

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ANALYSIS OF WARDENS' WILDLIFE OBSERVATION CARDS

(BANFF NATIONAL PARK 1957

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CWS-10-57
Hooke

The wardens in Banff Park submitted 1086 wildlife observation cards during 1957. This report, compiled from the cards, notes all observations of the less common species and for the others, selected observations concerning behaviour activities, and records of disease and fatalities. Although no attempt was made to assess the actual numbers of ungulates present from records on these cards, the proportion of young recorded for some species was used to indicate the success of the reproductive season. All cards are being kept on file and will prove extremely useful for mapping distribution of species more precisely when specific studies on some are undertaken. The cooperation of Banff wardens in submitting these cards was sincerely appreciated.

The cards submitted for each species were as follows.

Grizzly	28	Pika	1
Black bear	56	Marmot	1
Wolf	3	Snowshoe Hare	1
Coyote	58	Mule Deer	105
Lynx	8	White-tail Deer	1
Cougar	4	Deer sp.	75
Mink	2	Elk	248
Marten	9	Moose	192
Wolverine	11	Bighorn Sheep	198
Beaver	7	Mountain goat	64
Porcupine	3	Birds	11

An annotated summary of the observations follows.

Grizzly (Ursus horribilis).

On March 30 Wardens Fagan and Woledge saw quite a few old bear tracks, thought to be grizzly, at the Scotch Camp area; otherwise the first observation of the season was of

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an adult seen on April 5 at the Cascade R. bridge by Warden Deegan. Tracks were reported during April on the Pipestone R., 5 miles above the mouth, and at the Spray R. cabin. During May tracks were reported at Turrell Cr., and at Panther R. station; this latter set was noted by Warden Fagan as the largest he had ever seen.

A female and two yearlings were observed feeding on a slide 2 miles above Stoney Cr. on the west side of the Cascade R. on May 21 by Warden Woledge, and another grizzly was reported at Ram Summit on May 22 by Warden Coggins. At Clearwater L. on June 19, one was trying to break into a cabin and paid no attention to a dog barking at the time; it ran when Warden Coggins yelled at it. On June 20th an adult with two cubs was seen there and on July 8, one was digging a hole under the wall of Clearwater cabin; it had broken two windows and damaged the door.

One was seen digging roots at Mallock Cr. on June 19 and one was hunting ground squirrels at Dormer Summit on July 6. By July 7, Warden Woledge had seen six different grizzlies in the Stoney Cr. District. At Sawback Cr. on July 24, a female which had two yearlings with it ran out at a car as it went past and stayed on the road until the young had gone out of sight. On July 28, he observed two small grizzlies having a mudbath in Spring L., 2 miles above Stoney Cr. Warden Tarr saw an adult female and one young digging grubs in a rocky meadow at Healy Pass on August 6; the adult gave chase for a short distance. Warden Hermanrude

saw an adult and one young hunting for "gophers" in the meadows at Egypt L. on August 16.

The last grizzly of the season was reported by Warden Rigaux at Stoney Cr. on October 25.

Black Bear (Euarctos americanus).

A black bear seen at Silverhorn Cr. on March 19 by Warden Tasker was the first of the season. Warden Woledge saw the first bear of the season in the Stoney Cr. District on April 8.

Mr. Titherington reported the following observation at the Aylmer Lookout tower on June 19. A female and three cubs came out of the conifers on the run, the female with nose to the ground. A half an hour earlier, seven sheep had gone up the same trail on a rocky ridge of a steep alpine slope. The bear reared up, sniffed the direction the sheep had gone, then with the cubs, ran off the same way the sheep had gone. The same family was seen again on July 3, once running across a meadow and later browsing there, and again on July 6 when their presence frightened a yearling ram.

Warden Vroom observed two bears mating in the yard at the Wardens' Bunkhouse on June 30. Most bear observations were of individuals along the highway or at garbage dumps; the last observation of the year was at Healy Cr. on November 13.

Wolf (Canis lupus).

Warden Fagan saw two fresh tracks on the road by Cuthead School on April 29, and saw one animal at the Sandhills Cabin

on June 24. Two wolves had been reported in the vicinity of Graveyard Cabin at the mouth of the Alexandra R. during the winter.

