10-23
(June 1941)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yellowstone NATIONAL PARK

✓	ROGERS	
	EMERT	
✓	JONES	
	SMITH	
	MACBETH	
	SHORLY	
	CURST	
	S. MERVILLE	
	LANGUL	
✓	BARROWS	
	ELLIOTT	
	EVANS	
✓	BAUER	
	LORD	
	ROBINSON	

FILE NO. 207-02.3

MONTHLY REPORT

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

December

1942

IMPORTANT

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NEWTON B. DRURY,
Director.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—22371

January 6, 1943.

MEMORANDUM for the Director.

Following is the report of activities for Yellowstone National Park for the month of December 1942:

Weather Conditions. Weather conditions throughout most of December were quite stormy, with considerable precipitation. The heavy snows made travel very difficult and it was necessary to operate the snowplows most of the time in order to keep open the roads between Gardiner and Mammoth, around the park headquarters and between Mammoth and Cooke. The latter road was kept open for the benefit of Cooke residents and to permit travel between Mammoth and the Buffalo Ranch in connection with the elk reduction program. Sub-zero temperatures were recorded, the minimum temperature for the month being 10° below zero on the 26th. The maximum temperature was 45° on the 20th and precipitation amounted to 1.15 inches. There were only 6 clear days during the month, 9 partly cloudy and 16 cloudy.

Snow depths throughout the park were considerably in excess of last year and a comparison at some of the points in the interior of the park, as of December 31, follows:

	1942	1941
Northeast entrance	38.0"	23.0"
West Yellowstone	47.0"	20.0"
Lamar	16.0"	6.5"
Gallatin	20.0"	10.0"
Crevice	30.0"	13.0"
East Entrance	30.0"	16.0"
Tower Falls	20.0"	10.0"
Mammoth	10.0"	3.0"
Old Faithful	32.0"	22.0"

Special Activities. Superintendent Rogers remained in Chicago, where he had been called to attend a meeting of park operators and to discuss and participate in matters affecting the Yellowstone, until December 15. While there he was very active in aiding with problems affecting the Yellowstone elk reduction program. He left for Denver on the 15th, stopping en route in Omaha for one day to confer and transact park business with the Regional Director and his staff. He arrived in Denver on the 17th, expecting to remain there until about the 11th of January before returning to the Yellowstone. During his absence Assistant Superintendent Emmert was Acting.

Acting Superintendent Emmert, accompanied by Messrs. Jaffe, Bauer, Barrows and Evans, met with the Park County Rod and Gun Club in Livingston on the evening of the 17th to discuss the elk reduction program. On December 23 a trip was made to Livingston with Senior Personnel Clerk Macbeth to discuss the medical situation with Dr. Windsor and on December 29 a trip was made to the elk hunting area outside of Gardiner with Acting Chief Ranger Barrows.

The gasoline rationing went into effect on December 1 and the travel of park residents will be greatly restricted hereafter. The closest community, outside of Gardiner, is 63 miles from park headquarters so that only few trips can be made even as far as Livingston on the allowable rations. The Yellowstone Rationing Board consists of U. S. Commissioner F. Paul Wilcox, Chairman, Park Naturalist C. Max Bauer and Chief Ranger Francis D. LaNoue. Mrs. Wilcox is clerk of the Board.

The elk reduction program occupied a great deal of the time of practically all employees and it was particularly difficult to keep the office work current with a shortage of personnel, sickness, and inexperienced employees filling some of the positions. The original proposal of giving the elk meat to the War Relocation Authorities for the Japanese caused a deluge of complaints from sportsmens organizations, unions and others and the park received a lot of unfavorable criticism. However, when the Montana State Fish and Game Department agreed to take the meat and arrange for its disposal the criticism subsided and the elk reduction program progressed very favorably. The unusually severe weather, snow conditions and numerous storms drove large bands of elk out of the park and the kill by hunters was greater than has been experienced at any time since the elk reduction program first got underway in 1934, and so far as the records show since 1919. The ability of a large number of hunters to get their elk also aided materially in reducing the criticism of the elk reduction program. The actual killing in the park by Park Rangers started on December 12. The Montana State Fish and Game Department crew arrived on December 17 to start disposal of the carcasses allotted to them.

