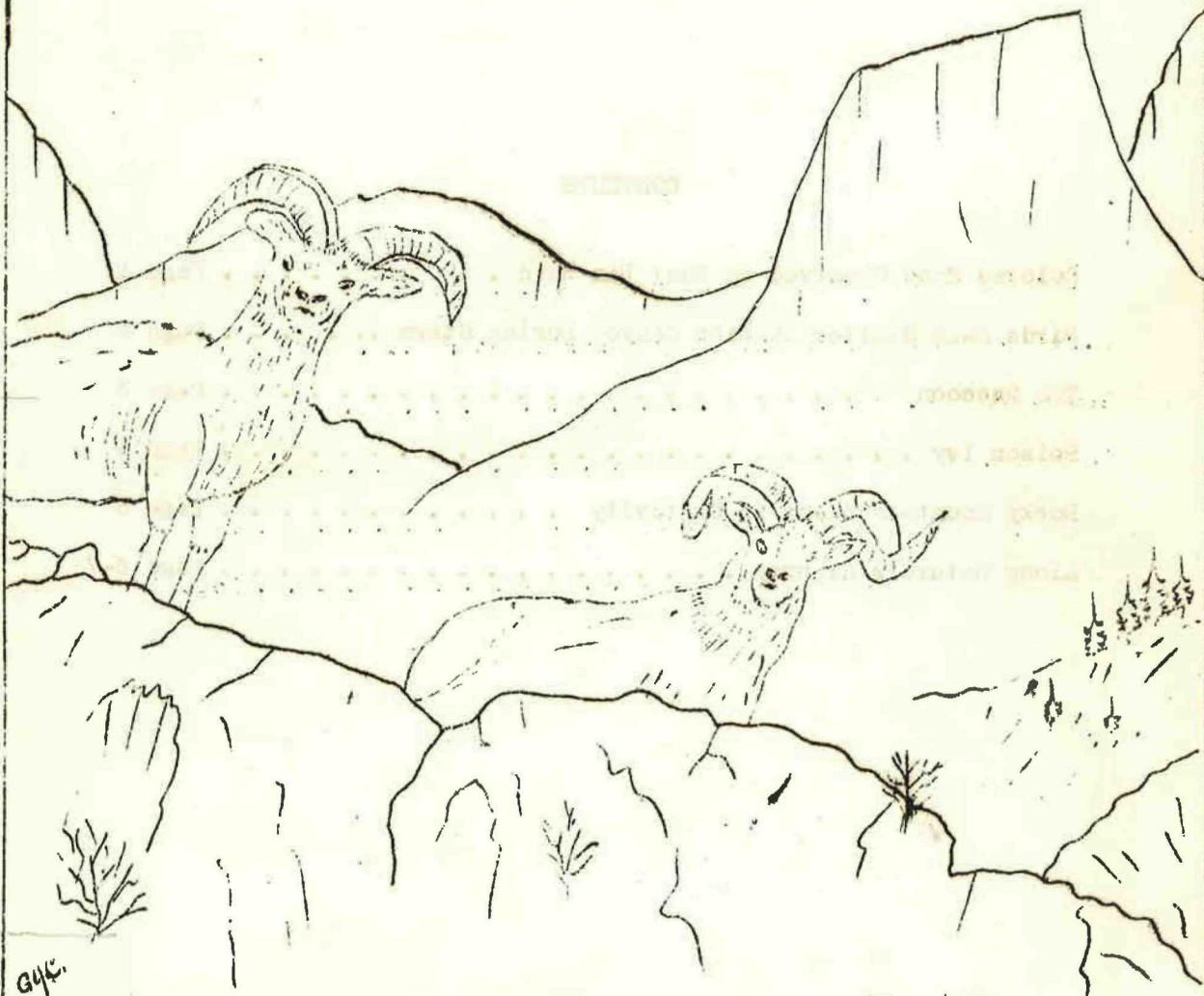


Tison and Bryce Nature Notes



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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ZION AND BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARKS, UTAH

Vol. 5
Zion-Bryce Nature Notes

No. 1
May, 1933

This bulletin is issued monthly for the purpose of giving information to those interested in the natural history and scientific features of Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. Additional copies of these bulletins may be obtained free of charge by those who can make use of them by addressing the Superintendent, Zion National Park, Utah. PUBLICATIONS USING THESE NOTES SHOULD GIVE CREDIT TO ZION-BRYCE NATURE NOTES.

