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6 negatives

NATIONAL PARKS SAVE MAMMALS

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One of the most important acts of this nation has been the establishment of National Parks. These Parks have served as education and enjoyment for many people in all parts of the country. They have brought about more health and happiness which is a vital part of human life. They are the justification of the conservation of woods, waters, and wildlife for the future benefit of this nation.

Crater Lake National Park is the deepest and bluest lake in the world. Today the surface of the lake is one thousand feet below the rim, and the depth of the water is some two thousand feet. Supposedly, it has no inlet or outlet for it fills the crater of a once enormous volcano, collapsed some time in the dim ages of the past. It is a gem of wonderful color set below encircling pines and firs, and changes its hue with the shifting of the light. There are crater lakes in other countries, but none as spectacularly beautiful as this one in America.

At one time there must have been a succession of fire-tipped or active volcanoes in southern Oregon with great pressure of internal heat and combustion, something like those fire mountains strung along the Aleutian Chain and a part of the mainland, from which the great Katmai exploded and sunk into itself, leaving a jagged and monstrous hole in the earth. The Oregon volcanoes, however, belong to an entirely different group. Crater Lake National Park was established in 1902. The government has closed Crater Lake for the past three years as it could do no work on the roads and grades, and discouraged the use of cars and gasoline for such trips.

In the National Parks there are big game like deer, antelope, elk, mountain goats and sheep, and buffalo. It has always been more difficult to hunt big game with a camera in the fields and forests. National Parks are the prominent exceptions where many wild creatures have become reassured of their immunity to guns. They are the best hunting grounds to seek those negatives that are a lasting record and remembrance. You don't

have to buy a license or limit the pulling of your trigger. Why should those who want to kill big game ever be allowed to hunt in any National Park?

About fifty years ago, people began hunting wildlife for pictures. When the publishing of game pictures started, it led others to begin working with the camera. Many books have been published relating to birds and mammals and untold thousands of pictures have been reproduced in newspapers and magazines. In fact, certain magazines are devoted entirely to natural history. All of this has proved of great educational value in spreading information, giving better protection, and conserving those species that were on the downward trend. If it had begun earlier, it might have prevented the extermination of a bird like the passenger pigeon, untold millions of which lived in the middle West and East.

In early days vast numbers of big game animals were killed for food and the sale of their hides. At one time, it looked as if the millions of antelope and buffalo that ranged the prairies of the middle West would follow the passenger pigeon. When the pioneers moved in here and turned the prairies into farm lands, the buffalo was on the point of extermination. It was fortunate that the Yellowstone Park was established in 1872. It has always protected a good herd of buffalo. The next step was the creation of the National Bison Range in Montana to save buffalo, deer, mountain sheep, and others.

During the summer when we were in Yellowstone, we spent most of our time picturing bears. One day I discovered what a mother bear thought about a camera that was aimed at her cubs. She seemed a little backward about meeting people, but the cubs were over friendly. The cubs came up to see if there was anything to eat in the camera. I had finished one roll of film and was putting in another when the old bear appeared about forty feet away. She gave two "Woofs!" and came galloping toward me at full speed. There was just one moment for thought, but I was too scared to move. I just stared in the face of a headlong collision. When about eight feet distant, the old bear put on the brakes and drew up with a jerk that would have brought

our noses together if she had skidded. We gazed intently at each other. Then she turned her head slowly, swung deliberately around and walked away. I made off rapidly in the opposite direction. I understood quite clearly that she didn't want me to shoot her cubs, even with a camera.

The best place to picture prong-horns or antelope is near the Gardiner entrance. One morning near the Superintendent's office, we saw a big buck antelope lying on the lawn near the curb. We slid the car up and parked parallel with his back. He didn't move. When the camera was aimed at him for a close-up face view, he lifted his upper lip as if giving us the Bronx cheer and turned his head away, ignoring us entirely. In the end we got the shot anyway. Up in the hills and little draws, we watched other bucks with their does and fawns. We also saw deer roaming in the yards behind the houses, and often we met a doe with twin fawns meandering along the trails in the woods.

The only chance of finding moose was in the marshes south of Yellowstone Lake. For several days we stalked moose in the valley of the upper Yellowstone, but they were so wild it took a lot of tramping to get any pictures. At that time from 400 to 600 moose were estimated to be in the Park. At the present time they have increased so that tourists can see them in the wet willow meadows along the main highways. At the present time one can see a whole crowd of excited sight-seers around a calmly grazing cow moose and calf shooting her with a barrage of cameras. The people and their animal friends have ~~egg~~ gathered together, to the benefit of both.

At the ranger station near Tower Falls, we were told there were two big bull moose in the meadow to the East. We found them lying in the deep meadow grass where there was a lot of dwarfed willows. I watched one grab a willow limb low down, and pulling it upward with his big snout, strip the leaves to the tip. When the pair became aware of us, they lumbered to their feet and started off through the grass, moving deliberately, nibbling here and there, tolerating but not inviting us to follow them for pictures. Later one of the pair was out in the open and I had worked up to within thirty feet of him. He turned and watched me as I snapped a picture. I had been stalking him for several hours, and I could see that he was becoming a little

irritated. He suddenly shook his head, lowered it, stamped one foot and charged. I was near a clump of willows, and was a good runner. As he chased me around a bush, I dodged in between a bunch of wirey limbs. It was lucky that his horns were still in the velvet, because at that stage he will never even let them touch the limb of a tree. He chased me around and around the bushes, but could never get near enough to slash me with a hoof. Finally he gave it up and meandered away.

When we left Thoroughfare and followed up Fox Creek to Big Game Ridge, we saw hundreds of elk in the high mountains. This was a most remarkable big game country. There were still big patches of snow in several places, but plenty of grass on the sunny slopes. Thousands of elk were ranging high up on the continental divide at this season of the year, while in winter they worked down into the Jackson Hole country. Originally they had plenty of natural food. When that region was turned into farm lands, the elk had to be fed in winter the same as cows. It was later discovered that this was a mistake, because wild animals do not thrive on domestic animal methods. They should have a wide range of natural food, even if they have to dig through the snow for the roots and herbage underneath.

While making a survey of Rainier National Park, we found a goodly number of mountain goats as well as deer and bear. In Yosemite National Park, the deer seemed to be as much at home as dogs around the dooryard. Half way down in Grand Canyon National Park, we found a small herd of antelope that I was told were brought in from the Yellowstone region. They were tame enough for good pictures. In the high mountains around Crater Lake, we saw deer and bear. The wild Olympic Peninsula is one of the most natural and best regions for elk. During our four months in Alaska, we enjoyed a pack trip through McKinley National Park. Here we saw hundreds of white sheep and caribou, but it took a good deal of stalking and sneaking to get pictures. During a summer with Arthur N. Pack, we enjoyed a pack trip through the northern part of Glacier Park. To get good shots of high-ranging mountain goats, I had to use a costume and be a goat to get a goat. In all the National Parks, there was an unlimited supply of both big and little game birds and mammals that furnished thrills for the naturalist and camera hunter. These are great outdoor museums, and should never hear the shot of a gun to spoil the education and enjoyment of the public.