

Yellowstone
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NEWS RELEASE
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YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The winter animal show is now underway in Yellowstone National Park. Only the bears are missing.

The Wyoming snowstorms that transform this famous vacationland into a dazzling blanket of whiteness also push the bruin into a long wintertime slumber.

But Americans, with a yen to see the unusual, are not hibernating. Thousands will enter Yellowstone's two wintertime gateways from now until mid-March to view its spectacular wild animal show.

By snowmobile . . . private or rental . . . they will bounce over sparkling snowdrifts to see elk, buffalo, deer, moose, coyote, antelope, mountain sheep, and the many little creatures that populate Yellowstone's two and a quarter million alpine acres.

Sharp eyes may spot a bald eagle circling over the colorful Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. Or graceful trumpeter swans will be photographed gliding serenely down the Firehole River . . . with geysers spouting and steaming on either bank.

Before the days of snowmobiles, these were marvelous sights enjoyed only by an occasional few. Now "over-the-snow" vehicles . . . from two-passenger to twelve-passenger . . . tour Yellowstone daily. Riders merrily click their cameras, at a kaleidoscope of furry, and feathery, wildlife.

Mammoth Hot Springs at the Park's north entrance, and West Yellowstone, Montana, at the west entrance, are the two gateways open to snowmobile travel.

Inquiry should be made with the National Park Service at Yellowstone for additional information about visiting America's largest animal refuge in the wintertime.

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NEWS RELEASE

from *Yellowstone*
NATIONAL PARK



ROBERT A. HENKEL
DIRECTOR/PUBLIC RELATIONS
BOX 1142, HELENA, MONTANA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ursus horribilis.

The ancient Romans never saw a North American grizzly bear, but they certainly had an apt Latin name for it. The "horrible bear" has struck fear into many an outdoorsman over the past 150 years.

But now many outdoorsmen, particularly naturalists, are fearing for the grizzly bear's precarious existence.

"Since Lewis and Clark first saw grizzly bears on our western prairies in 1805, their numbers have steadily declined," report research scientists John and Frank Craighead. "In the United States, excluding Alaska, they now exist only as remnant populations in wilderness areas, national parks and national forests of the Rocky Mountains."

These brother naturalists, both Ph.D.'s in ecology, believe the heaviest grizzly concentration to be in Yellowstone National Park.

Consequently, some of the estimated 200 grizzlies inhabiting Yellowstone Park and adjacent country are serving science. Some are being "tranquilized" with drugs, "tagged" with radio transmitters, and "tattooed" on the leg - all in the interest of preserving the species.

Tourists in Yellowstone Park rarely, if ever, see a grizzly. They don't become roadside panhandlers like their smaller relative, the mooching black bears. Grizzlies roam the park's two-million primitive acres unmolested.

(MORE)

(Ursus Horribilis - cont.)

Unmolested, that is, until 1959 when the Craighead research team appeared on the scene. Sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other interested organizations, the team began an intensive grizzly bear study in order to more fully understand the threatened giant.

The experience of Bear Number 73 is a typical example of their work. It was a male, or boar, grizzly. He entered a baited cage located in the Hayden Valley. He liked the bait and the trap door clanked shut behind him.

Researchers shot a drugged dart at him. Eight minutes later, "Tranquilized" Number 73 was dragged out onto the ground. He was hoisted on a scale and carefully weighed (780 pounds, the largest bear examined to date). He was measured from head to tail. Blood samples were taken. His fangs and claws examined. Identification numbers tattooed on the inside of the right leg. The examination over, a colorful plastic tag was fastened in his left ear. Researchers moved cautiously back from the beast.

Ninety-three minutes after being stung by a dart, Number 73 snarled and ambled awkwardly across the valley to the safety of a stand of lodgepole pine. Slowly recovering, he licked his dart wound, scratched his new earring, and perhaps pondered whether - even in the interest of science - it was worth all the annoyance.

Certain bears are "tagged" with a small radio transmitter fastened by a loop antenna around the neck. This gives off a pulsed signal. Scientists can then track them and plot their day-to-day movements. A rare achievement occurred this past winter. Radio signals led the Craigheads to the snowy den of a mother with yearlings. This is the first instance where a grizzly in Yellowstone has been located in hibernation.

The research crew of the Craigheads, Hornocker, and students from Montana State University expect 1964 to be a fruitful year in recording the habits of the huge bruin.

Whether the feared (and feared for) grizzly bear population can be managed so it does not conflict with increasing visitor use in Yellowstone depends heavily on the statistics being recorded by this research team in the wilds of Yellowstone National Park.

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