

Never a Dull Moment

by WENDELL and LUCIE CHAPMAN

Photographing mountain goats and grizzly bears in the Rockies is not the easiest job in the world, but it is one of perpetual and absorbing interest

FOR the photographer patience is the cardinal virtue, and in photographing wild animals we have never found that the necessity for patience detracted from the pleasure. Dull moments are few, and to us the days and nights seem all too short.

Some time ago my wife and I decided that observing the wild animals which have survived in remote regions offered us a rare opportunity to gather new information. The realization that we could learn something really new in a well-explored world gave purpose to our wanderings, and what began as an extended vacation has become a permanent and absorbing profession, hobby and pleasure all in one.

Perhaps my own patience in stalking wild animals comes from the fact that for a time I used to stalk singed bond buyers in the early, chilly 'thirties. Those folk were really wild. But patience in photography is not a hard virtue to come by since it usually means accomplishment or failure. One never quite knows what an animal is going to do next, except that it probably won't be what you anticipated. It pays to wait.

On one occasion we were camping in Yellowstone Park to observe the animals in the country's largest game sanctuary. Many people are familiar with the black bears there, but grizzlies are rarely seen. For several nights I tried to obtain a flashlight picture of a grizzly visiting camp, but without success.

One midnight, when the camp grounds were quiet and dark, I heard padded feet scuffling toward me among the trees. A shadowy form arose nearby . . . a bear was climbing to the trash can on the platform a few feet away. I heard the galvanized iron lid drop to the ground and

roll. In disgust I turned on my flashlight, jumped up and drove away an ordinary black bear. Five nights running I had waited for a grizzly. When all was quiet he would go to one of the camp's two trash cans for garbage. But no matter which can I watched, he visited the other.

Replacing the trash can lid, I sat down again beside the camera. In spite of woolen wraps the night air at 7,800 feet elevation penetrated to the skin and I shivered until the flash bulbs on my lap clattered. I was on the point of giving up for the night when a terrific banging made me almost knock over the camera tripod. Before I could remove the camera's lens cap and set off the flash bulb, the garbage can lid had rebounded and banged again. That meant a grizzly for certain. The fiftieth of a second's flash caught the lid on the third bounce, and on top of the platform was the grizzly for which I had been waiting.

With a breathy woof he leaped off the platform, his claws rattling when he struck the ground, but all that I could see was the after-image of the flash as his bulky form loomed above me. Was he running *toward* me or *from* me? Through my mind flashed the recollection of the outlaw grizzly which, a few years before, had turned to killing buffaloes by crushing their skulls with a single blow. My head felt like a target in the dark. Then, to my immense relief, I heard the rattling of claws farther away. I resumed breathing, my skin damp with cold perspiration. I snapped on the flashlight. The grizzly was running away, but the moment the light played upon him, he turned. Snatching the camera, I ran for the tent. The canvas walls gave me a feeling of security far beyond their real worth, but they were enough. Another quick flash from the tent showed the bear



I fed this marten from a spoon



It was time for "Old Hottentot" to die

disappearing among the trees. I breathed easily again.

The Park rangers would not believe us when we reported the grizzly. They said that grizzlies avoided people and never came into the camp grounds. We understood this skepticism because many of the tourists did not know one animal from another, but when we showed them the flashlight photograph of the grizzly, the men became concerned. They realized that the crowds assembled each night at the bear feeding grounds were teaching these formidable animals to lose their fear of man.

However, we spent two months many miles from the highways wandering afoot in grizzly territory where the bears were not accustomed to people, and we were never molested. *Ursus horribilis*, the largest carnivore in the United States, preferred to mind his own affairs. During four years of mingling unarmed with big game in the western mountains of North America our narrowest escapes have not been from the grizzly bear but from trailing the mountain goat. It was not the goat himself, but the crags on which he dwelt that were dangerous.

