

ANIMALS & MEN



THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



“Rods” sightings in Iraq

Unusually coloured frogs

Wiltshire wildcats; Bigfoot flap in Arkansas; First ever pictures of a living *Architeuthis*; Mythology of ravens

Animals & Men #32

Animals & Men is the quarterly journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology; a non profit making organisation administered by:



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CONTENTS:

- p. 3 Editorial
- p. 4 Faculty of the Centre for Fortean Zoology
- p. 6 End of year message from our president
- p. 7 Newsfile
- p. 19 Newsfile Xtra: "Rods" in Iraq
- p. 21 Newsfile Xtra: First photographs of living giant squid
- p. 24 The Sevenoaks Jackal
- p. 25 Nick Redfern's Letter from America: Primates on the prowl
- p. 28 CFZ Big Cat Study Group
- p. 30 *Wiltshire Wildcats* by Marcus Matthews
- p. 40 *Unusually coloured frogs in Britain* by

- Richard Muirhead and Darren Naish
- p. 44 *Raven Mad* by Wilf Wharton
- p. 48 CFZ People
- p. 49 Letters to the Editor
- p. 52 Book Reviews
- p. 58 The Sycophant

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Animals & Men #32



EDITORIAL

jonathan downes



Dear friends,

Welcome to another issue of the world's only dedicated Cryptozoological magazine. The last few months have been very busy for the CFZ. In October we promoted the highly successful 4th Weird Weekend and raised a not inconsiderable amount of money for the cause. A full report will appear in the next issue, but it was such a success that we have already booked a larger room in the same venue for next year's event which will be held over the weekend of the 20th to the 22nd of August. We have already confirmed some speakers including Nick Redfern (subject tba), Sally Watts (gryphons), Mark Martin (Loch Ness), and Mark Fraser (Scottish big cats). Prospective punters should be warned that next year's event coincides with my 45th birthday and so a frightfully jolly time is guaranteed for all.

I would like to take this chance to apologise to Paul Vella. He sent me an excellent article on the Willow Creek Bigfoot conference and his subsequent trip to Bluff Creek. It was about 40 pages long. I had every intention of trying to include an edited version in this issue of *Animals & Men*, to complement the full version with pictures which is in the 2004 Yearbook. However, I found his prose to be so riveting that it seemed a crime to cut it down. So, if you want to read it you are going to have to buy the Yearbook. Hey - if every other corporate publishing house in the world can pull dirty tricks like this so can we.

I have just returned from a two-week trip to the United States where I appeared at a conference in Las Vegas and then travelled down to Texas to stay with Nick and Dana Redfern in Nederland. Whilst I was there I finally met Chester Moore in the flesh. What an absolute dude he is! A full account of my transatlantic sojourn which will include some of Chester's remarkable findings will be found in the next issue.

The publication of this issue marks somewhat of a milestone for us. It is the first year since 1996 that we have managed to publish four issues and a Yearbook. Personally, I believe that this is all down to the sterling work of John Fuller who has turned our administration department from an embarrassing mess into something of which we can all be proud.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very happy new year, to thank you for everything you have all done for the CFZ over the past 12 months and to look forward with great excitement to 2004.

Slaínté Mhòr

Jonathan Downes
(Director, CFZ)

*The great days of zoology
are not done.....*

THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)

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Animals & Men #32

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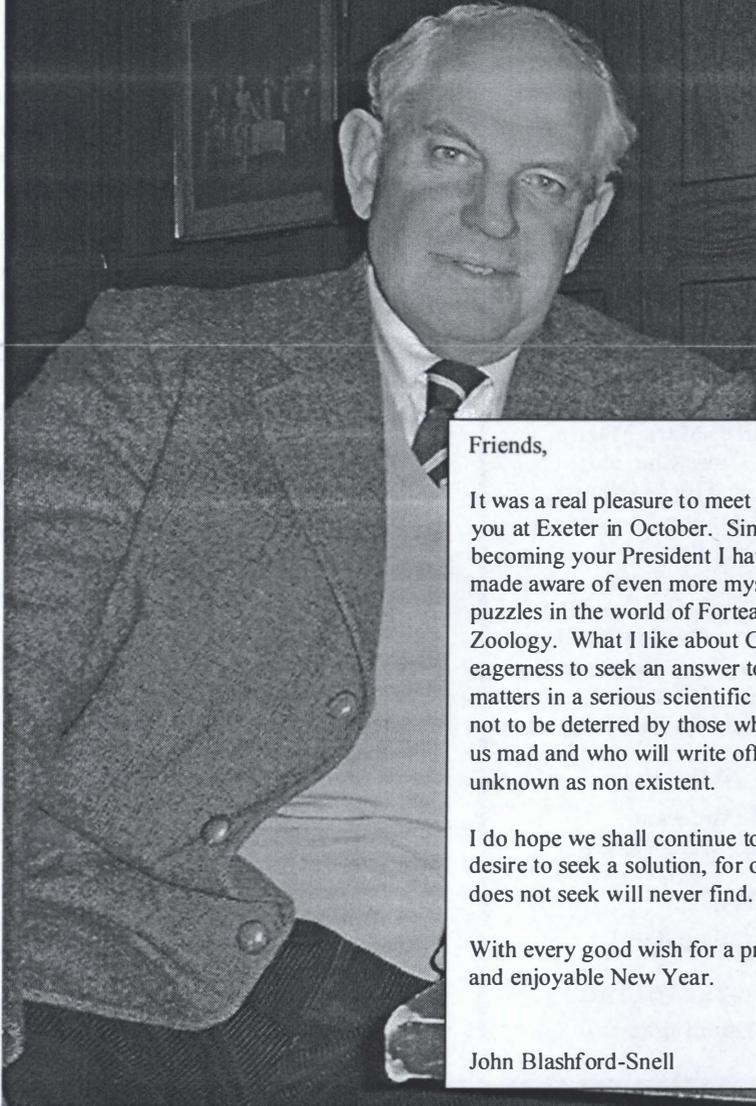
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Message from the President



Friends,

It was a real pleasure to meet so many of you at Exeter in October. Since becoming your President I have been made aware of even more mysteries and puzzles in the world of Fortean Zoology. What I like about CFZ is the eagerness to seek an answer to such matters in a serious scientific way and not to be deterred by those who consider us mad and who will write off anything unknown as non-existent.

I do hope we shall continue to foster the desire to seek a solution, for one who does not seek will never find.

With every good wish for a productive and enjoyable New Year.

John Blashford-Snell

Animals & Men #32



edited and compiled by jon and richard



Weekly Maritime Hat-Trick

The last three-months have been exciting ones in the world of cryptozoology. New species are being discovered almost on a daily basis. Possibly the most exciting of these come as a result of an international marine census which, according to Associated Press on 23rd October, aims - over the next seven years - to catalogue all the life forms in the world's oceans. 300 scientists from 50 countries recently announced the results of the first three years of the project admit that although they have already catalogued 15,304 species of fish and 194,696 to 214,696 species of animals and plants, they have only listed what this estimated to be roughly 10 percent of the world's total. The census is adding about 150 to 200 species of fish and 1,700 species of

animals and plants each year. The scientists said they believe the oceans that extend across 70 percent of Earth's surface hold about 20,000 species of fish and up to 1.98 million species of animals and plants. Many of those could be basic and small life forms, such as worms and jellyfish.

"We've tended to be interested in the things that we eat," said Jesse Ausubel, an environmental scientist at The Rockefeller University in New York City. He helps run the census for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which provided \$20 million in funding. *"We've tended not to be interested in the things that pass through our nets or don't taste good,"* Ausubel said. *"But the small critters are tremendously important in the ecosystem ... and in an evolutionary sense, the small things came first. They're ancient, and they're survivors."*

"Our goal by 2010 is to know as much about life in the oceans as we know about life on land now," said Ronald O'Dor, a marine biologist at Dalhousie University in Canada and the project's chief scientist. *"No one would claim that we know everything about life on land,"* he said. *"There are probably still a few hundred thousand beetles in tropical and haven't been described. But we'd like to aim for parity."*

The CFZ are happy to agree with him, but are certain that a heck of a lot more animals still await discovery on land as well as in the oceans, and that the quest for new species on land is a lot more than merely the search for new species of beetle. However, we applaud the project which grew from scientists' concerns after a 1995 report by the National Academy of Sciences found that human population growth was fast changing the diversity of life in the oceans, possibly irreversibly. The census, which in our opinion at least is a great - and long overdue - idea, was first thought of six years ago, partly through

Animals & Men #32

of the efforts of J. Frederick Grassle, director of Rutgers University's Institute of Marine & Coastal Sciences. It has cost \$70 million so far and the price tag eventually is expected to reach \$1 billion, paid by participating governments. "We know we won't have counted every animal," said Grassle, who chairs the census's scientific steering committee. "The limit on the knowable is, in major part, the resources that can go into the problem."

Hello/Goodbye

As fortune favours we become increasingly aware of patterns which become apparent in news stories. A particularly disturbing pattern it is that of a new species which is discovered only to find that its chosen environment is either under imminent threat of destruction or, in some cases, has disappeared altogether.



The UK-based charity Birdlife International announced in October that a new species of finch had been discovered in Venezuela but mourned the fact that its only habitat had recently been destroyed by the state electricity company to make way for a Hydro-Electric dam. The bird - the blue flecked Carrizal Seedeater - was first spotted on Carrizal Island, an uninhabited islet on the Caroni river in biodiverse southeastern Venezuela, in July

2001. However, it took two years for the bird to be recognised as a new species and by this time it was too late. In that time, the bird's habitat of thickets of spiny bamboo on the island were razed as part of the construction of a massive hydroelectric dam, BirdLife International said in a statement sent to Reuters.

"The discovery of the Carrizal Seedeater is an exciting development for global bird life, but the discovery is tempered with the knowledge that we have now destroyed the place where it hid from us for so long," said Robin Restall, one of the naturalists who made the discovery.

"This bird may now be losing the most favorable habitat for its continued survival," he added.

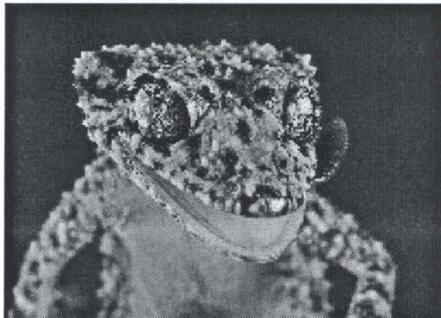
BirdLife International said the bird had a larger bill than other finches and small plumage differences. The male was gray with splashes of blue, the female was varying shades of brown.

In a startlingly similar story PhD student Conrad Hoskin from the University of Queensland in Brisbane found a "startling" new lizard - the Gulbaru gecko (*Phyllurus gulbaru*) - in a suburban-sized area of just 14 square kilometres in Northern Queensland. Under international criteria, any dwindling species occupying less than 500 square kilometres is defined as endangered. "The Gulbaru gecko and other leaf-tailed geckos are part of an ancient lineage that appear to be Gondwanan", says Hoskin, adding that the new gecko may be related to those in New Zealand and New Caledonia.

In 1998 Hoskin had discovered another distinct leaf-tailed gecko, the Mt Elliot gecko (*Phyllurus amnicola*) in a neighbouring area near the Townsville. Then in 2001, he encountered the Gulbara gecko during a nocturnal search - in the form of a pair of red eyes glowing in the dark. He believed the gecko was a new species, and it later turned out to be genetically more closely related to leaf-tailed geckos from the Mackay

Animals & Men #32

area than the Mt Elliot gecko he had previously discovered.



After the first discovery, Hoskin went back and surveyed the area and other comparable habitats, finding just two small sub-populations of the Gulbaru gecko. Both dwelt in rocky rainforest areas surrounded by open eucalypt forests, very little of which is protected.

"Only a small fraction of the suitable habitat for the Gulbaru gecko receives some degree of protection in state forest," Hoskin says. *"Our surveys indicate that the species probably occurs in two subpopulations near Townsville separated by an expanse of unsuitable habitat."*

"The reduction and fragmentation of patches of suitable habitat by fire poses a threat to the survival of this species. Since this species was discovered, much suitable habitat has already been destroyed by severe burning. The destruction of habitat by unmanaged burning continues to reduce and further fragment the available habitat."

Sub-continental slitherings

The Herpetological community were excited in early October by the discovery of a remarkable new species of frog - bright purple in colour with tiny eyes and a long protruding

snout which is very reminiscent of the head of a soft shelled turtle (*Trionyx spp.*).

The small-headed creature belongs to a new family of frogs that scientists thought had either never existed or disappeared without trace millions of years ago.

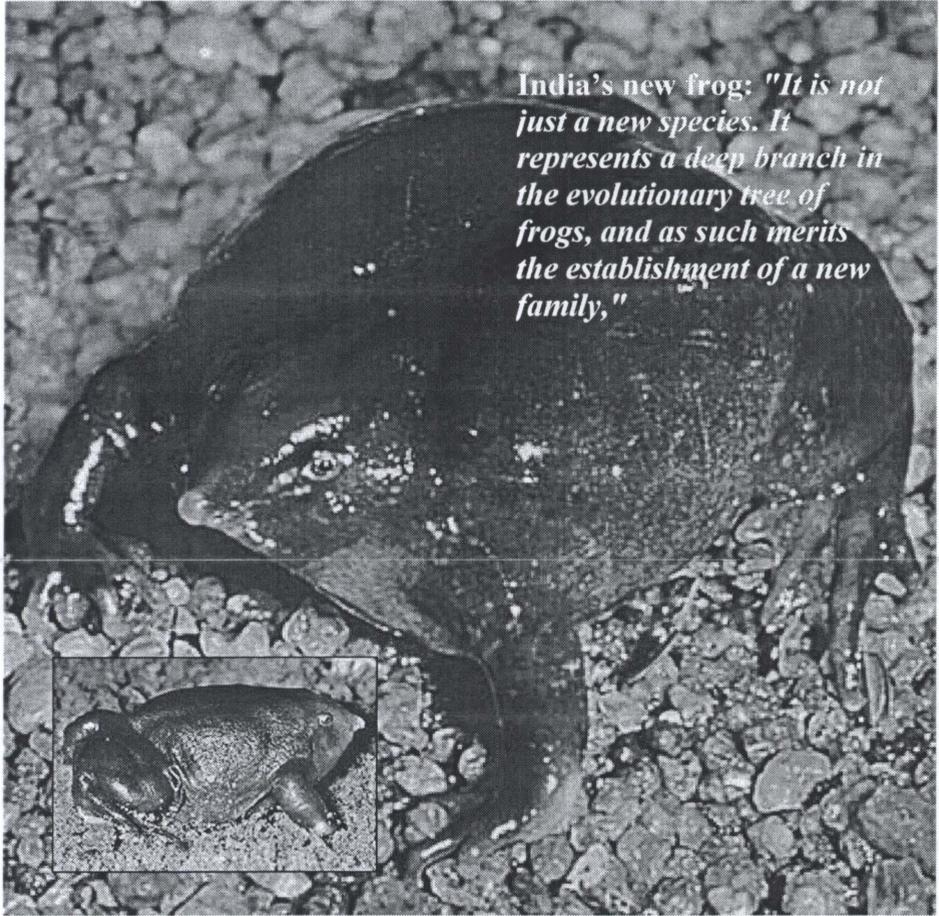
"It is not just a new species. It represents a deep branch in the evolutionary tree of frogs, and as such merits the establishment of a new family," Franky Bossuyt, an evolutionary biologist at the Free University of Brussels in Belgium, said in an interview. *"It is an important discovery because it tells us something about the early evolution of advanced frogs that we would not know otherwise because there are no fossil records from this lineage."*

Bossuyt and his colleague S.D. Biju discovered the frog in the Western Ghats Mountains of India, one of eight biodiversity hotspots in the world that are home to unusual species found nowhere else. Its closest living relatives are a family frogs called *sooglossidae* that are found only in the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, some 2,000 miles from India.

"You could say it is a living fossil," said Bossuyt, referring to the new species. *"People have been wondering about the closest relative of sooglossidae, the ones that live on the Seychelles. There was a theory that maybe the closest relative was in India and had become extinct. But now we have found it, and it looks different than expected,"* he added.

Also in India - the Barkudia skink - a rare limbless lizard which has been described as looking like a giant earthworm - was sighted in the eastern Indian state of Orissa after an absence of 87 years. The lizard, with the zoological name *Barkudia insularis*, was found on Badakuda island in the Chilka brackish water lagoon, the United News Of India reported. The skink has

Animals & Men #32



India's new frog: *"It is not just a new species. It represents a deep branch in the evolutionary tree of frogs, and as such merits the establishment of a new family,"*

not been seen since it was discovered in 1917, and sightings after have been unconfirmed, wildlife officials said.

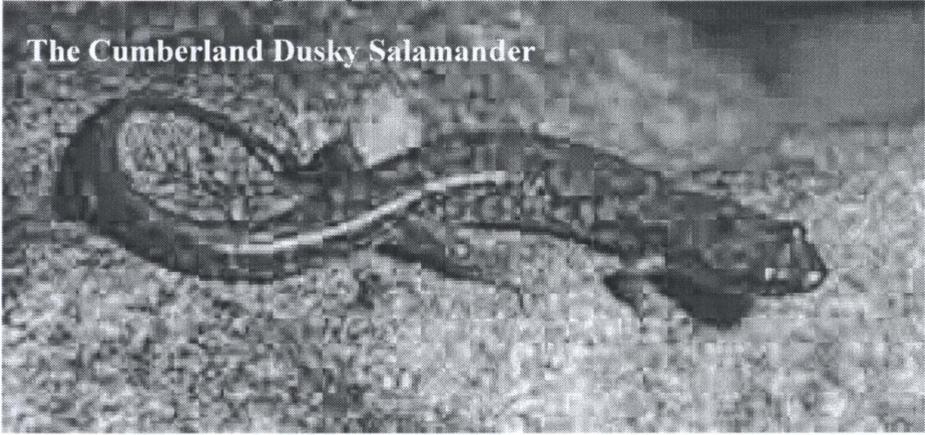
The species is endemic to Badakuda island, and is not found in any other parts of the world. The sighting was supported by video documentation, an official said.

