**Things to Do**

Keep this Guide with you to get the most out of your visit.

**Tour The Ahwahnee**
Step back to an earlier era of history as you explore the National Historic Landmark that opened in 1927. Notable for its architecture and artful décor, the hotel provides a cozy atmosphere to relax and enjoy a warm drink in. (Food & Beverage, page 7.)

**Drive to Tunnel View**
One of the most famous views of Yosemite Valley, Tunnel View has captivated visitors for over 75 years. Newly rehabilitated, it offers expansive views of El Capitan, Clouds Rest, Half Dome, and Bridalveil Fall. (See map, page 2.)

**Snowshoe with a Ranger**
Learn about the wonders of winter on a ranger-guided snowshoe stroll. Programs are offered daily at Badger Pass Ski Area through March 28th, conditions permitting. A free shuttle from Yosemite Valley to Badger Pass is available. (See page 3.)

**See Half Dome at Sunset**
Towering more than 4,000 feet above the eastern end of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome compels eyes to gaze on it. Sunset lights up the cliff face, creating a dramatic and colorful scene. Witness the effect from Sentinel Bridge or one of the meadows near Yosemite Village or Curry Village. (See the Valley map on the back of this Guide.)

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**How to Use Your Yosemite Guide**

The list on this page offers 10 popular things to do. The table of contents (“What’s Inside...”) at lower right shows where you can turn for more information. A detailed listing of program information can be found on page 3.

**Visit the Yosemite Museum**
Learn about Yosemite Indians by exploring a museum collection that includes remarkable woven baskets and traditional dress. Tour the outdoor Indian Village or talk with an Indian cultural demonstrator. The Yosemite Museum is located in Yosemite Village at shuttle stops #5 and #9. (See page 6.)

**Hike to Mirror Lake**
Situated at the base of Half Dome, Mirror Lake frames reflections of Yosemite’s most iconic cliff. The quiet trail is gentle and follows Tenaya Creek as it winds its way through the eastern Valley. The trail starts at shuttle stop #17. (See Valley map on the back of this Guide.)

**Take a Photography Class**
Learn how to best capture the landscape of Yosemite by joining a photography expert from the Ansel Adams Gallery. Several classes are offered each week. Some have fees, some are free. Learn more and sign up at the Ansel Adams Gallery. Several classes are offered each week. (See page 7.)

**Ice Skate at Curry Village**
The outdoor ice rink at Curry Village is nestled among the dramatic scenery of Yosemite Valley. Rent equipment for skating, sit by the fire pit, or enjoy the warming hut at the Curry Village ice rink, which operates through March 7, conditions permitting. (See page 4 for contact information.)

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**Welcome, and Be Prepared**

**Tourist Information Center**

- **Address:** Yosemite Village, Yosemite Valley, California 95389
- **Telephone:** 209/372-0200
- **Hours:** 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily

**Shuttle Map**

- **Shuttle Map:** Shuttle stops #5 and #9. (See page 3.)
- **Rents:** Rents, which operates through March 7, conditions permitting. (See page 4 for contact information.)

**Program Schedule**

- **Program Schedule:** Programs are offered daily at Badger Pass Ski Area through March 28th, conditions permitting. A free shuttle from Yosemite Valley to Badger Pass is available. (See page 3.)

**Visitor Service**

- **Visitor Service:** Visitor Service can be reached at the Visitor Center. (See page 3.)
- **Visitors:** Visitors can call 209/372-0200 for information on the park and Bear info. (See page 3.)

**What’s Inside:**

- **Discover Yosemite**
- **Program Schedule**
- **Exploring Yosemite**
- **Badger Pass and winter activities**
- **Yosemite Valley Focus**
- **Visitor Service**
- **Protecting Yourself & Wilderness Permits**
- **Protecting Your Park and Bear Info**
- **Feature Article:** Christmas Bird Count
- **Supporting Your Park**
- **Shuttle Map**

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**Illustration:** Lawrence W. Duke

**Photo by Kenny Knapp/DNC Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.**
Yosemite Valley

Yosemite Valley is world-famous for its impressive waterfalls, cliffs, and unusual rock formations. In winter, it may be reached via Highway 41 from Fresno, Highway 140 from Merced, and Highway 120 west from Manteca. The Valley is known for massive cliff faces like El Capitan and Half Dome, its plunging waterfalls including the tallest in North America, and its attractive meadows.

