

NATURE NOTES FROM CALIFORNIA STATE REDWOOD PARKS

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PROJECT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem. There has never been a handbook on sale concerning the wildlife of southern Humboldt County. Nature Notes From California State Redwood Parks has been written so that people can discover new things about the natural science surrounding them under the giant Redwood trees. In compiling this booklet, an attempt has been made to discuss the most important plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians of the Redwood groves. Conservation of the natural resources was emphasized so that future generations will have the enjoyment of the beautiful Redwood belt. The check lists have been compiled for use by Park Naturalists who are new to southern Humboldt County. These check lists include the species prominent during the summer months.

Justification of the problem. For many years there has been a dire need for a booklet that could be obtained by tourists as an aid in identifying some of the outstanding natural inhabitants of the Redwood belt. In working with the California State Park System and private concerns in the southern Humboldt forests, the

author has seen the need for a handbook of this kind. The answers to the many questions asked by tourists have been incorporated in the text.

This pamphlet also is a solution to the problem of the Park Naturalist who has never had an opportunity to make a thorough study of the flora and fauna of southern Humboldt County. With the check list section this ranger is able to limit his study to the species listed because of their importance.

Organization of the problem. The first section of this booklet contains write-ups on the outstanding species. Each plant and animal was carefully studied in its native environment and then all the pertinent literature was read. All of the outstanding characteristics and peculiarities were then brought together in language that could be understood by any reader. Before selecting the species to be discussed, the author found it necessary to talk to residents, former naturalists, specialists in the various fields, and to read all of the reports, books, and magazines concerned with the natural history of the Redwoods.

The latter pages include check lists of all of the plants and animals prominent during the summer months. These check lists were compiled after a thorough study

of all the available natural history literature. Each species was carefully checked to be certain that it would be found in the Redwood region of southern Humboldt County.

Statement of the sources of data. There are many publications which cover the flora and fauna of California and portions thereof, but none cover the natural history of that section of the Redwood belt in southern Humboldt County. Shirley's The Redwoods of Coast and Sierra covers the giant trees but nothing else. Trees Shrubs and Flowers of the Redwood Region by Willis L. Jepson discusses the flora of the groves. Many books are written on classes in the animal kingdom, but none deals with only the Redwood groves. This publication combines the fields of nature into one small handbook.

The check lists were compiled after a complete study of the literature available dealing with the locality of plants and animals. Jepson's Manual of the Flowering Plants of California, Ingles' Mammals of California, Pickwell's Amphibians and Reptiles of the Pacific States, and The Distribution of the Birds of California by Grinnel and Miller were used as the authorities for the check lists.