Coyote (Canis latrans).

A bob-tailed male was killed by some vehicle opposite the Mt. Eisenhower D.P.W. camp on January 2, and another killed by a train, was found about 3 miles west of Eisenhower Station in March.

Warden Hermanrude saw two coyotes mating on March 18 in the Bow Valley.

On March 25 at Saskatchewan Crossing, Warden Anderson watched two sitting on a hill calling to dogs which stayed at the bottom of the hill; the coyotes were quite bold and could be approached to within 200 yards. Warden Young saw a coyote playing with a dog at Spray Lodge on July 1 and in November Warden Carleton noted that coyotes frequently stayed around the Eisenhower station probably because of the presence of a dog.

Coyotes were reported as numerous in the Mistaya district in March where one pack of seven was seen at Waterfowl L. They were also reported numerous in the Spray R. area in June.

One adult was seen running ahead of a truck on a plowed road in the Sunshine Lodge area on April 14, and this was noted by Warden Hermanrude as the first time he had seen a coyote that high up in winter.

Warden Fagan saw a lactating female on the Snow Cr. trail 2 miles from Scotch on May 29 and found a den at

sulphur Springs, Panther R. in June. On June 12, the six small pups were playing with the remains of an elk calf, after the old coyote ran away from the hole.

Mr. Titherington saw two coyotes hunting and then chasing four sheep at the Aylmer Lookout on June 20, Warden Lightbound watched one killing "gophers" near the Bryant Cr. cabin on June 27, and Warden Vroom reported one shot in Banff townsite while eating scraps put out for a dog on August 24.

Lynx (Lynx canadensis).

Observations were as follows: (1) January 25. One was "hunting rabbits" near Baker Cr. (Warden Woodworth). (2) March 22. Two, while crossing the road near Cuthead Cr., stopped and watched the observer and came very close (Warden Rigaux). (3) April 8. One was staying around a carcass of a cow elk killed by a diesel locomotive 2 miles west of Eisenhower station (Warden Carleton). (4) June 21. One was travelling the road at the Cascade R. at dark (Warden Woledge). (5) November 2. One watching a squirrel was quite reluctant to move when approached in the Bow Valley between Healy and Sundance Creeks. (Warden Hermanrude). (6) November 5. One was seen between Healy and Borgeaux cabins on Sunshine Rd. (Warden Hermanrude).

In addition, during February, tracks of one lynx were reported 4 miles up the Pipestone R. trail from the L. Louise warden station, and tracks of two lynx were reported near Mud L.

Cougar (Felis concolor).

Warden Fagan reported tracks at the Snow Cr. trail above

Scotch on January 16 and other tracks $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below Windy on April 12. Mr. Titherington had a cougar jump on the roof of the Aylmer Lookout cabin at 1.30 a.m. on August 27. One cougar was reported at mile 12 east by Warden Guttman although the date of this observation was not noted.

Mink (Mustela vison).

On March 27 Warden Fagan reported a lot of tracks in the Red Deer R. canyon below Scotch. Throughout early spring one mink stayed around garbage from the cookhouse of Wells Construction crusher, 4 miles west of Eisenhower on the trans-Canada highway. (Warden Carleton).

Marten (Martes americana).

Warden Hermanrude reported a marten at the Red Earth cabin on March 6, at Shadow L. cabin on March 7 and at the Borgeaux cabin on November 5. Warden Lyster noted on April 6 that a marten had been around the Ptarmigan cabin most of the winter and that tracks had often been seen in front of the cabin windows. It, or other single individuals were seen there again on October 30th and December 11. On December 17 a marten was feeding on food scraps given it by people at Temple Lodge.

On March 22 Warden Vroom commented that a few marten tracks seen at the mouth of Sheol Valley were the only sign of life noted in Paradise Valley as far up as the Giant Steps. Tracks were also reported on December 13 at Peters Cr. 5 miles from Indianhead Cabin.

Wolverine (Gulo luscus).

Warden Woodworth live-trapped four wolverine as follows:

- 1) west of Herbert L. in the bush, January 16.
- 2) east of Herbert L. in the bush, January 19.
- 3) Bath Cr. January 30.
- 4) No-See-Um Cr. on February 16.