P. P. Patraw, Superintendent

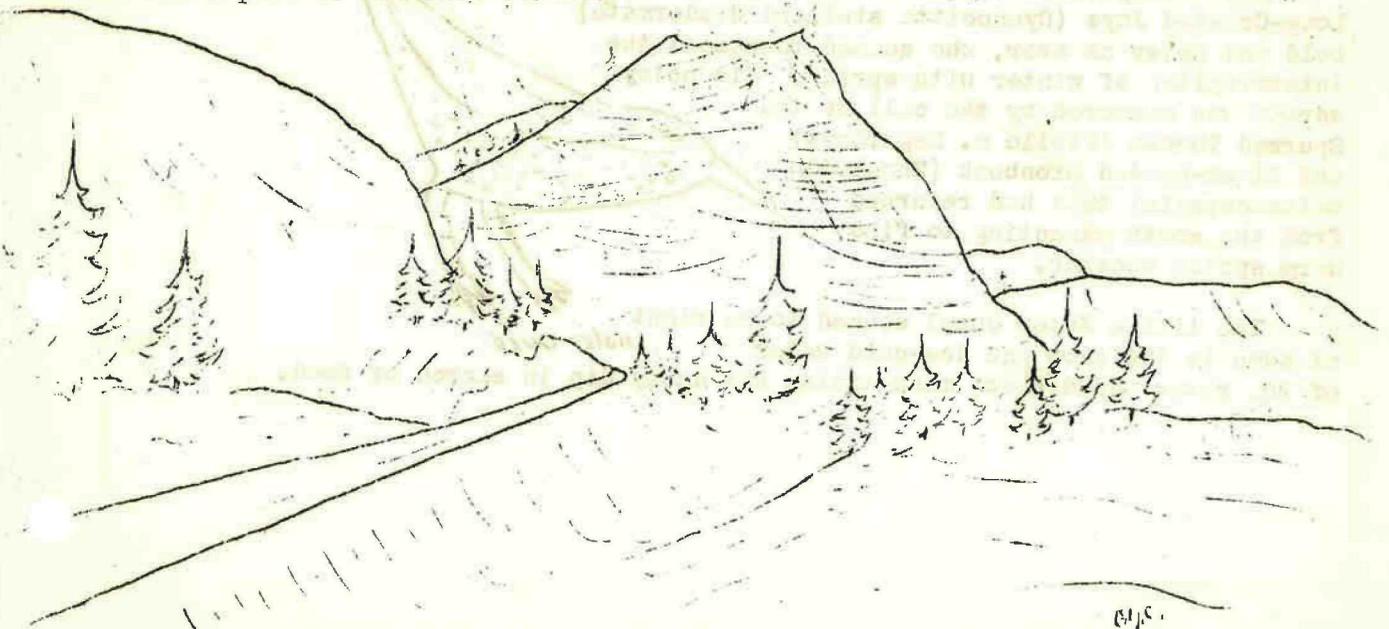
Gordon Y. Cfoft, Acting Park Naturalist

COLORED SNOW OBSERVED ON EAST RIM ROAD
P. P. Patraw, Superintendent

Following a heavy snowstorm on the night of January 29 and on January 30, a snowslide off Checkerboard Mountain in Zion National Park blocked the East Rim Road. Accompanied by the Chief Ranger, I went to this place and on arrival I noticed that the snow gave off a light blue-green color. Wherever there were irregularities in the surface the depressions seemed to be filled with iridescence.

At the time this was observed, about 2:00 P.M., the sky was completely overcast, and it was snowing. The freshly-fallen snow had fallen during a time of low temperature, and seemed to be light, with little moisture content.

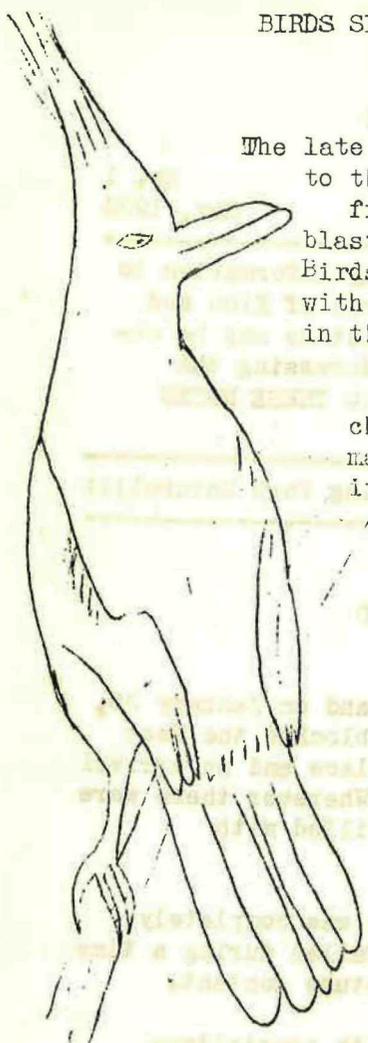
The so-called Checkerboard Mountain is of sandstone, with precipitous slopes and nearly devoid of vegetation. The iridescence was observed in freshly fallen snow, and it is not believed that it was due to organisms. The color was not a part of the snow itself.



