such treat When we were returning from this year, for they will no doubt more prosperous hunting

Ladybird Beetles Versus Aphids

By Shaler E. Aldous

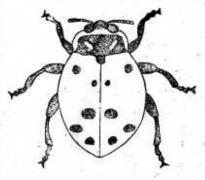
keeping her charges well balanced. ages of these lice. To the average observer in Yosemsuch an influx. This enormous increase in the ladybird beetle population is merely Nature's mothed of keeping a check on another group of very destructive insects belonging to an order of insects known as Homoptera. This order includes such pests as mealy bugs, scale insects and aphids or plant lice.

Among our numerous species of ladybird beetles all are beneficial except one-the Mexican bean beetle. The primary food of the great majority of ladybird beetles, both as larvae and adults, are these softbodied Homopterous insects

Aphids exist on almost every type of living plant. In fact, we could almost say that each plant has its own type of aphis. Many plants harbor more than one species and many species attack more than one black oak, Quercus kelloggii, is suf- numbers. fering a serious attack of aphis. It is hard to find a leaf that is not Syrphid flies derive a great part of occupied and the edge rolled in by their existence from feeding on inthese small succulent pests. The sects of the order Homoptera. It coffee berry, Rhamnus californica, is our duty to know these insect is likewise badly infected. The lit- friends and give them our every aid tle red leaf gall on the Mariposa in helping to preserve our plant manzanita, Arctostophylos mari- population.

Nature has a wonderful way of posa, is also suffering from the rav-

The bark of many of our common ite valley it would appear that we trees and shrubs is completely covare having a ladybird beetle inva- ered by scale insects that are gradsion, and many would actually feel ually relieving the tissues of their concerned regarding the outcome of food supply. The result is that at



Convergent Lady Bird Beetle (Hippodamia convergens)

present many of the limbs are dead. Hordes of these Homopterous insects are playing havoc over the entire valley, and it is a consoling fact At the present time the to see the ladybird beetles in large

Other beneficial insects such as

Spotted Owls Seen in Yosemite

By C. H. O'Neal

On the morning of July 28, 1927, ticing the noise behind him, he eleven members of the Yosemite slowly turned his head turret-like for a trip up Indian Canyon. After much climbing and slipping on the rocks and crawling through the brush we arrived, at about 10 a. m., near the top of the talus slope at an elevation of slightly over 5000 Here we stopped a few minutes in the shade of a golden-cupped oak near the stream in order to regain our breath, quiet our hearts and mop our brows.

The leader, Dr. Harold C. Bryant, made some calls like a young bluejay in order to see if they were near. Suddenly there was a great shadow upon the ground. Lifting our gaze we saw a beautiful adult spotted owl (Strix occidentalis occidentalis) alight on a golden-cupped oak about 12 or 15 feet away. His splendid coloration, the noiselessness of his approach, his fearlessness, and the fact that he was about in daylight was a surprise to everyone. From his perch he calmly gazed at us, while we scrambled around to obtain a better view. After about a minute, finding us not suitable for food or having his curiosity satisfied, he flew about fifty yards across the canyon and alighted in a golden-cupped oak at the foot of a tall cliff.

Having become again more or less normal physically, we followed him over the boulders to the tree. when to our surprise we saw three owls. Two young ones with downy heads were perched in the tree next to the one in which the adult alighted. Immediately below the young ones was a shelving rock on which we scrambled. We were thus able to get within about 12 feet of the lower one. His sleepy indifference or stupidity permitted us to scrutinize him carefully for several minutes, when he flew to the adjacent oak tree where we were at close range.

School of Field Natural History left so that it faced directly backward, Yosemite Museum at 6:30 making in all a tourn of about 180 degrees. This great neck movement, even though his vision is of the binocular type, must permit him a right or left-hand range of vision of almost a complete circle We wondered if this great necktwisting was not an advantage in permitting him to locate noise or prey without the necessity of having to move his body, which would be much more likely to attract attention.



Spotted Owl

(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)

Growing weary with out attentions, the bird flew to a higher In so doing he dropped a breast feather. This breast feather had a white spot near the end which when arranged crosswise in line with others give a barred offect upon the breast.