Two wolverine "apparently either fighting or mating" were seen by Warden Anderson at mile 88 on the Jasper highway on March 14. Observations of single individuals were at the Spray R. cabin on April 2 (Warden Lightbound), between Skoki and Fossil Mt. on April 10 (Warden Lyster), one at Martin Cr. April 19 (Warden Coggins) and one on the L. O'Hara trail on May 21 (Warden Vroom). Many tracks were seen in the Spray R. area during the winter and tracks of three were seen at Wigmore Cr. on April 15.

Beaver (Castor canadensis).

Two were seen feeding in a pond $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below Windy on March 16 by Warden Fagan. On April 5 Warden Woledge saw two feeding on willows at an inlet $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Stoney Cr. on the Cascade R. Fresh sign was noted in other ponds and by April 10 beaver in all ponds between Cuthead and Stoney Cr. had been out to get more food.

Other beaver observations were of two at Muleshoe L. on May 3, two at Johnson L. ponds on June 5, one working on a new dam above Flint cabin on June 16 and one at Turrell Cr. in the Red Deer valley on August 22.

Porcupine (Erethizon dorsatum).

Warden Lyster reported four around the Little Pipestone cabin on June 22 and five in the Molar Valley on June 24.

Warden Guttman reported two at Boom L. on July 7.

Pika (Ochotona princeps).

Four were reported on rockslide at Boom L. on July 7 by Warden Guttman.

Marmot (Marmota sp.).

Warden Lyster saw nine, including three young, in the Ptarmigan L. area on August 13; he had previously counted as many as 20 there and they are seen on every trip through in the summer.

Snowshoe Hare (Lepus americanus).

Warden Guttman recorded one, 3 miles south-east of the Eisenhower station on March 7; although it seemed in good shape, no others appeared to be around and not many tracks had been seen.

Mule Deer (Odocoileus hemionus).

Four seen by Warden Carleton on April 12 at mile 12 on the old highway were moving west down the centre of the road and were likely headed for Hillsdale slopes which had just started to clear of snow. A buck seen by Warden Woledge at Grassy Mt. on May 11 was the first observed there that season; similarly, the first deer of the season at the Spray R. cabin was a doe seen on May 15 by Warden Lightbound.

On August 21 at Wolverine Cr. Warden Hermanrude saw a doe which had warts on its neck and shoulders; this may have been an instance of fibromatitis. On August 30 at the Little Pipestone cabin, Warden Lyster saw a yearling with

very short ears as if they had been frozen the previous winter.

The observation cards report a total of 44 adult males, 105 adult females, 4 yearling males, 15 yearling females, 2 other yearlings, 21 fawns and one unclassified animal. Fawns comprised 11% of the total deer recorded and indicate a 20% increment based on total fawns recorded and total adult females recorded.

White-tail Deer (Odocoileus virginianus).

On May 30, a quarter mile from Marvel L. three does were seen feeding along a brushy hillside. Warden Lightbound noted that these deer were "often seen here during the summer months".

Deer sp.

Seventy-five cards did not actually specify which deer was observed but most probably, all referred to mule deer. Warden Fagan noted the first deer of the season, a doe, at the Panther R. station on May 16.

Elk (Cervis canadensis).

Elk observations are presented chronologically below.

January 5. Grassy Mt. Three yearling males were observed on a high wind swept ridge at an elevation of about 7000 ft.; judging by the snow pawed out they had been there for some time. (Warden Woledge).

January 26. Trans-Canada highway near Red Earth Cr. Seven elk were feeding on garbage near the gravel crushing camp. (Warden Carleton).