G.Y.C.

BIRDS SEEK SHELTER IN ZION CANYON DURING STORM
Gordon Y. Croft

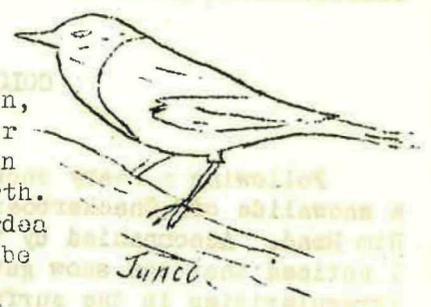
The late spring storms which brought such a variety of weather to the southwest saw many of the birds that had returned from their winter homes in the south caught in the cold blasts of snow and sleet which swept down from the north. Birds that normally live in the Transition region mingled with those of the hot desert regions, all seeking shelter in the protective walls of Zion Canyon.



Crested Jay

Great flocks of Green-tailed Towhees (*Oreospiza chlorura*) a bird seldom seen on the valley floor but who makes its home high up on the pine slopes of the Transition Zone, was found mingling with the Western Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus stigatus*), a normal inhabitant of the sagebrush plains.

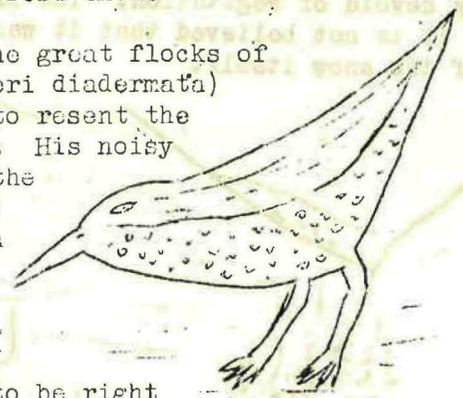
Many birds new to the canyon, probably migrants, tarried longer than otherwise before starting on their long journey to the farnorth. Among them was a Snowy Egrot (*Ardea candidissima*), the first one to be recorded in the park.



Juncob

The Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla gullata auduboni*) was observed during the storm on the floor of the valley. This bird normally lives in the fir forests of the high plateau. Grouped with it were flocks of Western Tanagers (*Piranga ludoviciana*) that had been driven from the pine-covered highlands with the coming of the fresh snow.

Most conspicuous of all were the great flocks of Long-Crested Jays (*Cyanocitta stelleri diadermata*) bold and noisy as ever, who seemed to resent the intermingling of winter with spring. His noisy scream was answered by the call of the Spurred Towhee (*Pipilo m. Megalonyx*) and Black-headed Grosbeak (*Zamelodia melanocephala*) that had returned from the south expecting to find warm spring weather.



water ouzel

The little Water Ouzel seemed to be right at home in the snow and ice-cold water of the river and did not mind taking his daily dip in search of food.

THE RACCOON
(Procyon lotor lotor)
Harold Russell, Park Ranger

What has become of the Raccoon? Has he left his home in Zion Canyon? When the early settlers who lived near Zion Canyon began their farming activities on the floor of the valley, they reported many evidences of the Raccoon. (The name is derived from the Indian word "aracoun"). Up until this time they must have subsisted chiefly on fish, which abounded in all small streams as well as the main river which flows through the valley, and no doubt varied their diet with bird flesh as well as by robbing the nests of eggs. It has been reported that raccoons washed their food before eating it when near a stream. Here let me say they do not always live near streams, as they inhabit the woods, and are very apt climbers. High in the cavities of trees and cliffs they make their home where their young, numbering four to six, live till they reach maturity.

