



YELLOWSTONE NATURE NOTES

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LEAVES FROM OUR DIARIES

March 26: The Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis borealis*) which we have been following with interest throughout the winter gave us a real thrill this afternoon. Junior Naturalist Oberhansley and I were out in the field looking for him and had been watching a pair of Golden Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) until one of them finally settled on a telephone pole just back of Pryor's Store. A few yards further on we flushed the Shrike and he flew directly toward the Eagle. To our amazement, he hovered over the Eagle on rapidly beating wings and then darted directly at the great bird's head, rising again for a few yards to pause and then repeat his rapier like attacks. The Eagle, greatly disturbed, would flap his wings and twist his head to avoid his assailant. After resting on the telephone wire within six feet of the Eagle, the Shrike renewed his harassing assault with such vigor that the Eagle, with a scream of protest, finally took flight.

--W.E.Kearns

April 10: A pair of Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) were seen today in the horse corral at the old ranger station. Large flocks of these little birds have been near the station all winter.

A Rocky Mountain Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*) was also seen near the station today.

--Marguerite L. Arnold

May 13: For the second time this season a

nest of Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) was seen and photographed. In company with Dr. Bauer and District Ranger David Condon, I discovered the nest while taking movies of a Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*). After we had observed the nest and had taken pictures from the ground, I climbed a nearby tree for more movies.

These birds were very bountiful in their offering, for while we watched and photographed them, the female cleaned out her nest and then the male came in. The female soon departed and the male proceeded to feed three and perhaps four yawning mouths which were thrust up from the depths of the nest. This task complete, he settled down on the nest for his turn with the little family.

--W.E.K.

May 15: The first elk calf (*Cervus canadensis*) of the season was seen today by Dr. Murie and Mr. Russell Grater about a mile northeast of Tower Falls Ranger Station.

--W.E.K.

May 17: We were awakened this morning by a Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) drumming near our window at 4:30 a.m. He apparently did not see us and we watched his antics with a great deal of interest. The two pair of Hairy Woodpeckers which have been seen during the winter are still with us as, they were all seen again today.

--M.L.A.

May 17: Swan Lake has become the breeding ground for many wildfowl since Dr. Harlow B. Mills had the small dam placed to hold back sufficient water to protect the nesting Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*.) The area, now more than double the size of the original lake and rich in natural food found in the grasses and reeds, is also a favorite resting place for migratory waterfowl.

It is no wonder then that the rarely observed Wilson Phalaropes (*Steganopus tricolor*) should choose such a fine habitat for a visit and perhaps for a home site. This evening five females and three males of this interesting species were seen and were observed for over an hour.

With this species, the females are the aggressors and are more brightly colored. After the eggs are laid, the males take care of the incubation of the eggs while the females enjoy their freedom in little groups, disporting themselves in a most carefree

manner.

--W.E.K.

May 18: A Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) which has been living between the Museum and the Chapel was busily engaged digging up Grounds Squirrels (*Citellus armatus*) during the past week. He was eating the small ones and killing the large ones and then burying them. This morning a fine close-up photograph in Kodachrome was taken of him.

--C. Max Bauer

May 19: Three Wilson Phalaropes two female and one male, were seen this afternoon at Beach Spring. This is but the second time in three years that I have had the pleasure of observing these casual visitors, or secretive summer residents, whichever they may be.

--W.E.K.

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