

Greg Greer: Olympic Peninsula National Park, Washington U.S.A.

July 2, 2022

My wife and I are retired and we travel in the U.S. in our RV about 8 months of the year. Due to this, we are consistently in the field, searching for flora and fauna. On Saturday, July 2, 2022, we spent the day in Olympic National Park, in extreme N.E. Washington. My photographic targets were Olympic Marmot and the Olympic Chipmunk, which is a subspecies of the Yellow-pine Chipmunk. This I find quite interesting as this subspecies is entirely isolated from the contiguous range for the yellow-pine chipmunk. So, I need to further research the taxonomy for the Olympic subspecies.



First and foremost, one of the best places for both the marmot and the chipmunk is Hurricane Ridge. Unfortunately, during the summer months, there are masses of people heading up that route. We spent an hour in a line of traffic to get into the gate. They were letting a car in every 1 minute and 40 seconds. (The gate attendants actually had timers that went off to let them know to let another car through the gate) My advice is to go in early even though there may be considerable clouds and mist in the early morning. On our drive up the Hurricane Ridge Road, we observed a number of black-tailed deer and an adult black bear. As soon as we parked, we observed a big blonde colored male Olympic Marmot. Photographing the marmot was as easy as it gets in finding a new squirrel species. Of course, we take advantage of those circumstances as there are so many other times when targets species are not found. We then hiked the Hurricane Ridge Trail, hoping to find Olympic Chipmunk. We hiked quite a few miles and the scenery is spectacular. We did find another black-bear but it was a distant view through binoculars. We also observed 4 more Olympic marmots on the very steep downhill slope about 1 mile from the parking area. We also talked with a ranger and it was mentioned that the best place to

photograph the chipmunks is.....you guessed it: The restaurant / picnic area. So, we walked over and in the steep meadow below the parking area, I photographed two more Olympic marmots and as soon as we arrived where the outside picnic style tables were, on the lower patio, there was a very accommodating Olympic Chipmunk wanting to be photographed. So, I achieved both of my target species for the day. Everything else was a bonus! In the meadow immediately above the parking area, the herd of black-tailed deer, increased through the afternoon and by 5 pm, there were about 15 deer. Anyone needing to photograph black-tails....this is a wonderful opportunity. In addition to numerous does, there were 3 different aged bucks with their antlers in velvet.



The later part of the afternoon, we drove down the dirt road to Obstruction Point. We were advised by a ranger that is the best place to see Sooty Grouse. The road is blacked off at 3.6 miles in due to snow. We got to the end of the road and did a short hike. Lots of glacier lily in flower, both white and yellow variety but no grouse. As we were driving out, at about midway in the drive, we observed a sow black bear with two very young cubs. They were fairly close to the road on the downhill side. It was nice to see these creatures in this location as there was no one else around. So often, in our National Parks,

wildlife along the roads attracts a lot of attention and traffic jams make the observations considerably less desirable. So, finding this sow black bear with her two very young cubs was a sheer delight. On our drive back down the mountain, we observed a doe black-tailed deer with twin fawns. They were young and sported beautiful reddish coats with bold white spots. Attached are a few images of the day.