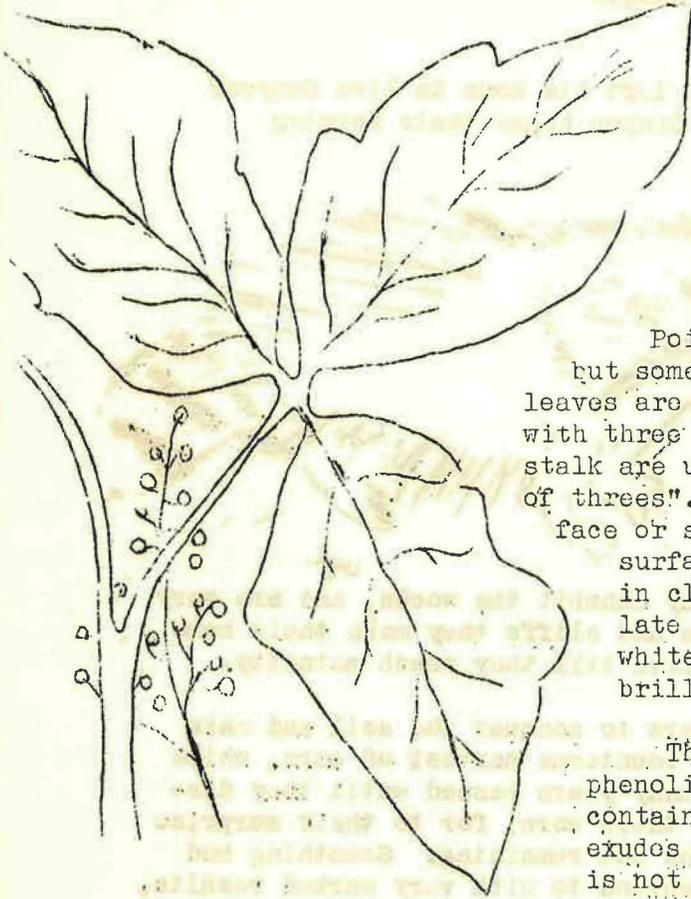


After the untiring efforts of the farmers to conquer the soil and make it produce, their labors were rewarded by a bounteous harvest of corn, which was the principal crop produced here. Not many years passed until they discovered that the sly raccoon was destroying their corn; for to their surprise they discovered the corn shucked and only the cob remaining. Something had to be done. Trapping and poisoning were resorted to with very marked results. For a number of years it seemed that all had been killed off. Since the region has become a national park and all game protected, the raccoon, as well as other animals, are increasing gradually. In Birch Creek and Pine Creek evidences of these animals are to be seen.

In the Great West Canyon along the stream which abounds with fish, they live in great numbers, and we hope that this will act as a feeding ground for Zion and that they will come back to their former abundance.



POISON IVY
Gordon Y. Croft



"Leaflets three, let it be" is a wise saying for any one to adhere to if he is to spend the summer in the woods or mountains of the West. Although Poison Ivy (*Rhus Toxicodendron*) is common throughout the park, few people suffer from poisoning. It is very conspicuous and any one can easily identify it if once pointed out.

Poison Ivy is a woody plant. It grows erect but sometimes may spread over the ground. Its leaves are arranged alternately and are compound, with three leaflets. These three leaflets on a leaf-stalk are usually referred to as "leaves in groups of threes". The leaves have a glossy or dull surface or sometimes even may be hairy on the lower surface. A small greenish-white flower appears in clusters in the axils of the leaves. In late summer the fruit appears as a cluster of white berries. In autumn the leaves turn a brilliant red.

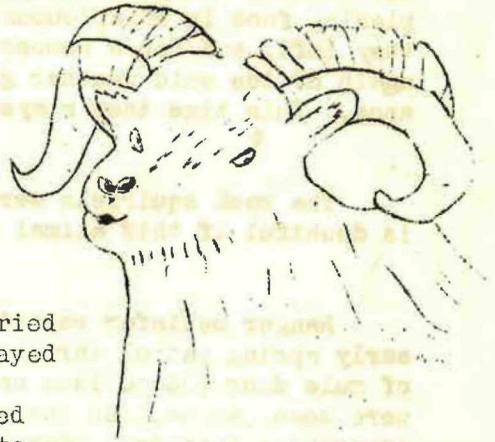
The active ingredients of Poison Ivy is a phenolic oily resin, known as toxicodendrol, contained in the sticky sap of the plant, which exudes when the plant is injured. Toxicodendrol is not volatile, but it may be conveyed to some distance on the soot in the smoke of burning plants, and also by dust, which accounts for some people becoming poisoned by it without coming in direct contact with the plant.