- March. Eisenhower Station. One bull which had been around the station all winter lost one antler on March 28 and the other the following day. (Warden Carleton).
- April 19. Spray R., 16 mile area. A large group of 147 elk were grazing and moving slowly along the exposed hillside (Warden Lightbound).
- April 29. Panther R. station. A herd of at least 38 elk was the first large herd to come back to that area that season. (Warden Fagan).
- May 14. Clearwater Valley. Seventeen elk wintered on flats 2 miles long by $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide. The previous fall, grass was about 6" high but by mid-May was grazed down to about $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Poplars had all been skinned to a height of about 6ft. (Warden Coggins).
- May 16. Spray R. A herd of 68 elk was seen and it was thought that the main herd was gradually moving towards the high country, as fewer elk were being seen each day. (Warden Lightbound).
- May 27. Red Earth Cr. Three female elk were seen with two calves, the latter the first reported for the year (Warden Tarr).
- May. Eisenhower District. The largest count of elk during the month was 106. (Warden Carleton).
- May. L. Louise District. The largest count of elk during the month was 41. Similarly, largest counts for June was 62; July, 18; September, 74; October, 78; November, 67; December, 27. (Warden Woodworth).
- June 2. Near Anthracite. Four bulls seen were all shed. (Warden Stenton).
- June 5. Snow Cr. Ten calves were seen in a herd of 58 elk. (Warden Fagan).

- June 22. Elk Valley. Four bulls were at a salt lick and elk antlers shed around the lick indicated that it was in wintering grounds. (Warden Woledge).
- July 8. Aylmer Lookout. A bull and 4 cow elk were seen rolling in shallow water at the edge of L. Minnewanka. (Mr. Titherington).
- July 17. Wigmore Cr. A total of 231 elk was seen in Wigmore valley near Head; there were many small calves but they were difficult to count. (Wardens Fagan and Edge).
- July 29. Valley up the centre of Molar Mt. Cr. - flows east to Pipestone R. A herd of 26 elk was found apparently summering there; it was the first time this was noted (Warden Lyster).
- August 26. Bankhead Townsite. Two bulls had their antlers clean of velvet. (Warden Stenton).
- August 29. Cadet Camp. Two spike bulls were still in velvet. (Warden Stenton).
- September 30. Goat Cr. Bridge. Two bulls with 14 cows and 7 calves were fighting for over an hour and making so much noise they could be heard 2 miles away. (Warden Young).
- October 7. Wigmore Summit. About 250 elk were moving mostly in single file towards the lower Panther R. area (Warden Campbell).
- October 23. Barrier cabin. A herd of 300, some of which had been around the cabin during a snowstorm while the others were bedded down in timber and brush along the Panther R., were travelling towards Sulphur Spring. (Warden Campbell).

November 2. Divide Cr. Summit. A fresh carcass of a calf elk was found, apparently killed by a wolf. The heart and liver were buried in snow 12 ft. away. (Warden Campbell).

November 8. Eisenhower Station. A large bull elk returned to winter beside the barn for the third successive year. (Warden Carleton).

Sightings of 5510 elk were reported during the year, of which 1541 were classified as to age and sex as follows: 429 bulls, 653 cows, 21 yearling males, 40 yearling females, 15 other yearlings, and 383 calves. The calves comprised 25% of the reported observations and indicate a 58% increment based on total calves and total cows reported. The total of 429 bulls and 653 cows may suggest an unbalanced sex ratio of about 63 males to 100 females.

Moose (Alces alces). Moose observations are presented chronologically below.

January 12. About 7 miles west of Banff. A moose (bull?) was standing on its hind legs to take the top off a young aspen. (Warden Carleton).

April 13. Clearwater Valley. A cow moose was shot in the horse pasture after it was found lying on the ground unable to get up. An autopsy showed that one lung was almost entirely gone and large pus pockets had formed on the liver. Large wart-like sores were on the inside of the right hind leg. (Warden Coggins).

April 25. Mile 106 Banff-Jasper highway. A dead yearling female was found lying in gravel beds of the Saskatchewan R.

It was very thin and was thought to have died of malnutrition. Several piles of excrement were noted in the immediate vicinity of the body. (Wardens Anderson and McPhee).

May 22. Stoney Cr. Pasture. A cow, and a calf only a day or two old, were seen. The cow was very badly rubbed off and looked as though it was covered with ticks. (Warden Woledge).

July 10th. Cyclone horse corral. Two 2 year old moose, a male and a female, had been raised near the cabin and had become quite tame. They were seen this time lying in the horse corral. (Warden Lyster).

July 23. Indianhead. A cow moose was licking salt in the horse corral. (Warden Coggins).

Sightings of 345 moose were reported during the year of which 294 animals were aged and sexed as follows: 126 bulls, 117 cows, 7 yearling males, 7 yearling females, 6 other yearlings, and 31 calves. Calves constituted 11% of the reported observations and indicate a 26% increment based on total calves and total cows reported.