Wawona and Mariposa Grove

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is located 36 miles (1 ¼ hours) south of Yosemite Valley via the Wawona Road (Highway 41), two miles from the park’s South Entrance station. The road to the grove is closed from December until April due to snow. See page 7 for Mariposa Grove hiking details. Nearby in Wawona, the Pioneer Yosemite History Center is a collection of historic buildings associated with people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite.

Crane Flat and Tuolumne Grove

Crane Flat is a pleasant forest and meadow area located 16 miles from Yosemite Valley at the junction of Big Oak Flat and Tioga Roads. A number of hikes through pleasant meadows are available—when snow covers the ground these turn into delightful ski and snowshoe tracks. To see giant sequoias, park at the Tuolumne Grove parking area located on the Tioga Road, and walk one steep mile down to the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. Or, park at Merced Grove trailhead and walk two steep miles down to this small grove. These groves north of Yosemite Valley are smaller than the more-famous Mariposa Grove, but are quieter and off-limits to vehicles. Remember that the walk down is easier than the walk back up.

Hetch Hetchy

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, a source of drinking water and hydroelectric power for the City of San Francisco, is home to spectacular scenery and the starting point for many wilderness trails. The area’s low elevation makes it a good place to hike in winter. Hetch Hetchy Reservoir is located 40 miles, a 1 hour and 15 minute drive, from Yosemite Valley via Highway 120, Evergreen Road, and Hetch Hetchy Road. Hetch Hetchy Road is open limited hours: 8 am to 5 pm through March 31. Trailers, vehicles over 25 feet long, and RVs and other vehicles over 8 feet wide are not allowed on the narrow, windsing Hetch Hetchy Road.
Events and Programs

Where to go and what to do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOSEMITE VALLEY</th>
<th>WAWONA</th>
<th>BADGER PASS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday</strong></td>
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<td>9:00am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Photography Walk</strong> 1½ hrs, Limited space, sign up in advance (AAG) $</td>
<td><strong>Ranger Stroll – Rivers and Waterfalls</strong> 1½ hrs, Shuttle stop #6 (NPS)</td>
<td><strong>Winter Theater! The Spirit of John Muir: Stories of Ice and Snow</strong> (January 18 only) 1½ hrs, Yosemite Lodge at the Falls Cliff Room, tickets at any tour desk, if available (DNC) $</td>
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<td><strong>History of Bracebridge Talk</strong> (Dec. 23 only) ½ hr, The Ahwahnee Winter Club Room (DNC)</td>
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**Winter Wild Ones** (Except January 27) ½ hr, Stories & activities for kids 6-16 & under. The Ahwahnee Great Lounge (DNC)


**History of Bracebridge Talk** (Dec. 23 only) ½ hr, The Ahwahnee Winter Club Room (DNC)

**Ranger Evening Program** 1 hr, Check local listings for venue and topic (DNC)

**Winter Theater! The Spirit of John Muir: Stories of Ice and Snow** (December 30 only) 1½ hr, Yosemite Lodge Cliff Room, tickets at any tour desk, if available (DNC) $
The Incomparable Yosemite Valley

Yosemite Valley embraces one of the world’s most outstanding concentrations of waterfalls, granite walls, meadows, wildflowers, and trees. The Valley also harbors a rich collection of human stories, from American Indian lore to the birth of the National Park movement.

Yosemite Valley

An unlimited array of possibilities await you in Yosemite Valley. Most involve sightseeing and learning about the scenery before you. See page 2 for more information on program topics, and page 6 for visitor services.

The base of Lower Yosemite Fall is an easy walk from shuttle stop #6. This hike features educational exhibits and a picnic area, and is accessible to the mobility impaired. You can visit Bridalveil Fall by car on your way into or out of the Valley. Winds swirling about the cliff lift and blow the falling water in a delicate free-fall.

El Capitan, a massive granite monolith, stands 3,593 feet from base to summit. From spring to fall, climbers come from all over the globe to scale El Capitan. Note: Please park on the paved road shoulder next to El Capitan Meadow. Delicate meadows are easily damaged by trampling, so please stay on footpaths.