Cumberland Blues

In more exciting news for herpetologists, an entirely new Salamander species has been discovered - in the highly populated east coast of North America. This is particularly exciting

Animals & Men #32

The Cumberland Dusky Salamander

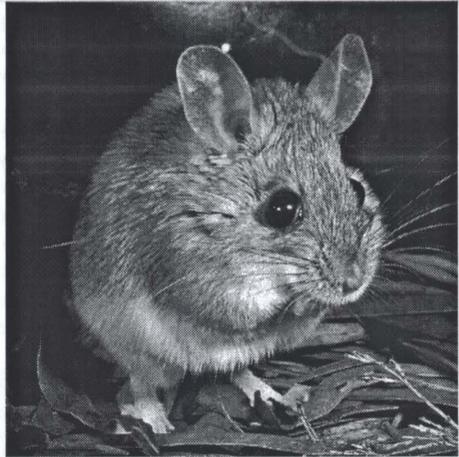


news because of its location. Herpetologists Jennifer A. Anderson and Stephen G. Tilley, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, named the creature the Cumberland Dusky Salamander after studying the population in the Cumberland Plateau of eastern Tennessee. Its Latin name is *Desmognathus abditus*. The species name "abditus" comes from Latin, and means hidden, concealed, or secret. The authors so named this creature because for so long it had remained hidden from science in an area where few would have thought that new vertebrate species would be discovered.

trapping native species stumbled on the little rodents by accident.

Caught on the hop

The dusky hopping mouse - one of the few native Australian rodents - has been rediscovered after a gap of 150 years. The tiny animal which lives in the outback desert, had been presumed extinct, as it had never been seen since it was first described by the explorer Charles Sturt in 1854. Scientists



For Ingrid Witte, a National Parks and Wildlife Service manager in remote Tibooburra, the find involved a 180km trip to confirm an "incredibly exciting" discovery in north-west New South Wales.

Animals & Men #32

A University of NSW student, Matt Dowle, and a German biologist, Ulrike Kloecker, have been trapping in the sand dunes of Sturt National Park, searching for any remaining members of the colony.

"They really are beautiful native rodents," said Dr Witte. "When the first one was found, the researchers radioed that they thought they had a dusky hopping mouse, and I had to endure a 180km car trip in excited anticipation to get to them. Because they are nocturnal, we kept him until dark to prevent a raptor or other predator discovering him during daylight. I cannot describe the feeling in knowing that an animal we had thought lost in NSW is actually alive.

"With the further discovery of two lactating females has, of course, come the added excitement that they are not only alive, but seem to be breeding."

For many years zoologists had believed that the only mammal species south of the Wallace Line which crosses through southern Indonesia were Monotremes, Marsupials or relatively recent arrivals. It had been hypothesised that a few species of rats and mice which have been described in Australia had been brought by humans and then diversified into new species. However fossil evidence proves a more exciting story. Apparently placental mammals arrived in the nascent continent at the same time as Monotremes and Marsupials, but whereas in the rest of the world they soon gained the upper hand, in Australia the more primitive Mammal groups triumphed. The rediscovery of this species is therefore doubly exciting and allows us an unprecedented look at what might have been in the Antipodes.

Sabah's greatest hit

Elephants on the island of Borneo, believed to be the smallest in the world, have been

reclassified as a distinct subspecies after new genetic tests. The Malaysian chapter of the WWF reported the findings following studies on the herd with Malaysia's Wildlife and National Parks Department in the state of Sabah, in northern Borneo. WWF officer Teoh Teik Hong said the Borneo elephants — called Pygmy Elephants — are smaller and have larger ears, longer tails and straighter tusks than typical Asian elephants. The beasts, believed to number between 100 and 200, are milder-tempered than African and Asian elephants. During the study, intestinal cells collected from mucus adhering to fresh elephant dung was collected and sent for genetic testing at Columbia University, New York, where researchers found that the Borneo herd separated from their Asian cousins 300,000 years ago, instead of having been introduced by man from Sumatra.

TOLD U SO!

Far be it from us to indulge in a spot of self-congratulatory posing but after many years the editor of this esteemed publication has been proved correct.

In issue two of this journal Jon Downes presented his hypothesis that the European green lizard (*Lacerta viridis*), is in fact a British resident. According to accepted belief there are only three species of lizard found on mainland Britain; the sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), the common lizard (*Lacerta vivapara*) and the legless slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*).



Animals & Men #32

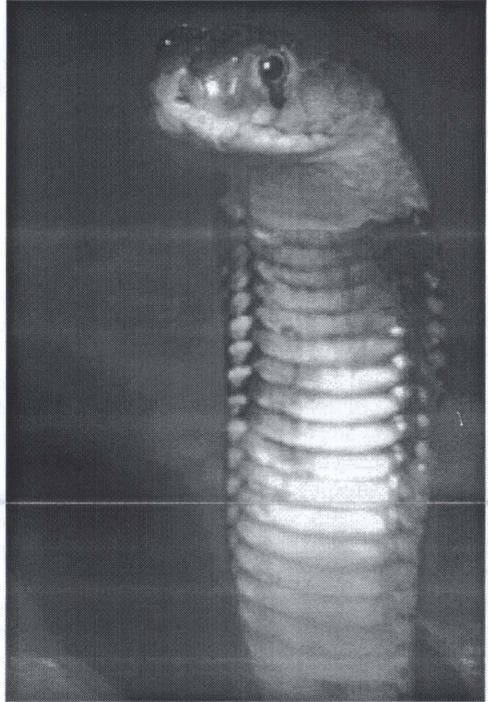
In papers published in *Animals & Men* and in the *Bulletin of the Southwest Herpetological Society* over a decade ago, we collated a series of sightings of this species from southern Devon and Dorset over the past two centuries. We suggested that because of the relatively unrestricted trade in fruit and flowers between the Channel Islands (where the species has been known for centuries) and seaports in southwestern England, the species may have arrived clandestinely and become established.

The findings were ignored by the zoological establishment and two famous zoologists (who shall remain nameless) told us that the theory was arrant nonsense. The paper was returned with a brusque letter from several zoological magazines and after a while we just gave up. However, in August this year, Dr Chris Gleed-Owen of the Herpetological Conservation Trust that he had found a thriving colony of these beautiful reptiles – only a hundred yards from his office in the Bournemouth area. With this it looks like the books on British Natural History will have to be rewritten forever.

With the discovery that the pool frog (*Rana lessonae*) is also a British resident it seems that those people who claim that British wildlife has no more surprises to offer may think well about changing their belief systems. We do not want to let the cat out of the bag just yet, but claims we made again over a decade ago about the specific status of the British martens and the probability that there are pockets of pine martens living in southern England are also likely to be bolstered up with new evidence.

Perhaps it is time that the scientific establishment would do well to realise that cryptozoology is not only concerned with monsters in far flung places and start to treat some of the CFZ's other claims with a bit more respect!

GET AN EYEFUL OF THIS



Finding a new species of animal is often the highspot of a zoologist's career. Usually, however, they have to go to some uncharted desert or jungle to do so. For zoologist Dr Wolfgang Wüster of the School of Biological Sciences, University of Wales, however, his little piece of zoological immortality came from the reptile house at London Zoo! The snakes, brought to London Zoo as part of a Customs seizure from Egypt, were originally thought to be the spitting cobra *Naja pallida*, but have subsequently proved to be a closely related but new species - *Naja nubiae*, the Nubian cobra. The new species can be told from the red spitting cobra (*Naja pallida*), by its throat and neck pattern and overall body colour. Keepers noticed

Animals & Men #32

a difference in scale pattern and colouring and the new species was confirmed by Dr Wüster's DNA studies. The new snake has a wide range across Egypt, the Sudan, Chad, Niger and Eritrea and is named after the region known as Nubia, the home of the first black African civilisation which occupied the Nile Valley between Aswan and Khartoum in present-day southern Egypt and northern Sudan in the fifth millennium BC.

LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS



BLARNEY IN KILLARNEY

Watch out Toto

Is there a mischievous herpetologist on the loose in Kansas? Or are the climate changes wrought by global warming responsible for the western diamondback rattlesnake expanding its range north from its regular sun-drenched habitat in Texas and Oklahoma. In early September a snake of this species was discovered by hikers in the Horsethief Canyon area of the Kanopolis State Park. It is the eighth such large, venomous snake of its species to be found and removed from the park since 1991.

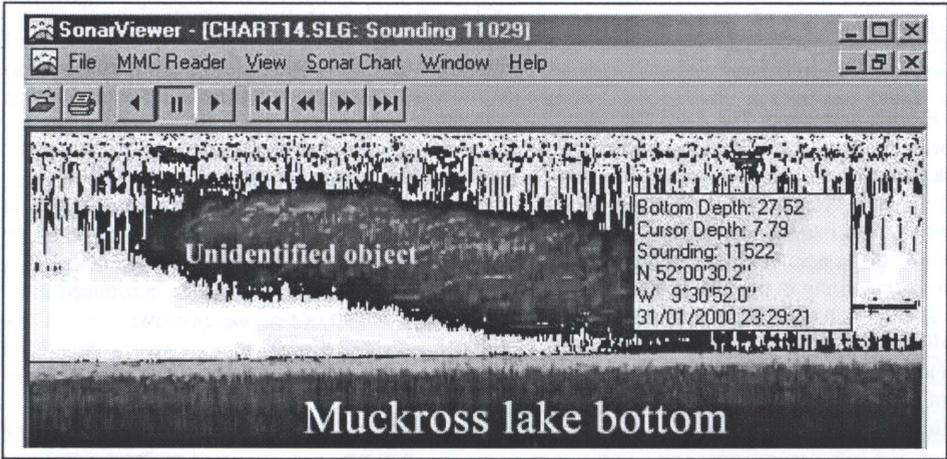
"I pretty much firmly believe they have been [dumped]," said Travis Taggart, executive curator of herpetology at Sternberg Museum of Natural History in Hays. *"Often it's escaped pets or people who get tired of them. In this case, there's been so many of them, it doesn't seem like that."*

There is mounting suspicion that this species will join the five species of venomous snakes native to Kansas – the copperhead, cottonmouth, massasauga rattlesnake, prairie rattlesnake and timber rattlesnake.

However, the good news is that there are fewer than 50 cases of human snakebite each year, and few if any victims are seriously hurt or die, Taggart said.

A number of lakes in the Republic of Ireland are reputedly the haunt of water monsters. We have covered sightings of horse eels, the master otter, and more conventional Lake Monsters across the island in these pages for many years. In September, however, the first reports began coming in of a brand new monster in a brand new location - Lake Mucross in Killamey. For almost a year, Irish and international scientists have been working with the Irish Char Conservation Group to find out more about the fish life in the Ice age lakes around Co. Kerry. They carried out the first fish survey ever in Muckross Lake last September and identified the presence of the important rare fish called the Arctic char. This finding is of interest in itself but when they recently analysed data collected by new hydroacoustic or sonar gear in April of this year they were completely taken by surprise. Hydroacoustic surveys basically beam sound into the water, some of this sound bounces back from fish, other aquatic life or the lake bottom and is picked up by a receiver which logs the information. This data must then be examined using sophisticated computer software. *"It was when we started to examine the recorded signals that we noticed something very unusual was going on in one transect logging. Instead of the normal small signals indicating individual fish which we always get during our surveys, we got something the size of a two story house in 20-25m of water along the south eastern portion of the lake. We have been unable to identify what*

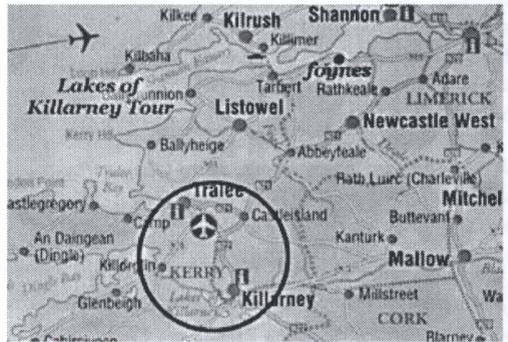
Animals & Men #32



exactly the image is, but we know that it is not a computer or logging error as the gear was functioning normally,” reports Andrew Long, specialist fisheries consultant with River Monitoring Technology Ltd.

Although visual sightings of a creature from Muckross lake have yet to be confirmed, some people have already christened it “the Muckross Monster” or more affectionately “Muckie”. Dr. Fran Igoe, scientific adviser to the Irish Char Conservation Group stated, “*what we do know is the fish fauna in Muckross is very ancient indeed. We have confirmed the presence of a good population of Arctic char, and the lake is known to hold ferox trout, ordinary trout and Atlantic salmon as well as lamprey species and eel, all of which attest to the ancient origins of this lake. This latest discovery is very exciting and the Irish Char Conservation Group is keen to continue our investigations in this area. Talk that these images may be that of a mysterious prehistoric monster like that reported for Lough Ness may be a bit premature.*”

At the CFZ we know the danger of making exaggerated premature claims before the facts are in, so we would just agree with Dr. Igoe's statement: “*Although the taxonomic status of the image has yet to be identified, it serves as a reminder of the hidden mysteries still lurking in Muckross and other ancient lakes in Co. Kerry. We must work together to ensure that we look after these lakes properly not only for future generations to enjoy but also for the creatures that lurk within!*”



Animals & Men #32

IT WAS PUT THERE ON PORPOISE

The Florida newspaper *The Boca Beacon* reported on August 29, 2003 that residents of Boca Grande have seen what some people describe as a lake monster in Gasparilla Lake. However Tom Farrish, who works for a lawn company in the area believes that the animal he has been seeing in the lake is a dolphin. He first spotted it in early August when he was standing at the edge of the lake's north end with another man looking at a huge red fish. All of a sudden a grey, smooth body appeared, lunging towards the fish.

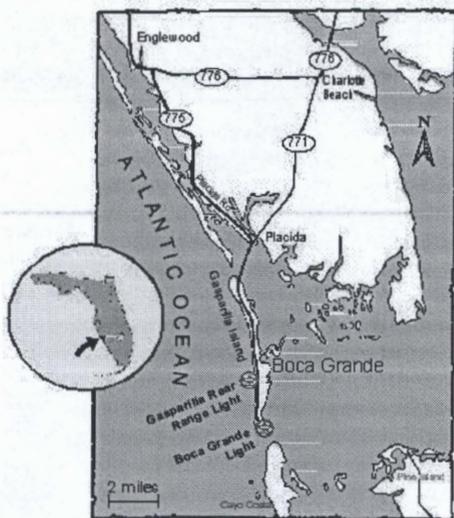
"That's a dolphin," Farrish's companion said with shock. Since that time, he has seen the dolphin a couple of other times and Kristine Barr, who lives on the lake and spends a lot of time on her porch, said she saw the creature almost every day for two weeks. *"I know how dolphins swim and absolutely it is a dolphin,"* she said.

Both Farrish and Barr described the mysterious creature as small, anywhere from 2 to 4 feet long, with no scales and smooth skin. Barr said she's seen it chasing fish to the shore on several occasions. However Lyman Randall, a resident on the lake and former president of the area's homeowners' association, disagrees.

"We bought our house overlooking Gasparilla Lake in late '95 and we have never seen anything in or on the lake that might resemble a dolphin. I've also been on the lake in our canoe many times but never have seen anything that would suggest large mammal, reptile or fish life."

The lake is apparently landlocked and unless there is a hitherto unsuspected passage to the

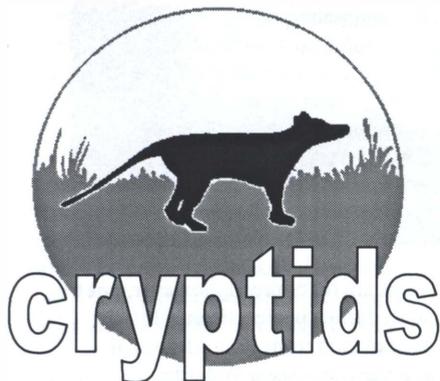
sea it is a mystery as to how the dolphin - if it is a dolphin - got there. Unsurprisingly there has been speculation within the cryptozoological community that there is a hitherto unknown species of freshwater dolphin living in Florida. However, we feel that this is unlikely. Whereas there are freshwater dolphins in South America, the lack of historical evidence and the fact that this lake is in a relatively built-up area suggests that the creature is either a misidentified otter or is a small cetacean which has been introduced to the lake by person or persons unknown.



Although some ordinary dolphins stray into fresh water, true freshwater dolphins are found in Asia and South America. Because they live in murky water they hunt by sonar and their eyes that have no focussing muscles have atrophied to such an extent that they are more or less blind.

There are four species: The Susu or Gangetic Dolphin in India, the Chinese River Dolphin, the Amazon River Dolphin and the La Plata River dolphin. The chances of a fifth species living in a Florida holiday resort are so slim as to be almost impossible.

Animals & Men #32



TIGER TALES

Thylacines have been in the news a lot lately. An Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) report from October 18th included an undated report from Dale Bennett in the Northern Territories. He was on a camping trip with a friend when they saw an animal which looked exactly like a thylacine. *"We saw this animal on the side of the road and slowed down thinking it was just going to be a dingo... we looked at it and we looked at each other and thought – that's no dingo. It didn't look like a mongrel camp dog either,"* Dale said. People were initially sceptical about his report, but after reading an article in his local paper about other people claiming to have seen the same thing he decided he wasn't going mad after all.

"You don't expect to see one in Tasmania let alone the Northern Territory," Dale said.

A few days earlier an official in Victoria likened Thylacine sightings to those reports of Elvis working in a supermarket. Wildlife management officer Nic Mooney said:

"Mistakes can be made, particularly if you add in this problem of people trying to make a judgment over long distance, poor light, over a very short time, I've actually seen dogs here

that are starving. These are bush dogs that are lost basically and they certainly look like they could have stripes."

