

ANALYSIS OF WARDENS' WILDLIFE

OBSERVATION CARDS

JASPER NATIONAL PARK 1957

G.R. Francis

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE

CWS
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* G.R. Francis

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A total of 1500 cards representing about 10,980 sightings of animals were turned in by Jasper Park wardens during 1957. They were as follows:

Species	Cards	Sightings	Species	Cards	Sightings
Grizzly	48	133*	Beaver	24	32
Black bear	92	189	Elk	302	3585
Wolf	6	3*	White-tailed deer	4	4
Coyote	60	110	Mule Deer	50	146
Fox	2	2	Deer (Unspecified)	265	1689
Marten	15	25	Moose	299	728
Fisher	1	1	Caribou	42	337
Mink	1	1	Bighorn	167	3177
Wolverine	5	3*	Mountain Goat	95	807
Lynx	5	3*	Birds	10	-
Cougar	7	2*			

* - excluding tracks

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 Jasper wardens in submitting these cards was sincerely appreciated.

Summaries, in the form of an annotated list are given for each species.

Grizzly Bear (Ursus horribilis).

Tracks were first reported on April 6 at Jacque Pond and the first sight observation was at Deer Creek on April 21, it appeared to be a young animal. On May 22 an adult female was seen feeding on a dead moose at Topaz valley. There were 11 observations in July, six of which were at garbage dumps, grizzlies were reported as becoming a nuisance at Maligne by the end of July and during August the Maligne L. dump had 11 different bears around, including 4 very small cubs. On September 1 Wardens Schintz and Ross saw a grizzly chasing caribou at Pobokton Pass. An adult male seen on September 13 at Snow Bowl was thought to have been paint marked at the Jasper Park Lodge incinerator. Of five observations in October, none were at dumps; the last report for the season was at Southesk River on November 18.

Black Bear (Euarctos americanus).

Observations were made as follows.

April 2 cards 2 animals	August 22 cards 66 animals
May 17 cards 29 animals	September 12 cards 28 animals
June 16 cards 19 animals	October 3 cards 5 animals
July 18 cards 38 animals	November 1 card 1 animal
	? 1 card 1 animal

The first report of the year was on April 13 and the last on November 14. There were six cubs reported.

Wolf (Canis lupus).

Warden Wilkins saw one chasing coyotes at mile $1\frac{1}{2}$ on the Miette Hot Springs Rd. on February 19. Four were seen travelling down Cairn Pass on June 17 and one was seen near

Brazeau Cabin on November 22. In addition, tracks were observed at Pobokton Creek on November 4, at mile 4 on December 4 and at Job Creek December 16.

Coyote (Canis latrans).

Observations were as follows.

January	6 cards	10 animals	July	3 cards	3 animals
February	7 cards	14 animals	August	1 card	1 animal
March	6 cards	7 animals	September	3 cards	6 animals
April	7 cards	9 animals	October	11 cards	17 animals
May	4 cards	4 animals	November	8 cards	13 animals
June	3 cards	3 animals	December	12 cards	23 animals

On January 10 Warden Young saw 2 coyotes chasing a doe deer at mile 8 on the East highway. Warden F. Camp saw one on February 6 at mile 43 and noted it was the first seen in the area for some time. A half moulted animal was at Henry House Flats on April 17. Warden Wells observed a female with 3 young on September 27, the young were barking at his dog. In December, three coyotes were seen regularly at Willow Creek.

Fox (Vulpes fulva).

Warden Wells saw a silver fox at Devona Cabin on July 30, the first silver fox he had observed in the park. Warden McGuire saw a fox at the Bald Hills on November 20.

Marten (Martes americana).

Observations were as follows.

March	1 card	1 animal	August	1 card	2 animals
April	4 cards	7 animals	September	1 card	2 animals
May	1 card	1 animal	October	2 cards	5 animals
June	1 card	2 animals	November	3 cards	3 animals
July	1 card	3 animals			

Warden Tremblay noted that two marten at Warden Shelter on Willow Creek on April 10 were very tame and came into the cabin and fed from his hand; one was a pregnant female. On the same day Warden F. Camp saw a marten sitting in the doorway of Waterfalls Cabin "looking for a handout". At the Blue Creek Cabin Warden Tremblay found 3 marten on April 15; they were very tame and would enter the cabin. One was a pregnant female. During the summer and fall marten were seen at garbage near Beaver cabin in June and November and at garbage near Maligne Cabin in July, August, September and October. One male was caught at Maligne Cabin on October 21 in a trap set for packrats. Warden McGuire had a marten enter Medicine Cabin while he was having dinner on November 23.

Fisher (Martes pennanti).

Warden Tremblay treed a fisher which seemed to be hunting in small willows at Snake Indian Lake on April 11; he had seen tracks in the area previously. This is the first fisher reported in Jasper Park since the wildlife observations scheme was inaugurated in 1951.

