

# BIOFORTEAN NOTES

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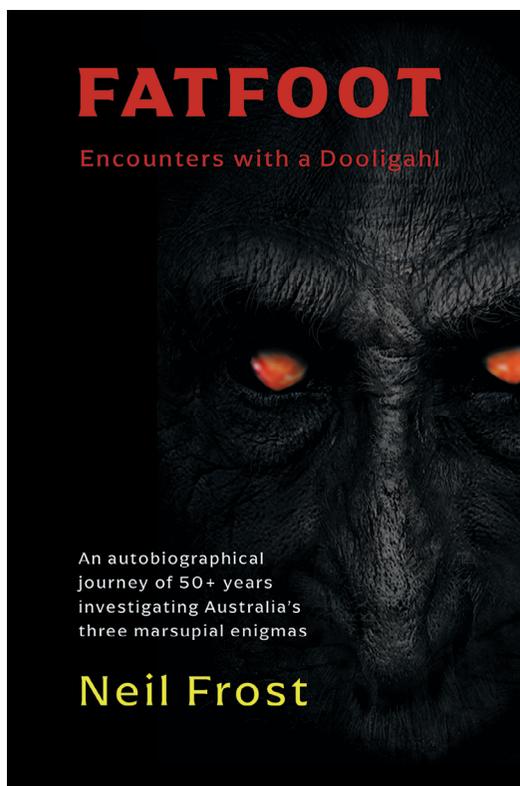
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*Fatfoot* is the culmination of decades of investigation and field research into Australian ‘Yowie’ phenomena. Neil Frost tells the story of how puzzling encounters in his own back yard became a community-wide research project. Over the years, Frost developed a theory that there are actually three unknown species behind these encounters, and rather than being primates (as ‘wild men’ elsewhere around the globe are supposed to be), these are marsupials with very different biological traits. This fascinating book will entrance cryptozoology enthusiasts looking for a serious but readable addition to their library.

# The Historical Yowie

An Australian Newspaper Survey, 1840s-1930s

Chad Arment

Having worked recently with Australian researcher Neil Frost to bring his book, *Fatfoot*, to publication, I decided to take a closer look at Yowie reports from the historical record as I did similarly with historical Bigfoot accounts (*The Historical Bigfoot*, 2nd edition, 2019). Frost's thesis is that behind what we term 'Yowie' reports are actually three separate undescribed marsupials: carnivorous, facultative bipeds that look somewhat primate-like, but with some distinctly marsupial features. This would explain details that primates lack, such as claws and reflective eyeshine from a tapetum lucidum. Frost delineates the Dooligahl, probably the most common 'Yowie' form, moderately tall and leaving 3-toed tracks; the Quinkan, larger and more aggressive; and the Junjudee, smaller and more monkeylike.

As with any mystery animal medialogue, not all presumptive accounts are legitimate encounter reports. Some will be hoaxes peddled to newspapers, hoaxes created by newspapers, misidentifications of known or out-of-place species, rumors and vague gossip, or other errors. I've weeded out several 'wild man' accounts which are clearly just homeless individuals; some of those individuals were caught and imprisoned (soon dying in prison) in the early 1900s.

This is a chronological survey, but is not exhaustive. I'm sure there are many additional accounts yet to be located (not all newspapers are readily available in digital format), or which have been printed in Australian titles not in my personal library. I have noted some of these stories truncated for publication in certain Australian cryptozoology books which have argued for a primate Yowie. I think seeing the accounts in full form may push back against that argument. More work is needed to be done, but

I do see several character traits cropping up in different accounts that suggest the unknown marsupial theory is worth considering.

*Geelong Advertiser* (VIC), Sept. 29, 1849

Hark For'ard Hoicks the Bunyip.—Benjamin Nixon, our indefatigable road finder, road maker, road and mail contractor, and thief tracker, having like most of his neighbours, some cattle rather the worse for low diet, proceeded to explore the country west of the Illawarra range in search of bush feed; having finished his journey westward, he ventured upon a supposed short cut home, and his lengthened progress exemplified the old 'saw,' of the shortest way round is the longest way home. He started from Comerton, Mittagong, and made a straight circumbendibus across the gullies, deep, dark, and dismal, fit only to be the abode of some 'devil-devil,' or imp of the strange and horrible; he was on his weary journey two nights and a day instead of a few hours; and returned travelworn and hungry, and his brain full of something uncommon and wonderful, to be seen. He saw and tracked, as far as time and an empty stomach would permit, plain and well indented footmarks of a strange animal, walking upright, with round cloven foot, in size, shape, and impression, like that of a camel; he is out in search of it, accompanied by a small but resolute band of adventurers; and from his intelligence, wonderful power of tracking, and from his perseverance, there is every reason to anticipate a successful issue. We may therefore expect the hunters will 'run in' the bunyip in earnest, or some other hitherto unknown savage biped inhabitant of the wilderness.—*Goulburn Herald*.

Journal of an Exploring Expedition to the Eastward of Northam.

*Launceston Independent* (TAS), Sept. 13, 1861

[Lake Grace, WA]

August 1st, Thursday—This morning on further conversation, these men gave us an account of some strange animal they call Jungra and Jimba, male and female, which they describe as a large strong animal of the monkey tribe, very fierce, and will attack men when single, kill them and eat them. They were asked if the Jimba or Jungra, in any way resembled Ginka, or devil;

they replied that the devil was never seen, but the others were both seen and felt by some of them. . . . [excerpt]

*Kiama Independent and Shoalhaven Advertiser* (NSW), January 3, 1867

Strange Animal.—For two years past a strange animal has occasionally been seen by people in the bush near the Murilla Mountains, and various have been the descriptions given of the creature, so that we have been doubtful of the reports, and fancied the animal was nothing more or less than an old “wallaroo,” as the locality of the Murilla is very wild and rocky, and the wallaroo is found in such places; but within the last two days two persons have seen the creature, which has caused much alarm to a whole camp of stone-breakers and road-makers, sixteen or seventeen in number. It is described as being three feet six inches high, standing on its hind legs, the fore legs or arms could about touch the ground. It was covered with shaggy black hair all over. It made a most horrible yelling when the parties rode in the direction of the rock it stood upon, showing a very fine set of teeth. It made a spring at its disturbers, who put spurs to their horses and fled. The black in this district are aware of the existence of these animals, and state that there were a great number of them some time ago. The place where this creature was seen is one of the wildest places that could be found on the northern line of road, at the back of the Murilla Mountain, or as it is generally called the “Murlow.” This creature evidently belongs to the ape type.—*Herald*.