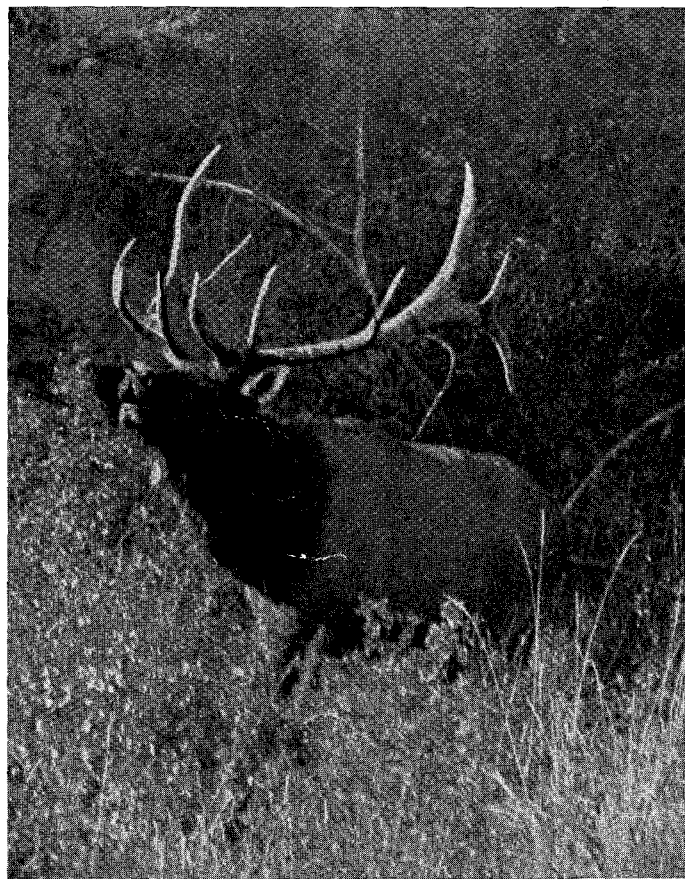
On the Continental Divide in northern Montana one day I took up the trail of three goats. The tracks crossed a steep snow bank which ended in mid-air at the top of a precipice overhanging a canyon. The bank was only twenty feet wide where the goats had crossed, and upon seeing a point of jutting rock two-thirds of the way over I decided to work to it. Each toehold had to be gouged into the steep snow by half a dozen kicks. When I eased my weight on the first step and stood facing up the slope I

began to fear that the kicking might jar my secure foot loose. Should I slip, I would shoot down a quarter mile and be crushed to pulp on the bordering rocks or else go whizzing over the precipice.

The slope was steep, yet the tracks of the goats showed how easily they had crossed. When the exposed point of protruding rock was within a yard I jumped upon it with a keen sense of relief. Instantly my fingers were clawing the snow as I shot down the slope. The rock point which had looked like a miniature Gibraltar had given way completely. Faster and faster I sped, a human toboggan bouncing and bounding with my camera pack. A strip of land jutted into the snow a few yards below. But would I stop, or go hurtling over the foot-high rise and continue sliding down the snow below?

Thump! My clothes ripped as I bumped . . . and stopped . . . on the rock outcropping. Blood dripped from my nose as I lay gasping for breath. I saw the rock which had betrayed me bound like a rabbit toward the brink, go over the precipice and sink into space.

After a brief rest I climbed on in search of the goats. Soon I surprised them. They were hemmed in, so it appeared, by an unscalable wall, a precipice, and a snow bank too steep for me to cross. The goats watched me for a moment, then hopped to the steep snow bank. Straddling their legs and squatting, they began to slide. As rigid as toys, they whirled about, slipping faster and faster toward the drop-off a hundred yards below. So steep was the bank that they would have tipped over had it not been



Our songbird turned out to be an 800-pound elk

for squatting and spreading their legs. Yet they whirled sidewise, rearing as they skidded, and came down in perfect balance with hoofs punching viciously into the snow. Each would stop, momentarily, then slide again, his hind quarters whirling about as if he were dangling from a string.

It was difficult to understand how they could handle themselves so easily when there was a total lack of suppleness in their wooden movements. Half way down to the deadly precipice, they skated to the opposite side of the bank and hopped to the rocks. With short frayed tails erect, they disappeared in a ridiculously clumsy and sure-footed gallop. Their performance had so fascinated me that I had forgotten to use the camera!

Later in the day, as I was sitting on the skyline, a white head appeared above the ledge. Quietly I took my camera from my knapsack, fearing that the curious goat would be frightened at my movements. Quite to the contrary, he walked up to within twelve feet of me, and seemed puzzled over my actions. At the whine of the motion picture camera he wiggled his ears and probably wondered why I did not wiggle mine to get rid of the buzzing insects.