In September Australian media reported that two of only three Tasmanian tiger skulls in the Australian Museum's prized marsupial collection are unaccounted for, among hundreds of items still missing after raids to recover tens of thousands of stolen artefacts.

In August, however, Freedom of Information requests have revealed 63 possible sightings of thylacine and big cats in Victoria, including in Warrandyte State Park. Local residents have also reported seeing large striped dog-like animals in their yards while others have told of seeing the extinct marsupial while driving their cars.

ENTER THE DRAGON



In May this year, David Nardiello, 29, encountered a strange beast in Osaka, Japan, in a town called Shinke-Cho. Nardiello had lived in a small apartment in the town for three years, teaching English to high school students at the nearby Higshimozu High School. It was a rainy and foggy night and continuous torrential downpours had flooded a rice field bordering his building.

Animals & Men #32

"I'm looking in the lake and I see this thing pop out," Nardiello said. "A white neck. And it's got two black eyes. And then it turns its neck to look at me. And it noticed me. But it looked like it had cat's legs. It looked like maybe it was a lizard. It turns to look at me, then turns and takes out wings and starts to fly away. It must have gone almost 100 feet up in the air, out of nowhere. It sent shivers up my spine. I got the hell out of there."

Curiosity turned to fear. Nardiello ran up the stairs to his third-floor apartment and peered outside the window. *"I look out the window and I see it fly right by again,"* he recalled. *"Really fast, too. Right up, close. [The wings] looked like bat's wings. And its paws looked like a cat of a cat. It had a tail, too. [Its face] looked like a white snake with black eyes. Like great-white-shark black eyes."*

MISS HANOI

The giant turtle of Lake Hoan Kiem in Hanoi has featured in these pages on a number of occasions.

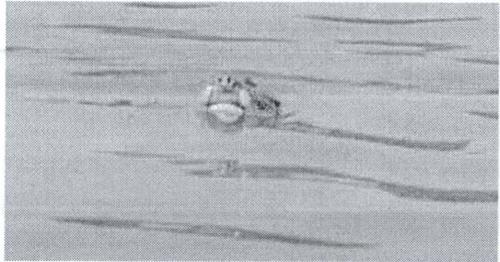
It seems bizarre that despite the fact that it has been filmed and photographed on many occasions that nobody has yet found out what it actually is. Also not known is whether it is a single individual in the lake or whether it is part of a small but viable population of an unknown species.

"This species is a huge, huge animal that's incredibly endangered and it really needs help," said Anders Rhodin, co-chair of the World Conservation Union's Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group.

"I don't think anyone is willing to try to capture that animal in Hoan Kiem Lake. I think it is thought to be sacred."



Conservationists are determined, however, not to let the legendary turtle species die out. In November, researchers from Hanoi National University and the U.S.-based Wildlife Conservation Society plan to scout lakes in Thanh Hoa province, 100 miles south of Hanoi where other giant turtles have been sighted, but never confirmed.



"We're going to the province to see whether there's any truth to this," said Douglas Hendrie, the society's Asia regional turtle conservation coordinator who has worked in Vietnam since 1996. *"The species is very, very, very important to Vietnam culturally and therefore of high priority when it comes to conservation."*

Legend has it that in the mid-15th century, King Le Loi defeated Chinese invaders with a magic sword given to him by the gods. After the victory, the king was said to be boating on the lake when a giant golden turtle rose to the surface and grabbed the sword in its mouth before plunging deep into the water to return it to its divine owners.

Animals & Men #32

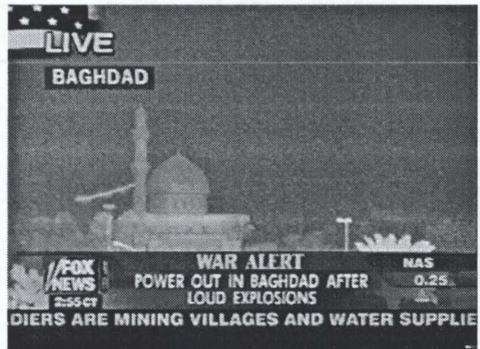
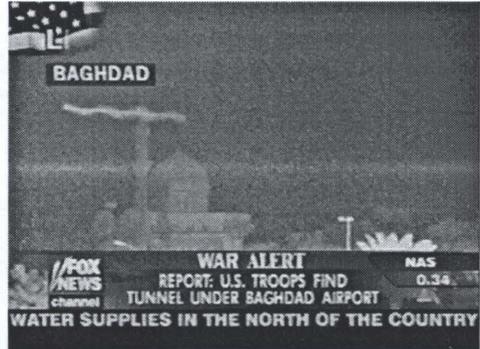


IT'S LIFE FOLKS, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

We received these pictures some months ago at the height of the Iraq War. It appears to be the latest piece of evidence in the ongoing quest of Jose Escamilla, a middle aged filmmaker, retired rock musician and author from Southern California to prove that he has made the most important zoological discovery of the past century. I met him first in early December 1999 at a low-key convention in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire. where he explained his discoveries to an awe-struck conference hall full of people. Jose Escamilla believes that he, and colleague Jim Peters may have discovered a whole new type of animal life.

In the bar after the conference we chatted for many hours. Escamillo and Peters have discovered that high speed video film, taken in various places across the world contains images of cylindrical or cigar shaped objects which appear to travel at extremely high velocities barely visible with the naked eye.

They have dubbed these objects "Rods", and after five years of study Escamilla believes that they are indeed an entirely new form of soft-bodied animal.



Animals & Men #32

Their first inklings of this momentous discovery were over half a decade ago. *"The Rods were discovered after we scanned footage taken at Midway, New Mexico on March 19, 1994. At first we thought they were bugs or birds flying close to the camera lens. After reviewing the footage over and over again, frame by frame, we came to realize that the footage we had was of some very unusual objects."*

At the LAPIS convention, at Lytham St Anne's, Escamillo and Peters presented footage of 'Rods' for the first time in the UK.

Some of the most exciting footage was taken in a cave in Mexico where high speed cameras had been used to film devotees of the extremely dangerous sport of 'cave jumping' - an exercise similar to bungee jumping but involving a deep natural chasm and a small parachute.

High speed film had been used to record this dangerous feat and when the tapes were slowed down a myriad of thin, cigar like objects which appeared to have projections along the torso similar to the mantle of a cuttlefish or sea-slug.

The 'Rods' dart about in such a piscine manner that Escamillo has dubbed them 'sky fish'.

Since the first 'Rods' were captured on film in Mexico and in the southern states of the USA, video film containing 'Rods' has been sent to Escamillo from all over the world. But if they had known about these things for so long, why has it taken so long for the facts to be presented before the public?

On their web site the pair claim that:

"The next step before releasing any information about what we felt was an unknown object of some kind was to do a variety of tests. These tests were to re-assure us that we were, in fact, capturing some new unknown objects and not mis-filming common things like insects and birds. Our tests prior to making a public announcement about the Rods would prove to be an invaluable undertaking. This would close all options the skeptics might use to discredit what we were videotaping.

"The fact is, these objects are not insects, birds or jets that we might have mis-filmed. They are an unknown object of some kind."

The last word should go to Dr Karl Shuker who said, many years ago, in an article for the CFZ Yearbook 1996:

"I have always believed that the apparent absence of airborne life forms on a planet where every other habitat was inhabited by a wide range of creatures was somewhat of an anomaly"

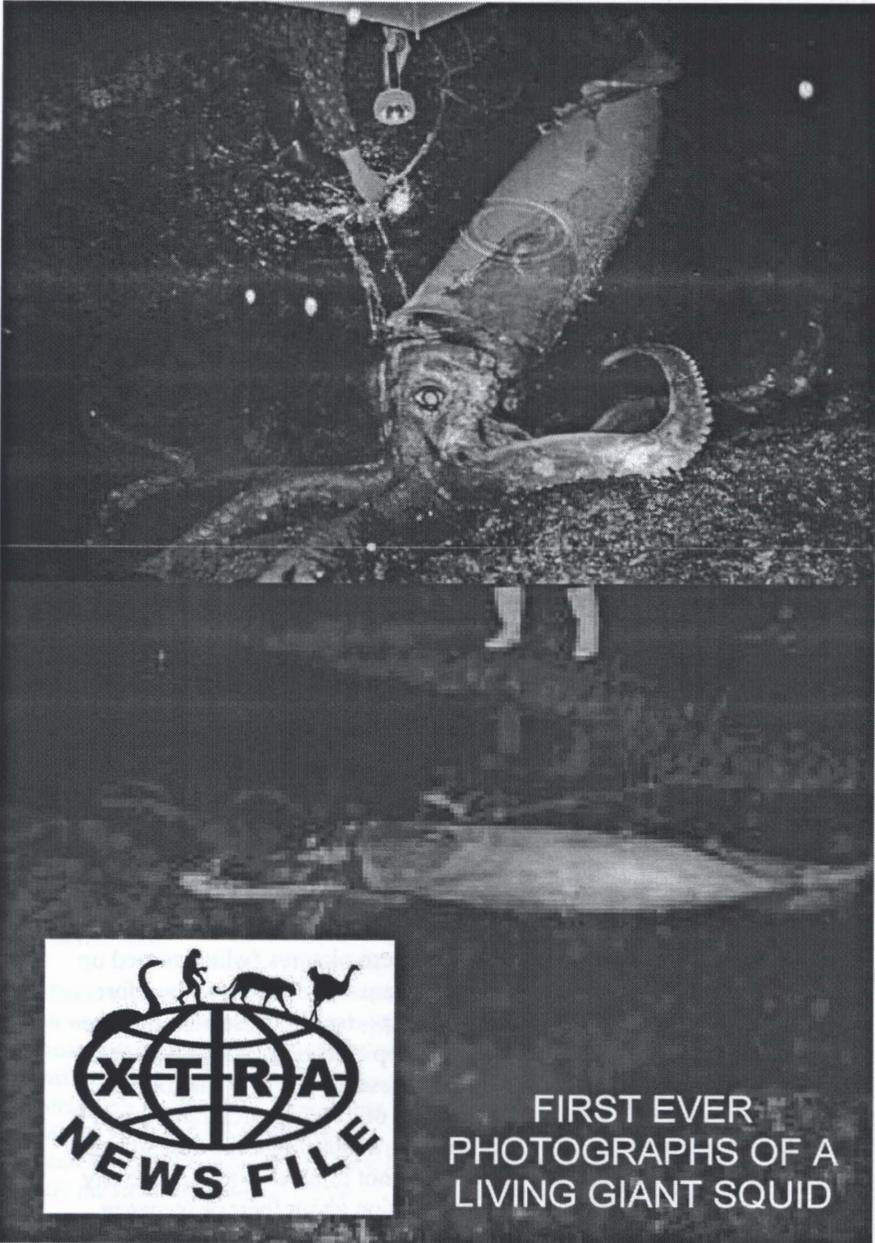
These video images have captivated me now for years, and I am determined that when we get the funding the CFZ will join Jose and Jim in a search to solve this mystery once and for all!

For more details visit Jose Escamilla's web site at www.roswellrods.com

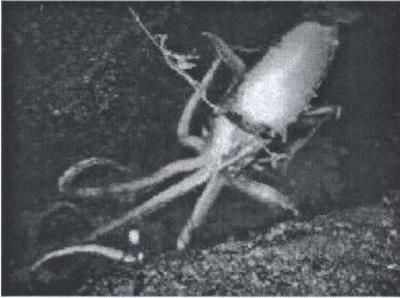
All pictures courtesy Jose Escamilla.

Very many thanks as well to Rob Whitehead for sending us these images and for introducing is to Jose and Jim in the first place.

Animals & Men #32



Animals & Men #32

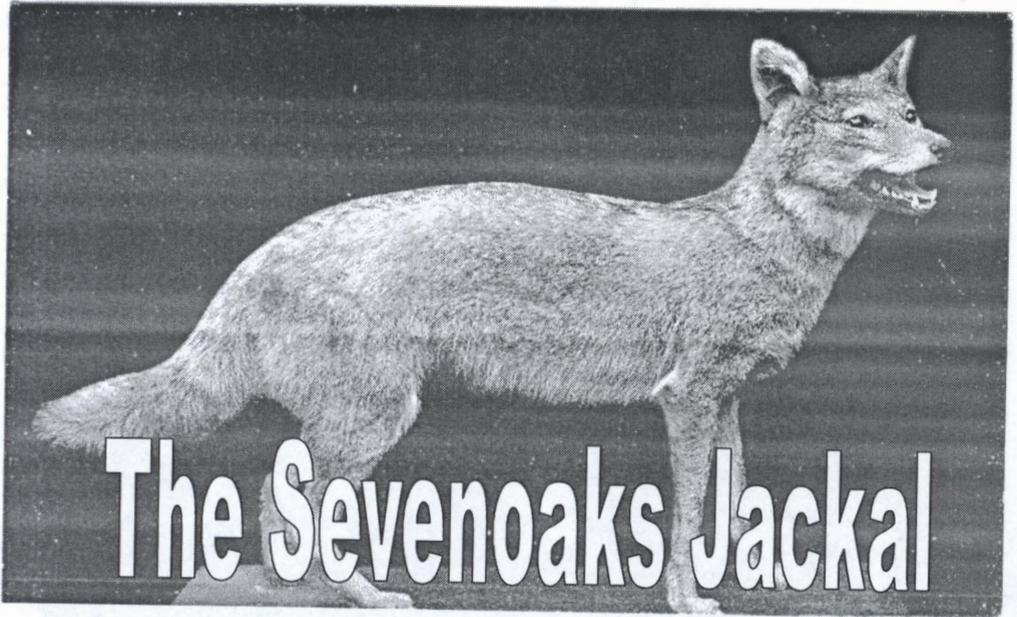


The Giant Squid (*Architeuthis dux*) has been known to science since the mid 19th Century. However, despite its size – large specimens can exceed 18m – practically nothing is known about its biology or habits. We don't know how long they live, what they eat or how they breed. These pictures (which turned up on a Japanese website) are therefore highly important because although the animal depicted is clearly unwell, it is alive. These are the first photographs ever taken of a living *Architeuthis* and it is horribly frustrating to be able to print them but not to be able to provide any information about their provenance.

Animals & Men #32



Animals & Men #32



POST CARD. (2)

INLAND

THIS SPACE MAY BE USED FOR COMMUNICATION
IN THE BRITISH ISLES ONLY.

JACKAL,

SHOT AT SEVENOAKS, MARCH 1st, 1905.

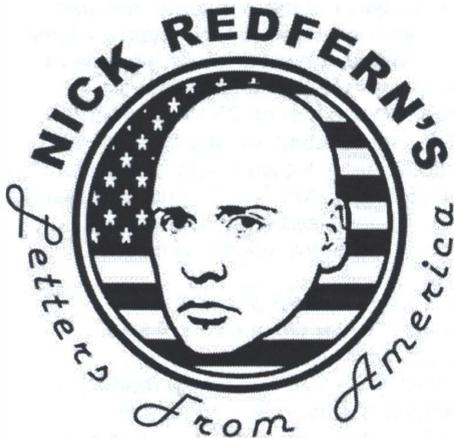
This animal, which is a fine specimen of a male Jackal, about 3 years old, infested the neighbourhood of Sevenoaks for some weeks: during which time it evaded capture, and did great damage to the flocks and game in the neighbourhood. On Wednesday, March 1st, a hunt was organised, and the animal was eventually shot by Mr. Willis near "The Woodman," Sevenoaks. The hunting party consisted of about 50 guns and 70 beaters. It has been stuffed by Mr. Hutchinson, Naturalist of Derby, at whose premises this photograph was specially taken by Essenhigh Corke & Co., and is now in the possession of Mr. Pocock, Cold Harbour, Montreal, Head Keeper to the Right Hon. Earl Amherst, on whose estate it was killed.

We have been looking for this picture for ages. It depicts an animal probably released into the Kentish countryside by the legendary spy and adventurer Richard Meinerzhagen. We were overjoyed, therefore, when long time CFZ member Jonathan Hexter from Cullompton found this postcard at a car boot sale.....

However, proving (as if any proof were needed) that the forteen universe is a very strange place, the same day Martin Cotterill – a UK Big Cat Researcher – found another copy of the same postcard (see insert). We confidently expect more Jackal-related strangeness over the next few months 'cos as Tony Shiels once told us: "There's no such thing as a coincidence".



Animals & Men #32



Primates on the Prowl

In September and October of this year, a rash of sightings of Big Hairy Men (BHMs) and unidentified primates occurred in the US and caught the attention of local, national and even international media sources. Decatur, Arkansas was the site of several such incidents, with things really kicking off on 3 October. However, the exact nature of the creature seen at Decatur remained somewhat murky. Police Chief Coy Hendrix stated that two people had called him during the course of the previous week, asserting that they had seen some form of primate in the area. According to Hendrix, the initial encounter was made on Hill Street, while the next witness informed the police that the creature was seen heading towards the Crystal Lake area.

An employee at the Wild Wilderness Drive-Thru Safari in Gentry, who perhaps wisely insisted on remaining resolutely

anonymous, stated that: "*No animal matching the description had escaped from the park.*" He did concede, however, that the creature would in all probability try to find a consistent food source. "*I imagine it's scared to death,*" he added. "*It will probably try to shack up near some cattle feed.*"

But what, precisely, was it that was seen? According to Police Chief Hendrix, quoted by KATV Channel 7, Little Rock, Arkansas: "*The only description I have is a small brown monkey about a foot and a half tall. It's not Bigfoot, I believe. I didn't see any tracks of anything.*"

The "whatever-it-is" was certainly the talk of the area, however. With the media inevitably stirring the pot about a "strange beast lurking in the woods" local residents ensured that they had their say, too. One, Ike Owens, stated: "*It's freaky. They're saying it's Sasquatch. They're saying bigfoot and this and that.*" David Cook, also of Decatur, said: "*It happens around the nation. Everywhere, I guess. It could be here as well as anywhere I guess. It's sure getting around; I think it's ridiculous. There's nothing like that in Decatur.*"

One week later, on 8 October, the interest in the affair showed no signs of stopping: Police Chief Coy Hendrix said that he had received phone calls from CNN, CBS and ABC in New York and had taken part in a telephone interview for a live radio show in Chicago. Hendrix was determined to keep the situation in its proper perspective, however, and said that he believed the media was blowing the situation out of proportion. "*They must be hurting for news,*" he stated firmly.