Half Dome, Yosemite’s most distinctive monument, dominates most views in Yosemite Valley. Forces of uplift, erosion from rivers and glaciers, and rockfall all shaped this famous feature into what we see today. Cook’s Meadow, Sentinel Bridge, Tunnel View, Glacier Point, and Olmsted Point are just a few locations with stunning views of Half Dome.

Happy Isles is a place to see dramatic natural processes at work. It is easily reached by shuttle at stop #16. Cross the footbridges onto the Isles or wander through outdoor exhibits detailing Yosemite’s geologic story. Shuttle buses may not travel to stop #16 when the road is snow-covered or icy though.

For a strenuous day hike, you can use this trailhead to reach Vernal Fall footbridge (½ miles) and Nevada Fall (2.7 miles) via the Mist Trail. The Nevada Fall portion of this trail closes in winter due to snow and ice. Visitors with mobility impairments can obtain a placard at the Valley Visitor Center or at an entrance station that will authorize them to drive to Happy Isles or Mirror Lake.

Winter sports get underway at Badger Pass Ski Area is tentatively scheduled to open December 18. Enjoy ice skating at Curry Village. To learn more: 209/372-8341.

Tunnel View, along Wawona Road (Hwy 41) provides a classic view of Yosemite Valley, including El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, Cathedral Rocks, and Bridalveil Fall. It is particularly spectacular at sunset or after the clearing of a storm.

To experience the Valley on foot, stop by a visitor center for a trail map and the most current trail conditions.

To enjoy Yosemite Valley by bike, if you’ve brought yours along, take a scenic ride along the designated bike trail routes, as paved roads. Bicycles are not permitted on hiking trails.

Take a Sightseeing tour, to experience the Valley with a bus and guide. The Valley Floor Tour is a 26-mile, 2-hour tour that departs twice daily from Yosemite Lodge. As the weather turns colder, tours will travel by motorcoach.

Call 209/372-1240 for reservations or inquire at tour/transportation desks at Yosemite Lodge, Curry Village, or Yosemite Village.

Take a Photography Class

Learn how to best capture the landscape of Yosemite by joining a photography expert from the Ansel Adams Gallery. Several classes are offered each week. Some have fees, some are free. Learn more and sign up at the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite Village. Shuttle stops #5 and #9. (See pages 2 and 6.)

Self-Guiding Trails

A Changing Yosemite

This one-mile-long walk through Cook’s Meadow explores both natural and cultural stories of Yosemite. Brochure available at the Valley Visitor Center.

Mirror Lake

Mirror Lake interpretive trail is a short loop adjacent to Mirror Lake, a seasonal lake on Tenaya Creek. Exhibits focus on the rich natural history of the area and American Indian use. To reach the start of the trail, walk one mile from shuttle stop #17 to the disabled parking spaces near the lake. The trail begins here.

Indian Village

This short loop winds through the Indian Village of Ahwahnee, a reconstructed Miwok-Paiute village. A booklet is available at the trailhead and in the Visitor Center. The trail begins behind the Yosemite Museum.

Curry Village

The Legacy of Curry Village is an easy stroll commemorating the early days of Camp Curry. Pick up a map and guide at the Curry Village front desk or tour desk.

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Badger Pass

A free shuttle serves Badger Pass Ski Area through its planned closing date in March. Two buses pick up each morning. Departure times are 8 and 10:30 am at Curry Village; 8:10 and 10:40 am at Yosemite Village; 8:15 and 10:45 am at The Ahwahnee; and 8:30 and 11 am at the Yosemite Lodge.

The ski area is about an hour by road from Yosemite Valley and is located a short distance from Wawona Road and Chinquapin on Glacier Point Road. Badger Pass Ski Area is the oldest continuously operating ski area in California. The lodge and original lift opened to the public in December 1935. Nordic ski facilities in the area include close to 25 miles of machine-groomed track (depending on conditions) and the availability (with reservation & fee) of ski huts at Glacier Point and Ostrander Lake. Nordic rentals are available.

Glacier Point

The Glacier Point Road is open to snowshoeing and Nordic skiing during the winter months. It is closed to vehicle past Badger Pass Ski Area. The snow-covered road takes you right to the brink of Yosemite Valley. Go to the railing’s edge and catch your breath at an exhilarating view, looking down 3,124 feet to the Valley Floor. For a trip to an overhanging lookout, choose the ski trail to Dewey Point. The trailhead for snow travel is at Badger Pass Ski Area. The road usually opens to vehicle traffic sometime in May.