In a few minutes he lay down on the ledge and with half-closed eyes began chewing his cud. Later he arose to inspect me again. In the meantime a companion arrived, her winter coat just beginning to shed. Startled, she looked at me, then at him, and realizing from his lack of concern that I was not dangerous, she clambered around the cliff to browse on the sparse shrubs. For two hours I photographed them, talking softly to hold their interest when their curiosity began to wane. At sunset I left.

Although the noise of the cameras did not frighten these particular goats, the mechanical whirrings did frighten many wild creatures. Frequently they fled at the noise of the first picture.

Numerous mishaps with camera traps have caused us to discontinue their use. The subject is too often out of focus or in an unsatisfactory pose. Once high in the mountains I set up a trap to see if I could get a shot of the rare American sable. The camera was put in position and a trout tied to the trigger with a fishline. Hiding in the rocks, we saw a pine marten come up, pounce on the fish, and



Ursus Horribilis was fast losing his fear of man

take his own picture. But he jerked the camera to the ground and played tug-of-war with it until, luckily, the fishline broke.

The martens here became quite friendly with us, if not with each other. During the night they would come into camp for food a dozen times. Because of their unsocial natures they never came together. One of them we managed to snap with stolen goods in his possession . . . the last egg from our larder.

Another marten became quite friendly after we fed him from a spoon. In accepting the meat, honey, or bread and milk, he growled, exposing his long white teeth. But his snarling thanks was only a bluff. Finally I handed him a morsel of raw bacon from my fingers. He spit at me and with a leap, as if he feared that the food would vanish, caught my thumb in his teeth. In a flash he relaxed his jaws before hurting me, stuck up his tongue in place of his lower teeth and with it and his upper teeth carefully pulled away the bacon. Then he growled again, just to

make us remember how tough he was. Thereafter we fed him from our fingers and although he often threatened, he never bit.

It is fascinating to watch animals prepare for the winter. During the crisp Fall days and frosty nights in the solitudes of Wyoming, we watched the pine squirrels, rabbits, and beavers gathering their stores. Bears were working overtime to put on a layer of fat before going into their long hibernation.

During this season we heard one of the most beautiful songs of our land, one which rivals that of the western meadowlark. So we searched the forests for hours one moonlit night for the songster. It did not seem possible that such an exquisite song was not widely known.

In the morning several songsters could be heard down the slope. Resuming the hunt, we stalked through a patch of timber and came to a meadow where stood the creature which was producing this flute-like music. To our utter amazement, our delicate-voiced bird was an eight-hundred-pound bull elk. His light tannish body was hardly distinguishable from the tall yellow grass, except for his dark brown neck and antlers, the points of which were whitened from goring the earth. At the click of the camera he and his harem of thirty cows disappeared into the forest.

Indian summer passed and winter soon settled over the mountains. Deep snows drove the government buffalo herd from its summer pasture on Mirror Plateau in Yellowstone Park. In December we went to the buffalo ranch maintained in the Lamar valley of the Park. Hay is raised here during the summer when the bison are on the higher ranges. During the December round-up eight hundred of the twelve hundred bison were driven into corrals for culling. Each year the numbers in excess of the carrying capacity of the ranges are butchered, the weaklings and aged killed, and the dressed meat sent to Indian tribes.

One old bull, known as "Old Hottentot," was said to be the finest specimen ever seen in the Park. There had been larger bulls, but none so striking in appearance. The dense growth of wavy dark hair on his head stood out beyond his horns and completely concealed his ears. This year,

