



YELLOWSTONE NATURE NOTES

Vol. XIV January-February, 1937 Nos. 1-2

LEAVES FROM OUR DIARIES

January 10: Early this morning, four coyotes (*Canis latrans*) were observed feeding on a deer carcass just back of the plumbing shop. One animal fought off the others until satisfied, and then another took possession. The other two coyotes were still there when I left.

-- Joe J. Way

January 19: While returning from a ski patrol to the East Entrance, I noted two birds maneuvering among the trees near Eagle Creek. Their bodies collided and the smaller bird was knocked into the snow. The larger bird pounced upon his victim and made off with it, grasped in his talons. Events transpired so quickly that identification of the birds was difficult. It is assumed from coloration, markings and size that the aggressor was probably a Northern shrike (*Lanius borealis*).

-- F. R. Oberhansley

January 25: A pair of pink sided juncos (*Junco mearnsi*) were seen near the Cooke Ranger Station today.

-- Marguerite L. Arnold

February 1: Ranger Sheldon Dart reports the following ducks on Soda Butte Creek during January: mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*); American golden-eye (*Glaucionetta clangula americana*); Barrow's golden-eye (*Glaucionetta islandica*); Lesser scaup (*Jyroca affinis*); ring-necked (*Nyroca collaris*) and green-winged teal (*Nettion carolinense*). He also reports that a red-wing

blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) lived in the barn with the horses, but that shortly after the horses were moved down to the Buffalo Ranch, about the middle of January, this bird disappeared.

--W. E. Kearns

February 1: The Meteorological Report for January is summarized as follows; "The temperature this January was lower by far than that of any previous month on record; the mean temperature, 2.2° was eight degree lower than the extremely cold months of 1888 and 1890 as recorded at Camp Sheridan, a nearby and slightly higher location. At the present exposure since 1904, the next coldest month on record is January, 1930 with a mean temperature of 4.8°." There were 20 days of the month when the temperatures ranged from -1° to a -30°, and 27° was the maximum for the month. Five days had all hourly readings below zero.

--W.E.K.

February 1: Today while skiing near the old Cooke Ranger Station, I saw an Engleman spruce loaded with cones, clear to-the-lowest limbs which were dragging in the snow (24" of snow). It is a large tree, about 60 to 70 feet high and heavy in trunk, limbs, and foliage. So much for cones in the "upper third!"

--M. L. A.

February 2: Since coyotes are no longer being killed in the park, wise dogs that they are, they have quickly learned that they may come into Mammoth in daylight in safety. About seven o'clock this morning five coyotes met on the lower slopes of Capitol Hill within seventy five yards of our house. After leisurely investigating the setting, one of them suddenly elevated his nose and began to howl. A second dog, cocking his head, watched the first one a moment, and then joined in with gusto. The other three without waiting for any cue added their voices and their concerted efforts made the echoes ring. Stopping as suddenly as they had begun, they then went, as fancy directed, on over the hill and out of sight.

--W. E. K.

February 6: Bird visitors at the feeding tray at Cooke Ranger Station in January were: Canada jays (*Perisoreus canadensis canadensis*); Steller jays (*Cyanocitta stelleri*); Clark's nutcrackers (*Nucifraga columbiana*); magpies (*Pica pica hudsonia*); mountain chickadees (*Penthestes gambeli*

gambeli); pink-sided juncos (*Junco mearnsi*); red-breasted nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*); pine grosbeck (*Pinicola enucleator montana*); rose-breasted grosbeck (*Hedymeles ludovicianus*); and the downy woodpeckers, (*Dryobates pubescens medianus*). Ravens (*Corvus corax sinuatus*) were also seen in the vicinity, and several gray ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus umbelloides*) have come in quite close to the Station.

While skiing on the hills toward Pebble Creek large flocks of very small birds were seen at about the 8500 foot elevation, but I was unable to get close enough to determine what they were.

--E. L. Arnold

February 7: "Stories in Snow" might well have been the title for observations made this afternoon on the slopes below Mammoth where the snow is piled soft and deep in the timber. In three different places tracks showed where a pine squirrel (*Scirus hudsonicus ventorum*) had eluded a winged pursuer, and then at the edge of the timber where the foolish squirrel had attempted to cross too wide an opening, the last chapter was written. The squirrel's tracks led straight away from the tree for several yards, and then suddenly the pattern changed to circles, figure eights, and reverses, and here and there along these desperate attempts to escape were seen the wing marks of a large bird. After much turning, the squirrel must have decided to run for a nearby tree, for his track straightened out and he was away for nearly three yards before the track ended in a clawed hollow. Wing marks in the snow on either side of the termination of the trail gave mute evidence that the bird (perhaps a raven!) had been successful in his capture. About a yard from the end of the trail, marks in the snow made by the primaries of the bird and a dragging depression between, evidenced that the bird had had trouble in getting away. (A raven is suggested because many of them are constantly patrolling around Mammoth and one was observed actually in pursuit of a squirrel.)

--W. E. K.



[<<< Previous](#) | [> Cover <](#) | [Next >>>](#)

<http://www.nps.gov/mora/notes/vol14-1-2d.htm>
27-Dec-2004