*Newcastle Chronicle* (NSW), April 8, 1868

The Gorilla.—The narrative which appeared in your journal of last Saturday, taken from the Maitland Mercury, concerning Patrick Hogan, a free-selector on the other side of the Sugarloaf Mountain, towards Lake Macquarie, seeing what he termed a gorilla, has proved since to be a young Australian native named Sidebottom, who, being well acquainted with the old man, thought to have a lark with him, knowing that he was filled with superstitious notions. This young Australian, who resembled one of the human species, painted himself with various colours, and stood about the same height as that which Mr. Hogan had represented

as a gorilla. But instead of Hogan menacing the creature with the axe, he at once commenced to cross himself, and at the same time lost his equilibrium while on his way to the hut. The kangaroo pup that is spoken of, doubtless knew the supposed Australian gorilla nearly as well as his master. The whole affair seems to have been carried out so cleverly that the *Mercury* has been caught in the trap on the first of April.

*The Evening News* (Sydney, NSW), April 1, 1870

A Singular Animal.—We have received the following:—“The capture of a singular animal is reported by a bushman recently engaged in exploring the belt of limestone country at the head of the Uker River, Northern Queensland. While camped in a basin at the mouth of the singular caves hollowed out in the natural formation by the section of the weather, his attention was attracted by the singular and gigantic tracks leading from the upland passes to the margin of the river. Curiosity led him to keep several nights’ watch by what seemed to be a well-beaten path, and by the aid of a three-quarter moon he was enabled to observe a heavy mass pass him, apparently on the road to its nightly feeding ground. The height of the animal was described as that of an average horse at its wither; its form and gait not unlike that of the nylghan [nilghai]; and the note uttered a species of heavy snuffling, as if suffering from a severe cold. A shot fired at a distance of sixty or seventy yards struck with a heavy thud, but apparently did little save extort a shrill groan and accelerate the pace of this strange mammal. On the following morning, however, gouts of blood were noticed on the track, and at a distance of some three-quarters of a mile from where the shot was fired the body of the creature was found at the base of a precipitous cliff overhanging the river. Whether death resulted from the bullet or was caused by the precipitation of the animal from so great a height in its fright could not be ascertained, as the spot where the brute had fallen was inaccessible. For the same reason but a cursory view of the body could be obtained, by which it appeared to be coated with a shaggy covering of reddish brown hair, the head being destitute of horns or ears, and the feet terminating in claws as formidable as spike nails. More definitive information is

required to affix to this discovery its true position in the fauna of Australia.—*Cleveland Bay Express*.

### An Australian Gorilla.

*The Age* (Melbourne, VIC), April 29, 1871

Mr. George Osborne, a census collector, on going his round actually was within shooting distance of a real live gorilla! His narrative, published in the *Illawarra Mercury*, is as follows:—"On my way from Mr. Matthew Reen's, coming down a range about half a mile behind Mr. John Graham's residence, at Avondale, after sunset, my horse was startled at seeing an animal coming down a tree, which I thought at the moment to be an aboriginal, and when it got about eight feet of the ground it lost its grip and fell. My feelings at the moment were anything but happy, but although my horse was restless, I endeavored to get a good glimpse of the animal by following it as it retreated until it disappeared into a gully. It somewhat resembled the shape of a man, according to the following description:—Height, about five feet, slender proportions, arms long, legs like human being, only the feet being about eighteen inches long, and shape like an iguana, with long toes, and muscles of the arm and chest being well developed, the back of the head straight with the neck and body, but the front of the face projected forward, with monkey features. Every particle of the body, except the feet and face, was covered with black hair, with a tan-colored streak from the neck to the abdomen. While looking at me its eyes and mouth were in motion, after the fashion of a monkey. It walked quadruped fashion, but at every few paces it would turn round and look at me following it, supporting the body with two legs and one arm, whilst the other arm was placed across the hip. I also noticed that it had no tail." It appears that two children named Summers saw the same animal, or one similar, in the same locality, about two years ago, but they say it was then only the size of a boy about thirteen or fourteen years of age.

*Illustrated Australian News* (Melbourne, VIC), June 17, 1871

More tidings of the Australian gorilla. Since the report of the strange animal seen by Mr. Geo. Osborne on the Avondale Ranges,

and which he supposes was a gorilla, has appeared, speculations regarding the existence and species of that natural curiosity have been rife in the Illawarra district. Several parties have been exploring the bush and gullies in the supposed whereabouts of his gorillaship during the past fortnight, but without success. Recently, a party of between twenty and thirty gentlemen assembled in the vicinity indicated, with dogs, ropes, and firearms, but without obtaining either scent or sight of the gorilla. Strange steps and marks were noticed up the side of a fig tree in one of the gullies explored, but on the tree being laid low, an "old man opossum" made his appearance instead of the gorilla. A person who has resided on Bulli Mountain for several years, positively asserts that an animal similar to that seen by Mr. Osborne, but considerably larger, has been seen in the bush in that locality more than once, and by different persons, and that no dogs can be found to face it.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), July 22, 1871

The *Macleay Herald* gives currency to a report that a gorilla has been seen in the neighbourhood of Belgrave.

*Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* (NSW),

December 16, 1871

A Wild Man in the Bush at Manaro.—From the fastnesses of the Jingeras, adjacent to or in the district of Manaro, comes the startling intelligence that a 'wild man' has been seen in that place. A little girl, the grand-daughter of Mr. Joseph Ward, senior, of Mittagong, asserts that she has met an old man, whose back is bent, and body covered with a thick coat of hair,—in height (to use the girl's words), about the same as her grandfather. The strange being in question had nails of a tremendous length on his hands, and seemed desirous of shunning the girl. The main points of the assertion are given with remarkable earnestness by Mr. Ward's granddaughter; nothing can shake the simple outlines of her story. Confirmatory of the above incident, is the statement made by Mr. Kelly, of the Jingeras, who says that he has himself seen the 'wild man.' Anent the above, there is a tradition among the settlers of this place that the mysterious monster, the 'yahoo,' is

a denizen of the mountainous country where the 'wild man' has been discovered, and that it is only observable in stormy weather, or on the approach of bad seasons.—*Manaro Mercury*, Dec. 9.