Tioga Road

Tioga Road is closed to vehicles during the winter months, usually until May or later. Winter brings ski and snowshoe options for experienced parties. Reaching Tuolumne Meadows via the road is a serious, multi-day undertaking. An experienced guide and avalanche beacons are among the essentials needed for the journey.

Wawona

Located six miles from the park’s South Entrance, or one-hour drive from the Valley, the Wawona area tells the story of Yosemite’s human history and pioneer past. The charming 19th-century Wawona hotel and the Pioneer Yosemite History Center are a history buff’s delight. The center is a collection of historic buildings associated with the people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite. Interpretive signs and a brochure provide a self-guiding tour. Also in Wawona, you will find hikes of varying difficulty to places like Wawona Meadow and Chilnualna Falls, one of the taller outside Yosemite Valley.

Hetch Hetchy

Once considered a twin to Yosemite Valley, Hetch Hetchy was described by John Muir as “a grand landscape garden.” Hetch Hetchy is located along the Tuolumne River in the northern part of the park and now contains a large reservoir. Hetch Hetchy’s relatively low elevation gives the area one of the longest hiking seasons in Yosemite National Park.

Winter Weather and Driving in Yosemite

Tioga Road and Glacier Point Road are closed each year from November to late May or early June. Other roads are generally plowed and maintained, but can close or present delays during storm periods. Motorists should always carry chains and check weather and road conditions before travel. To check conditions, call 209/372-0200 for roads inside the park and 800/427-7623 or visit www.dot.ca.gov for highways connecting to Yosemite.
Yosemite Valley
Where to Go and What to See

Throughout Yosemite National Park
In Winter, Yosemite is a place of special beauty, offering unique opportunities for outdoor adventure. Below you will find a list of services and facilities that are available throughout the park.

Valley Visitor Center and Bookstore
Located just west of the main post office (shuttle stops #5 and #9). Visitor center and bookstore hours are 9 am to 5 pm daily. The center offers information, maps, and books in the attached bookstore. Explore the new exhibit hall and learn how Yosemite’s spectacular landscape was formed, how people have interacted with it through the centuries, how wildlife adapts and survives.

FILM: SPIRIT OF YOSEMITE
This inspiring visitor-orientation film is shown in the Valley Visitor Center Theater every 30 minutes, Mon. - Sat. between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm; Sunday and Christmas Day, between noon to 4:30 pm.

WILDERNESS PERMITS
Rangers issue permits at the Valley Visitor Center from 9am - 5pm. Bear canister rentals are also available at the visitor center. See page 8 for other locations to obtain wilderness permits.

Yosemite Museum
Located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center.

INDIAN CULTURAL EXHIBIT
Interprets the cultural history of Yosemite’s Miwok and Paiute people from 1850 to the present. Open 9 am to 5 pm, may close for lunch.

YOSEMITE MUSEUM STORE
The store offers books and traditional American Indian arts, crafts, jewelry, and books. Beginning Jan. 1, open Thurs. - Sun., 9 am to 5 pm, may close for lunch. Closed Monday-Wednesday.

Indian Village
Located behind the Yosemite Museum and open daily, the village offers a self-guiding trail brochure and exhibits on Ahwahneechee life.

Yosemite Cemetery
This historic cemetery is located just west of the Yosemite Museum, across the street. Guide to the Yosemite Cemetery is available at the Valley Visitor Center.

Ansel Adams Gallery
The gallery is located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center and is open daily. Hours are 10 am to 5 pm. The gallery offers the work of Ansel Adams, contemporary photographers, and other fine artists. See page 3 for photo walk and other event times. For more information, call 209/372-4413, or visit www.anseladams.com.

Internet Access
Fee-based terminals are open at Degnan’s Deli. Free internet access is available at the Mariposa County branch library, adjacent to the Yosemite Cemetery. Hours vary. Ask at the Valley Visitor Center.

Help Badger Pass celebrate 75 years of skiing history!
Saturday & Sunday, January 23rd and 24th! Check local listings or visit www.badgerpass.com for scheduled activities.