Bighorn Sheep (Ovis canadensis). Sheep observations are presented chronologically below.

April 11. Mile 5, Bow Valley. A paint marked ram was seen; it had been amrked at Vermilion Lake. (Warden Hermanrude).

April 29. Mile 7, Bow Valley. A band of 46 sheep appeared heavily infested with ticks but had not shed much. (Warden Carleton).

- May 6. Minnewanka boathouse. Seven sheep appeared to be heavily infested with ticks. (Warden Stenton).
- May 16. Palliser Range. Four yearlings seen had left the band probably because the ewes were about to lamb. (Wardens Woledge and Ferris).
- June 2. Minnewanka Picnic Grounds. Eight yearlings were together as if chased from the band by older ewes prior to lambing. (Warden Stenton).
- June 21. Aylmer Lookout. An old ewe was looking for her lamb which was thought to have been killed by a coyote the previous day. A yearling stayed close to the ewe whereas usually at this time of year, yearlings are butted and hooked by the ewes, presumably as a form of "weaning". (Mr. Titherington).
- July 1. Aylmer Lookout. Sheep habitually come to salt blocks placed out for them at the tower. If the blocks are taken away, the sheep stay the whole day looking for them, but if salt is available they stay for an hour or so then return to the high country. (Mr. Titherington).
- July 2. Aylmer Lookout. Eleven yearlings have appeared out of the 24 lambs in the band in 1956. (Mr. Titherington).
- July 4. Aylmer Lookout. A band of 82 sheep visited the salt block. One $\frac{3}{4}$ curl ram and an old ewe got their horns locked on a block of salt. The ram threw the ewe on her back, dragged her down a steep slope and finally shook her off. The ewe was groggy and dazed but no horns were broken. (Mr. Titherington).

- July 19. Aylmer Lookout. Twenty of 36 sheep were completely shed. (Mr. Titherington).
- July 23. Aylmer Lookout. A yearling ewe walked to about 30 paces downwind from a wolverine before taking fright. Both ran off and disappeared but within a few minutes the ewe came back into the clearing and ran down to the lookout; the wolverine had gone. (Mr. Titherington).
- August 9. Pilot Mt. A ram was seen with a large lump just below the shoulder on a sore front leg. (Warden Hermanrude).
- September 2. Aylmer Lookout. In a band of 84 sheep there were 28 lambs indicating a good survival rate throughout the summer. (Mr. Titherington).
- September 24. Near Sulphur Springs. Rams were seen running with ewes by this date. (Warden Campbell).

Sightings of 3360 sheep were reported during the year of which many were repeated observations of the Aylmer band. Of these, 2348 were classified as follows: 578 rams, 934 ewes, 166 yearling rams, 206 yearling ewes, 2 other yearlings, and 512 lambs. Lambs thus constituted 22% of the observations and indicate a 55% increment based on total lambs and total adult ewes recorded.

Mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus).

Observations at favoured localities were: up to 11 at the Spray L. side of Mt. Fortune, 13 three miles above Stoney Cr. mouth, 12 at the North Fork of the Dormer R., 8 on the range behind Bryant Cr. cabin, 19 on Flint Mt., 30 on the south face of Mt. Wilson, 15 at Totem Cr., 41 at Dormer Summit, 27 at

Siffleur R. valley, and 23 in a valley at the head of Douglas Cr. near Bonnet Glacier.

On June 18, Warden Fagan saw 9 goats going right along the Red Deer R. near Sandhills cabin quite a way from the high country. The band of 41 goats at Dormer Summit on July 3 was reported by Warden Woledge as the largest he had seen in the district. Warden Coggins saw the 27 at Siffleur R. on July 11; they were coming down to the river for water. On July 30, Warden Hermanrude saw a goat walking down the road by Borgeaux cabin, presumably changing range. On November 2 Warden Carleton saw a goat on the road at 7 mile corner. It was attempting to climb a clay bank to reach escape cover but after many attempts it gave up and trotted downhill to the Bow R. and travelled along the bank.

Birds.

Eleven cards were received reporting a western grebe, Canada goose, golden eagles, ptarmigan and Bohemian waxwings.