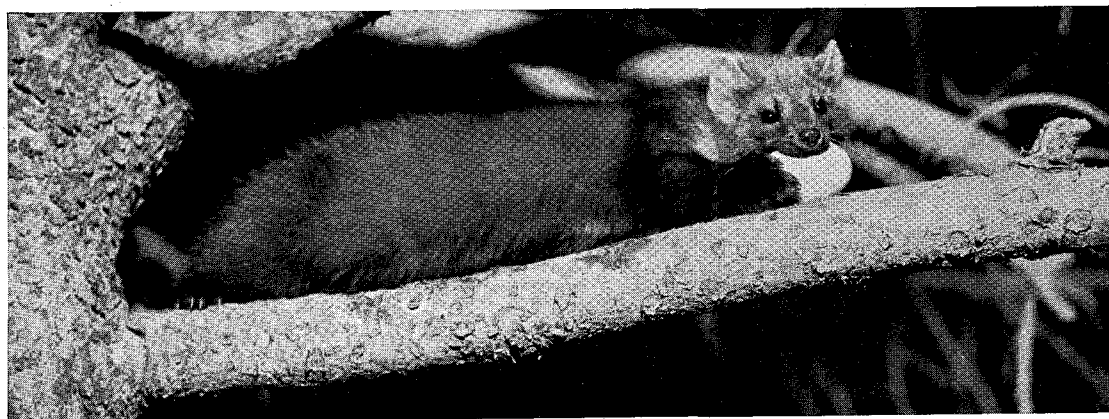
because Old Hottentot was old, it was time for him to go.

But instead of being skinned and quartered, he was merely dressed out and shipped to an Indian Reservation two hundred and fifty miles away where the Crow Nation, now numbering only twenty-one hundred people, is crowded into a fraction of their former vast hunting range. Fittingly enough, Old Hottentot played, in death, an important rôle in a re-stocking program.

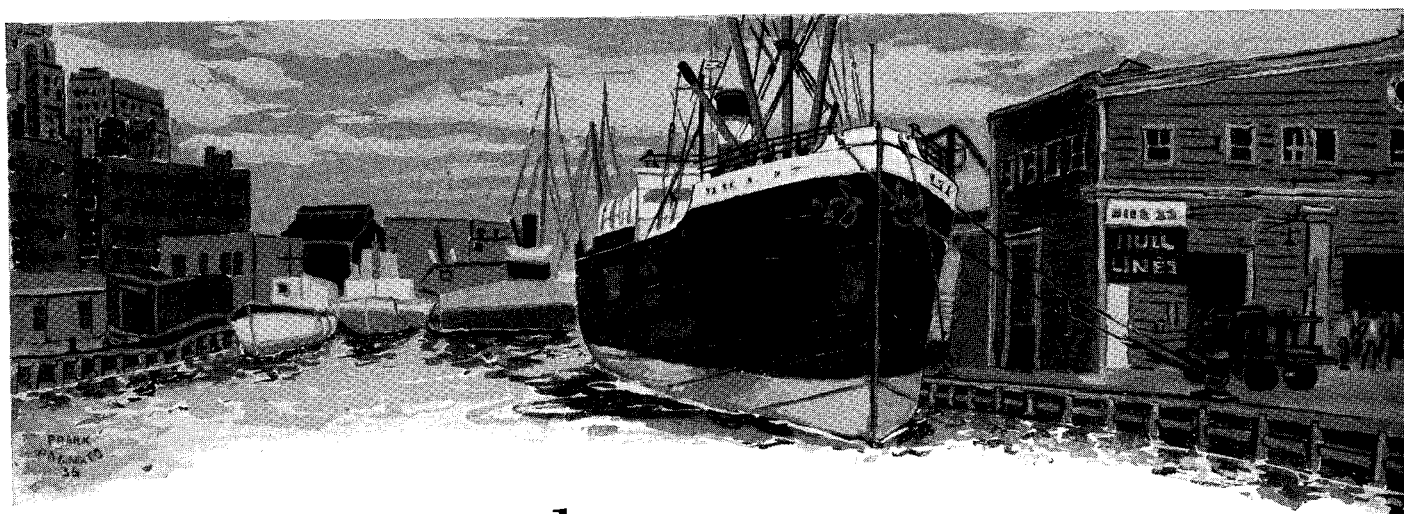
For six years, Robert Yellowtail, native superintendent of the Crows, had been working to induce the government to give his tribe its allotment of buffalo meat in live animals. He wished to re-establish a herd on the Crow reservation, which had once been one of the best bison ranges in the West. But before the government officials would co-operate, Yellowtail had to convince them that the Indians would take care of the animals. It was necessary for the Indians to set aside the lush canyon of the Big Horn River in the spring, if buffalo were to be pastured the following winter. In addition they would have to agree that there would be no hunting until the herd had multiplied for several years. Because the Indians supplemented their meagre income by leasing reservation pastures to white men, they hesitated to sacrifice the rental from the canyon.

