

Forest and Stream

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Additional News of the Park Buffalo

Later.-- Since the above was written I have received a letter from Mr. E. Hofer, at Gardiner, Mont., dated April 30, which is given below. The additional news that Howell admits having been in the Park on the Pelican Valley for three winters, and he says there are only a few buffalo there, can only point to the conclusion, namely, that the total number left alive in the Park are even less than the *Forest and Stream* expedition of this winter would make out. Capt. Anderson has always thought it likely that a good number of buffalo had moved over to winter in the Pelican hot country, but no report has been made of buffalo in that little-visited portion of the Park, and no expedition has gone in there to investigate. Howell has been investigating for three years in a locality where it was next to impossible to find him, and his statements made to Mr. Hofer, no doubt made in candor, constitute the best available report of facts as to the buffalo supply in the Pelican country. Outside of this there remains practically only the Hayden Valley herd, the largest count of which is only 103 head. Congress has done well to act speedily in passing the protection act. It was time if any of the buffalo are to be left. These facts, and the facts I picked up after I left the Park lead to only one possible belief-- the Park buffalo can not be counted for even 200 head this winter. There may not be 150, perhaps not 125. This is not mere alarmist talk. We may hope and may even believe that there are 250 buffalo somewhere in the Park, but how shall we prove it? The Park has been better scouted this winter than it ever was before, but by whose report shall we place the number of buffalo actually seen at more than 125?

On the heels of this sickening conclusion note the statement that Howell is again at large, free to go in again and complete a fourth year in the Park, free to kill the remainder of the herd now left so sadly cut down in numbers, free to finish up the rest of the great animals which we found panic-stricken, timorous, running till exhausted in the deep snow, in terror for their lives.

Mr. Hofer's letter follows:

"Howell is out of the guard house as per order from Washington. Capt. Anderson was away when the order came. Howell was held about two weeks longer.

"Howell called at my cabin to see me and the papers that had an account of his arrest. He is pleased to know he made such a stir. He says they can thank him if they get laws passed to protect the game and the Park. He says, too, that he had seven buffalo, not five, killed when they found him, one was over a ridge, the boys did not see or find it at all.

"Howell has been in there three winters, and knows all about the buffalo on the east side of the river, says there are only a few there. I suppose you know the reason. He spoke about the picture you made, and said he supposed he ought to have let you take it, but you was so fresh he did not like to. [Thanks, but the picture I got anyhow will do very well.]

"The snow is getting off the first hills and higher tablelands, one can see a bit of green here and there. The antelope are scattered over more ground now. They can go to the top of the hills and get grass, until they get on the eastern side of the hills, where they find snow. I have been out and had another whirl at the antelope with the camera."

Mr. Hofer's letter is the last word obtainable on the grave question of the numbers of the Park buffalo. *Forest and Stream* can well claim the credit of an exclusive presentation of these important facts, unwelcome as they are to the people of the United States and their representatives in Congress.

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