*Illawarra Mercury* (NSW), April 28, 1876

The Gorilla Again.—A correspondent, in writing to us from the Crookwell district, on the 23rd instant, gives the following startling information respecting the present whereabouts of "The Gorilla," who appears to have taken a tour from the rugged ravines and craggy heights of Avondale to the more open and elevated plateau of the southern districts. Whether his Gorillaship has been terrified at the idea of remaining any longer in this district, lest the Borough of Central Illawarra should obtain a Free Library as proposed, or has gone on a "free selecting" expedition, we cannot say. It is quite evident, however, that he is "abroad." Our correspondent says:—"The news that is exciting if not startling the people of this part at present is the existence here of what is supposed to be a veritable live gorilla, the monster having been seen within four miles of the village of Crookwell on several nights during last week. Two or three families have been so much frightened by 'the hairy man' that they have left their own houses and have gone to live together for safety. He went up to a window of one man's house, and looked into the room, shewing his face, it is said, quite visibly, and scratching along the wall of the house with his nails, making a noise like a cat scratching. He is reported to be about six feet high, and covered with shaggy hair, face and all. His tracks are said to have been followed for some distance, but his lordship of the forest has not yet been found by his pursuers. Last night a party armed to the teeth were going out to search for him, but with what success I have not yet heard. It is said that shots have been fired at him without taking any effect upon his body. I should like to try what effect a bullet from a Henry rifle would have upon his gorillaship. Should a capture be effected I will send you particulars."

*Shoalhaven News* (NSW), Nov. 4, 1876

Found at last.—The Milbury Creek correspondent of the Bathurst Free Press says:—A resident of this place returned from the Fish

River some forty miles from here, a few days ago, and told me that he had been informed by a respectable settler in that quarter that a party of sawyers, working in the Walla Walla scrub, came upon the dead body of an unearthly looking animal, human or inhuman they could not tell. It stood about 9 feet in height, with head, face, and hands, similar to a man's; one of its feet resembled the hoof of a horse, and the other was club-shaped; the body was covered with hair or bristles like a pig. For many years past it had been believed by the settlers of that wild part of the country, that the Walla Walla scrub was inhabited by a monster commonly called "the hairy man of the wood," or what all the blacks stand so much in dread of—the Yahoo. Horses and cattle are said never to have been known to enter or remain in the scrub.

Milburn Creek. November 11. [excerpt]

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Nov. 18, 1876

What Was It?—Who has not heard, from the earliest settlement of the colony, the blacks speaking of some unearthly animal or inhumane creature, that inhabited some part of the wildest, inaccessible, rugged and sequestered haunts of the rocky mountains and gorges in the colony, namely—the Yahoo-Devil Devil or the Hairy Man of the Woods—which to this day they stand in fearful awe and terror of. I, for one, sympathise with the superstitions or aboriginal sayings of those wild and unsophisticated denizens of the Australian bush—that their aboriginal tradition of such unearthly mongrels of monsters have and do now exist—though so rare, and not as yet often seen or believed in by white men. Fourteen days ago, and not more than ten miles from here, towards the head of the Lachlan River, on Coolamba station (Hemmond's), in one of the most secluded and melancholy-looking spots imaginable, imperceptibly a terror of awe creeps over every one that has to pass through this far and wide-known gorge or death chasm of the river. While a lad of the name of Porter (a son of Porter, a settler on the Lachlan), was shepherding a flock of his father's sheep, near to the dismal rocky bridge or gorge, as so called, an inhuman, unearthly-looking being was seen by the lad coming direct towards him from the high, rugged, and precipitous rocks. The dogs, on observing such an unknown monster,

would not attack, became timid, and crouched around the lad's legs, who became horror-struck with fear; he left the sheep to their fate, and ran, altogether with his collies, for home. On relating the inhuman sight he had seen, which was not credited by the father and others at home, they, however, at last, mustered courage, and went to the exact place described, but could find or see nothing of the hairy man.

On Saturday last, however, a fishing party of young men and young women went to the Rocky Bridge waterholes for a night's sport. These waterholes are famed, far and near, for quality and quantity of fish. It is customary for those bent for good sport to remain for the night, and, as a matter of course, a large fire is made. On the evening of this memorable day, two hours before sun-down, the young men and some of the women went to set their lines, leaving one of their young friends to boil the billy and prepare supper. While engaged, the young woman was suddenly startled by observing a man, as she naturally imagined at first sight, was one of their own party coming towards the fire, but on walking closer, discovered the appearance to be unsightly and inhuman, bearing in every way the shape of a man with a big red face, hands and legs covered over with long, shaggy hair—from fright became almost spell-bound, screamed and screeched—but unable to run. The men, on hearing such unearthly cries, left their fishing lines and ran with all speed towards their comrade. On reaching the fire, the monster of alarm was only distant some fifty yards. ON their appearing it stood for a minute or two and turned away and made for the rocks. Two of the men armed themselves with a tomahawk and cudgel and followed this extraordinary phenomena of nature for a short distance up the rocky and rugged mountain; when suddenly it turned round, and stood viewing the men as they were approaching. They also halted, being then about sixty yards from the object of terror, commanding a full view of his whole shape and make, resembling that of a big, slovenly man. The head was covered with dark grizzly hair, the face with haggard darkish hair, the back and belly and down the legs covered with hair of a lighter colour. This devil-devil—or whatever it may be called—doubled round, and hurriedly mad back towards the fire and women again. On seeing him coming, a

fearful commotion amongst the females, and a kind of supernatural terror among the men took place. In the meantime, before reaching the camp, it sided away towards the inaccessible rocky mount. The names of two of the men who witnessed and took part in the scene are Porter and Dun, well known settlers on the Abercrombie and Lachlan Rivers. Mr. Laner, another settler from the Lachlan, has informed me the other day that the neighbours all round have organized a party to go in search of the human monster, and hunt him down, dead or alive. It is not many weeks ago that I recorded the remains of a similar animal or creature being found in the Walla Walla scrub. It is well known to the old settlers for the last 30 odd years, that the blacks will never camp within miles of this death-like chasm of the Lachlan, though they come long distances every year to fish in the adjoining waterholes, but leave before sundown to camp miles away. Whether this be the blacks' veritable Yahoo—devil-devil—or the white man's hairy man of the wood, time, it is hoped, will now shortly tell.