POST OFFICE

BOOKS, GIFTS, & APPAREL

WINTER SPORTS

Badger Pass Ski Area and Sport Shop
Scheduled tentatively to open December 18, weather and conditions permitting. Information (Recorded) 209/372-1000 Information (Live) 209/372-8430
Keep yourself safe while exploring your park.

There are many ways to experience the wilderness of Yosemite. While the forces of nature can create unexpected hazardous conditions, with a little common sense and some pre-planning, you can minimize the risks associated with many activities.

Rockfall Awareness
Due to its steep, glacier-carved cliffs, Yosemite Valley experiences many rockfalls each year. Be aware that rockfalls are inherently unpredictable and may happen at any time. Pay attention to warning signs, stay off closed trails, and, if unsure, keep away.

Avoid Hypothermia
Sierra winters are comparatively mild, but temperatures can drop into dangerous territory with little warning. Winter sports require a high degree of preparation and training. Be prepared for a bivouac even when out just for the day. Know how to use your gear and carry basic repair materials.

Avoid the combination of wetness, wind, and cold. Know symptoms of hypothermia. Carry emergency fire-starting materials and food. Avoid dehydration. Carry and drink plenty of water and carry emergency high-energy food.

Water Quality
To protect yourself from disease, treat any surface water before drinking. Treatment methods include boiling for five minutes, use of a Giardia-rated water filter, or iodine-based purifier. To prevent the spread of Giardia and other water-borne disease organisms, use restroom facilities where available, and always wash hands afterwards with soap and water. In natural areas where facilities are not available, wash, camp, and bury human waste (6 inches deep) at least 100 feet away from any water source or trail.

Traffic Safety
Roads leading to the park are two-lane, narrow, and winding. When traveling on park roads you can protect yourself, other visitors, and park wildlife by observing the following simple rules: Please obey posted speed limits. Yosemite’s roads are used by both visitors and park wildlife. Use turnouts to pull completely out of the road, to take photos, consult the park map, or simply enjoy the park’s scenery and wildlife.

Effects of Altitude
Altitude sickness may develop in otherwise healthy and fit people who are exposed to rapid increases in altitude. It can develop at altitudes as low as 8,000 feet (Yosemite Valley’s elevation is 4,000 feet). Should altitude sickness develop, descend to a lower elevation. The Yosemite Medical Clinic in Yosemite Valley is experienced in diagnosing and treating this sickness.

Hiking, Backpacking, Backcountry Snow Travel, and Rock Climbing
There are no scheduled winter patrols, so be prepared. You’re on your own. Be honest about your abilities and plan with the least experienced member of your group in mind. Tell someone where you are going and when you are due back.

• Be prepared for icy travel before conditions arise. Bring crampons, ice axe, climbing skins, and other traction devices.
• Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
• Check weather forecasts. Snow can occur with little warning, and can make route finding very difficult. Temperature shifts are common.
• Avoid dehydration or heat exhaustion; carry and drink plenty of water, and bring high-energy food.
• Be prepared to set up emergency shelter even when out just for the day.
• Know how to use your gear and carry basic repair materials.

Wilderness Permit Details
Free wilderness permits are required for all overnight trips into the Yosemite Wilderness. Rangers issue permits at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (9am - 5pm). Self-registration permits are available seven days a week at Tuolumne Meadows Ski Hut, Big Oak Flat, Hill’s Studio in Wawona, and the Hetch Hetchy entrance station (8am - 5pm). More information about current conditions can be found on the park website.

Vehicle Chain Requirements
When you are visiting from November through March, expect chain requirements to be in effect, even if you only plan to park in the Valley and ride the shuttle bus. Any time chain controls are in effect, all vehicles must have chains or cable chains readily available. Not having them could subject you to an expensive citation.

Changes in Elevation
Because higher elevation roads receive more snow, chains are required on the Wawona Road (Highway 41), Big Oak Flat Road (Highway 120 west), and Badger Pass Road more often than on the El Portal Road (Highway 140), roads within Yosemite Valley, and the Hetch Hetchy Road.

Check by Phone
Call 209/372-0200 (press 1 then 1) for updated road information inside the park. This recording is updated whenever road conditions change and is the same way in which park staff gets road information. This recording includes information about current chain requirements. Remember that conditions can change rapidly.

You can also call 800/427-7623 for road conditions throughout California (these links & phone numbers do not provide information about roads within Yosemite).