Turning our attention to the adult a little higher up we studied him carefully. Our field notes contain the following desciption of the adult: The estimated length about 18 inches. The tail was short again able to study him carefully protruding but a short distance beyond the wing tips. The head was Dr. Bryant went behind him for rounded; there were no ear tufts a study of his back markings. No- The iris instead of being straw-cowhite spots on a dark brown sur- perched in fairly thick foliage.

these rare birds was their activity in daylight. That an adult was at- the class.

ored was slate. The breast was yel- tracted by noise in the mid-mornlow brown with a white barred ef- ing when they are supposed to be fect. The facial disc was yellow- strictly nocturnal is of outstanding ish, strongly bordered with black, interest. However, the canyon was The top of his head and back had still in the shade and the birds

To have had the opportunity to The most unusual thing about see three specimens of such rare birds was a treat well relished by

EXTRAORDINARY FISHERMEN

By Mabel E. Hibbard

I was going to say "unusual fish- comes to land bringing with it an ermen," when I realized that just because such incidents are seldom witnessed by human beings they may be natural and not at all unusual in the animal world about us.

E. W. Gundger, associated in ichthyology of the American Museum, writes in volume 25, May and June, 1925, Natural History Magazine, of several authenticated instances coming under human observation of aquatic spiders catching and cating fish an inch or more long. spider, measuring perhaps three inches across from tip to tip of legs, attaches itself to a stone by the tarsi of the two rear legs, just above the water; while the other six legs are widespread out upon the water, denting but not breaking the surface film. The body is in the center with head very close to the Suddenly there is a dive beneath the surface, the free legs tightly clasp _n unwarv trout fingerling which the powerful fangs pierce as the spider angler quickly withdraws upon the stone and without formality immediately proceeds to devour its catch.

From the Sierra region in and Yosemite National Park come true accounts of tragedy in troutland. Since all the stories are similar in essential details, to recount one is sufficient.

A water snake not more than two feet long is observed making unusual and spasmodic motions in the water instead of its regular grace-ful swimming glide. Then, to the marvel of those watching it, it

Eastern brook trout at least eight inches long, projecting head out, from the snake's already unhinged jaw. As fast as the trout wriggles outward, the muscular walls of the mouth and body of the snake draws it still farther in; until at length the whole trout, from tail to head, disappears within the snake's body -to be slowly masticated by the digestive juices and muscular movements of the alimentary processes of the snake,

Is it not wonderful that any trout survive the attacks of their many natural enemies from egg to adulthood? For this reason, it is altogether fitting that female trout deposit so many hundred eggs, since they are set adrift where the unsympathetic and merciless law of the survival of the fittest maintains harmony in the world of nature. There animal preys upon animal. The unwary, the sluggish, the reckless and the physically unfit indi-vidual perishes. Result, the great-est good to the greatest number evolution to more alert and stronger animals—the flexible, mysterious, beneficent and ever operative balance of nature.

Does the intrepid fisherman. then, as he struggles to land a two or more pound beauty realize the many previous battles waged and won by his gamy opponent and so withdraw the hook from its mouth with the attitude of admiring respect with which one good allaround sport always looks upon another?

I wonder.

AFIELD WITH THE NATURE GUIDES

NATURE GUIDING AT GLACIER POINT

I have just finished a week's sta-tion at Glacier Point Lookout. A week on the rim thousands of feet above the world of the Valley floor. It has been a week of exquisite thrills, of purple sunsets and gran-

ite peaks.

But I have not been alone in my crowded to ultra-capacity floor. They were like children re- upon the stems of oak leaves.-H. leased from school—these people. C. Bryant. Few persons have I ever met who are more appreciative of the rare beauty which surrounds them than' those who come to Glacier Point. They come as one person and leave as another. The Point weaves its spell over them until they change from non-interested layeaus to ardent students and children of Na-Telephone girls from Francisco, shop girls from Seattle, butchers and bakers from Oskosh and Kankakee-they all come and before they leave are invariably eagerly seeking information of the "how" and "why" of trees, birds, animals and granite canyons.

When the sun goes down and the light purple of the snow-capped ranges deepens dark purple and the dark purple blends into night, a beautiful human silence falls over the watchers on the hotel porch. They have touched Nature in one of her varied moods. Later when we gather around the fire in the lobby the conversation is not politics, it is not war or dancing nor Wall Street or wheat. It is of trees and sunsets and white rushing And still later when the music begins in the ballroom as a signal for the dance to begin the crowd migrates—not to the ballroom but out into the night to seek the harmony of stars, black silhouetted firs and roaring waterfalls. CUIS ENTERTAINS The subjects of Midas and Mammon have rallen before the spell of the Red Gods.—Dorr C. Yeager.