#### An Australian Hairy Man of the Woods.

*Freeman's Journal* (Sydney, NSW), March 23, 1878

A correspondent in a western district sends the following strange story:—About thirty years ago a shepherd in W. Suttor's employ averred that he had seen a hairy man in a scrub north of Cunningham's Creek, but the story was treated as childish. However, he persisted till the day he died that it walked upright and was covered with hair, and his dogs that hunted everything else ran back from this frightened, with their tails between their legs. A few years ago young Tim Wring, a shepherd, in Mr. Price's employ, while his pot was boiling for dinner, saw something unusual walking through the scrub about five miles from where the first shepherd reported, but Tim could give no description, as he ran home for his life to be laughed at as a dreamer. Later still, in the last-mentioned locality, Pat Wring, a younger brother, heard his kangaroo dogs bark from 10 a.m., till 4 p.m. down some inaccessible cliffs. He determined to go and help them to kill what he supposed must be an old man wallaroo, as the two dogs could kill any other kind of marsupial. Pat's surprise may easily be imagined when his eyes looked down on a hairy monster standing

upright, a body apparently as round as a horse, arms as round as a man's thigh, three claws on each hand, two large claws on each foot. It stood, to the best of his belief, about four feet high. The head resembled a pig's but turned upwards, and he threw into the air the only dog that would venture within his reach. Pat could see the milk-white hair under its armpits. When Pat was tired of looking on, and fearing the dog would be killed, as it fell on the rocks about six yards away each time it was thrown up, he threw down about 14 lb weight of a stone, which struck the mark without doing any damage. The animal was at the foot of the rocks on which Pat stood, and in two springs or strides it sprang or strode in an upright fashion and then commenced to climb monkey-fashion. Pat saw no more, as he thought it was time to run for life; he never looked back. His heart beat so audibly that he fancied it was the quick stamping of the strange thing behind him. The dog died shortly after, but not a hair of the strange creature could be found, though the dog's hair and blood was plentiful on the rocks. We now hear that some splitters on the flat lands north of Cherry Tree Hill have become terrified by hearing unearthly screams or sounds at night. There are three caves in the vicinity of the above; into *one* of these the dogs never follow the rocky-wallaby.

#### More About the Pyramul Hairy Wonder.

*Freeman's Journal* (Sydney, NSW), April 13, 1878

A correspondent, on whose good faith we rely, the same who sent us some particulars of the reported appearance in a western district of a strange creature resembling a hairy man—gives the following additional information on the subject:—

It is now about 18 months since I first heard of Pat King's adventure with the hairy man. I thought as little about it as my neighbours, until I got the recital from his own lips. I fancy I am pretty sharp in detecting a falsehood, in a certain link between the voice and the eye, but I could see no reason to doubt the story. Moreover the character of the whole family is above reproach. I have since seen the young man's sister, who tells me that when her brother Tim ran home and told about the sight he had seen he was white as a sheet, and gave a better description in a few

more particulars than his brother. She likewise reports another meeting with this strange thing. A settler's daughter having gone for the cows, an elder sister, thinking she was long away, went out to assist her. On turning the corner of a bush fence, about a quarter of a mile from the hut, she suddenly stood face to face with the stranger. No doubt both were frightened, as they stood watching each other, until the sister called out that she had all the cows, when the hairy creature turned about and walked leisurely away. This last adventure, like the three black crows, took all shapes ere it reached our neighbourhood two years ago. We always doubted the existence of this strange animal, but after conversing with some of the actors, and hearing the recital from neighbours who live beside them, we see no reason to discredit it any longer.

*Burrangong Argus* (NSW), Sept. 4, 1878

Sensational News—The Wild Man of the Woods.—Some startling intelligence was brought into town yesterday morning by a young man named Wallace, a resident of the Three-Mile. According to his account he was early in the morning on his way to Mr. J. Pring's, Crowther station, whither he was bound to see after a job of fencing, and while riding leisurely along in the neighbourhood of Bendick Morrell, he heard a strange roaring noise behind him. Turning his head, he was somewhat alarmed at perceiving approaching him a weird object in the shape of a man, but of gigantic size, entirely destitute of clothing, and covered in thick hair. The 'wild man,' while Wallace was gazing at him, came nearer, at which the other started his horse away at a canter. The frightful being, however, quickened his gait at the same moment, and kept pace with the horse, and seeing this Wallace put his animal at a neighbouring fence and cleared it. But the 'hairy 'un' could also jump, and was soon drawing near to Wallace, who, however, quickly placed another fence between them. Over this the 'wild man,' it appears, did not attempt to get, but amused himself by running parallel with Wallace, who finally evaded his pursuer some way or the other. Wallace's description of the strange being is not a very lucid one; but this might arise from the fright he was in at the time, for we have it from another source that there was

no question as to the state of terror he was in when he arrived at Jasprizza's wine-shop, Three-Mile. Wallace, who, we may here mention, is a strictly sober man, and not therefore open to the imputation of suffering from the D.T.s, stated his perfect willingness to lead an armed party back to the scene of his encounter, where he asserted the tracks would be found, but declined to go back alone, or without the party carrying firearms. Many surmises are expressed as to what the monster can be, one being that it is the traditionary yahoo, of Weddin Mountain notoriety; another, that it is some demented son of Esau; and another, that it is an adventurous gorilla, who has made its way to this colony as a stowaway, in some vessel lately arrived on [----ric's] torrid shores. But anyhow, we are likely to be soon relieved of all suspense in the matter, as an expedition, foremost amongst which are some members of the Shamrock Hunt Club, is organizing to go in search of the monster, and no doubt, the Orson found, some one of the party will be ready enough to act Valentine.

A Strange Animal. Adelaide, 3rd May.

*The Age* (Melbourne, VIC), May 4, 1880

Additional particulars have been received of the existence of a strange animal at large on Yorke's Peninsula. The report, received a few months ago, represented the animal as being like a large hairy man. The latest account is as to the frightening of settlers' horses during the night. Tracks as of an enormous kangaroo were discovered in the morning, jumping 4 feet 6 inches. The aboriginals speak of a big one fellow like man along the scrub. The first report was discredited, but the latest furnishes reason for thinking that some unknown animal is in the scrub. The settlers are talking of organising a party to search the scrub. The matter has caused much excitement on the Peninsula.

Grafton. Tuesday.

*Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), July 7, 1880

Constable Morgan, of Blick's River, reports to sub-inspector Creagh that several well-known residents have seen an extraordinary creature in the bush on the Serpentine River, near the Grafton and Armidale Road. The creature is described as about

three feet six inches in height, with a head like a diamond snake, hands like a kangaroo, and a body like a man's, but dark and hairy. One man saw the creature on six different occasions, and on one occasion he was chased by it. Search is now being made for the creature, with a view to its capture.

*Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (NSW), May 27, 1881

The *Cooma Express* relates that the Jingera hairy man has again turned up. It was seen on Saturday last by Mr. Peter Tourbon and one or two others. This is its first appearance for some considerable time past. The animal, if such it be, has the appearance of a huge monkey or baboon, and is somewhat larger than a man.