Online Information
A summary of chain control rules can be found on the park website at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/chaininfo.htm
Protect Yosemite’s Wilderness

- Pack out all trash and toilet paper/sanitary products.
- Use gas stoves rather than wood fires.
- Camp in an existing campsite at least 100 feet from water and trail. You must be four trail miles from any populated area and one mile from any road before camping.
- To minimize trampling of vegetation, bring a container to carry water to your camp from lakes or streams.
- Maximum group size is 15 people for trai travel and eight people for off-trail travel.
- Yosemite is a wildlife preserve. Pets, weapons, bicycles, strollers, and motor vehicles are never allowed on Yosemite’s wilderness trails.

Fishing

Fishing in Yosemite is regulated under state law. A valid California sport-fishing license is required for those persons age 16 years and older. When fishing, the license must be plainly visible by attaching it to an outer layer of clothing above the waistline.

- Trout season opens on the last Saturday in April and continues through November 15 (except Frog Creek near Lake Eleanor, which opens June 15).
- Special fishing regulations apply on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley from Happy Isles downstream to the Foestra Bridge in El Portal. Within these reaches of the river, it is catch-and-release only for rainbow trout. Brown trout limits are five fish per day. Only artificial lures or flies with barbless hooks may be used.
- The use of live or dead minnows, bait fish or amphibians, non-preserved fish eggs or roe is prohibited.

Pets

Some visitors choose to bring pets along on their vacations. Keep in mind, in Yosemite, pet owners have a few rules to follow:

- Pets are only allowed in developed areas and on roads and paved bike paths. They are not allowed on other trails, or in wilderness areas.
- Pets must be on a leash (6 feet or less) or otherwise physically restrained.
- For the courtesy of others, handmade companions are responsible for cleaning up and depositing pet feces in trash receptacles.
- Pets are not allowed in any lodging facilities or other buildings within the park and are not allowed in some campgrounds.
- Pets may not be left unattended.

Bicycling

Each season, plants are crushed from bicycle travel in meadows, campgrounds, and picnic areas. Please respect park resources and keep bicycles on paved roads and paved bicycle trails. They are not allowed to travel off-trail or on dirt paths or trails.

Permits and Other Rules

To find out more about Yosemite National Park regulations visit www.nps.gov/yose/plan_your_visit/yoursafety.html and find a copy of the Superintendent’s Compendium. This document is a compilation of designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions made by the superintendent, in addition to what is contained in applicable federal statutes and regulations.

Reporting Violations

During your visit to Yosemite be aware that there are people who either unknowingly or intentionally harm park resources. In accordance with federal laws, possession of a firearm within Yosemite must be in conformity with federal law and California statutes. Please contact a park official if you see the following illegal acts:

- Actively feeding or harassing wildlife
- Collecting plants, reptiles, or insects
- Hunting or directly harming animals
- Picking up archeological items such as arrowheads
- Using metal detectors to locate and collect historic objects
- Driving vehicles into meadows
- Camping outside of campgrounds
- Possession of weapons (If you see activities that could harm people or park resources, jot down any description or a vehicle license plate number and call the park dispatch office at 209/379-1992.)

Yosemite’s Black Bears Wild

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- Camping outside of campgrounds
- Possession of weapons

Yosemite’s Black Bears Wild

Permits and Other Rules

To find out more about Yosemite National Park regulations visit www.nps.gov/yose/plan_your_visit/yoursafety.html and find a copy of the Superintendent’s Compendium. This document is a compilation of designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions made by the superintendent, in addition to what is contained in applicable federal statutes and regulations.

Reporting Violations

During your visit to Yosemite be aware that there are people who either unknowingly or intentionally harm park resources. In accordance with federal laws, possession of a firearm within Yosemite must be in conformity with federal law and California statutes. Please contact a park official if you see the following illegal acts:

- Actively feeding or harassing wildlife
- Collecting plants, reptiles, or insects
- Hunting or directly harming animals
- Picking up archeological items such as arrowheads
- Using metal detectors to locate and collect historic objects
- Driving vehicles into meadows
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Bird-watching Opportunities

Feature Article

Yosemite Christmas Bird Count, a park tradition since 1932, happens on Dec. 20. Zoom in on the park’s avian diversity!