Mink (Mustela vison).

One was seen at mile 13 on November 13.

Wolverine (Gula luscus).

Two, one of which may have been a yearling, were seen travelling along Willow Creek on April 9; Warden Tremblay suggested at the time that there "seemed to be an increase in these animals over the past year". One wolverine was travelling a trail 9 miles west of Blue Creek on May 15 and

one was seen on a grass slide at Leah Slide on November 19. Tracks were observed at the Brazeau River in April and around the Brazeau Cabin and equipment shed in December.

Lynx (Lynx canadensis).

On February 1 at Mile 42 Warden F. Camp saw one lynx carrying another; they had apparently fought, one killing the other. Individual lynx were seen at the Mushroom Patch and Mile 12 in April and Medicine Lake in November. Tracks were seen at Brazeau Bridge in April and Mile 2 Celestine Rd. in November, the latter animal followed the road for approximately one mile before cutting into the bush.

Cougar (Felis concolor).

One was seen at Rock Creek on April 14 by Warden Elvin and another was seen at night in the lights of a car at mile 32 south on October 7 by Warden Stack. Tracks were observed at Boulder Creek in January, along the main highway in February, at Dolly L. in April, at Mile 3 Celestine Rd. in November and at the Snake Indian River near Willow Cr. in December.

Beaver (Castor canadensis).

Observations were as follows.

April	2 cards	3 animals	August	3 cards	3 animals
May	5 cards	10 animals	September	1 card	1 animal
June	5 cards	6 animals	October	2 cards	3 animals
July	4 cards	4 animals	November	2 cards	2 animals

During May beaver were seen feeding on shoots along the banks of the Athabaska at Mile 24½ on May 2, cutting poplar

at Blue Cr. on May 13 and feeding on willows at the river bank by Miette cabin. One was seen building a new house on the bank of the Snake Indian R. on June 21; in the autumn it was noted that beaver feed away from this river as long as the water stays open.

Elk (Cervis canadensis).

Observations were as follows.

January	26 cards	349 animals	July	19 cards	152 animals
February	13 cards	109 animals	August	11 cards	82 animals
March	20 cards	244 animals	September	23 cards	92 animals
April	24 cards	220 animals	October	29 cards	435 animals
May	28 cards	319 animals	November	40 cards	789 animals
June	37 cards	235 animals	December	32 cards	560 animals

Warden Tremblay observed 21 elk at Willow Creek on March 18, the "first winter elk known to winter in this country". On May 10 Warden G. Camp saw 8 elk at Mile 14 to 29 S. apparently working back to the summer range. On June 11, of 7 elk at Mile 2 Celestine Rd., 2 yearlings and 1 cow had moulted whereas 4 other cows had only partly moulted. On June 12 at Brazeau Cabin a cow with part of its winter coat was seen. Warden Elvin observed cow elk at Rock-Mud Creek on June 11, and their actions suggested there could have been calves in the vicinity. At Miette cabin on June 24, Warden Wells saw cow elk chase a barking dog, so thought they had calves. At Rocky River on September 21 bull elk were heard bugling; Warden Schintz thought that they were late starting in that vicinity this year.

White-tailed Deer (Odocoileus virginiana).

Single females were observed with mule deer at Henry House flats on May 10, west switch, Jasper townsite on October 5 and at Mile 8, east highway on October 25. A male

was seen with mule deer at the airfield on December 20.

Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus). Observations were as follows.

March	1 card	7 animals	September	7 cards	10 animals
June	6 cards	12 animals	October	9 cards	26 animals
July	4 cards	8 animals	November	10 cards	42 animals
August	7 cards	14 animals	December	6 cards	27 animals

Deer, not specified, but probably mule deer were as follows.

January	13 cards	126 animals	July	24 cards	148 animals
February	12 cards	106 animals	August	29 cards	140 animals
March	17 cards	172 animals	September	20 cards	90 animals
April	27 cards	184 animals	October	22 cards	131 animals
May	30 cards	217 animals	November	20 cards	119 animals
June	36 cards	137 animals	December	15 cards	119 animals

Warden McGuire noted that a lot of deer had started out of the high country at Maligne on August 30. Warden Elder saw a deer with a large left horn and the right one just a prong, at Cairn R. November 16.

Moose (Alces alces).

A total of 299 cards representing 728 moose observations were submitted. They were as follows.