New South Wales. Sydney, 11th October. [excerpt]

*The Age* (Melbourne, VIC), October 12, 1882

It is stated that an animal covered with hair, and making a noise like a child crying, was seen by five persons on Saturday with the aid of a telescope on Treachery Headland, from Seal Rocks. This is the third creature seen resembling a hairy man.

The Naturalist. Australian Apes.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Dec. 2, 1882

Reports occasionally reach us through the medium of the press of strange animals of the monkey tribe being seen in different parts of the colony, but such reports seem to attract little or no attention, and in many instances the truth of them is gravely doubted, if not entirely disbelieved.

The general belief amongst Australian naturalists seems to be that the nearest approach we have in this colony to the monkey is the native bear. Now I am in a position to state, and if necessary to prove, that a more egregious and unpardonable error does not exist. The mere fact of no apes being found in the Sydney Museum does not justify us in rushing to the conclusion that there are none in the colony, for it is extremely improbable that any ape will be foolhardy enough to present itself at the museum to undergo the somewhat delicate operation of stuffing; and beyond the fact that there are none to be found in the Sydney Museum, there is not one scintilla of evidence to prove that they

are not to be found in the colony, while there is abundance of evidence to show that they are. A few days ago I saw one of these strange animals in an unfrequented locality on the coast between Bateman's Bay and Ulladulla. My attention was attracted to it by the cries of a number of small birds which were pursuing and darting at it. When I first beheld the animal it was standing on its hind legs, partly upright, looking up at the birds above it in the bushes, blinking its eyes and distorting its visage and making a low chattering kind of noise. Being above the animal on a slight elevation and distant from it less than a chain, I had ample opportunity of noting its size and general appearance.

I should think that if it were standing perfectly upright it would be nearly 5ft high. It was tailless and covered with very long black hair, which was of a dirty red or snuff-colour about the throat and breast. Its eyes, which were small and restless, were partly hidden by matted hair that covered its head. The length of the fore legs or arms seemed to be strikingly out of proportion with the rest of its body, but in all other respects its build seemed to be fairly proportional. It would probably weigh about 8st. On the whole it was a most uncouth and repulsive looking creature, evidently possessed of prodigious strength, and one which I should not care to come to close quarters with. Having sufficiently satisfied my curiosity, I threw a stone at the animal, whereupon it immediately rushed off, followed by the birds, and disappeared in a ravine which was close at hand.

I do not claim to be the first who has seen this animal, for I can put my finger on half a dozen men at Bateman's Bay who have seen the same, or at any rate an animal of a similar description; but I think I am the first to come forward in the columns of a newspaper and give publicity to the fact of having seen it.

I may mention that a search party was organized at Bateman's Bay some months ago to surround the locality the supposed ape frequents and shoot or capture it, but the idea was abandoned in consequence of the likelihood of gun accidents; and I may further state that the skeleton of an ape, 4ft in length, may be seen at any time in a cave 14 miles from Bateman's Bay, in the direction of Ulladulla—Yours truly, H. J. M'Cooley.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Oct. 6, 1883

A strange animal like an ape has again been frightening the residents on the road from Orange to Bathurst, at a place called The Rocks. Several ineffectual attempts have been made to secure it.

The Naturalist.

Australian Apes.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Oct. 20, 1883

A telegram from your Blayney correspondent appeared in the "Evening News of the 2nd instant, and also in the "Town and Country Journal" of the 6th instant announcing the fact that "a strange animal like an ape has again been frightening the residents on the road from Orange to Bathurst, at a place called The Rocks. Several ineffectual attempts have been made to secure it." Now, it is probable that you and many of your country constituents may remember that in your issue of December 9, 1882, I gave a somewhat lengthy description of a large ape, (or yahoo, as the animal is called by bushmen) I had seen a few days previously in a rugged mountainous locality on the coast between Ulladulla and Bateman's Bay. My article called forth no comments that I am aware of from your country reader, which may be accounted for by the fact that the presence of indigenous apes in this colony is so notorious that the announcements of one being seen is not looked upon by bush residents as at all extraordinary. But strange to say, Mr. Ramsay, curator of the Australian Museum, disbelieves in their presence. Not because it is not possible for apes to be in the country up to date without being captured, but because of the deficiency of food plants for them to exist upon. Now with all due respect for Mr. Ramsay's opinion, with due respect for him as an eminent scientist and as an enthusiastic seeker of truth as a naturalist, I submit and think I shall be able in brief to prove to the satisfaction of every one who is not blindly sceptical that the position taken by the Curator of the Museum is absolutely untenable; that there are indigenous apes in this colony; that they have been frequently seen in Budawong mountains, in Jingera mountains, and in the Abercrombie mountains, at Bateman's Bay, at Mount Macdonald, and on the Guy Fawkes-road between Armidale and Grafton; that apes were known to the

aborigines of this colony, and were dreaded by them, long before a museum was founded in Australia, or a white man crossed the Murray; and that one was actually captured and killed near Braidwood within the memory of persons still living.

The curator of the Museum, last December, offered me a bonus of £100 if I brought him either alive or dead an indigenous ape, and I think it is highly probable that before many months elapse I shall be in a position to claim his bonus.

In conclusion, allow me to state that on this occasion I sincerely hope this subject will be fully and properly ventilated in the columns of your journal, and that any and all of your readers who can throw any further light on the subject, will have the kindness to do so.—Yours faithfully, H. J. M'Cooley.

Survey Camp, Mandurama, October 15, 1883.

The Naturalist.  
Australian Apes.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Nov. 3, 1883

In this article I propose to show that the position taken by the curator of the Museum in regard to the presence of indigenous apes in this colony is wholly untenable. His argument is this. That as there are no fruits or food plants in Australia there can be no indigenous apes. Now I readily admit that this argument would be of some weight if no ape had ever been seen in the colony, or if it were satisfactorily proved that without fruit or food plants it was impossible for the Australian ape to exist, but when it is notorious that apes have been seen in all parts of the colony at different times and by different persons, and when it is not shown that fruit or food plants are absolutely necessary for their existence, the curator's argument becomes illogical, and must of necessity fall to the ground. Mr. Ramsay seems to think that the Australian ape should live upon the same kind of food as the Asiatic or African ape. I reply that it is not at all necessary that it should. When every, or nearly every animal, bird, and insect known in Australia differs so widely and extraordinarily from animals, birds, and insects indigenous to other parts of the globe, would it be at all extraordinary to find the Australian ape differing from the Asiatic or the African ape? Most certainly not.