* ¥. CHICKAREES EAT STEMS OF BLACK OAK LEAVES

A field party recently stopped to observe a couple of chickarees or "pine squirrels" busily working in the foliage of a black oak tree. of bears must They followed out the upper limbs vent accidents.

to the leaf clusters, seemed to eat something and soon a leaf fluttered to the ground. Then another leaf fell and so on. Gathering up the leaves it was found that the leaf itself had not been touched but the peticle, or stem, to the leaf was gone. At this season of the year the pine seeds are hardly ripe enough to attract the chickaree and The hotel has been evidently some of these squirrels with turn their attention to a makeshift guests eager to escape for a night food supply. Certainly in this inthe dust and traffic of the Valley stance this squirrel was feeding

A CHICKADEE'S NEST IN A NOVEL PLACE

Upon arriving at Glacier Point on May 31, I immediately began erecting the tent for the summer season. The stove had been left on the tent platform and was covered over with a piece of canvas. After we had gotten the tent placed and the stovepipe on, I started to build a fire, when on opening the top of the stove I was greeted by a sharp, hissing note not unlike the hiss of a gopher snake. I peered down into the darkness of the firebox and there was a short-tailed mountain chickadee sitting on a nest. She would fluff out her feathers and expel the air from her lungs. I induced her to leave the nest. She had burrowed out a place in the ashes and lined it with the stufting of a mattress or quilt, and hair of the California ground squirrel, rat or flying squirrel as well as other unidentified hairs. bottom of the nest were seven eggs.

I did not start a fire, needless to say .- D. D. McLEAN.

* *

PEAR WITH THREE VOSEMITE VISITORS

It is not often that bears birth to more than two young. However, triplets are occasionally found. ever, triplets are occasionally found. A fine, large mother bear and three cubs have been seen almost daily for the past two weeks near Mirror lake. Several persons who teased this mother bear have had to have wounds dressed at the hospital. More and more it is apparent that the regulations against the feeding of bears must be enforced to prevent secidents. GROUNDSQUIRREL BURNS HIS NOSE

Guests on the porch of the Glacier Point Cafeteria one evening last week witnessed an amusing sight. Amusing to the guests, no doubt, but painful to an inquisitive groundsquirrel. California The squirrel had been on the porch for some time searching the floor for crumbs and taking scraps from the hands of the guests at dinner. man at one of the tables lit a cigarette and sat watching the mountains with his arm hanging down within six inches of the floor. Suddenly an agonized squeal brought the man's attention from Vernal Falls to the interruption at hand. In the words of a witness the squirrel "hightailed it" from the porch and with a series of squeaks and muffled noises buried his nose in the sand like an ostrich. It seems that the gentleman's cigarette appeared to be a tempting morsel but was too hot to swallow .- Dorr C. Yeager.

JACK FROST DECORATES LEDGE TRAIL

The nature guide party which made the trip to Glacier Point on Saturday, May 28, passed through a fairyland. The storm of the night before left pienty of dry, powdery show above the "rim," and along the stream at the upper end of the ledge trail every bush carried a load of wonderful icicles. Even the trees, laden with snow, were not as head. laden with snow, were not as beau-tiful as the scintillating ice which covered every spray-swept bush along the trail. The difficulties of along the trail. The difficulties of the climb, including the breaking of the ice in order to get a strong foothold, were forgotten because of the beauty of this fairyland. Splendid opportunity for studying animal tracks was afforded. On the way up the ledge trail, foot prints of a marten were studied. Above

of a marten were studied, the "rim," a splendid ser Above the "rim," a splendid series of tracks made by a bobcat were not-ed. The left-over meal of either a mountain lion or of bears was discovered in the carcass of a deer along the four-mile trail.

Mountain bluebirds, goldencrowned kinglets, green-tailed towhees and fox sparrows furnished thrills for bird students.—H. C. B.

now it is loaded with cherries. An hour spent at the cherry tree An hour spent at the cherry tree between 8 and 9 on the sunny morning of June 10 was indeed entertaining to the observer. During this time birds were continually coming and going. Following is a list of the species actually noted in the cherry tree with the estimated number of individuals: Western Robin, 20; Black-headed Grosbeak, 20; Western Tanager, 4; California Woodpecker, 3; Cedar Waxwing, 3; Blue-fronted Jay, 4; Western Chipping Sparrow, 2; Russetbacked Thrush, 1; Sacramento Towbee, 1; Thrush, 1; Sacramento Towhee, 1; Western Wood Pewee, 1; Yellow Warbler, 1; Sierra Junco 1; Califor-nia Purple Finch, 1, and Lazuli

Bunting, I.

Of the fourteen different species of birds noted in the cherry tree all of birds noted in the cherry tree all save the Wood Pewes were seen to eat cherries. Although the Towhee, the Junco and the Chipping Sparrows were seen in the tree they were not actually seen to pick at cherries on the bough, but contented themselves by feeding on the ground among the fallen cherries. Robins, Grosbeaks, Tanagers, Woodpeckers and Jays were seen to carry fruit from the tree; the other kinds of birds were apparently satisfied to stuff them. apparently satisfied to stuff themselves at the table, as it were.