Jacqlin Castillo, who had participated in expeditions to track Bigfoot in Oklahoma, said that what has been seen in Decatur

Animals & Men #32

could have been a "baby Bigfoot". Adding: *"They're not born nine feet tall. Usually only a juvenile Bigfoot would allow itself to be seen. The adults are too smart to allow themselves to be seen."*

Castillo said that she was hoping to receive authorization from the Bigfoot Field Research Organization to investigate the possible sightings in Decatur. "[Bigfoot] are a fascinating species," Castillo added. *"They are absolutely out there, but they're so elusive ... I think people need to be educated about them."*

Castillo further informed a frenzied media that this was not the first alleged sighting in northwest Arkansas of a mystery man-beast. She said a Bigfoot was allegedly seen by a beekeeper near Siloam Springs two years previously and another report had come in from the Elm Springs area of the state several years before.

Interestingly, as the tales of the exploits of the creature increased, it was revealed that there had been previous examples of monkey mayhem in the area. In the autumn of 1995, a primate was shot and killed by Gentry police after being cornered on the playground of Gentry Elementary School; and in the spring of 1999, Gomer and Glory Alsup's farm near Centerton became home to a Rhesus macaque, which lived in the farm's barn, riding on horses and swinging from the rafters. Centerton is about 10 miles east of Decatur. In a Daily Record story published in 1999, Glory said, *"He'll look through the windows and grins with a face that will stop a clock. He sits on the tractor and acts as if he's driving it down the road. He pets the cows. He loves the dogs. He just does everything. Oh ... he's a good one."*

Arkansas, was not the only state that was having close encounters of the hairy or furry kind at the time, however. Ray Dufresne of Winooski told the Bennington Banner, Vermont, newspaper on 25 September that he had spotted a Bigfoot-type creature at the highest elevation on Route 7 between Bennington and Manchester; and as a result of the publicity afforded the Dufresne sighting, three more reports came in.

At approximately 7:45 p.m. on 16 September, writer Doug Dorst of San Francisco was heading south from Cavendish on Route 7 to give a reading at Bennington College when he saw the creature. As he approached the stretch of road near the highest elevation, Dorst saw in the distance what he first thought was a *"homeless dude with a war wound in a snowsuit."*

As Dorst got closer, however, the "creature" appeared to be a *"big somebody."* He added: *"It freaked me out. It was so not computing." The creature's face, recalled Dorst, was light brown, or tan, and the body was dark brown or black. He was careful to note with respect to the six-foot-plus-tall thing: My impression was that it was a mask that someone had created to be frightening. My feeling is that it was a stunt, and I enjoy that. More power to the guy."* In closing, he added: *"I almost wish I'd been paying more attention, so I could've appreciated the absurdity and the fear of it. I think this was a dude in a suit out there. I celebrate it."*

And as with the Decature events, things at Bennington were not about to stop. On the same night that Ray Dufresne contacted the Bennington Banner to report his sighting, Sadelle Wiltshire and her partner, Ann Mrowicki, were heading north to see the

Animals & Men #32

Vermont Symphony Orchestra in Manchester and were passing the highest elevation on Route 7 at 7:10 p.m., virtually at the same time as Dufresne, when...

"It was the weirdest thing," said Wiltshire. "It looked like a guy in a gorilla suit, but it looked like it had a tail." As a passenger in the car with Mrowicki, Wiltshire was no more than 10 to 20 feet away from the thing, she said. Dufresne said he had been about 140 feet away.

The creature, according to Wiltshire, was about 6 feet tall, of medium build, with dark brown hair. She said it walked on two legs and had jointed knees like a hominid. Neither Wiltshire nor Mrowicki saw the creature's face, however.

"Definitely not a bear," said Mrowicki in an e-mail to The Banner, adding: "Bigfoot? Hmmm. A strange big person in a costume? That's the conclusion we drew." Local folks aren't buying into it, either. The Banner received several tips that a Bennington man, Michael Greene, was the culprit, roaming the area in a gorilla suit. But Greene, who admitted that he did have a penchant for practical jokes, denied the reports. "I pull some jokes on people, but not this one," said Greene. "I heard about it in the paper."

On Tuesday 7 October, the Bennington Banner stated that like his son, Michael, Gale Greene was singled out by local folk as the man behind the alleged gorilla mask.

"They don't know what they're talking about," said Greene. "If you're a Greene, they call your name out." Plus, as The Banner pointed out, Greene is only 5 feet and 10 inches tall, and weighs only 160 pounds, far less than the descriptions

given by a number of the witnesses, who described the "creature" as being approximately 270 pounds in weight, more than 6 feet tall, and covered with dark fur.

And still the stories progressed. On 11 October, The Albany Times Union, New York, newspaper reported that two, huge, wild boars had been seen in the vicinity of the Skene Valley Country Club. "They were big and they had that razorback down their back. One guy said he saw a tusk, but we didn't see a tusk," said Pat Sparks, who co-owns the club with her husband, Cliff, and daughter Dawn Boothby.

Local authorities, State Police and the state Department of Environmental Conservation were called in after receiving several reports of sightings. "Our wildlife staff have not seen the animal that has been described to us," said Michael Fraser, DEC spokesman. "We're going on the theory that it most likely came from a pig farm. It may not be a wild boar, but a pig species that resembles wild boars."

Intriguingly, the sightings came at the exact same golf course where, about 30 years ago, Cliff Sparks said he spotted a hairy, 7-foot-tall Bigfoot-style creature, with glowing red eyes. Today, the 18-hole course features the image of Bigfoot as its logo, but now, Pat Sparks joked, "We're changing the name from Bigfoot to pig foot."

Can all of the above cases that have suddenly surfaced across the US be adequately explained away as sightings of out-of-place animals of a distinctly terrestrial nature and the work of enterprising hoaxers? Or is something far stranger occurring?

I'm buggered if I know, but if I find out, you'll know too.

Animals & Men #32



Horncastle, Lincolnshire November 19th 2003.

by Mark Fraser

22.40hrs.

Off Boston Road, in the field adjacent the sewage works on the outskirts of Horncastle.

Myself, Chris Mullins, Brian Murphy and Terry Dye who had just joined us that evening about an hour earlier were actually sat in the home of Sandy and Julie Richardson who recently took the footage of the large cat in the caravan in Hemingsby, Lincolnshire.

Julie's phone rang at 22.10hrs and she answered it to a very excited person who had just seen a very large black cat on the outskirts of Horncastle at around 22.00hrs. She described as big as a fully grown Labrador with a long sweeping 'S' shaped tail.

The four of us decided to go and have a look for ourselves straight away. I got in the passenger seat with Terry and Chris drove his car with Brian, we had communication between the two cars via walkie talkie radio's.

After a couple of wrong turnings we finally managed to find the right road and the sewage works, having passed the works we turned in a lane. As Terry negotiated his three-point turn the headlights hit a very large black cat running across the field towards tree's against the sewage work's fence. I shouted for Brian and Chris who was in the car behind, and who for some reason shot on up the road towards the sewage work's gates.

The cat was about as large as a fully grown Alsatian, I personally didn't see the tail. I agree with Terry when he said "*black almost fluffy or long coat.*" No other details were seen, although I think the distance we were away from the cat was a fair bit further then 20ft, my estimation was maybe three times that distance.

I wasted no time and actually jumped out of Terry's car and into the field after this big black cat, I wanted to know what it was and after 15 years of investigating other people's sightings, this was my chance. I ran down the side of the tree's and bushes were the cat was last seen heading. I stopped half way down the field thinking that the animal must have gone away out of view by now.

I turned round and the torch beam caught two dull green / yellowy eyes belonging to the cat that was sat on it haunches looking at me. I half thought it was an amused or bemused look, but quickly brushed that aside. It was about 15 -20ft away obscured by foliage as the eyes peered out at me. At that point Brian came on the radio asking what's happening. I

Animals & Men #32

calmly told him that the cat was sat watching me at a spitting distance away, I don't think he realised what he was saying but after a few expletives he got the message. The cat was about 2 and a half feet high at this point and seemed to have lost its rough look and appeared sleek, calm and knowing!

I slowly (some say foolishly, but I knew this was no leopard) walked towards it in an arc, straying a little further out into the field so I would not come too close. But on my walk down I must have passed it at a distance of 2ft when it stopped to watch me. The cat must have ducked down and slinked away under the fence into the sewage works, because it was there and then in the next instant it wasn't. But my attention was distracted by the noise of the walkie talkie and it could have made its escape in one of those moments.

I had lost it and I returned to the cars and my three comrade in arm's who never once ventured of the roadside! We scoured the area for another 15 minutes and then returned to the scene of the sighting. Again on my own I went into the field to look for any tracks the cat may have left behind, but in the darkness on my own I found nothing. We then returned to Hemingsby and the hospitality of Sandy & Julie.

The next day having returned home we learned that video footage had been taken a couple of hours earlier in the same area outside of Horncastle, at this point I know nothing of the footage or what it shows. This cat certainly was busy this evening showing itself at least three times that we know of.

But as Chris Mullins pointed out it was bin night, no wheelie bins in the area just black bags. Hundreds of them lined along the roads and streets!

What was it I saw, I do not really know, I know it wasn't a leopard or a puma but I believe I saw the cat locals dub the '*panther of the Wolds*' or the *Lindsey leopard*' and I also believe that this was no mutant domestic or feral cat either. Its the second time we have been in the area and it will not be the last, its certainly interesting and a hotbed of activity for this mystery feline and it needs further investigation. My appetite has been whet!

As a postscript: although we had been walking round all week with cameras, video cameras etc, when I saw that cat I never once thought of a camera or a photo, it never even entered my head!!!

Terry Dye's Account.

Hi all, Yes, I am the man with the slogan, "Take care and take a camera" but on Wednesday after the tip-off by phone we had passed the Sewage Works that was the sighting map point and were thinking of going back to see if anything was lurking. I attempted a 3 point turn in the road. It was a main (if small) road and as I turned 90 degrees we saw a Big Black Cat in the field not 20 feet away in the headlights. As it moved away Mark (Fearlessly?) jumped out and went after it along by some trees next to the Sewage works. I straightened up the car and joined him along with Chris Mullins and Brian Murphy who had also "Parked" on the roadside. (There were a few cars belting up the road every now and again so we had to be careful) The ground was just dirt and flat but we saw no prints on the hard earth.

In the meantime Mark was now way down the field in the dark searching for it. Apparently he had walked past it and it was behind him. We lost it then and we all decided to go round the other side of the works. We went into the

Animals & Men #32

driveway but could go no further due to the fence and barbed wire on top.

On returning to the original sighting we found a lane nearly opposite where we again parked. Mark was off into the darkness again with my 2mill candles torch. (His battery was flat). By now it was about, I think, approaching 2300 to midnight-ish.

There was no opportunity for a photo to stand any chance of getting anything in the dark and anyway as the man said I had my hands full of steering wheel at the crucial moment.

With hindsight looking at the roadside there was NO ditch so I could have driven straight at it over the field and chased it but we didn't know this at the moment of sighting.

There will be a next time. We must get more prepared.

Full marks to Mark for trying so hard and bravely.

My opinion of the cat is that it looked just like the cat in the caravan. It was just like a domestic cat. Black almost fluffy or long coat but as big as an Alsatian dog. And we saw it live at about 20 feet so it was not the camera lying or a bad photo. It was definitely a BIG BLACK CAT.

WILTSHIRE WILDCATS

by Marcus Matthews

When I was 14 I went round the Devon Farm Park and in the gift shop a booklet caught my eye of two feline eyes looking out from a black background. The booklet was "The Beast Of Exmoor, Fact or Legend?" by Trevor Beer and

I read the booklet and struck up a correspondence with the author, a naturalist, artist, and photographer who was most encouraging. We met up and celebrated my 14th birthday at Tarr Steps-where sightings of the Exmoor Beasts have occurred. Eating chocolate cake!

I also met Nigel Brierly, a retired Biologist, author of "*They Stalk By Night, The Big Cats of The South-West*", who has corresponded with me since 1986. Nigel has been most inspiring and helped to identify cat pawprints and kills. This inspired me to investigate the Big Cats sightings around the country, including Wiltshire.

The popular theory is that these cats escaped or were let loose from private menageries, circuses, zoos, and wildlife parks before and after the Dangerous Animals Act of 1976. Dr. Karl Shuker has supported this theory in his book "*Mystery Cats of The World, From Blue Tigers To Exmoor Beasts*". Di Francis, a Journalist from Devon, author of "*Cat Country, The Quest For the British Big-Cat*", "*The Beast Of Exmoor*", and "*My Highland Kellas Cats*", has championed the theory of a native species of prehistoric Big Cat. Jon Downes has chronicled the cryptozoology in the area in "*Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry*" and the journal "*Animals & Men*." Ufologists like the late Mrs. Joan Amos of the Plymouth UFO Research Group suggest Mystery Cats come out of UFOs or are teleported there from another dimension!

There is a long tradition of the ghost Black Dog or Hound in the westcountry. *Fortean Times* culls newspaper cuttings of reports of mystery Cats and other strange phenomena.

From the 1500s to the 1700s there were private menageries at Longleat (Marquess of Bath), Wilton House (Earl of Pembroke), and Bowood

Animals & Men #32

(Marquis of Landsdowne) containing Lions, Tigers, Bears, and wolves.

Thomas Thynne, 1st Viscount Weymouth (died 1714) owned two Bustards briefly. His great nephew Thomas Thynne 2nd Viscount Weymouth (1710-1751) expanded the menagerie. Amongst the papers preserved in Longleat's Muniment Room is a small unbound and battered notebook headed "*A Bill of Work done for the Right Honorable Lord Weymouth at Longleat, from December 15th 1733 to January 6th 1734 by me John Line, carpenter.*" Scattered through its pages, amidst an absorbing miscellany of estate-built furniture which included a linen press, wooden plates, and a half-tester bed, are a series of payments to Longleat's two house carpenters:

- For Benjamin, three days up at ye live creatures in ye Grove 5/-
- Robert, five days making a house for ye leopard 8/4d
- Robert, one day for making a perch for ye parrot 1/8d
- Benjamin, one day for making a house for ye bear 1/8d
- Benjamin, three days for making a house for ye wolves 5/-

The 2nd Viscount Weymouth also kept lions and the carpenters rebuilt the Bustards' aviary to keep two vultures and an eagle. The carpenters also built a cage for the bear in the cellars so that it could be led into the Great Hall in the evenings to entertain the household.

Hannah Twynnoy, aged 33, a maid from the White Lion Inn, Gloucester Street, Malmesbury, visiting a travelling menagerie in the town and standing too near the tiger's den, was seized by the tiger and so badly mauled she died. She is remembered by a grave in Malmesbury churchyard, bearing the inscription:

Hannah Twynnoy

Who died October 23rd 1703

Aged 33 Years.

In bloom of Life

She's snatched from hence.

She had not room to make defence; For Tyger fierce

Took Life away

And here she lies

In a bed of clay,

Until the Resurrection Day.

The phrase "She who lives by the lion dies by the tiger" seems appropriate. Chris Moiser, a cryptozoologist and researcher into travelling menageries, was unable to pinpoint which menagerie the tiger came from.

On 20th October 1816 the "Quicksilver", the best of four Mail Coaches, en route for London from Exeter, stopped at the Pheasant Inn (Winterslow Hutt) as usual when one of the leading horses was pounced on by a Lioness! The coachman thought at first the assailant was a calf but was soon enlightened. The animal belonged to a travelling menagerie which was putting up there for the night, and no one knew it had escaped until it indulged in this piece of unprovoked aggression.

The horse, an ex-racehorse named Pomegranate, put up a spirited defence but became entangled in the traces and nearly overturned the coach. The passengers tumbled out of the coach and rushed into the Inn, bolting the door. The mail guard Joseph Pike, drew his blunderbuss but was threatened with a pistol by the menagerie proprietor who was unwilling to lose such a valuable animal. An ostler employed at the Inn settled the horses. The Menagerie proprietor called up his dog, said by one account to have been a Newfoundland and by another to have been the menagerie's mastiff, who seized the lioness by the hind leg and promptly suffered the consequences. The lioness, now as alarmed as

Animals & Men #32

everyone else, took refuge under a granary, where she crouched among the straddle-stones.

What followed, as reported in the Salisbury and Winchester Journal in the following week, strikes us as being singularly courageous:

“Her owner and his assistants, after a short deliberation, followed her upon their hands and knees, with lighted candles, and having placed a sack on the ground near her, they made her lie down upon it; they then tied her four legs and passed a cord round her mouth, which they secured; in this state they drew her out from under the granary, upon the sack, and then she was lifted and carried by six men into her den in the caravan. To the astonishment of everyone who beheld this part of the transaction (which lasted about a quarter of an hour), the lioness lay as quietly as a lamb during her removal to the caravan; but when she was there she became sensible of the restraints she was under, and her rage was excessive till the cords which annoyed her were loosened.”

As Ralph Whitlock comments in *“Wiltshire Folklore And Legends”* (1992) :

“I do not think I would care to crawl under a barn and to persuade a lioness, who had savaged a dog and horse, to lie on a sack while I tied up her jaws, especially with only the light of a guttering candle to work by! An eyewitness account however, says that throughout the breathless operation she was as one dazed.”

What of the coach passengers? As the unknown animal made her first leap they fled into the Inn, barring the door behind them, but one of them was too slow. When the hubbub was over and they unbarred the door, there he was, in a state of panic and exhaustion. The

lioness had actually brushed against him when she turned upon the dog. The man recovered sufficiently to give his account of the affair to the newspaper but after a few days collapsed completely. He spent the remaining 27 years of his life in the asylum at Laverstock.