On the contrary, it is more than probable that the Australian ape differs as widely from the African as the kangaroo does from the buffalo, the dingo from the lion, or the laughing jackass from the nightingale. Therefore, I submit that it is quite probable the Australian ape exists and lives upon food different to that which apes from other countries exist upon—it may be the leaves of certain trees and on grass and herbs like the native bear and the opossum. For my own part I am strongly inclined to believe that the Australian ape is carnivorous, and that it subsists on birds' eggs, mice, &c. This belief is strengthened by the fact—a fact known to everyone who has seen these strange, uncouth animals—that all birds regard them with deadly enmity, and attack them with implacable fury. In fact it was the deafening outcry of a flock of birds that drew my attention to the ape I saw near Bateman's Bay, and I observed at the time that there were numbers of nests in the vines and bushes immediately above where the ape stood. In closing this article I wish to assert emphatically that there is not a scintilla of proof before us to show that fruit is necessary to the existence of the Australian ape; that there is not one scintilla of evidence to show that it does not live on leaves and herbs, or that it is not carnivorous, and that the proofs I shall shortly bring forward will conclusively demonstrate that the Australian ape is something more than a myth.—Faithfully yours, H. J. M'Cooley.

Survey Camp, Mandurama, October 22, 1883.

### Australian Apes.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), Nov. 24, 1883

In your last issue, and under the head of "The Naturalist," you publish a letter signed H. J. M'Cooley, having reference to Australian or indigenous apes. Allow me to add my testimony to that of Mr. M'Cooley, and to support his theory to the effect that there are indigenous apes in this colony, although rarely seen.

An animal resembling a human being, and covered with long hair, has several times been seen about four miles from here. News was brought in a short time ago, that it had been close to the township, and a party immediately started out in pursuit, and although they failed to see or hear anything of the animal, they discovered in the dust and other soft places in the bush, the

impressions of what appeared to be human hands. One of Cobb and Co.'s mail coach drivers asserts, and that with the utmost pertinacity, that about two years ago, when at Cullen Bullen post office, 12 miles from here, he saw an animal exactly like a human being, and covered with long shaggy hair, cross the road in front of his coach, and leap the fence with the greatest of ease. It then disappeared in the darkness. Richard Bulkeley. Capertree, October 24.

### The "Hairy Man" Turns Up Again

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), May 2, 1885

Some excitement was caused here (says the Inverell *Argus* of Saturday last) about two years ago, by reports furnished by visitors to the Big River of the mysterious appearance there of an object whose precise character or description the narrators were at a loss to give. Various members of fishing parties returned to town and related, with bated breath, how, at different times—and sometimes under lonely and trying circumstances—they had seen a figure, the like of which they in vain searched for among their friends and acquaintances. The object was described by some as resembling a gorilla; by others it was not doubted for a moment that the great "bunyip" had made its appearance; while we can well remember that a few, sceptical as to anything out of the ordinary, averred that the apparition represented no less a personage than Sally Walker—an aboriginal well known in Inverell at the time! Be this as it may, the "sensation" has again been revived. A young man named M'Rae informs us that on Good Friday, when fishing at the Big River, he noticed an object apparently swimming and coming towards him. He threw a stone, and the figure turned away. He then took his gun and fired at it. Upon this the mysterious stranger sprang about 6ft into the air, and rapidly swimming to the other shore, disappeared in the bush. M'Rae describes it as black and hairy, and of a shape hitherto unknown to him! Query: Can it be there is a gorilla in these parts? We shall await with interest a solution of the mystery by some hardy fisherman.

Tarago. (*From our Correspondent.*)

*Goulburn Evening Penny Post* (NSW), August 22, 1885

The Hairy Man Again.—No little commotion has been caused among our knights of the trigger and the excitable small boys during the last few days by the rumour that the hairy man has been seen in the high range at the rear of Mr. William Wyatt's farm. Wallaby hunters declared with solemn, scared faces that they had had a glimpse of him in the distance, and how he had rapidly "missled;" while one of our local residents, a giant among men, states that there is no doubt about the identity of the mystery; and on Tuesday night last a fettle and a lad went in that direction resolved to do or die. It appears that his lordship was seen in the moonlight close to a dark thicket of bushes, and appeared about eight feet high, covered with hair, and when fired at roared as loud as distant thunder, the shot taking no effect beyond making his eyes, plainly visible, sparkle and glare, while something like fire shot out of his nostrils. This tale is told in front of the bars to eager, and sometimes incredulous, listeners; but to-morrow a posse of bold hunters will invade the solemn, dark-looking ranges, carrying their lives in their hands, a trusty rifle, and a bottle, perhaps; and we may see the mystery cleared up. The fettle states he walked backward until able to get a fair run from the monster, while the youngster reached home with a scared, white face. Time will prove whether it is an old man kangaroo, or cross between a kangaroo and a bull.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW), August 29, 1885

Hairy Man.—The rising generation in and around Tarago have been almost frightened by the appearance of an orangutan, or hairy man. Some short time ago one of these certainly very peculiar animals for this country was reported as having been seen near Parker's Gap. Here is a chance for curiosity hunters.

*Cootamundra Herald* (NSW), Sept. 22, 1888

The Yahoo!—We cannot vouch for the fact, but it is reported that a gorilla or yahoo has been seen several times in the neighbourhood of Jindalee and even close to town; and it is said that his unearthly cooey has been heard at night. If so, it is to be hoped

that are gend'armes will "run him in," if only to restore confidence to the youngsters in the bush.

Our Holiday Resorts: An Artist's Wanderings  
in the Blue Mountains. [excerpt]

*Illustrated Sydney News* (NSW), Oct. 3, 1889

Talking of Lindon, which is situated some six miles from Springwood, reminds us that it has attained of late years considerable notoriety as the reputed haunt of a 'Great What is It?' in the shape of—laugh not, gentle reader—a hairy man! Germany has its legendary lore. Why should not the Blue Mountains? Let us entitle it

The Legend of Lindon.

The Grisly Details.

Once upon a time, about three years ago, or thereabouts, the peaceful little village of Lindon was shaken to its centre by the report that a monstrous and mysterious apparition had appeared to a lady, the wife of the caretaker of Sir Henry Parkes's property at Falconbridge. It seems that she was in the act of gathering a few sticks when a commotion amongst the fowls attracted her attention, and on looking up, before her stood a Thing about seven feet high. The black hair growing on its head trailed weirdly to the ground, and its eyeballs were surrounded with a yellow rim. It was—the hairy man!! (orchestra, pizzicato, and bluefire.)