By Ranger Elizabeth Munding and Sarah Stock, Wildlife Biologist

Unwrap a seasonal surprise for yourself. During winter, watch John Muir’s favorite bird, the American dipper, as it plunges underneath ice in its search for aquatic insects and minnows. Or, observe a flock of gregarious mountain chickadees and red-breasted nuthatches as they mob a tiny northern pygmy-owl.

See the birds add up fast during the Yosemite Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20 and then continue to give yourself the gift of bird-watching throughout the winter season. An astounding 255 species of birds have been documented in Yosemite; including 165 resident and migratory species.

A Park Tradition

Since 1932, Yosemite National Park’s participation in the Christmas Bird Count has contributed more than 90,000 observations to the annual conservation event. On a winter day each year, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas join to celebrate and count birds. In 2008, Yosemite participants identified 3,028 birds of 65 species. Species with the biggest annual counts are band-tailed pigeon (1,100 individuals in 1970), American robin (380 in 2008), mountain chickadee (360 in 1972), Oregon dark-eyed junco (503 in 1953), and golden-crowned kinglet (483 in 1953). During the 2008 event, 32 birders were separated into six groups to cover large expanses of the park. Highlights included a northern goshawk in the west end of Yosemite Valley, a merlin in Foresta, a northern mockingbird in El Portal and two red-breasted x red-naped sapsucker hybrids—in El Portal and Foresta.

The Art of Birding

Experienced birders confidently identify birds by just a glimpse. Birders use silhouette, posture, flight pattern, size, and habitat to recognize different birds. Start by keying in on a general group or family of birds, such as warblers, flycatchers, hawks, owls, and wrens because all members of a group share similarities. As a next step, note the field marks—colored or patterned places on a bird’s body, head, and wings. Remember that a bird’s feathers change as a juvenile bird molts into its adult plumage, or as an adult molts into its winter plumage. For many species, a male bird’s winter plumage is dull compared to his colorful plumage in the spring when he is interested in attracting a female. Also, note subtle nuances in a bird’s song or call—long trills or short chips. In the winter, birds rarely sing but may call notes to defend a territory, announce the presence of a predator, or to keep up with a mixed-species foraging flock.

Necessary Equipment

Carrying the right equipment is key for birding. Bring a bird guide, notebook and pen, and a pair of binoculars. First spot a bird with your eyes, and then lift your binoculars to your eyes without moving your head or losing sight of the bird. Becoming familiar with your field guide by interpreting the range maps and learning the terms for various field marks will help you more quickly identify birds. Record your observations, such as species, date, location, and observers.

A Distinct Population

Birds are said to be excellent indicators of an area’s environmental health; therefore many research studies seek to gain a greater understanding of bird populations. Great gray owls, observed in past Yosemite Christmas Bird Counts, are particularly interesting to Yosemite researchers because new evidence suggests that the Sierra Nevada is home to a genetically distinct population, compared to great gray owls outside California.

Yosemite is the southernmost range of almost all of California’s great gray owls. Researchers estimate there are only 200 to 300 individuals in California, and about 75% of the state’s population resides in Yosemite. This rare and endangered owl is the largest North American owl—standing as tall as 2 feet with a 5-foot wingspan. Unlike the more common great horned owl, the great gray lacks “horns” or ear tufts, and instead has a smooth rounded head with piercing yellow eyes, accented by large facial disks. In the winter, great gray owls generally move downhill to snow-free areas to more easily access rodent prey. Great gray owls can be active at any time of the day or night, preferring to hunt in open meadows and clearings within the forest, using branches and low seedlings for listening posts. If you happen to spot a great gray owl during the Bird Count, consider yourself lucky.

Volunteer for the Dec. 20 Event

To attend the Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20, or next year in December 2010, contact ornithologist Sarah Stock by e-mail at yose_birds@nps.gov or by phone at 209/379-1435 to be assigned to an area and a group. Bring lunch, plenty of warm clothes and sturdy shoes. A small fee exists to support the publication of count results in National Audubon Field Guide Note. Plan to be outside from dawn to dusk. A compilation potluck dinner closes the day to allow participants to share Yosemite birding highlights.

Yosemite National Park’s scientists have documented the presence of more than 250 bird species in the park. Birders are sure to have a lot to see.
Enhancing the Visitor Experience

It takes a legion of people working together to protect this special park for you and future generations of visitors. You, too, can extend your connection to Yosemite well after you return home by getting involved with the organizations that partner to preserve Yosemite.