	Adult		Yearling			Sub-Total	Young of Year	% of Herd	Un-classified
	M	F	M	F	?				
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	220	263	12	24	6		102	16	101
May 15-31	14	22	3	1		40	1		6
Jun. 1-15	9	11	3	3	2	26	8	23	4
Jun. 16-30	8	11				21	6		
Jul. 1-15	14	12		2		28	8	21	
Jul. 16-31	8	10	2	1		21	5		
Aug. 1-15	11	8		1		20	3	17	
Aug. 16-31	9	14		2		25	6		1
Sept. 1-15	13	11				24	7	20	1
Sept. 16-30	13	14	1			28	6		1
Oct. 1-15	18	13		3		34	8	18	2
Oct. 16-31	19	12	1	1		33	7		
Nov. 1-15	10	15				25	7	13	
Nov. 16-30	15	20				35	2		
Dec. 1-15	9	6	1			16	5	27	10
Dec. 16-31	7	17				14	10		15

The frequency of observations of young vs. adults does not show a steady decline from calving season on, which would provide a measure of calf mortality. Observations covering the entire year, indicate that calves comprised 16% of the herd, whereas for the period from mid-May calving to the end of the calendar year, calf observations comprised 18% of the total. From mid-May to the end of December 98 calves and 196 cows were observed, giving a calf increment of 49%, calculated on this basis, slightly higher than similar evaluations in previous years.

On April 12 at the Mud-Deer Creeks area, Warden Elvin found a cow and yearling ('56 calf) dead, bogged down in a spring. The tracks around the bog indicated that the yearling managed to get out once but apparently went back to the cow.

On June 8 two calves which looked newly born were seen at Maligne cabin and a calf about a day old was seen on July 11 at the west end of Snake Indian Lake. On November 7 Warden Tremblay shot a cow moose which had a broken leg - a clean break just below the knee.

Caribou (Rangifer arcticus).

Forty-two cards representing 337 observations of caribou were submitted. Young of the year comprised 21% of the total observations, or a 42% increment based on total young (69) and total adult females observed (164).

Warden Tremblay saw a calf born, the first of the year, on May 22 in the Topaz Valley. Other observations were of tracks of a

large herd in the Evelyn Pass area in July, a calf with diarrhea near Caribou Inn in October, a bull with a broken antler, badly infected and in poor shape at Cold Sulphur Springs in November and caribou migrating to the winter range at Blue Creek on November 13. The larger herds were observed at Blue Creek - 61, Cold Sulphur Spring - 30, Caribou Inn - 24, Topaz Valley - 23, Mt. Kelsey - 18, Caribou L. - 17, and Willow Cr. - 14.

Bighorn Sheep (Ovis canadensis). Observations were as follows.

January	10 cards	164 animals	July	10 cards	109 animals
February	9 cards	216 animals	August	1 card	1 animal
March	8 cards	217 animals	September	18 cards	295 animals
April	9 cards	231 animals	October	17 cards	262 animals
May	21 cards	417 animals	November	33 cards	709 animals
June	18 cards	147 animals	December	12 cards	408 animals

Observations were: (1) 3 rams apparently going up country on May 18 at a burn at Medicine L., (2) more sheep than usual at the southend of Medicine L. at the end of May, (3) 3 adult ewes partly moulted at Windy Pt. on July 6, (4) 41 ewes and 15 yearling 3 miles up river from Arete Shelter on July 26 in what was considered by Wardens Klettle and Schintz as rather low country for sheep at that time of year, (5) 3 sheep licking black shale at lime kiln, mile 25 east highway, (6) rut starting at Chocolate Mt. November 10, (7) 2 adult rams believed changing their range since they came from the Cold Sulphur spring direction and headed towards Mt. Chetamon on November 11, (8) 2 adult male headed towards Snaring River from Moberly flats on November 16 and believed to be changing range, (9) rut in progress at Windy Pt. on December 2.

Information recorded on live-trapping bighorns is

excluded from this summary.

Mountain Goat (Oreamnos americanus).

A total of 95 cards reporting 807 goats were turned in. Of these 432 animals were classified. Young of year made up 28% of the observations, or a 54% increment based on total kids observed (121) and total adult nannies (206). Larger groups were observed at Mt. Kelsey - 55, Rock Cr. - about 40, Ancient Wall - 32, west of Moosehorn Cabin - 32, Leah slide - 24, and 3 miles west of Topaz Lake - 20.

At Ancient Wall on May 22, 14 females were "bearing with young" (Warden Tremblay) and the same observer saw the first kid of the year at Mt. Kelsey on May 28. Warden Camp noted 20 goats to be the highest count for May along the range from Mt. Kerkeslin to Ranger Creek. Fifteen goats at Mt. Kelsey were shedding heavily on July 7.

Birds. The following cards were turned in.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Cards</u>	<u>Number of birds</u>
Ptarmigan	4	37
"White geese"	1	50 - 60
Canada geese	1	30
"Blackbirds"	1	7
Great Horned Owl	1	2
Robin	1	2
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1	1

CWS
58-44 Francis, G. R.
c.2 Analysis of warden's
wildlife observation
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