Now one would suppose that the reflected glory from so great a man as Sir Henry would have lent the lady courage to face the monster of the yellow-rimmed eyeballs and request its name and address; but no, she just dropped her sticks and 'skinned out of that,' giving utterance to piercing screams. Her husband, on learning that a 'hairy man' was in the back yard, sallied forth with his gun to put daylight through him; but he of the flowing locks, in order to avoid an unsought-for publicity, had disappeared, taking several of the fowls with him to soothe his lonely hours. But, and this was imparted to us with great solemnity, he left a track three inches deep behind him!

When a fowl, or series of fowls disappear mysteriously during the night, people at Lindon whisper with bated breath—"The hairy man!" Parties who have seen his tracks institute search parties

for his discovery. Mr. Cummins, of the Royal Hotel, Springwood, offers fifty pounds for him, in order to fasten him up in a hen coop and exhibit him to an admiring public, or sell him as an advertisement to a hair restorative company.

Down in the gloomy depths of the gorge, where vines are clinging to rocks that have survived the ages; in that dim twilight where the sunlight never falls; beneath the awful precipices that echo with everlasting clangour the ceaseless thunder of the cataract—keep your weather eye lifting for the hairy man!

It is a sweet little place, is Springwood, and they believe this delightful yarn. So they do all round the neighbourhood. Why, even the guard that took us to Lawson in the van poured into our ear the 'legend of the hairy man;' and what made the tale doubly affecting was the fact that the narrator had partaken freely of the succulent onion.

*Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* (NSW), April 20, 1893  
The sensation created two or three years ago by the report that a hairy man, or ourang-outang, had been seen in the Crowther mountains, Young, was revived the other day by a statement made by Mr. Costello, of the Koorawatha Hotel, that shortly after passing through Mr. D'Elboux's boundary gate to the station, he came upon the self-same curiosity, and was not at the time more than 30 yards distant. Unfortunately, this was another instance of what a man may see when he is without a gun. The morning was perfectly clear, so that there could have been no mistake; indeed, Mr. Costello is prepared to verify his statement by statutory declaration. It is said that some years ago an ourang-outang was lost from a menagerie while travelling from Cowra to Young, but whether this explanation is sufficient to account for what Mr. Costello saw so recently we cannot say.

#### A Strange Animal. An Important Capture.

*Australian Star* (Sydney, NSW), October 27, 1893

Mr. Arthur Marrin, cordial manufacturer, met with a rather awkward reception as he was going in to Captain's Flat on Friday last with a load of cordials (says the *Braidwood Dispatch*). Shortly after getting upon the turn off road from the Cooma road, within

two or three miles of the Flat township, he noticed his dog running up out of the bush at full tear and clear off down the road in a terrible scare. He got down to see what had frightened him, when a formidable animal, with which he was entirely unacquainted, jumped up the lower bank on to the road. It frightened him quite as much as it did the dog, as it was standing up on its hind legs with its fore feet stretched out like the arms of a man. The road, being a cutting on a hill side, was narrow, and the animal was making for him, either to follow the dog or spring upon himself. Being unarmed, having only the whip in his hand, which would have had very little impression upon such an antagonist, he dropped the whip and picked up a stone which lay close to him, which he threw at the beast, striking it on the temple and bringing it to the ground. He then ran up and finished it with the butt end of the whip. On his return to Braidwood he put its body in the cart and brought it home with him. We paid a visit to Mr. Marrin's factory on Saturday and inspected it. It was four feet long, 11 inches across the forehead, and had a face very much like a polar bear. It weighed over seven stone. Its forearms were very strong with great paws that would be capable of giving a terrible grip. It was a tan color like a possum with strong hair on its skin. When Mr. Marrin encountered it it stood between 6ft. and 7ft. high. Some people think it is identical with a beast which has frightened several teamsters travelling through Parker's Gap on the Cooma road at various times, so much so that they have left their horses and ran away. Such an animal has been reported as visiting selector's places at Molonglo and Floxlowe and there have been reports of the presence of similar ones in the Budawang and Sassafras ranges. It has gone by the name of the hairy man. Other persons maintain it is merely a wombat and perfectly harmless. Met under such circumstances as those under which Mr. Marrin met it most persons, however, would be inclined to give it a wide berth if possible, but as Mr. Marrin could not get away he had to face it. The beast was a female.

#### A Strange Creature Killed.

*Australian Star* (Sydney, NSW), Nov. 1, 1893

A few days ago, it will be remembered, we reported the killing of a strange animal up Braidwood way. In view of the possibility

of the animal being an unknown one, it might have been worth the while of the Museum authorities to secure the body. The *Braidwood Dispatch* has the following to say on the matter:—

Since the notice in our last issue of the adventure of Mr. A. Marrin with the animal which he encountered near Captain's Flat and slaughtered with the simple weapon with which David brought down Goliath, he has had a great number of callers at his place to see the body, which he brought home with him. But, unfortunately, he buried it on Saturday. It is a great pity that he did not preserve it before decomposition set in, and more particularly so as there are numbers of persons now who put the whole thing down as a fairy tale and attempt to throw a doubt upon the truth of our description of it as we saw it in the flesh and measured it with the assistance of Constable Burney, who was looking at it the time we were. Of course it may be a wombat, and it may not. If it were a wombat the pugnacity it displayed is something altogether opposed to the reputed character of that animal, as all those who have seen one aver that it will run away from a man in place of attacking him, as this one did Mr. Marrin. Its fore legs were shaped just like a man's arm and about the same length, and the feet were shaped like a man's hands, with the palms precisely similar, and toes which had a close resemblance to fingers with overgrown nails. Its hind legs, upon which it stood upright when it faced its captor, were in proportion to the length of its body, nearly as long as a man's, and as it is measured from its head to its rump (from the top of the head and not the nose) fully 4ft., it could easily stand up between 6ft. and 7ft. high when standing on its hind feet, as Mr. Marrin estimated its height when it sprang up the bank. But whether it was a wombat or large bear, or the identical "hairy man" which there are so many stories about, it would have been a most valuable acquisition to Darwin in support of his theory of the evolution of the human family from the monkey, as it would have accounted for the missing link, which has been so long the trouble in the want of all traces in man of the caudal appendage, which is so prominent a feature in the monkey tribe. This animal resembled the wombat in having no tail, and would thus prove that there would be no need to look for the missing link in establishing the original kindred between the human being and the animal creation.