The coach later continued on its way, the injured Pomegranate having been replaced by another horse. When the coach arrived at Andover, two of the passengers were quick to notify the Magistrates in Salisbury of the incident and how the menagerie owner intended to show the lioness at the city's fair the next day. The owner of the menagerie was particularly enterprising because following the incident at Winterslow, he promptly purchased the wounded horse and exhibited him alongside the lioness at Salisbury Fair.

Pomegranate had a lamentable success at Salisbury Fair next day, exhibiting his wounds to the public, who paid to gaze in horror at his wounds.

Pomegranate was later returned to his former owner, Mr. Weeks of the Red Lion Inn, Salisbury, who eventually received compensation for the injuries his valuable horse had suffered. Although a lively little story and one which might make headlines for a day, it is little more than an incident. It is difficult to understand why the story so caught the public fancy. But there is no doubt that it did. The lioness of Winterslow Hutt became known all over the country, and quite a flood of paintings, especially painted trays, were turned out.

A. Sauerweid's illustration is purely theatrical, it shows the lioness attacking the leading horse with a great deal of ferocity. The passengers fly from the coach with streaming cloaks, while men with torches come to the rescue. The Newfoundland dog is, for some reason, portrayed as a mastiff. The Inn is only shown as a shadowy

Animals & Men #32

building in a corner of the picture, with a garland hanging as a sign. James Pollard's print, which is more accurate, was dedicated to Thomas Hasker, the Superintendent of His Majesty's Mail Coaches. Pollard, apparently, did his illustration under the direction of the mail coach guard and the landlord of the Hutt. It shows the coach drawing up in front of the Inn, with the lioness plunging at the throat of the leading horse, while the guard on the back of the coach is seen taking hold of his blunderbuss. A small group of gentlemen, wearing top hats, look out from an upstairs window of the Inn. They are supposedly the politician Charles James Fox (1749-1806) of Farley; and the essayists Charles Lamb (1775-1834) and William Hazlitt (1778-1830). Lamb and Hazlitt were friends and the latter once lived at the Hutt. Hazlitt married Sarah Stoddart (daughter of a retired naval officer and sister of Dr. Stoddart who became editor of the Times in 1808. She owned a small cottage at Winterslow where they settled and brought up their children. Following the winter of 1819, Hazlitt chose to live apart from his wife but because he could not forsake his beloved Winterslow, he took up residence in the Inn. Pollard's addition of the three celebrities to his picture was artistic licence, especially when you consider that Fox died ten years before the lioness incident.

The Pheasant Inn naturally made a collection of the prints and could show the visitor half a dozen or more prints, until, quite recently, one proprietor, retiring, took them with him. On the stairs there used to stand a large oil painting of the adventure, with the lioness clawing the horse, which however, is standing not outside The Pheasant but outside an Inn in London. Apparently the tale was such good publicity that other pubs unashamedly commandeered it for their own use. There was also a coloured print of the incident by a German artist called Numberg. The story of

the lioness at Winterslow has been depicted again, more recently, when it appeared on one of five 16p stamps issued by the Post Office on 31st July 1984, commemorating the bi-cenenary of the introduction of the mail coach.

"Alien Animals" by Janet and Colin Bord (1980) records: - *"Early in February 1965 Michael Lewis, a gamekeeper with his brother David, found large footprints which were thought to be puma's at Farley, near Salisbury, Wiltshire, and photographs and plaster casts were sent to London for identification."*

The prints were found in Hound Road, Farley and were sent by the Salisbury Field Club to London Zoo for identification.

A rumour once went round that there was a train crash in the Wylve Valley and a Black Panther on the way to a circus escaped into Great Ridge Woods in the 1970's. There was a search for the panther, which proved unsuccessful.

Mr. David C. Holton, a chiroprapist, of Crocker-ton, mentioned in Arthur Shuttlewood's *"The Warminster Thing"* (1965), wrote to me in March 1987:

"I have never heard of any such animal as a panther escaping from a train crash in the Wylve Valley in the 1970's, but I noted with great interest reports of a lion having been seen by a number of witnesses in the Norton Bavant area, as they were travelling by train to Bristol. Intensive inquiries and searching by both the police and military failed to show any physical justification for the reports, though a phantom lion has been seen in that vicinity on many occasions. The Romans had an encampment at Norton Bavant and their witchcraft (of which we have very little knowledge) centred very largely on animals / astral forms through their lunar cult of Diana. People who are sensitive to such sightings may interpret them, on occasion, as

Animals & Men #32

physical beasts and have very disturbing experiences on this account."

An article appeared in the *Warminster Journal* on Friday, 8th February 1980:

"And The Lion Danced with the Kangaroo.

A dozen policemen led by Insp. Roger Eades with air cover supplied by helicopters of the Army Air Corps went on safari to the windswept wastes of Codford last Friday morning in search of a wandering lion and a rogue kangaroo. This quaint rural pursuit was the inevitable response to a message from the guard riding on a train between Portsmouth and Bristol earlier the same morning that at least one of his passengers had seen a lion browsing in a field near the village. The information that a kangaroo had been spotted in the same area the previous day came a little later, just for good measure. Longleat Safari Park was quick to deny that there had been any break-out from its neck of the woods, but even so, to be on the safe side, the police hunt had to be organised. Neither hide nor hair of anything remotely resembling either creature was found however. Mr. Eades said later none living in the vicinity had seen anything untoward, and the local livestock all seemed perfectly at peace with the world, and not in the least "jumpy", when one might have expected the faintest scent of a marauding lion to put a cow off its fodder for a month. And so for the time being the Codford lion scare is being put down as a false alarm and kangaroo mystery remains unsolved. Whether a quiet country walk can ever be quite the same again for the people who live here remains to be seen."

In February 1987 Mr. Roger Cawley of Longleat Safari Park wrote:

"In reply to your letter addressed to Mrs. Chipperfield neither she nor anyone else here has kept any record of wild animal sightings in Britain. On occasions we have been involved in searches for alleged wild animals but they have always turned out to be large dogs. We are not convinced that there are any wild-cats living free in this country."

Mary Chipperfield wrote two fascinating books entitled "*Lion Country*" and "*Lions On The Lawn*" which features their lions, tigers and a black panther. Victor Canning wrote a fictitious novel entitled *The Runaways*, which concerns a cheetah escaping from Longleat and living feral on Salisbury Plain. In August 1986 a seal escaped from Longleat but was soon recaptured on the River Avon.

The Daily Telegraph of 27 October 1987 carried an item "*Lion Lifted*"-

Thieves have stolen a 100 year old stuffed African lion from a furniture shop in Ludgershall village, Wiltshire. "It probably took four men to carry him", said a police spokesman."

A shooting Party from Westhill Farm, Hetyesbury including Mr. Steven Ware encountered a large Black Big Cat on the ranges in 1984. Edward Bridges, aged 14, and his father of Trowbridge observed a large black cat crossing the road between Bratton and Earlstoke in January 1987 in the headlights of their car. He described the cat as being "*larger than a Scottish Wild-cat with a bushy tail*". He thought it was not as large as a black panther and likened it to a Kellas Cat.

He had heard of a tabby cat captured near Westbury, which resembled a ferocious Scottish Wildcat and was released into the countryside. James Barrett-Gray, aged 14, of Edington, informed me he had seen a black panther-type

Animals & Men #32

cat "longer in the body than a labrador" jumping a log in woods on the edge of Salisbury Plain in 1987. He had also seen a deer carcass in the same woods.

Duncan Robinson, aged 15, of Potterne, Devizes, saw a strange creature while watching television one evening at about 10.15 PM. It was large, white and cat-like-but not like a normal cat. When he saw a picture of a genet, he identified that as being most similar to what he saw.

On 7th March 1994 there were sightings of a lion roaming in a field at West Kennet, near Marlborough beside the A4. A major air and ground search followed unsuccessfully. In October 1994 the carcass of a still-born calf was found with its rib cage eaten away. The afterbirth and 20lbs of meat and offal had been consumed and the animal dragged about 10feet. Earlier, a two-week-old calf in Grittenham had bled to death after his tail had been hacked (or bitten?) off. A "strange creature" had been seen crossing the road in the area. A BBC documentary programme featured a lady seeing a large black Big Cat from her landrover on the Chitterne-Tilshead road in 1995. In 1995 Mr. Rodney Garton, Longleat Forester found paw-prints in Longleat Woods which seemed like a Big Cat's pawprints. In 1995 a Jungle-cat (*Felis chaus*) was run over at Black Dog Farm, Beckington, Warminster, on the Warminster-Bath road and taken to Paignton Zoo, Plymouth, Devon, where it was identified as a Jungle-cat.

In March 1990 Mr. R.V. Brown, Chief Public Health Inspector, for Wiltshire County Council wrote:

"There is no record of any such incidents at this office, however, having spoken to ex-police officers of my acquaintance, I

understand there is a certain folklore about black dogs always being held responsible for accidents involving motor vehicles at night. I do not think that this should be taken too seriously."

On 9th January three ewes were savaged to death at Britford, near Salisbury. Blunt claw marks suggested dog rather than a Big Cat.

The vicar of Upavon, the Revd D.G. Sloggett wrote to me describing the attack on his twin sons aged 13 years by a large panther-like black cat at 6.55pm on Sunday, 17th March, 1996, so here is his description:

"On the embankment of the track that starts at the pottery and leads to the golf course. The lane is on a steep slope upwards with high steep embankments at the lower part. The boys and their older sister have been saying that they have seen a large black cat in the area to the back of the vicarage for about two years. We have always put it down to fertile imagination, much to their protests until now.

On Sunday 17th March, Jonathan and Matthew were playing in a den, or base as they call it, situated at the top of the north embankment of pottery track, when they observed what looked like a large black animal crouching on the south bank looking at them. When it saw that they had seen it, it ran at high speed (they said that they had never seen an animal move so fast before) up the south bank in an easterly direction and out of sight. As they started to talk about what they had just seen, the animal reappeared close to them on their side of the track.

They described the cat as being black, broad at the front with a sleek rear, with a long thick tail with a rounded end, not pointed, and about the size of a German Shepherd dog. It moved quickly, quietly and had a strong smell which they described as metallic. They also said it had

Animals & Men #32

large teeth and very bad breath and it had curly hair coming out of the ears. I showed them a picture of a lynx with its tufts of hair on the ear, but they said the hair came from inside the ear.

When they had first sighted the creature, they had been playing with a long piece of bailer twine and two yoghurt pots as a phone, and Matthew was winding the twine up on his arm. When the cat reappeared it made a high noise which they described as a hissing growl and snatched at the twine around Matthew's arm and started to pull at it. Jonathan kicked at its head with a drop kick to which it made a noise and lashed out with its paw but did not let go of the twine, then he kicked it for a second time. They were both, of course screaming. Matthew managed to get his scissors out that they had been using on the twine and cut the twine making the cat fall a little backwards. It then caught hold of Jonathan's coat, which slipped through its mouth catching the zipper clasp.

Jonathan hit it hard with the open palm of his hand twice on the nose. At the second blow the end of the zip broke away and the cat slipped off and fell backwards down the embankment. As it struggled to climb the slope the boys ran for home which was only about fifty yards away.

As they ran, Matthew still had the twine round his wrist and the cat carried on chasing the twine catching it several times before they reached the proximity of home. Our boxer dog was in the garden, and when it saw them coming went to greet them as she usually does, then seemed to look past them and then ran to the house. It ran into the workshop at the back of the house and hid behind the door terrified. Even now, she will not go out in the dark before bed unless I go out with her and during the day time she will go and stare

through the fence in the direction that the boys had run from, before she can settle.

After the boys burst into the house, it took a while to calm them down and to get the story, by which time it was dark and I had no inclination to go out and check their story. It seems to me, from what they said, that it almost sounds as if this cat was trying to play with the twine that Matthew had been winding up and had no intention of hurting them. This makes me think that perhaps the cat was tame or semi-tame.

Since the account of Jonathan and Matthew's encounter several people have contacted me to say that they also have seen a big cat in the area. Their sightings are as follows:

- A lady phoned to say that a large black cat was standing in the road as she drove home late one night at Everligh, near Upavon. She said it just looked at her then walked off slowly as if it was unconcerned by her presence.
- Another lady from Upavon said that she had seen a large black cat by the side of the road just outside the village. She said it was about twice the size of a domestic cat, but looked as if it were young. There were also five different people who saw it over two nights at Avebury.
- A woman stopped me in Pewsey to say she and her husband had reported seeing a large black cat stalking some children but running off without attacking. This was 19 years ago and she was told by the police to keep it quiet as they did not want to start a panic."

On 13th July there was a sighting of a large black Big Cat at Earlstoke, near Devizes.

On Monday, 5th August, 1996 there was a sighting of a big-cat climbing up a roadside bank

Animals & Men #32

between Farley and Pitton near Salisbury. Ordnance Survey Surveyor Mr. John Hutton of Alderbury was driving his car along the winding stretch of road at about 5.45 am with his son Peter and Peter's girlfriend as passengers when all three caught sight of the cat. He told the *Salisbury Journal* of Thursday, 8th August, 1996:-

"We saw the back end of the animal, with its long black tail as it lumbered up the bank and disappeared. I stopped the car but we didn't get out. Quite frankly it was all a bit eerie and all three of us were breaking out in goose pimples. We couldn't really afford the time to look around anyway as I was driving Peter and his girlfriend to Gatwick Airport. I've always been sceptical of the big cat stories up to now but I don't doubt what I see with my own eyes."

Mr. Hutton said the long-tailed animal was at least twice the size of a domestic cat and probably as big as a large fox.

On 14th November 1996 the *Salisbury Journal* ran an article entitled "*Mystery cat is on the prowl again*" Mr. Barry Payne of North Street, Wilton, was driving home from a concert in Salisbury Cathedral on Saturday night at about 9.45pm he spotted the animal near the English China Clay site. Mr. Payne said:

"It was as big as a dog, but it was definitely moving like a cat and when I flicked the headlamps on to full beam to get a better look, its eyes shone red like a cats's."

Mr. Payne's passenger, Jenny Hay, also saw the animal, which after crossing the road disappeared into fields on the Quidhampton side of the road. Mr. Payne said: "*Jenny watched it go and said "I hope there aren't any sheep in that field."* Chief Inspector Roger

Curtis of Salisbury Police said they had received no reports of big cat sightings in the area.

In the summer of 1999 a farmer at Thoulstone, observed a black leopard in his field. In the summer of 1999 a lady from Corsley saw a large black cat crossing the road between Crockerton and Heaven's Gate in Longleat Woods and a farmer saw a large black cat crossing the road between Crockerton and Heaven's Gate in Longleat woods also in the summer of 1999. A retired RAF officer who lives on Dry Hill, Crockerton, looked out of his window one morning in the summer of 1999 to see a large black cat. stalking in his paddock. In 2001 a lady from Crockerton observed a large sandy cat, like a lioness ambling through a field near the Warminster Bypass. In 2001 Mr. Delany of Warminster and a friend were driving through Corsley, Wiltshire when they observed a Lynx crossing the road at night.

The Swindon Advertiser has reported attacks on livestock earlier this year. During 1991-2001 there were said to have been 40 sightings described as being of a large black cat in North Wiltshire. Locations included Crudwell, Charlton, Lea, Oaksey, Little Somerford, Brinkworth, and Dauntsey making it easy to plot the animal's territory. Local police are said to have logged 30 sightings.

There was a livestock kill and pawprints were found at Coulston, near Westbury according to the "*Swindon Advertiser*" and the "*Western Daily Press*" of 6th January, 2001. There was a sighting of a big-cat at Wingfield according to the "*Trowbridge Star*" of 29th March, 2001 and there was a sighting of a Big Cat at Edington on Salisbury Plain according to the "*Trowbridge Star*" of 5th April, 2001 and the "*White Horse News*" of 24th May, 2001. There was a sighting of a Big-Cat at Castle Eaton, near Highworth according to the "*Wiltshire Gazette And Herald*", via *This Is Wiltshire*, on 3rd May,

Animals & Men #32

2002. There was a sighting of a Big Cat between Great Bedwyn and Shalbourne according to the "*Wiltshire Gazette and Herald*" of 20th June, 2002.. Another Big Cat sighting occurred at Rowden Hill, Chippenham, according to the *Wiltshire Gazette and Herald*, via *This Is Wiltshire*, 8th August, 2002. A sighting of a Big Cat occurred at Battlesbury Hill, Warminster according to the "*Warminster Journal*" of 23rd August, 2002. And a sighting of a Big Cat occurred at Southwick, near Trowbridge according to the "*Wiltshire Times*" via *This Is Wiltshire* of 13th September, 2002.

In July 2002 we found a dead Dorset Polled sheep at Brixton Deverill with a front leg missing, the shoulder missing and the side of the face missing. When I sent these photographs to Mr. Nigel Brierly he thought they looked similar to the photos of suspected cat kills on Exmoor.

Johnny Kingdom wrote in his column in the Western Daily press on Wednesday, August 14 2002:

Riddle Of The Big Cat

Reader Maureen Pickup from Westbury in Wiltshire rang to tell me about something very interesting that happened to her as she was driving home along a country road recently. She came to a line of about ten cars, all moving slowly, and was amazed to see the reason for the hold-up- a big, black cat lying by the side of the road, which everybody was slowing down to get a good look at as they went past. "I couldn't believe it, Johnny, she said. "It was about six feet long, jet black, and it was definitely a cat. I've spent a lot of time in Africa, and I know what a big cat looks like.

"This one seemed to be dead, I would have loved to get out and have a closer look, but I

thought there was a chance it might just be stunned and could attack me, so I didn't stop." I thought she was wise. Many a time I've found birds or animals by the side of a road, apparently dead, but really just stunned.

It's even worth trying to save them, if you can- birds of prey seem to do especially well if you pick them up and take them to a bird sanctuary. This particular big cat must have got up and walked away after a while, because nothing more was heard of it. But it just shows that the so-called Beast of Exmoor does exist and not just on Exmoor."