Robert Yellowtail was still trying to promote the plan when Old Hottentot arrived at the reservation. Tears rolled down the wrinkled cheeks of the Crows as they looked at the magnificent dead animal. Braves who, a half century earlier, had seen the white men wipe out the bison and crush the redman, squinted at the carcass. Young Crows saw the buffalo for the first time. Young and old men alike were now willing to make the sacrifices that Robert Yellowtail advised. The following winter eighty-seven bison were trucked in alive and turned loose.

This was the beginning of a re-stocking program . . . a program which would never again send thousands of bison pounding over the plains, but one which had its purpose. The re-stocking of the buffalo range gave the Crows a greater measure of independence from uncertain government aid, and with that independence a greater measure of self-respect.



The marten had the stolen goods on him . . . an egg from our larder



Trapped

by GOSTA LARSSON

HE was afraid of turning his back to the other boy. As he bent down and dug his shovel into the coal he glanced suspiciously at Nick's grinning face weirdly illumined by the sluch lamp. Richard knew there was something back of this sudden show of friendliness.

He piled the wheelbarrow full with coal, then pushed it across the bumpy floor on toward the bunker opening while he kept thinking of Nick and the look of murder he had seen in his eyes yesterday. They had been fighting and Richard had got him down on his back in the coal. "Yeah, yuh sissy-face!" Nick had hissed between his teeth. "Yuh wait! I'll get yuh yet!"

The boys were of the same age, Richard a tall straight fellow, Nick undersized and gnome-like, his face all gray and pudgy under the soot. He belonged to the shiftless riff-raff that hung about the docks and was employed at the meanest kind of labor. During working hours he was forever crawling about out of the sun's reach in the filthy places of ships.

Richard had been working as an apprentice in a mechanic's shop, but as spring approached he got a longing for the sea, quit the shop, and traveled to the nearest seaport where he found a job as trimmer on a tramp ship lying in dry dock for repair. On his first day aboard he had been sent down into the stokehold to chip rust on the boilers. A gang of boys were working in the half-light from their candles. They were a raw bunch and from the start began to make fun of the newcomer. As he was chipping the rust they would tilt their candles over his back, covering his clothes with the drippings. Once they even put fire to his blouse. Then they ran and hid in black corners of the stokehold like a pack of evil dwarfs. Nick was the leader, and Richard only wished the ship would soon put to sea so that he could get away from his tormentors.

A few days before the ship was getting under steam, the other trimmer fell down the stokehold ladder and had to be taken to a hospital. Time was short. The Chief considered

Nick for the job and sent him to a doctor for examination. Nick's rating was low, but the Chief decided to try him out. "You think you can get along with the crew?" he asked the boy. "We don't want any monkey business aboard ship, you know."

Nick looked uncomfortable as he stood there in his frayed but carefully pressed suit. He fidgeted with his cap and mumbled that he would do his best. He put a grubby finger between his neck and the white collar he wore for the occasion. His neck was also bound with a white handkerchief to conceal a boil.

"All right," said the Chief. "We'll see. Run along now."

Nick looked sombre as he left the cabin. Instead of his old tough-guy manner he carried himself with a certain gravity. When he had changed into his greasy dungarees and joined his gang, they hardly knew him. He still seemed full of importance when later in the afternoon the stoker ordered him into the bunker to give Richard a hand with the trimming.

"How yuh makin' out, Richie?" he grinned as he crawled into the bunker where Richard was working in the light of his reeking sluch lamp.

Richard cast a nervous glance in Nick's direction, but silently went on with his work.

Nick coughed and pulled at the bandage around his neck. He had a weak chest, and his voice was hoarse. He edged a bit nearer to Richard. "Say, we're goin' to be mates for the trip," he said awkwardly. "Goin' to have a hellufa swell time, ain't we?" He coughed again.

Richard almost dropped the shovel.

"Yeah, yuh and me goin' to be pals," Nick continued and grinned. "The Chief tole me. Guess we'll take yuh along, he says to me."

Richard made no reply. He felt as though a lump of coal had been dropped into the pit of his stomach. He glanced up and again saw that smirk on Nick's face. "Richie," he was repeating, "yuh and me goin' to be