

WILDLIFE in the Bitterroot River drainage that were noted in the Journals



The Lewis & Clark expedition spent 10 days or portions of days in the Bitterroot drainage, which includes both the Clark's River (now the Bitterroot River) and the Travelers' Rest Creek (now Lolo Creek), on their journey westward between September 4 and 13, 1805. Then, they spent 8 days or portions of days in those drainages between June 29 and July 6, 1806, as they were heading home.

Journal entries by Lewis, Clark, Ordway, Gass, and Whitehouse for those days document many species of wildlife and birds that they identified, either as being observed or else killed by their hunters.

There were many inconsistencies in the documentations. These included spelling, as well as different names for the same species from one entry to another, even by the same person.

Deer were the most often mentioned wildlife species, not as white-tailed or mule deer, just as deer. One entry by Lewis referred to them as, "...deer of both species." Elk were mentioned only a few times, and there was one entry as "elk deer." Other wildlife entries of interest included, "Argalia or Ibex" (Argali are mountain sheep; Ibex are mountain goats), "brarerow" (badger), "burring Squirrel" (Columbian Ground Squirrel), "cabre or antelope" (antelope), and "gray squirrel" and "grey squirrel" (red squirrel).

[26 species of wildlife have been documented at Travelers' Rest since it became a State Park in 2001]

BIRDS mentioned in the Journals on the days at Travelers' Rest

Inconsistencies in the bird listings were much more prevalent than with the wildlife. Some birds listed in the journals were referred to then by the same common name used today, while others have changed over time.

The names in quotation marks are written as they appeared in the Journals, and the names that follow are what we call the birds today. Bird names shown in red are on our list as still being observed here; bird names listed in black are no longer observed at Travelers' Rest as of October 2020.



September 9, 1805

“Prairie Fowl, Pheasants, or Prairie Hens” = Sharp-tailed Grouse

“Ducks” = *(8 species of ducks are documented on our current list)*

“Geese” = Canada Geese

“Redheaded Woodpecker” = Pileated Woodpecker

September 10, 1805

“Grouse” = Ruffed Grouse

“Ducks” = *(8 species of ducks are documented on our current list)*

“Geese” = Canada Geese

July 1, 1806

“Dove” = Mourning Dove

“Black Woodpecker” = Lewis’s Woodpecker

“Lark Woodpecker” = Northern Flicker

“Logcock” = Pileated Woodpecker

“Prairie Lark” = Horned Lark

“Sandhill Crain” = Sandhill Crane

“Prairie Hen” = Sharp-tailed Grouse

“Robin” = American Robin

“Brown Plover” = Sandpiper *(Probably the Spotted Sandpiper; common here. Moulton’s footnotes say Upland Sandpiper, but the Upland is not found west of the Continental Divide. Spotted is very common here.)*

“Curloos” = Long-billed Curlew

“Small Black Birds” = Brewer’s Blackbird

“Ravens” = Common Raven

“Hawks” = *(11 species of raptors are documented on our current list)*

“Sparrows” = *(8 species of sparrows are documented on our current list)*

“Bee Martin” = Eastern or Western Kingbird

“Several species of Corvus” = American Crow *(Journal entry is plural. Raven & Crow are the only species in the Corvus genus here. They may have also seen the Black-billed Magpies, which they were familiar with and thought they were in the Corvus genus.)*

July 2, 1806

“Common Pheasant” = Sharp-tailed Grouse

July 3, 1806

“Prairie Hen” = Sharp-tailed Grouse

138 species of birds have been documented at Travelers’ Rest since it became a State Park in 2001. See our brochure, *The Birds and Wildlife of Travelers’ Rest State Park*, updated March 2020, for the complete listing of species.