The Sixth Registration under the Selective Service Act for youths who had reached the age of 18 since July 1, 1942 started on December 11 but by the end of the month there was only one registration in the park.

Yellowstone Park underwent its first practice blackout from 9 to 9:20 p.m. on December 14. The entire Mammoth community was totally blacked out through the pulling of the master switch at the power plant. Similar practice blackouts were conducted about the same time in nine Western States.

As traveling by public carrier was restricted for employees taking leave during the last half of December, most of the park employees remained at their homes. Special holiday activities were provided, consisting of a special program in the Canteen given by the school children on the evening of December 23, with a visit by Santa Claus and the distribution of gifts, a dance in the Canteen on the night of December 26 and Christmas Church Services in the Chapel on the 29th. Carol singers serenaded all homes on the evening of the 22nd. A New Year's dinner and special program was held in the Government Mess

on New Year's Eve.

On December 31 the park received notice that beginning January 2, Saturday would be a full work day and the Saturday half-holiday would be discontinued until further notice.

Inspections. Charles C. Fiske, Jr. Engineer, Geological Survey, Boise, in December 10, out 12th. R. E. Morgan, Regional Grazier, Billings, in December 19 in connection with the elk reduction program. Archie McTaggart, Special Salvage Investigator for Montana, War Production Board, Butte, in December 22 to discuss salvaging the Mammoth dump. He informed us that it was necessary to close down the activities of its W.P.A. crews who were working on the dump. Resident Landscape Architect Sanford Hill departed on December 11 for assignment to the Region Two Office in Omaha.

Plans, Maps and Surveys. The Engineering Section was engaged almost entirely in office work during the month. A number of final reports were completed and mailed to the Regional Office. Some time was spent on the P.C.P. program, preparing data for the on-the-shelf program.

A new topographic map of the south entrance was completed and the hard copy mailed to the Regional Office.

Publicity. No press releases were issued from the park during the month. Several pictures in connection with the elk reduction program were furnished the Great Falls Tribune for use in connection with an article which they expect to run on this subject, the article to be furnished by the Montana State Fish and Game Department. Similar pictures were also furnished William Rush, former National Park Service and Forest Service game study expert, for an article which he was to prepare on the elk reduction program. Pictures of range conditions and the elk reduction program were also furnished the Director's Office for use in connection with some articles to be prepared by Mr. Cahalane.

Road Maintenance. The maintenance force consisted of one foreman and two laborers. They assisted in snow removal on the Gardiner-Cooke road, furnishing the extra man to ride the snowplow. Fire hydrants in the Mammoth area had to be repeatedly cleared of snow and ice.

Snow was unusually heavy during the month, which, together with the elk slaughtering program in the park, made it necessary to keep one snowplow running most of the time.

Park Operators. The general store at Mammoth remained open throughout the month to accomodate Mammoth residents. No other operations were underway in the park.

Visitors. Dr. J. S. McFarland, Dr. E. G. Vedova and Mr. Elmer G. Phillips, of the Montana State Fish and Game Department, in December 3 to discuss elk reduction program. Dr. McFarland and Mr. Phillips returned on December 12 for a further discussion of this matter. Bernard King and Jack Sharn of the

[illegible]

Rocky Mountain Sportsmens Association, Butte, and Ed Mason, Union Leader of Butte, in December 13 to protest elk slaughter in park.

Cooperating Governmental Agencies. No contract work was underway during the month.

New Construction. Work of repairing the fire damage to Mammoth quarters No. 9 is progressing satisfactorily, finishing and painting being the major work to complete.

Increase or Decrease in Travel. Four hundred eighty persons visited the park during the month of December as against 461 for the same month in 1941, an increase of 19 or 4.1%. For the travel year first entry cars showed a loss of 1654 or -49.6% and re-entry cars showed a loss of 337 or -57.1%. There was a loss of 1991 cars or -50% and a loss of 7214 persons entering via motor vehicle or -57.2%.

Ranger Service. The elk reduction program constituted the greater part of the rangers' work for the month, however, much hunting activity took place along the north line in the Gardiner region and it was necessary to maintain regular patrols in that area.

The Bechler River Ranger Station was closed for the winter on December 15 and this area will be patrolled from the West Yellowstone District for the remainder of the winter.

