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GIANT BULLFROGS HEADING FOR SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

by

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The Giant Bullfrog is heading for Sequoia National Park and is expected soon to reach the boundary. Since 1930, these frogs have migrated from the Three Rivers district up the Kaweah Rivers easterly in the direction of the park, now they are within three miles of the park boundary. In less than six years they have moved up the Middle Fork one mile, the South Fork eight miles, and the North Fork six miles. They have gone some eighteen or twenty miles down the Main River into the valley at Woodlake and other places. Everywhere they are eagerly sought for their legs. Years ago the Anglo Saxons somewhat derisively called Frenchmen "Frogs" because they ate the succulent batrachian. But now we are all "Frogs".

These Bullfrogs are not native to California, but were shipped here from Kansas by Mr. C. L. Taylor, who has extensive holdings along the river one mile above Three Rivers. During the month of May 1928, Mr. Taylor received a consignment of twenty adult frogs from the Eugene Frog Hatchery at Langdon, Kansas, and he placed them in a rearing pond at his home. The ancestral stock of the frogs came from Louisiana. The frogs have thrived in their new environment and reproduced to such extent that countless thousands of them are now found in the streams and marsh places in Tulare County. Mr. Taylor has been a public benefactor.

The Giant Bullfrog belongs to the Order of Amphibians, Family Ranadac, genera and species (*Rana catesbeiana*), and are the largest of the frog family in North America. The adult frogs have a length over all eighteen inches and weigh three pounds. Their range extends over the southeastern portion of the United States mostly south of the Mason and Dixon line; but in latter years they have been propagated in other districts further north with fair success. All throughout their range the frogs are highly prized for food because of their size and the edible quality of their flesh.

For this locality the frogs spawn from May to July, during which time countless millions of eggs are laid; one individual frog may lay several hundred eggs at one spawning. The eggs are about the size of a No. 7 or 8 shot grayish-yellow in color, and when first laid are covered over with a slimy sticky mucus substance that holds them together in one mass pad which floats just below the top surface of the water until hatched. Incubation requires a period of some three weeks, according to the temperature of water. The pad is usually attached by the mucous to some vegetation that holds it in place during incubation. When the tadpoles first hatch they are helpless little creatures about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in length, but are provided with tail and external gill which disappear with the growth of permanent limbs. The metamorphic period takes place when the young are about one year old and some five inches in length. It requires about four years for the frogs to reach maturity from the time they are hatched.

Although the Giant Bullfrog holds the record for size he is less active than other of our California frogs. His best jump is about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet as against our California Red-log and Mark Twain's frogs of Calaveras. These bounding batrachians, when pushed can do twice the distance.

As to just when the Giant Bullfrog will reach the Sequoia National Park remains yet to be seen, but it will be an easy matter to detect their presence from their loud bellowing notes which would put a bull calf to shame in volume.