

Journal Entries from the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Unit: Animals (Elementary)

John Ordway,
January 05, 1805

(Lots of wolves mentioned)
one of the hunters Set a trap last night & caught a large Grey wolf.

Joseph Whitehouse,
January 14, 1805

... killed one buffaloe a wolf & 2 porkapines, & I got my feet So froze that I could not walk to the fort.

Meriwether Lewis,
February 04, 1805

our stock of meat which we had procured in the Months of November & December is now nearly exhausted;

Meriwether Lewis,
May 29, 1805

we saw a great many wolves in the neighbourhood of these mangled carcasses they were fat and extremely gentle, Capt C. who was on shore killed one of them with his espontoon. [a short pike: a staff with a steel lance point at the end]

Meriwether Lewis,
January 03, 1806

our party from necessaty having been obliged to subsist some lenth of time on dogs have now become extreemly fond of their flesh; it is worthy of remark that while we lived principally on flesh of this anamal we were much more healthy strong and more fleshey than we had been since we left the Buffaloe country. for my own part I have become so perfectly reconciled to the dog that I think it an agreeable food and would prefer it vastly to lean Venison or Elk.

Entries from *Lewis and Lewis: Across the Divide*

“On the Marias River Lewis listened... to the song of ‘a small bird which in action resembles the lark,’ characterizing it as both ‘sweet’ and ‘plaintive,’ and remarking that ‘these larks as I shall call them add much to the gayety and cheerfulness of the scene’.”

“On June 14, his second day at the Great Falls, the threatening behavior of a succession of animals ‘wore the impression on my mind of enchantment; at sometimes for a moment I thought it might be a dream’.”

“...the bears were not done with the Corps. Several hair’s-breadth escapes followed, and Lewis began referring to the bears respectfully as ‘gentlemen.’ On June 14, it was his turn. He had just shot a buffalo and was watching it expire when he realized that a grizzly had ‘crept up on me within 20 steps before I discovered him; ...I drew up my gun to shoot, but the same instant recollected that she was not loaded... it was an open level plain, not a bush within miles... in short there was no place by means of which I could conceal myself... I had no sooner turned myself about but he pitched at me, open mouthed and full speed, I ran about 80 yards and found he gained on me fast, I then run into the water... about waist deep, and faced about and presented the point of my espartoon, at this instant...he sudonly wheeled about as if frightened, declined the combat on such unequal grounds, and retreated.’ Shaken, Lewis waded out of the river speculating on the bear’s motivation for sparing him. He concluded that its reasons were ‘misterious and unaccountable.’