Colonel Conrad Freeman of Parsnip Cottage, Bishopstrow wrote to the *Warminster Journal* on 23 August 2002:-

"Whilst I was exercising my pedigree Schnauzer Bertram in the area of Woodland just below Battlesbury Hill, I sighted what appeared to be a big cat of some description. It had the mottled markings of a panther or leopard and was bigger than an Alsatian. Luckily Bertram was on a lead because he made a hell of a noise barking at this thing. I was terrified in case it attacked. I consider myself lucky to have escaped with my life. I saw one of these brutes rip a poor chap in two in India half a century ago. Have any of your other readers seen this beast of Battlesbury"? Has one of the Longleat felines escaped? And what about our soldiers, will they be safe on Salisbury Plain?"

What is fascinating to me is that 15 years on from my first boyish intrigue inspired by "The Beast Off Exmoor" booklet sightings of various Big Cats are still being reported from all over the country - does this suggest that these cats are breeding? In the *Warminster Journal* of 8th March, 2003 another letter appeared from an anonymous correspondent under the headline "Beast Returns":

Animals & Men #32

"With reference to a letter that appeared in the 23rd August, 2002 issue-Beast of Battlesbury.

I too have had a close encounter with this black cat. My first encounter was in the early morning of Saturday, 14th February this year. Standing on the railway bridge, looking over to The Dene woods, in the fold next to the railway, I observed a big cat, pantherlike, stalking rabbits. The grass was knee high so it wasn't a domestic cat.

"My second encounter was last Saturday, 1st March, early morning, while walking down the road from Middle Hill towards Bishopstrow Farm. From the thicket above me in the cutting came the low growl of a big cat. I froze to the spot, looking to where the sound came from, and moving slowly backwards heard a second growl louder than the first. I decided to make sure there was nothing in the field behind the thicket-there wasn't. There were people walking dogs but they were over on Battlesbury, I was alone. I tried to see if I could see it, but being black and in the thicket I couldn't. It probably growled at me and left-thank goodness.

The only thing that concerns me is that kids playing in the woods may surprise this cat and if its cornered who knows what might happen. I'm only glad I didn't corner it and it warned me off with a growl. The Beast Of Battlesbury is alive and well.

We found a pawprint near the railway bridge which was wider than it was longer without clawmarks and we measured it with a stick against a stuffed female puma's foot at a Taxidermist's stand at the Westcountry GameFair, Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset and found it had exactly the same dimensions. I took

photographs of this and other pawprints on the footpath round the edge of Dene Woods. Mr. Brian Licence and his wife Mrs. Elizabeth Licence of Warminster had a sighting of a large black cat longer in the body than a labrador and lower with long strides going across a field behind the old waterworks and School of Infantry Beagles Kennels on 24th March, 2002. I went with them on a walk round Battlesbury Woods on 26th March and collected samples of droppings from rabbit burrows which could have come from a cat and saw three trees with clawmarks eight feet up the trunks. They told me of a friend who found three Roe deer carcasses on the edge of Battlesbury Woods. They consulted a rangewarden but he had never had a sighting.

Mr. Deane, a farmworker, of Maiden Bradley told me about an encounter he had with a large black cat which climbed a sapling tree, causing it to bend before running off. He knew several sightings had occurred in the area.

In the Bath Arms, Crockerton, a gamekeeper from Kingston Deverill told me he had twice seen a large black cat once at Tytherington and once at Great Ridge when out lamping for Foxes in July 2003. He had no doubt it was a panther or puma.

Mr. Chinchin of Stour Row, near Shaftesbury telephoned me after reading the Ask Why Website to report a sighting of a large black cat crossing the road at Ferne, Berwick St John, near Shaftesbury, on the Dorset/Wiltshire Border. He took two plastercasts of pawprints which were the size of a large dog but appear to be consistent with a leopard or puma which he gave to me, when we met up on Thursday, 14th August, 2003. The reports keep coming in and the hope is good photographs and video footage of the cats can be obtained. These animals are a fascinating addition to British Wildlife and hopefully can be left in peace rather than hunted down.

Animals & Men #32

UNUSUALLY COLOURED FROGS IN BRITAIN

Richard Muirhead
and Darren Naish

Many people are aware that the Common Frog *Rana temporaria* can appear in various shades of green. What is less known is that since 1891 at least, this species of frog has appeared in white, pink, yellow, gold, and orange. These are all variants of albinism and according to Trevor Beebee yellow and orange "are widespread and always have been." (Beebee in communication with Richard Muirhead, May 2003.)

Red is thought to be within the normal colour variation of the Common Frog. According to Beebee "*many of the colour variants are obviously not simple albinism and are probably multigenic.*" Recent publicity about unusually coloured frogs may have led to increased reporting of them. According to Mark Nicholson recently of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, in a letter to me in June 2001:

"Whether there are more albinos now than ten years ago, no one can answer for sure. There are certainly many more recent records than older ones mainly generated by the publicity a few years ago.) My gut feeling is that there are more albinos than in the past, but it can always be argued that the increased number of records is simply due to increased searching and public awareness. "



Animals & Men #32



Animals & Men #32

Various sources indicate that the appearance of aberrant-coloured frogs is not a new phenomenon and, intriguingly, at least one medieval legend appears to be an attempt to explain the existence of these curious amphibians. Albinism in British frogs was reported as early as 1891 and, as noted by Beebee and Griffiths (2000), Malcolm Smith referred to the presence of red frogs from Scotland in his 1951 classic *The British Amphibians and Reptiles* (a predecessor to Beebee and Griffiths' volume). The medieval legend is apocryphal and now reasonably well known following its retelling in the fortean and cryptozoological literature, see Downes (1994.) The story goes that a woman miraculously healed an ailing infant at a poor man's house in Bovey Tracey, Devon. To convince the man that this wasn't a dream, the woman said that his family would soon find a new spring full of crystal clear water and bright golden frogs.

The possible authenticity of this legend may be supported by the fact that it was set in Devon. As revealed by Nicholson (1997), the distribution of aberrant-coloured frogs is interesting in that south-west England would appear to harbour the majority of specimens. More than a third (47 as of 1997) of all 124 ponds from which aberrant-coloured frogs have been reported are in Devon and Cornwall. Nicholson reported a further 40 ponds located elsewhere in southern England and a further 27 in the Midlands and Wales. As for northern Britain, until 1997 there had been no reports of albino frogs from Scotland and only one report from northern England. However, aberrant frogs have now been reported from ten sites in these latter regions, including in June 2000 one hundred and fifty yellow froglets were found at an address in Hebburn, Tyne and Wear. According to Nick White of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust in May

2003 very few aberrant coloured frogs appeared in 2002 and 2003

The over-riding impression one obtains from the aberrant frog situation is that there are more aberrant-coloured frogs today than ever before. This is certainly true as regards the number of reports, but are there simply more reports because of increased reporting, searching and public awareness? Nicholson's work generated substantial media interest and has meant that more people than ever before are aware of the existence of yellow, golden and other abnormal frogs. However, if changing environmental conditions are responsible for the presence and survival of these frogs, as has been suggested, then increasing numbers of them are to be expected.

Various explanations, ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous, have been proposed to explain the existence of aberrant frogs. Popular suggestions include the effects of pollution, increased levels of UV radiation, global warming and radon gas, though how any of these stimuli might actually trigger a change in pigmentation is never explained. There is a possibility that population isolation and inbreeding *may* be a factor in aberrant colouration but this is not definite. (Beebee 2003.) At the end of the twentieth century most abnormally coloured frogs were found in the south-east and south-west of the country, with thirty-five in Cornwall. In the year 2000 at least three odd coloured frogs turned up in Exeter. They were yellow and mustard coloured. Albinos lack the pigmentation that normally coloured frogs have to protect them from UV radiation. Electromagnetic radiation can alter the genetic structure of organisms. So this would cause a defect in the eggs resulting in albinism, rather than changing a normally coloured frog into an albino one. A contactee of Mark Nicholson, Ernest Ibbetson, thought weedkillers had caused genetic changes in frogs. Whatever the cause, something may be

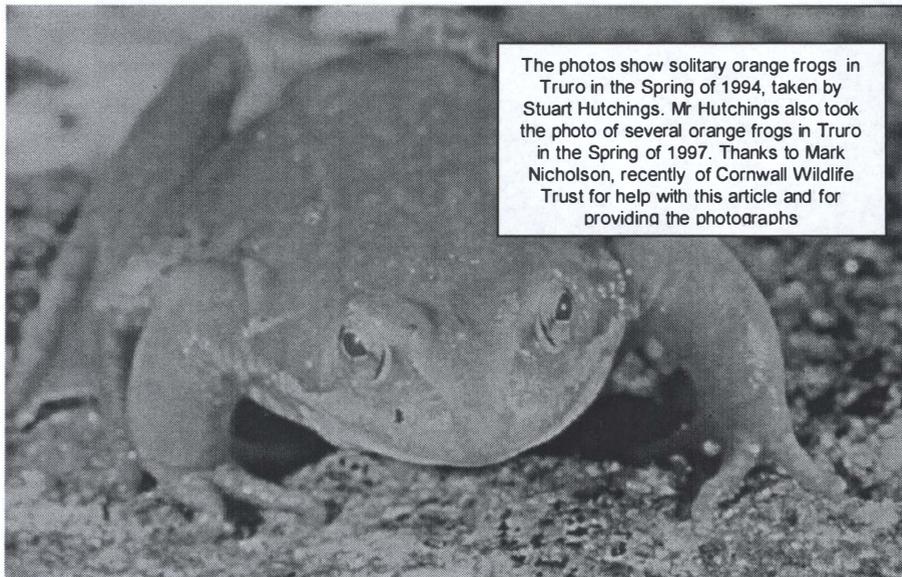
Animals & Men #32

seriously wrong with the genetic make up of the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) in some parts of the country. Genetic defects can be caused by spontaneous changes in chromosomal structure (DNA). The frog is not the only animal to have displayed orange colouration. Orange and gold snakes have turned up and in North America there have even been reports of orange raccoons! (*Procyon lotor*) In August 1996 an injured orange blackbird, *Turdus merula* was being held at Winslade Wildlife Sanctuary, Devon.

The phenomenon of abnormally coloured frogs can originate from the tadpole stage. "An albino female always produces albino spawn." according to Nicholson. White spawn takes longer to hatch than normal spawn. By the time of the tadpole's metamorphosis into a frog the colour at adulthood appears to be fixed. Another survey mentioned by Nicholson determined that an odd coloured male would always pass its colour to its offspring. Albinism has also been associated with a distortion of the pelvic girdle.

This produces a kink in the tadpole's tail. There were several reports of albinos in the 1930s so colour changes in frogs date from well before pollution and other man made abuses of the environment have been thought to contribute towards unusually coloured frogs.

Environmental factors such as lack of light can affect pigmentation. Mrs P Wood reported to Nicholson that a population of white frogs were found in a boarded up air raid shelter in Derbyshire in the 1950s. Trevor Beebee, a contributor to the British Herpetological Society Bulletin, has suggested that inbreeding of frogs, due to isolations of populations, is a key factor in the increase of albinism. Beebee also pointed out that brightly coloured frogs are more likely than normal coloured ones to suffer from predation. Nicholson suggests that lack of pigmentation is a greater disadvantage in the north of England where it is colder. Pigmentation protects frogs from ultra violet rays.



The photos show solitary orange frogs in Truro in the Spring of 1994, taken by Stuart Hutchings. Mr Hutchings also took the photo of several orange frogs in Truro in the Spring of 1997. Thanks to Mark Nicholson, recently of Cornwall Wildlife Trust for help with this article and for providing the photographs

Animals & Men #32

Raven Mad

Wilf Wharton

Throughout history Ravens have instilled extreme feelings in humans. They are often seen as images of pestilence, evil and even prophets of doom. The titular Raven of the Edgar Allen Poe tale being perhaps the most obvious and commonplace of these. The classic Joan Aiken children's book, *Arabel's Raven*, takes a more light-hearted, but similar view. Mortimer the Raven was a cantankerous bird who loved to cause trouble while cawing Poe's famous line: "Never more, never more!" Is this generally negative portrayal fair? Does the Raven have any positive traits, which may redress the balance of popular perception?

There is a good deal to commend the negative view.

Ravens and their smaller cousins, the Crow, are members of the Corvid family. Both Ravens and Crows are capable predators, but are happier to live from carrion. Indeed, their preference for such has made them common visitors to battlefields, burial grounds and other places associated with death throughout history.

The collective noun for Crows is a "Murder" and for Ravens: an "Unkindness". Numerous "executions" have been recorded: many species of birds, including Ravens, have been seen to encircle another bird on the ground and then peck it to death. Arguments differ on why this happens. It may be Raven justice for an offender, it may be the mercy killing of a sick bird. Whatever the reason, Ravens have been seen to consciously attack and kill other birds, including their own kind.



Animals & Men #32

Old English gravestones were once known as Ravenstones, as were German stone gibbets (Rabenstein). All this can only strengthen the association of Ravens with human suffering.

The Biblical tale of the Raven and the Dove gave the Raven the chance to become the hero. Noah released the Raven from the Ark to find land. The Raven simply abandoned his task and flew away. Luckily for the rest of the world the Dove was able to search out safety and bring back the branch as proof of dry land. (Although a pedant could argue it only proved that there was a tree above the waterline!)

The Tower of London is one place with a long history of death and a strong link with Ravens. Legend states that should the Ravens which inhabit the Tower ever leave, then England (or the Monarchy in some versions) would fall. A Royal Charter of 1662 decreed that six Ravens should always be housed at the Tower

In 1996 one of the six, believed to be a female named Hugine, (sic) managed such a feat. She climbed some scaffolding and despite having her wings clipped, glided to freedom. The bird was recaptured the next day, near the entrance to Tower Hill tube station, and returned home to the Tower.

The bird was one of two females brought from the Hebrides the previous summer. It is fair to assume that as she was one of a pair and was named Hugine (sic), that her fellow Hebridean would most likely be called Muninn.

Huginn (thought) and Muninn (memory) are the ravens associated with the mighty Norse God, Odin. They would spend their days flying around the nine worlds and then return to Odin's shoulders at night to report all they had observed.

Odin also had two wolves, the first of whose name may interest lexi-linkers, Geri (greedy) and Freki (fierce). (Another version has the Ravens being known, less grandly, as Olaf and Sven)

The relationship between the Raven and the Tower of London has interesting origins in the tales recorded in the Welsh histories, the Mabinogion. The stories are 12th & 13th century recordings of the oral traditions dating back to the 10th century.

One of these tells of Bendigeid Vran, son of Llyr. He was also known as Bran the Blessed. Bran's sister, Branwen was married to Matholwch, the King of Ireland. However, the initially happy marriage soon broke down. Branwen trained a starling to take a rescue plea to her brother. On receipt of this, Bran and his forces invaded Ireland from their castle in Harlech.

Bran was such a physically large and strong warrior that he was too big to fit in his men's ships and waded alongside them across the Irish Sea. He is also meant to have lain across the river Shannon, acting as a bridge for his men. (Lexi-linkers: A large powerful warrior, Bran the Blessed to Brian Blessed?)

The battle was long and fierce, although the Irish had the advantage of a magic cauldron, which was used to reanimate their dead at the end of each day's conflict, Bran and his men defeated them.

However, Bran was fatally wounded, by a poisoned spear in the foot. He decreed to his seven surviving warriors that they should cut his head off and take it to London, where they should bury it on the White Hill, facing towards France. As long as it remained there, Britain would be protected from foreign invasion.

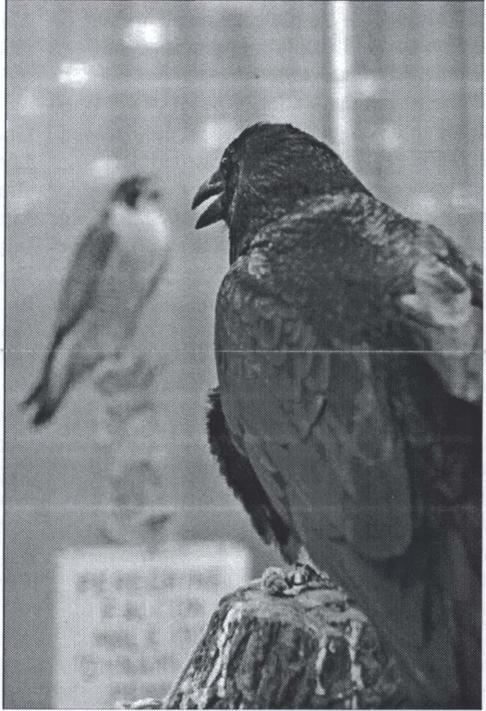
Animals & Men #32

So, after eighty seven (!!!) years of adventuring (with Bran's head still very much alive!) The group, as young as the day they set out, returned to Britain and carried out their leaders wishes.

Further stories tell that when he ascended to the throne, King Arthur felt that if anyone was going to protect Britain then it was he. This being the case, Arthur had the head dug up and proclaimed his protectorship.



The choice of the White Hill for Bran's burial is relevant for several reasons. The Welsh word for white can also translate as "holy". The White Hill is also traditionally the last resting-place of the Trojan leader, Brutus, who founded Britain and Troynovant (New Troy or London). It was already a place of spiritual importance.



(There are other links with Arthur. The lame Fisher King has been likened to the wounded Bran. Indeed, The Fisher King of the Grail Castle has been called King Bron. Also, there is a hill in the Dee valley, Dinas Bran, or Bran's stronghold. It has been also known as Crow Castle. The Old French for Raven/Crow is Corbin, which was the name Malory gave to the Castle of the Grail.)

William the Conqueror chose to build the Tower of London on the White Hill. If he knew of the history of the hill, it would have been a shrewd move for a Norman wanting to subjugate the populace to build there, a spiritual bastion of Britain. What brings the story full circle is that Bran is Celtic for Raven

Animals & Men #32

Although Bran may not be under the White Hill any longer, his familiars may be watching over the nation.

