

## Yosemite voices

**YOSEMITE VOICES IS AN AUDIO PODCAST SERIES** intended to provide insights into the natural and cultural history and management of Yosemite National Park. It also explores the lives and lifestyles of the people who live and work there. In Episode 1, entitled “Soundscapes,” Ranger Bob Roney interviews Kurt Fristrup, PhD, the senior acoustic specialist with the National Park Service’s Natural Sounds Program in Fort Collins, Colorado. He talks about the effect of noise on predator-prey relationships, animal communications, and human physiology. Fristrup reveals some of the findings about the acoustic health of Yosemite as well as interesting discoveries from recordings made in the wilderness. He explains that noise can impact the acoustic environment much as smog can impact the visual environment because it obscures the listening horizon for both visitors and wildlife. Working with staff of the Natural Sounds Program, Yosemite has conducted monitoring at 13 locations across the park. Each acoustic monitoring station was set up for a month and gave park staff baseline information about the park’s natural sounds and noise intrusions. The natural sounds detected include a sniffing black bear near the microphone, the dawn chorus of birds, and the thunder of waterfalls throughout the park. The principal noise source detected in Yosemite’s backcountry was from aircraft, with the average interval between noise events being three minutes. The good news is that between these noise events, Yosemite’s backcountry is full of exciting and intriguing natural sound events that connect visitors to the landscape. It is a powerful place that can take visitors back in time and provide an opportunity for respite, inspiration, and solitude. Ranger Roney encourages visitors to close their eyes to the landscape for just a moment, and open their ears to the soundscapes. By doing so, they may gain a whole new perspective on the environment around them.

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## Reference

Roney, B., host. 2008. Soundscapes [Episode 1]. Yosemite Voices. Podcast retrieved from <http://www.nps.gov/yose/photosmultimedia/yv1-soundscapes.htm> (August 2008).

—Ericka Pilcher