At the close of the month the ranger force had 10 vacancies but it is expected that three of these positions may be filled early in January 1943.

Police Protection. No law enforcement cases were held during the month of December.

Wildlife Protection. Buffalo. The largest number of buffalo counted in the Lamar area was 374 on December 7. The following day 150 were seen near Slough Creek in the Lamar Valley. Small bunches have been observed in the vicinity of Tower Falls, Hellroaring and Lava Creek.

Two bulls from the park herd appeared outside the park above Deckard Flat and one injured a horse belonging to the operator of a hunting camp. On orders of a Montana State Deputy Game Warden this buffalo was shot and the carcass was taken over by the State.

Snow conditions at the end of the month indicate that it will be necessary to begin some feeding of the Lamar buffalo herd early in January.

Coyotes. The limited measures taken in November to control the large number of coyotes in the Mammoth area were effective until early December when they again became numerous at Mammoth as well as in the vicinity of the Lamar Ranger Station. The fourteen-year-old son of one of the employees reported that his being up a tree prevented his being attacked by a coyote in the Mammoth area. At Lamar it was necessary to construct a fence around the elk

carcasses to stop the coyotes from feeding on and damaging the carcasses before they could be shipped.

Elk Hunting Season. By the end of December approximately 4500 elk had been taken from the northern Yellowstone herd by hunters in open territory north of the park. This probably is the largest hunting kill recorded since 1919 but no accurate figures for that season are available. The early crusted condition of the snow and frequent storms which increased snow depths considerably resulted in an unusually heavy movement of elk from the park and made the large hunters' take possible. Gasoline rationing and a shortage of sporting ammunition has not prevented hunters from making long trips to reach the hunting territory.

Other Hunting Areas. A total of 168 elk were checked by Idaho officials in the hunting areas adjacent to the Henhler River District of the park. Game officials estimated the total kill in that area at 200 which is unusually large for that section.

A newspaper report stated that approximately 1800 elk were taken by hunters from the Jackson Hole or southern herd during the Wyoming hunting season which closed on November 15. As previously reported, the hunters' kill in the Gallatin area was 1177 when the season closed on November 17. No report has been received on the kill in the Shoshone National Forest which is east of the park.

Elk Reduction Operations. Slaughter of elk on the open range in the park started for the first time on December 12 and by the end of the month a total of 315 had been taken. Of this number 198 were allotted to the various Indian Agencies and 117 to the State of Montana Fish and Game Department crews which began operations on December 18.

Shipments to Indian Agencies were as follows:

	Number	Date
Chemawa Indian School	1	12/19/42
Crow Agency	30	12/21/42
Fort Belknap Agency	15	12/30/42
Chemawa Indian School	3	12/30/42
Tongue River Agency	8	12/30/42
Pierre Indian School	12	12/31/42*
Cheyenne River Agency	60	12/31/42*
Total	129	

*Taken by truck from Lamar and Tower Falls on that date and later loaded on cars for rail shipment.

At the end of the month two crews were operating from headquarters at Lamar and Tower Falls and the operation extends from seven miles below the northeast gate to within five miles of Mammoth. Too intensive shooting in any one area has proven unsatisfactory since the elk do not come back to the vicinity of the road where they are accessible. Deep snow prevents carrying on operations at any distance from the highway since it is not possible to get the butchering crews to the carcasses and to drag the dressed animals to the road. Actual experience has also demonstrated the necessity for using suitable rifles and

ammunition since the shooters have been successful in taking all the animals that the dressing crews can handle with an almost negligible number of wounded animals escaping.

Forest Fire Protection. Some work was done on the fire atlas and an informal agreement regarding the proposed landing field at Thorofare was forwarded to the Supervisor of the Teton National Forest.

Miscellaneous. The Local Civil Service Board held an examination for Stenographer-Typist on December 1. There was one competitor.

The regular monthly meeting of the Federal Employees Union No. 465 was held in the Canteen on December 7.

Three of the park's permanent force left during the month for entry into the armed service, Senior Foreman-Mechanic Roger N. Miller and Senior Property Clerk Francis F. Roylance on December 12 and Chief Electrician Lloyd W. Seasholts on December 29. All enlisted in the United States Navy.

J. W. Emmert,
Acting Superintendent.

cc- Region Two.

JJ:san

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