It is not just in Britain and Scandinavia that the Raven is a potent symbol of power and discord. Stories from as far apart as North America and Australia tell of the actions of the wily Raven, the greatest of all shape shifters and a prodigious trickster. Whilst the Raven is generally associated with negative actions, there are also a number of positive images. The feeding of the banished biblical prophet, Ezekiel by Ravens is perhaps the most famous. Ravens are also portrayed with St Oswald, St Paul the Hermit and St Benedict, always in a positive light.

Roman legend tells that Ravens were once the same size and colour as the Swan. The Raven told Apollo that Coronis, the Thessalian nymph with whom he was in love, was being unfaithful. Apollo killed Coronis and, in time honoured tradition, the Raven took the brunt of Apollo's wrath. A direct result was the smaller, black bird we know today.

The Raven and Swan are also related through soul alchemy. According to Adam McLean, writing in volume 5 of the Hermetic Journal, they are the first two of the five bird totems. They represent "*the integration, purification and transmutation of the soul.*"

The Raven signifies the "*withdrawal from dependence on the physical senses*". While the Swan is the "*experience of the etheric body*". The Peacock is the "*astral body consciousness*". The "*conscious use of the forces of the etheric body*" is seen with the Pelican. The Phoenix embodies the "*freeing of the spirit from the bounds of the physical*". And the Penguin embodies the essence of a tasty chocolate biscuit.

Even in more contemporary culture, the Raven is there, spreading its message. Darkly mysterious comic book characters such as Morpheus in The Sandman and the eponymous Night Raven are prime examples.

How potent is the Raven mythos?

The Cleveland Browns American Football team were relocated to Baltimore and changed their name to the Ravens. Within only five years and tens of millions of dollars, they had won the Super Bowl. Coincidence? Of course it is.

Further reading:

The Bible (despite his claims it was NOT written by Erik von Daniken)

The Mabinogion pub: Voyager

The Folklore of Birds: Laura C Martin
pub: Globe Pequot 1993

Collected issues of Fortean Times pub:
FT/JB Publishing

The Folklore of Birds: Edward A
Armstrong Pub: Collins 1958

Albion: A Guide to legendary Britain:
Jennifer Westwood Pub: Guild 1986

Websites:

American Society of Crows and Ravens
<http://www.ascaronline.org/corvi.html>

Raven in Mythology
<http://www.ravenfamily.org/nascakiyetl/obs/rav1.html>

The Raven's Aviary
<http://www.shades-of-night.com/aviary/birdfict.html>

Animals & Men #32

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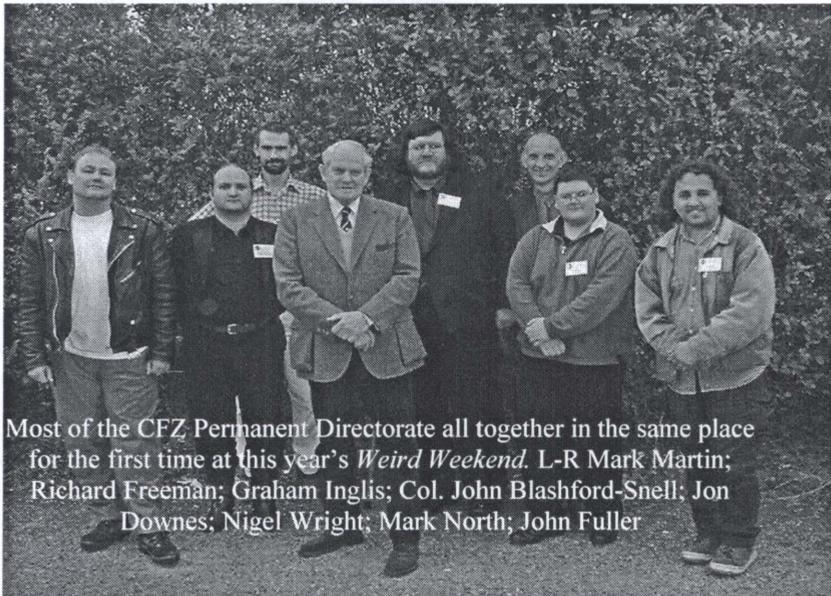
Many thanks must go to Paul Vella for having made a very generous donation of a DVD player for the CFZ office. Also thank you ever so to Mark Martin for another donation of electronic surveillance equipment and some technical gizmo to fix Mark North's computer. Guys, I really have no idea what we would do without you!

Our love and best wishes goes out to Joanne Curtis wife of "Geordie Dave" cryptozoological madman of this parish. Hope you feel better soon, Jozee...



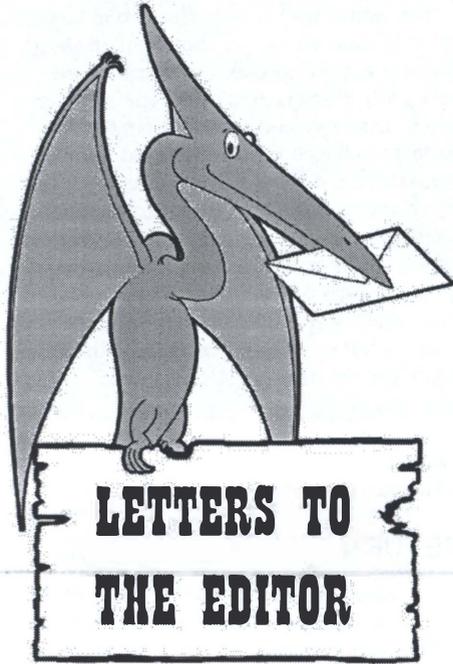
Congratulations to our Texas representative Chester Moore Jnr for his recent rediscovery of the Red Wolf and his eminently groovy new heavy metal CD. News on both next time

Congratulations to the Editor's Brother and Sister-in-Law on the birth of their fourth child - Timothy



Most of the CFZ Permanent Directorate all together in the same place for the first time at this year's *Weird Weekend*. L-R Mark Martin; Richard Freeman; Graham Inglis; Col. John Blashford-Snell; Jon Downes; Nigel Wright; Mark North; John Fuller

Animals & Men #32



HICKORY WIND

Dear Sir,

Recent reports in the press concerning the presence of Great White Sharks off the south coast brings to mind similar activity up here last summer.

A tourist from Yorkshire was walking the tideline of the Firth of Forth, just downstream of South Queensferry [Scotland], when he observed a small group of people in the shallows and a thrashing in the water.

Rushing to their position he saw two men furiously hauling another on a rope whilst a forth was battering a large shark with a crowbar as it attempted to bite the man tied to the rope.

When at last the latter lay on the shore babbling incoherently, the Yorkshireman realised he was a fellow English tourist. Gladdened by the display of selflessness by the locals he praised their actions, stating it contradicted everything he had heard about Scots/English animosity. With a spring in his step, he went on his way.

One of the rescuers asked the other what he'd said. "*Nae idea*", he replied. "*Couldn't understand the accent. Anyway, we've only caught the one shark today, better throw the bait back in*".

Yours,

Lt. Col. Armitage Shanks (retd.)
The Gatekeeper's Cottage, Balmoral.

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine.

We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology.

Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

Animals & Men #32

STREETS OF BALTIMORE

Dear Jon,

Re. Cannibal Cats

As you probably know, both large and small male cats will kill the kittens of a rival "tom." This generally occurs after beating the tom in a fight for supremacy. If food is not easy to get, the winner will eat the deposed tom's kittens, all but the head. I lived in a neighbourhood with a lot of feral cats, and have found kitten heads on my lawn.

In one two-year period, I watched the cat dynamics carefully, and discovered that, although a yellow tiger cat appeared to be the dominant cat in the area, a black tom was killing the yellow kittens and eating them. Sort of a sniper attack, if you will. He never did challenge the boss cat, and the females kept on producing yellow kittens. (Animal control officers eventually live-trapped most of the cats and neutered them.)

Hope this is somehow useful.

Sincerely,
Silvia Wilson
Seoul, Korea

SIN CITY

Dear Jon,

Just thought you'd like to get a little update on a rather amusing racoon on the rampage in Denmark just now. It first turned up ten days ago in a kindergarten early in the morning, where the leader found it destroying her office early in the morning. A rescue service was called in to get the animal. They brought to their station, and locked in a box in an office,

while they waited for a man from a zoo to come and get it. It took the racoon about half an hour to break out of the cage and start wrecking the office. Finally it was caught by several members of the rescue service and the man from the zoo, and brought to the zoo, where it stayed for a week, and then broke out again. Yesterday it turned up at the house of a priest. It ran when he discovered it, and probably with good reason. It turned out the animal had destroyed only one thing - the priest's official robes. The racoon is now very much wanted, as a local policeman put it. Oh yes, a full set of robes costs the equivalent of £1000. But the poor priest's insurance company won't pay!

Best wishes

Lars Thomas, Copenhagen

RETURN OF THE GREIVIOUS ANGEL

Dear Jon

Could you change the photo of me on your web site to this one as I think it catches my best side.

Davey Curtis
Seaham-on-Sea



EDITORIAL COMMENT: No

Animals & Men #32

WILD HORSES

Hello,

Herein renewal for the subscription to *Animals & Men*. GO ON! Your magazine becomes better every time. I look forward to the next issue.

Recently I bought the expensive but very useful books by George Eberhart. Together with your magazine this is the best way to stay up to date with cryptozoology. Greetings to you all from Holland,

Gerard van Leusden
The Netherlands.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW

Dear Jon and Co.,

Nothing very strange is happening around here but we do have a couple of bits of news. I may be on the track of a big cat around our neighbourhood but the lady who sees it is currently not divulging its actual whereabouts. However, a friend of ours who cuts her fields and hedges knows her quite well and is gradually getting her around to thinking that we are OK people. Apparently she has seen it two or three times on her land this year. Charlie (the friend) says that they have had a couple of dead ewes in the Dallington area – probably dead of natural causes and found with their udders eaten off and the rest of the soft tissues eaten in a pattern different from the way that foxes usually take carrion. He is going to enquire further for us as he has been around farming and timber work most of his life and is also interested in the local wildlife.

I find him a useful source of information. I hear rumours that the wild boars have now reached into Sussex as far as Ashdown Forest so we probably have them crashing around as well. If we catch one in the new soak-away pit we will let you know.

Love

Sally Parsons,
Five Ashes,
Sussex

IN MY HOUR OF DARKNESS

Sir,

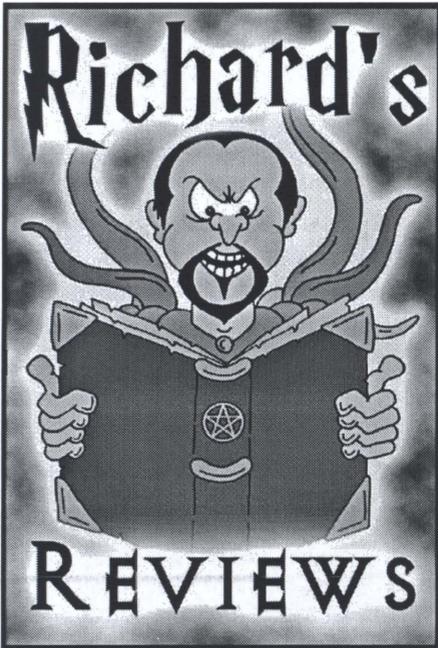
On the subject of the Bolam beast,

My friend and I were fishing just prior to Christmas at Bolam Lake early in the morning. We were both sitting quietly when suddenly we heard a loud noise, like the branch of a tree snapping. We instinctively jumped to our feet, alarmed by the sudden break of silence and peered into the woods to see the perpetrator of the noise. We could not believe our eyes, it was huge, quite a distance away, approximately 8 or 10ft in height and very dark. The beast, obviously frightened by our presence hurled a large stick at us, just missing my friend. He then seemed lured to us by the fish we had caught that morning at which point we both fled through the woods to our cars. We left all of our equipment and have never been back since. This is the 1st time we have told anyone about it for fear of ridicule.

Please email back if you are interested in knowing more of our terrifying experience.

Kav
via email

Animals & Men #32



Richard Freeman except where otherwise stated

The Field Guide to Lake Monsters, Sea Serpents and Other Mystery Denizens of the Deep by Loren Coleman & Patrick Huyghe, (Tarcher/Penguin Books, 2003.)

The Field Guide to Lake Monsters, Sea Serpents and Other Mystery Denizens of the Deep is probably the most important contribution to its field since the publication of Bernard Heuvelmans' classic, *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents*. At 358 pages, the book is packed with information on a whole range of serpent encounters spanning both the globe and the centuries. Coleman and Huyghe's title is a scholarly one, but is written in a style that both the newcomer and those that have long been fascinated by its subject will enjoy. I think it's important to stress, too, that the authors obviously care passionately about their

research and *Field Guide* is not just "another" book on monsters. Rather, Coleman and Huyghe - following in Heuvelmans' footsteps - have examined the available data both long and hard, and have proposed their own classification of elusive animals that they believe explains the sea serpent and lake monster mysteries of our world. To give you a couple of examples, there are sections in the book on giant octopuses; terrifying creatures resembling huge alligators (classified in the book as "Mystery Saurian"); still-surviving dinosaurs; gargantuan lizards; Manta Rays; and even giant beavers! Not only that: the book is literally packed with little-known accounts and sightings, provides data on the top places to see lake monsters and sea serpents, and includes much welcome drawings and diagrams of the beasts in question. If you're even remotely interested in its subject matter, I'd urge you to grab a copy of this book right now. Surpassing Heuvelmans' mighty tome, *The Field Guide to Lake Monsters, Sea Serpents and Other Mystery Denizens of the Deep* is the definitive book on the unknown creatures that lurk beneath the waves. NICK REDFERN

The Beasts That Hide From Man by Karl Shuker, Paraview, 2003.

What can you say about a book that includes chapters on "hairy reptiles;" "terror birds;" "living unicorns;" "crypto-bats;" and "furry fish"? Well, actually, you can say a lot and all of it good! From the examples I selected above, you might think that the book is somewhat of a sensationalized title. But that's far from being true. Karl Shuker's *The Beasts That Hide From Man: Seeking the World's Last Undiscovered Animals*, is a noteworthy and very welcome addition to the world of monster hunting and the creatures that continue to live alongside us in relative secrecy and obscurity. A scientific fellow of the Zoological Society of London, Shuker is the author of numerous books on wildlife oddities and unknown animals and his latest

Animals & Men #32

book never disappoints. For me, the most fascinating sections were those on (a) the Mongolian Death Worm and (b) man-eating trees and "vampire plants." The former is a bizarre worm-like creature that reputedly spits acid-like venom at its victims (and if that isn't enough it also - allegedly - has the power to electrocute them!); while the latter have been reported on a surprisingly regular basis from the darkest corners of the globe. Sounding like something conjured out of the imagination of horror writer H. P. Lovecraft and not unlike the famous Venus Flytrap plant, these critters (can a plant be considered a critter?) are much bigger and badder than their fly catching cousins and have their sights set on far tastier morsels - us! Shuker's book is a first-class look at some of the real and sometimes monstrous oddities that live among us. NICK REDFERN

Caribbean Amphibians and Reptiles

Brian I Crother (Editor)

(Academic Press ISBN 0-12-197955-5)

What's not to like about this book? When 14 herpetologists get together to write papers on the Herpetofauna of the Caribbean you have something special. Amazingly this is the first book to take an overview of these islands reptiles and amphibians. Papers include a history of herpetologists who have worked in the Caribbean, a look at the evolutionary relationships of the animals on each island to those on other islands in the group and on mainland Central America.

For me the most interesting papers were those which dealt with island faunas on individual islands. There are papers on Jamaica, Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and the Lesser Antilles. On many islands there are endemic species such as the Cuban crocodile and the Cuban boa. Of particular interest are the natural barriers that isolate some species and keep other from entering. On some of the

Lesser Antilles lizards and frogs are the only naturally occurring vertebrates apart from birds. The islands broke away before colonization could occur or rose up too far out to sea for mammals to reach. In fact the whole area has a dearth of large mammals, a factor herpetofauna has taken advantage of.

The effect of mankind is examined not only in direct competition but in the transportation of alien species to islands such as the spectacled caiman in northern Puerto Rico.

The book has useful maps and tables of species distribution in the islands. It would be invaluable to any herpetologist traveling in the area. It's only fault is that it could have done with a few more colour photographs. There are some colour plates at the start of the book but they are few in number and a little lacklustre. But this one gripe cannot detract from an impressive collection of work in a splendid book.

The Mammoth Book of Maneaters

Alex McCormick (editor)

(Robinson ISBN 1-84119-603-7)

This book covers much the same ground as Michael Bright's *Man Eaters*, published a couple of years ago. At 611 pages it is much longer than Bright's book but this is a case of quantity over quality. The editor has merely cobbled together as many accounts as he can find and published them without much comment (save for the introduction) in a scrap book type style. Even the title is misleading. Accounts include rogue elephants, black widow spiders, angry rhinos, and killer bees, none of which are interested in eating people. Man killers would have been a more appropriate title. Accounts are placed in loose sections such as death in the water and blood on the lowlands. Oddly, stories of big constricting snakes killing people in the wild are not included but several tales of pet

Animals & Men #32

constrictors killing their owners are listed. The book also covers human cannibalism.

Having said this, it's not all bad. There is some very useful information contained in the book. The section on man eating crocodiles is highly interesting and contains both well known accounts such as the Bujang Senang (Happy Bachelor) of Borneo to stories that I had not heard before such as the Wyabba monster a 25 foot Indo-Pacific croc that terrorized the Staaten river in North Australia during the 50s. Or the 26 foot plus specimen that today haunts the Goyder River Swamps in Arnhem Land.

I just wish they would give the job of writing books like these to zoologists. I don't want to blow my own trumpet but I could have done a much better job.