With all these birds feeding to-gether contentment reigned in the cherry tree except, on the arrival of a jay all birds present would band together to rout the unwelcome guest. The harrassed jays would quickly grab a cherry and be on their way. their way.

Of course, there were many beau-ties among this happy gathering of ties among this happy gathering of birds. In especially gorgeous plumage were the male Tanagers and the Lazuli Bunting, but the real threat was the Cedar Waxwings. Cedar Waxwings have been reported from the Yosemite valley during the fall months, but the finding of these birds in spring is believed to constitute a new record. tute a new record.

MOTHER ROBIN FOOLS THE SUN

After the cool days of June had passed and the members of the Yo semite School of Field Natural His tory were clambering for earlier hikes, we found that there were others beside the human inhabitants of Yosemite Park who were suffer ing with the heat. And the birds were not exceptions.

The CHERRY TREE

The cherry tree that stands on the bank of Yosemite creek at the edge of the Souvelski orchard now offers the biggest attraction to the bird life of the valley. The tree is about thirty-five feet high and just the stand of the same and the clouds of about thirty-five feet high and just the same and the clouds of the same and the clouds of about thirty-five feet high and just the same and the clouds of the same and the clouds of about thirty-five feet high and just the same and the clouds of the same and the clou A mother robin had built her nest ciferous youngsters. Though the did not exist, has been installed at nest was large, in a few days it was Glen Aulin, but a short distance filled to the point of overflowing, from the famous Waterwheel falls. Any observing passerby could see a nest bulging with three feathery moved from one another as to ne-bodies and three hungry mouths cessitate an exhausting climb in pushed well up into the air.

Unfortunately, the sun shone di-The babies dle of the afternoon. were very hot. But mother robin was equal to the situation. She perched herself on the edge of the nest with her back toward the sun, spread out her tail and drooped her wings, making a perfect sunshade for the babies in the nest. There she remained patiently, though her bill was drawn open by thirst, until the sun had traveled behind a tree After it was once more shady sha flew away to drink and rest a few minutes before beginning her incessant feeding of those hungry in-fants.—Alice Craig.

NATURE GUIDED TRIPS TO HIGH SIERRA CAMPS

Several parties guided by Government naturalists have already traversed the trails between High Sierra camps. On July 18, July 25, August 1, August 8 and August 15 other parties will be organized for six days of climbing in the higher regions of Yosemite National Park.



CLARK NUTCRACKER

(Nucifraga columbiana)

umne meadows and Tenaya lake. A he came.-Dorr C. Yeager.

had succeeded in hatching three vo sixth camp, which in previous years

These camps are not so far recessitate an exhausting climb in going from one to the next one. They occupy well chosen sites from rectly on this nest during the mid- which hikers may visit the best that the Sierras ofter. By traveling with a Government naturalist climbers are assured of viewing and considering those natural wonders for which Yosemite is famous. Reservations for a place in one of the nature guide parties should be made at the Yosemite Museum, and made in advance, for fifteen is the maximum number accommodated.

It should be understood that vacationists are perfectly free to visit the camps unaccompanied by a guide should they prefer to do so. The trails are well marked and there is small likelihood of anyone becoming lost. I. guide to the trails in the region of the camps may be had by addressing a request to the Yosmeite Hugeum or the Yosemite Park and Curry Company cants should designate the "Hikers Camp Bulletin," published by the Yoseraite Natural History Association.—Carl P. Russell.

GROUND SQUIRREL'S BACK SCRATCHER

I have often heard of the contortions a chipmunk goes through in an attempt to scratch his back, but not until my recent week at Glacier Point had I witnessed the performance.

I happened to be looking over the edge of the Lookout one afternoon when a golden mantled ground squirrel appeared from nowhere in particular, as they have a habit of Suddenly he scampered to a neighboring manzanita bush and began a series of amusing antics After discarding several branches of the bush as being too high or too rough he finally selected one at the right height and to his lik ing. The branch selected, he arched

his back like an angry cat and scratched it by a forward-backward As in past years the camps are lo-motion against the branch. The cated in Little Yosmeite valley, at operation completed he scampered Merced lake, Boothe lake, Tuol- off and disappeared in the direction

FROM THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OUT-DOOR RECREATION

Called by President Coolings

THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDORSE NATURE STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND THE EXTENSION OF THE NATURE STUDY IDEA TO EVERY AMERICAN SCHOOL AND FAMILY; THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSEUMS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NATIONAL PARKAVILL INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THEARKS".—Resolution of the Conference.

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