Treatment for Ivy poisoning - Susceptible persons should avoid exposure to the plant. As soon as possible after contact, the area should be scrubbed with soap and water, followed by alcohol to remove the unabsorbed poison. This may be supplemented by washing with ferric chloride lotion. After the poison has developed, its course is not materially affected by treatment. Salves should never be used, especially in the early stages, as they may tend to spread the infection by dissolving the poison.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHEEP IN CAPTIVITY
D. J. Jolley, Chief Ranger

Occasionally Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis Canadensis*) are to be seen on the ledges near the east rim of Zion Canyon. Rangers and ranger-naturalists have reported seeing them in different locations, but always on the east side of the canyon. Last summer one was seen by several people in the valley near the south entrance. Mountain sheep are shy and ordinarily keep to isolated spots on the high mountains. While no large bands have been seen, we have estimated the total number in Zion to be between 25 and 30 head, mostly between the east portal of the tunnel on the Mt. Carmel Highway and the rim of Parunuweap Canyon. Former Superintendent Scoyon, Ranger Schiefer and I saw six head near the natural bridge on Bridge Mountain in the summer of 1929, which is the largest group seen so far as known.

On December 22, 1932, the DeMille Brothers of Rockville, Utah, while on a cattle roundup in Parunuweap Canyon, discovered a two-year ewe with their herd of cattle. They made several efforts to catch it with a lasso rope, but were unsuccessful. The sheep stayed with the herd for four miles and was then driven into a corral with the cattle. Here the boys again tried to catch the sheep but the sheep was wise and stayed close to a cow. When the DeMilles got too close it easily jumped over the corral fence. It seemed to have adopted a certain cow as it kept trying to get back in the corral where she was. After some maneuvering one of the boys crawled on his hands and knees among the cattle and caught the sheep by a leg. They kept it in an old log cabin over night, then hauled it down to Rockville in an old wagon the next day. After it had been in captivity a few hours it seemed to have lost all fear of man, and would eat vegetables and other forage out of ones hand. It was brought to the park and lodged in the horse barn, where it was kept until March 7 and then was liberated.



It became very tame and would get impatient unless fed at a certain time each day. Its diet consisted of cabbage, lettuce, carrots and alfalfa hay, with an occasional drink of milk.

After its liberation on March 7, no more of it was seen, but careful observations have shown that it has occasionally returned to the barn.

Along Nature's Highway.

A Great Blue Heron (*Ardes herodias*) was seen by Superintendent Patraw about one mile south of the Temple of Sinawava. On the same day the Chief Ranger, Mr. Jolley, reported seeing a similar bird.

The first Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*) of the year was seen by Ranger Harold Russell on April 16th.

Numerous Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) resided in the canyon during the winter. Many of the park officials attracted large numbers by placing food in conspicuous places. With the first signs of spring they left, and for a number of weeks none were seen. With the return again of the cold weather great numbers once more made their appearance. This time they stayed only until the weather became warm again.

The rock squirrels were seen many times during the winter. It is doubtful if this animal hibernates at all.

Ranger Schiefer reported seeing a number of animals during his early spring patrol through Lower Birch Creek Canyon. Great numbers of mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and porcupine (*Erethizon epizanthum*) were seen, as well as the rock squirrel, which he reports were very numerous - further evidence that they do not hibernate. Among the birds seen were robins, western lark sparrow, mourning doves, swainson hawk and crested jays, all probably having spent the winter in this one side canyon.

He also reports that the first flowering plants to make their appearance were the Lupine, Pentstemons, and Spiderwort.

Assistant Superintendent Parker, while on a trip to the West Rim, experienced a unique phenomena - the wholesale discharge of pollen by a Red Cedar (*Juniperus scopulorum*). At a distance it was very misleading and appeared somewhat like a cloud of yellow smoke issuing from beneath the tree. Upon closer examination of this and other

Mr. Joseph S. Dixon of the Wild Life Survey of the National Park Service counted eighty (80) Audubon Warblers (*Dendroica auduboni*) in one afternoon during the recent storm which brought so many birds down from the snow covered mountains.

Numerous Lincoln Sparrows (*Melospiza lincolni*) spent the winter in the Park. Mr. Dixon reported seeing these birds nesting in the Mt. McKinley National Park, Alaska.

Mr. Cantrell reported seeing a Ferruginous Rough-leg Hawk (*Archibuteo ferrugineus*) near the south entrance to the Park. This bird is often mistaken for the Golden Eagle.

The snakes are somewhat slower coming out of hybernation this season. So far only two have been added to the live snake collection. This lateness is probably due to the cold weather.

Mr. Wendell Chapman, a noted wild animal photographer, was an early visitor to the Park. We are indebted to Mr. Chapman for the photograph of the mountain sheep from which the cover design was copied.



(1902)