In Search of Ogoopogo : The Sacred Creature of the Okanagan Waters
Arlene Gaal
(Hancock House ISBN 0-88839-482-9)

Every lake monster has its champion. Nessie had the late Tim Dinsdale who has to some extent handed his mantle down to the dedicated Steve Feltham. "Champ" of Lake Champlain has Joseph Zarzinski. Ogoopogo of Lake Okanagan has Arlene Gaal. This is Arlene's third book on the famed monster.

Ogoopogo is said to be up to 80 feet long and brownish green in colour with a paler underside. It has a lizard like head and long neck with a humped back. The body is long and snake-like. The body has flippers and the long tail is fluked like a whale's.

There two main camps in the riddle of Ogoopogo's identity. One is that the creature is an elongate fresh water whale descended from an archaic group of cetaceans called

Basilasaurs. The other is that they are decedents of one of the groups of Mesozoic marine reptiles such as *Mososaurs* or *Pliosaurus*.

The book traces the monsters history back to the time when the Indians practiced sacrifice to *N'ha-a-itk*, the dragon of the lake. A table lists all reported sightings since 1700 and photographs, sonar, and moving film are all examined.

Unlike Loch Ness, Lake Okanagan has massive stocks of fish. groups of large predators could, conceivably exist there. Also the strong resemblance of Ogoopogo to Caddy, a sea serpent reported off the west coast of Canada, cannot be ignored. If they exist the two species would seem related.

This is the kind of book hidebound academics, and armchair zoologists ignore. More fool them. The great zoological discoveries are to be made out there in the world's wild places, not in lecture halls.

Clandestine Creatures: Anomalous Animals, Manimals and Monsters of the Mind.

Neil Arnold (privately published)

If fortune were a war and cryptozoology and army then Neil Arnold would be a Sergeant Major out on the front line with the men whilst the officers sipped tea in their barracks miles away. In this follow up volume to *Odd Bodies*, Neil concentrates less on true mystery animals and more on boogey men. Those ethereal creatures created around campfires and kept alive be generations of sleepless children. The Monkey Man of India, that Spring Heeled Jack style character whose misdeeds brought whole cities to a halt. Some boogey men seemed to have only the most slender foothold in reality. The Loveland Frog, that human/herp hybrid who has graced so many books on the

Animals & Men #32

paranormal seems to have had it's genesis in an escaped iguana. The Bunnyman seems to have been to have been nothing more than a one off prankster in a rabbit suit. Others like the Highgate Vampire seem to have had a core of truth that has been wildly exaggerated. Like a game of pass the parcel if enough packaging is stripped off you will find some THING.

Perhaps the strangest story is that of the Yorkshire Maggot. Seen in a Yorkshire village in the 1960s it was an amorphous blobby thing that slithered up from a recently dug grave and crawled about apparently entering houses in a village and killing people therein. The victims apparently died of ptomaine poisoning (ptomaine being a compound found in decaying organic matter) The main witnesses five year old son was one victim. The attacks ceased after the grave was dug up and the body therein burned. The story if true sounds like a genuine vampire. An etheric entity prolonging it's ghost like existence via taking the life of the living like an ethereal leech.

I recommend that this book be read to small children last thing at night.

Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors

David D Gilmore
(University of Pennsylvania Press
ISBN 0-8122-3702-1)

I have always considered psychology to be the softest of the sciences, its tenets merely the opinions of the psychologist. This book takes a psychological view of monsters and it's first chapter almost put me off. It was full of gobbledygook and meaningless doubletalk. Cryptozoology hardly gets a mention though the author acknowledges it exists. He mentions Mokele-Mbembe but says it has only two legs

(?!). Other cryptids are mentioned briefly including the yeti, Oogopogo, and Sasquatch.

Once you are past the first chapter the book improves somewhat as Gilmore takes a whistle stop tour of the continents and cultures. Of particular interest is the chapter on the Wendigo that storm shrouded monster of Canada's frozen north. Wendigo psychosis is a recognized condition. Legend has it that if you eat human flesh you become possessed by the Wendigo and crave human meat. The victim goes berserk exhibiting immense strength. Finally they are said to change into miniature versions of the Wendigo itself. If caught early on it is possible to reverse the possession. Otherwise the victim's hart must be melted. The Wendigo itself was supposed to look like a demonic skeletal giant of ice with burning indigo eyes and wild billowing hair on it's head. It was surrounded by a vortex of storms. Cases of Wendigo psychosis have been recorded as recently as the 1980s. The Wendigo chapter is worth the book's price alone.

One wonders if Gilmore has ever considered that monster exist *outside* the human head.

Thylacoleo Lives
Dennis A Wright
(Privately Published)

This is a 47 page booklet dealing with one of cryptozoology's most neglected but most exciting animals *Thylacoleo canifex*. The marsupial "big cat" was the size of a lion, had shearing incisors fro killing (as opposed to canines) and opposable clawed thumbs to help it climb. A predator on Australia's ice age megafauna it supposedly died out 10,000 years ago. No one seems to have told thylacoleo this, as according to Dennis Wright there are an average of five sightings per day! Dennis himself has seen a specimen. Whilst out shooting rabbits he saw what he thought was an escaped panther.

Animals & Men #32

He had the beast in the sights of his rifle from only 25 meters away when he realized that it was no cat. It had a quoll like face and was transparently a marsupial.

This is a well written booklet that is a joy to read. Well researched by a man who has really put in the field work and gone out searching for his quarry and interviewing witnesses. Some of the most compelling evidence is from animal kills whose bones look as if they have been cut apart by shears. The calling card of thylacoleo and its unique guillotine-like dentition.

I disagree with Mr Wright on the Rilla Martin photograph of 1964. It think it shows a thylacine rather than a thylacoleo on account of the pointed muzzle. But overall this is an excellent little book that leaves you hoping that Dennis Wright will publish more of his findings soon.. You can order a copy on line by visiting www.thylacoleo.com

A Fish Caught in Time: the Search for the Coelacanth by Samantha Weinberg

(Fourth Estate; ISBN: 1857029070)

This year is the 65th anniversary of the discovery of the coelacanth - a fish thought to have been extinct for 65 million years. This excellent little book tells the story not only of the initial discovery, but of more recent discoveries which proved that this fish is now living in at least three different locations across the globe. It is as interesting for the background information that it gives about its discoverer - Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer - as it is for the biological information. Until now very little has been written about her and she is - by anybody's standards - a remarkable woman. It is probably true to say that if it had not been for her dogged persistence that these

fish would never have been rediscovered. After she recovered the body of the first specimen, although she was convinced that she had something of major importance, none of the other experts (nor her superiors at the East London Museum in South Africa), would believe her. In vain she tried to get of the fish preserved at a local morgue, or stored in a freezer. If it had not been for her, Ichthyological history would have been very different. This book also goes into a lot of depth about the significance of the discovery, it reproduces Marjorie's original sketches and letters, and explodes for theory that the coelacanth was a direct ancestor of all land dwelling vertebrates. JON DOWNES/RICHARD FREEMAN

The Kraken and the Colossal Octopus
by Bernard Heuvelmans
(Kegan Paul; ISBN: 0710308701)

Bernard Heuvelmans was a remarkable man. Known to many as the 'father of cryptozoology', he almost single-handedly invented a whole discipline. During his lifetime he wrote a long line of books about mystery animals, and for many years it has been a major annoyance to cryptozoologists and mystery animal buffs around the world that all but two of these books were only ever published in French. The publishers should, therefore, be congratulated for this English edition at - the second in what is promised to be an entire library of Heuvelmans's works in the English-language. However it is nearly seven years late. The first volume in the series (*On the Track of Unknown Animals*) was republished in 1995 and subsequent fore limbs were promised regularly. However, better late than never. It is a remarkable book by anybody's standards and tells you everything you wanted to know about Giant Squid and giant octopuses but were afraid to ask. However, once you have got over the shock of having a new Heuvelmans volume in your hands, the reality is less than impressive. His earlier books benefited greatly

Animals & Men #32

from a sympathetic translator. Heuvelmans wrote in a chatty and colloquial style which singularly fails to come across in this edition. He also intended his books to reach as wide an audience as possible which at a price of over 80 quid for 332 pages just ain't gonna happen. In these days of POD publishers and book finishers there is simply no excuse for charging that sort of money for a book - no matter how good - unless it is in an extra large format, on very high quality paper, and dripping with colour illustrations. This book has none of those. The illustrations are of relatively poor quality and are in black and white and there isn't even a dust jacket. It is a case of too little too late and I'm afraid that the publishers should be ashamed of themselves. Bernard Heuvelmans who died three years ago deserves better than this. JON DOWNES

Close to Shore: The Terrifying Shark Attacks of 1916 by Mike Capuzzo
(Broadway Books; ISBN: 0767904141)

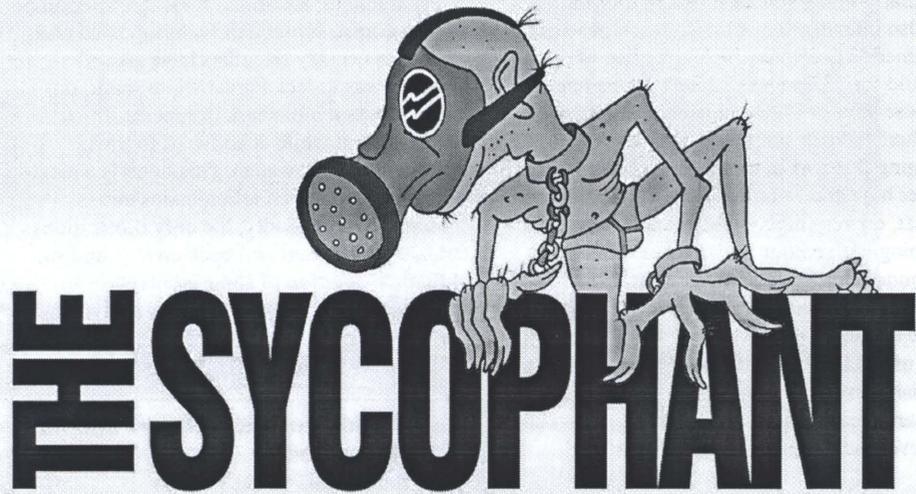
Peter Benchley's novel *Jaws*, and the subsequent blockbusting movie changed the public perception of sharks forever. But - just as you thought it was safe to go back in the water - here comes an excellent book on the real life series of shark attacks which inspired Benchley. The time: Summer 1916. The place: Matawan Creek, New Jersey. Whilst across the Atlantic World War One was reaching its bloody peak, the East Coast of America - a year before they joined the conflict - was on holiday. But Terror was about strike. In July 1916 a lone Great White shark left its usual deep-ocean habitat and headed in the direction of the New Jersey shoreline. There, near the towns of Beach Haven and Spring Lake - and, incredibly, a farming community *eleven miles inland* - the most ferocious and unpredictable of predators began a deadly rampage: the first shark attacks on swimmers in U.S. history. Four people were killed and one maimed for

life. When the fish was finally caught it turned out not even to be particularly big - only 7½ feet (2.2 m) in length. Exhibited for a short period of time, the corpse subsequently disappeared and for nearly a century scientists have argued whether it was in fact a great white shark, or whether it was a bull shark (a species which unlike the great white is known to travel regularly into fresh water). This book is a must-have for elasmobranch aficionados and is grippingly written. Sadly, the only illustrations are those on the front and back covers, and we feel that the addition of some archive photographs would have made this an even more attractive package. Well done Mr Capuzzo.
JON DOWNES/RICHARD FREEMAN

The Mythology of the Mermaid and her Kin by Marc Potts
(Capall Bann ISBN 186163 0395)

The mermaid is one of the enduring cultural icons of the human race. It is known from every culture, and - we believe at least - that an understanding of individual cultural mores is essential if you are to understand that culture's relationship with its environment. A study of mermaids, therefore, is essential for anyone wishing to understand man's relationship with the marine world. Why, therefore, have there been so few good books written on mermaids? Most of the readily available books are of the twee new age type and are best left alone if you have not had the foresight to equip yourself with a vomit bag first! However this book is different. It is beautifully illustrated by black and white line drawings and - unusually - does not limit its scope to European folklore. Russian merfolk such as *The Vodyana* and Japanese merfolk are also covered in great detail. The sickly sweet Victorian imagery of Charles Kingsley et al is swept away and replaced by a grim vision of implacable beings residing in an unforgiving environment. Well worth a read.

Animals & Men #32



Deep in a cave beneath Loch Ness lives a strange figure who steals ideas from other magazines and then somehow makes them his own.

He keeps a jaundiced weather eye on the world of Fortean Zoology and occasionally emerges into the world of men to pour ridicule upon his unsuspecting victims...

FUN IN THE FUNERAL PARLOUR

Welsh researcher Matthew Williams is no stranger to the world of the CFZ. He has appeared at one of the *Weird Weekends* and

together with his charming doggie is a fixture on the conference circuit especially since his 2000 criminal damage conviction for making a crop circle. We are all very fond of Matthew but at a recent conference in Las Vegas we saw him wearing a suit for the first time.



We now believe that the *enfant terrible* of cereaology has missed his true calling. In a somber dark suit and the somber intonation

Animals & Men #32

of the valleys he was the spitting image of a lugubrious Welsh undertaker. We solemnly suggest that he change vocations immediately.

Look you Boyo – you could be making far more money in the embalming chamber than you ever will constructing crop circles...

LIFE'S A RIOT WITH SPY vs SPY

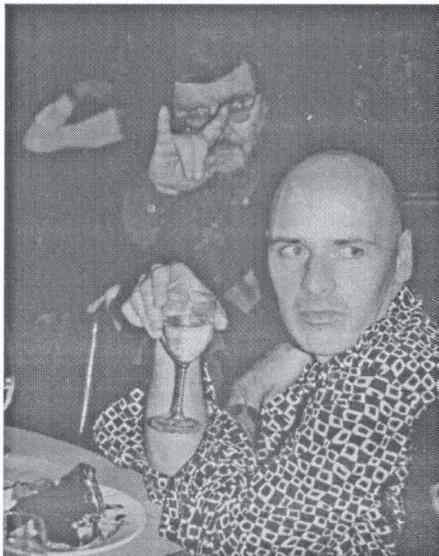
The fortean universe is getting even crazier. Only three years after denouncing our very own Tim Matthews as a "Government Asset", shadowy figures on the borderlands of ufology have now named ... wait for it ANDY ROBERTS as a government agent. The present government is seriously screwed up but I doubt whether even they would have started a Ministry for the Grateful Dead!

Whilst on the subject of Government agents, at the recent Las Vegas Crash Retrieval conference certain people present started a rumour that our beloved editor and the head of the US office of the CFZ were also state controlled assets.

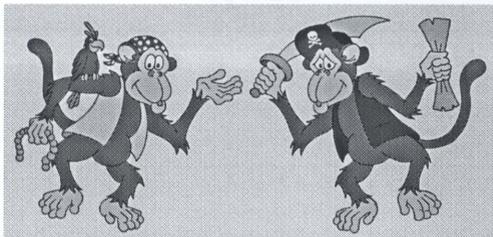
Jon and Nick responded to this by issuing the following photograph of themselves looking mysterious, and wandering about the departure lounge of Vegas airport looking shifty. Whenever any of the more credulous attendees at the convention were within earshot they would mutter loudly into Jon's cellphone:

"Attention Unit Commander. The Cobra has Struck. Repeat, The Cobra has struck. Condition red"

The intended recipients of this nonsense looked panic-stricken and ran away. We strongly expect to find allegations about these two reprobates in internet chatrooms before the year is out!



MEET THE TEN FATHOM PIRATES



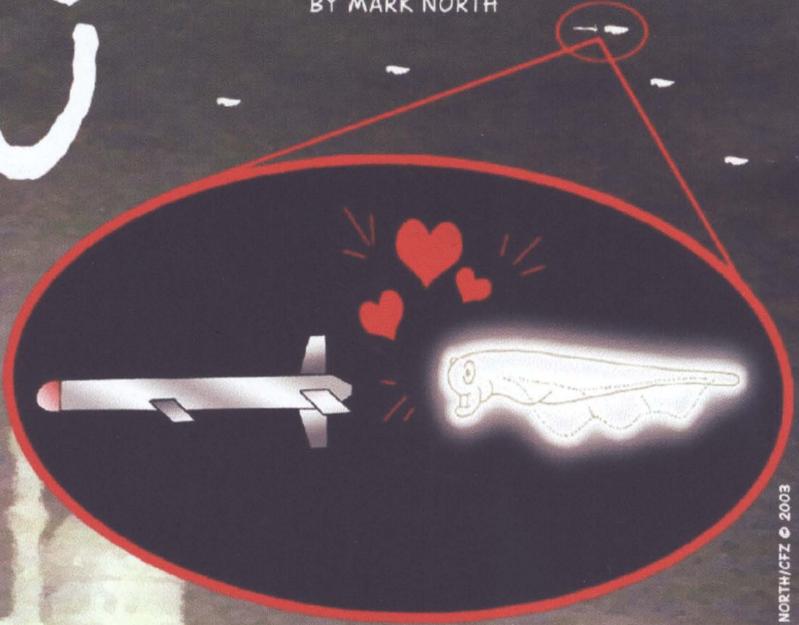
As we have successfully proved that CFZ funding does NOT come from our CIA paymasters, the question is, how do we finance the world's biggest cryptozoological organisation? We can exclusively reveal that one of our major sources of income is from an ongoing very silly children's serial for *Tropical Fish* magazine featuring two small monkeys called Marzipan and Frampton who live under the sea and have increasingly surreal adventures.

Hey, it's better than working!

THE

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CRYPTOZOOLOGY FILES
BY MARK NORTH



MARK NORTH/CFZ © 2003

LOCATION: BAGHDAD, IRAQ.

CASE: MYSTERIOUS FLYING RODS.

ETHEREAL ORGANISMS DUBBED "FLYING RODS" OR "SKY FISH" ARE CAPTURED LIVE DURING A TELEVISION BROADCAST. THE REASON FOR THEM BEING HERE IN SUCH ABUNDANCE REMAINS A MYSTERY.

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"...Merry go Merry go Merry go round BEEP BEEP"