This publication was made possible by the Yosemite Park Partners listed on this page. Read more below or visit www.yosemitepartners.org to learn more about helping these organizations provide for the future of Yosemite National Park.

The Ansel Adams Gallery
The Ansel Adams Gallery, owned by the family of photographer Ansel Adams since 1902, is a center that celebrates the arts and the natural grandeur of our environment. It cultivates an aesthetic appreciation and concern for our world by offering visitors a unique variety of literature and art, as well as programs that inspire creativity. Visit online at www.anseladams.com.

DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite
DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite (DNC) operates hotels, restaurants, sightseeing tours, recreational activities, interpretive programs, stores, shuttles and service stations in the park under contract with the U.S. Department of the Interior. DNC encourages its employees to develop a strong relationship with the park during their tenure. For more information and employment opportunities with DNC at Yosemite, visit online at www.yosemitepark.com.

Yosemite Association
The Yosemite Association is a nonprofit membership organization that provides opportunities for people to learn about, enjoy, and experience Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada. The Association celebrates the majesty and grandeur of this region through its visitor services, publications, outdoor classroom, and membership activities, which give people of all ages the chance to forge an enduring and inspirational connection to Yosemite. This, in turn, builds a commitment to the long-term preservation and vitality of Yosemite and our National Parks. Since 1923, the Association has provided important services and financial support to the National Park Service. Anyone who loves Yosemite and wishes to be become more closely involved and affiliated with the park will enjoy membership in the Association. For more information, visit park bookstores or www.yosemite.org.

The Yosemite Fund
The Fund provides broad-based private funding from 27,000 donors for projects that preserve, protect, or enhance Yosemite Park. Fund operations result in material improvement in the stewardship and quality of Yosemite’s natural, cultural or historical resources or the visitor experience. Fund grants repair trails, restore habitat, conduct scientific research, enhance visitor education, preserve park history, and protect wildlife. Since 1988 the Fund has provided over $50 million to complete more than 200 projects. Visit online at www.yosemitefund.org.

Yosemite Institute
Since 1971, thousands of school-age children have benefited from learning in “nature’s classroom” through the residential field-science programs offered by Yosemite Institute (YI). A YI experience strives to foster a life-long connection to the natural world—whether it is in Yosemite, on a city street or in our own backyards. YI also offers professional development for teachers, summer youth programs, backpacking adventures, community outreach programs and service learning projects. For more information, visit www.naturebridge.org/yosemite.

Supporting Your Park
Providing for Yosemite’s Future

The Ansel Adams Gallery
PO Box 455
Yosemite, CA 95389
209/372-4413
209/372-4714 fax
www.anseladams.com

DNC Parks & Resorts
PO Box 578
Yosemite, CA 95389
801/559-5000
www.yosemitepark.com

Yosemite Association
PO Box 230
El Portal, CA 95318
209/379-2646
209/379-2486 fax
www.yosemite.org

The Yosemite Fund
155 Montgomery St. #1104
San Francisco, CA 94104
800/469-7275 or 415/434-1782
www.yosemitefund.org

Yosemite Institute
PO Box 487
Yosemite, CA 95389
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209/379-9510 fax
www.naturebridge.org/yosemite

Above right: Half Dome. Photo: Christine White Loberg

Contact Us...
Yosemite Guide
December 16, 2009 - February 16, 2010

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01 Things to Do
03 Programs and Events
06 Services and Facilities
10 Special Feature: Yosemite Bird Count

Yosemite Valley Shuttle System

A portion of the trail past Mirror Lake is closed due to rockfall. Please observe posted signage.

Stop # | Location
--- | ---
1 | Yosemite Village
2 | The Ahwahnee
3 | Village Visitor Center
4 | Lower Yosemite Fall
5 | Camp 4
6 | Yosemite Lodge
7 | Sentinel Bridge
8 | LeConte / Housekeeping Camp
9 | Rainbow Bridge
10 | Curry Village
11 | Curry Village Parking
12 | Upper Pines Campground
13 | Happy Isles
14 | Mirror Lake Trailhead
15 | Stable
16 | Pines Campground

Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System

Campground
Parking
Picnic Area
Restrooms
Walk-In Campground

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Tunnel View, Winter. Photo by Christine White Loberg