*Australian Star* (Sydney, NSW), November 30, 1894

On October 3 last young Johnnie M'Williams was riding from his home at Snowball to the Jinden P.O. When about half way the boy was startled by the extraordinary sight of a wild man or gorilla (writes a correspondent to a Braidwood paper). The boy states that a wild man suddenly appeared from behind a tree, about 30yd. from the road, stood looking at him for a few seconds, and then turned and ran for the wooded hills a mile or so from the road. The animal ran for 200yd. across open country before disappearing over a low hill, so that the boy had ample time to observe the beast. The boy states that it appeared to be over 6ft. in height and heavily built. He describes it "as a big man covered with long hair." It did not run very fast and tore up the dust with its nails, and in jumping a log it struck its foot against a limb, when it bellowed like a bullock. When running it kept looking back at the boy, till it disappeared. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and the boy describes everything he saw minutely. The boy is a truthful and manly young fellow, well acquainted with all the known animals in the New South Wales bush, and persists that he could not have been mistaken. For many years there have been tales of trappers coming across enormous tracks of some unknown animal in the mountain wilds around Snowball. Of course, these tales were received with doubt, and put down as clever romancing on the part of the 'possum hunter, but the story of Johnny M'Williams is believed, by all who know the boy, as a true tale.

*Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* (NSW), March 5, 1895  
Several residents of Bingara, including a clergyman, have lately seen a peculiar animal known as the ya-hoo, hairy man of the woods, or gorilla in some rough country near the Horton River. As soon as it was seen the animal rushed off into the bush, but its tracks clearly showed that it was no ordinary animal. Its appearance has caused considerable consternation in the vicinity.

*Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (NSW), July 24, 1896

A resident of Tenterfield reports having been attacked by a large animal like a gorilla.

The local paper says an armed party have gone in pursuit of the creature.

*Delegate Argus and Border Post* (NSW), Feb. 25, 1897

A Strange Animal.—The Wyndham correspondent of the *Pambula Voice* says:—A very strange animal was recently seen in the vicinity of Wyndham by a young fellow named John Wilmott, who, with a mate, was bark stripping between New Station and Candelo, rather nearer to the former place than the latter. Wilmott and the other fellow (Edward Power) were walking along looking for a horse when they suddenly heard a noise like the roaring of a bull, which seemed to come from the jungle that abounds in this part of the district. The young fellows thought that some cattle had got into the jungle, and Wilmott rolled a good size stone down the hill, when to his surprise the strange animal proceeded from the thickest of the scrub. It passed over a small clear patch of land and Wilmott states that he saw it plainly. He does not know whether to call it a man or a beast, being about 5 feet in height, it had arms like a man, which appeared to be of great length. Its head was rather small and round, something like a monkey's. This curious affair travelled on two legs and appeared to be able to get along at a good pace. Wilmott says he is not as a rule a nervous chap, but the sight of this peculiar freak somewhat startled him and he did not care to make any closer investigations. The mate, who was a short distance away at the time, did not see the thing, but heard the noise quite distinctly. It is said that several residents have seen it at various times.

Was it a Fox? [excerpt]

*Bathurst Post* (NSW), October 15, 1897

. . . Some years ago it was reported that a hairy man—supposed to be a gorilla or baboon—used to knock around the Rocks Hill and frighten people. We have not heard of him for some time now. . . .

*Inverell Argus* (NSW), June 9, 1899

A Wild Man of the Woods.—We hear that there is considerable perturbation and consternation in the neighborhood of Wandsworth over the appearance of a gorilla in that vicinity. About a month ago a man named Meaney saw a large animal of some sort in the mountains between Wandsworth and Paradise heads, and on Monday last (June 5th) a young man passing by the same way

also caught sight—or says he did—of a similar animal, i.e., a tall, hairy, ferocious, gorilla-looking creature. On Tuesday about 20 residents of Wandsworth, mounted and armed, set out in search of this strange denizen of the bush, but our informant (who left Wandsworth the same day for Inverell) does not know the result of the expedition. If they do happen to capture such an animal as that described it will authenticate all the stories that have from time to time been told of the existence of the ourang-outang in the wilds of Australia. But if they don't, the matter will still be doubted.

An Alpine Excursion. Notes of a trip to the mountains, rivers, plains and caves of the Australian Alps. By the Editor.

*Queanbeyan Observer* (NSW), March 17, 1903

The Home of the "Yahoo."

Swift, in his introduction to the travels of Gulliver, speaks of a tribe of animals with certain human attributes, passions and vices. The work mentioned is, we know, fiction—satire. But is there in reality (as in fiction) such a creature? Out in the fastnesses of the big mountains and deep, scrub-tangled gullies west of the Upper Murrumbidgee, a strange, shy, and wild creature is said to have been seen on several occasions. It is spoken of sometimes as the "hairy man," sometimes as the "yahoo." For thirty years past, or more, it has occasionally made its appearance in those regions, according to common report. If these reports were not so well authenticated, so abundantly confirmed, as I shall proceed to show, one might reasonably set them down to superstition or the exaggerations of imagination under the excitement of fear. If the evidence before us is worthy of credence, then the creature referred to does exist, and is, in all probability, a quadrumanous animal, from its description. I had hesitated to refer to the story of the yahoo here; but on fuller consideration I arrive at the conclusion, that not only because it is readable matter, but because the allegations I am about to narrate ought to be known in the interests of natural science and the zoology of Australia. My informants—the gentlemen who (amongst others whose unsupported statements might be taken *cum grano salis*)

aver they have seen this wild, mysterious creature—are not ignorant persons or superstitiously inclined; they are strong-minded, experienced, and educated men.

The subject of the existence and various apparitions of the “hairy man” of the Upper Murrumbidgee settlers a generation ago, the “Yahoo” of the present generation, was the topic of conversation at the camp formed by Messrs. McDonald, senior, Cox, and myself, as mentioned in the earlier passages of this narrative. Mr. Cox was relating what had befallen him when camped alone in the ranges of Brindabella about two years ago on a shooting expedition. He was, he said, enjoying his billy of tea in the afternoon, when his attention was drawn to an enraged cry, between a howl and a yell, in the thick scrub of a gully close by. He instantly seized his rifle and looked in the direction whence the sounds proceeded. There he saw a huge animal in an erect posture tearing through the undergrowth, and in a moment it was out of sight before he could bring his rifle to his shoulder. He distinctly heard the crashing of the undergrowth in its flight, and he followed after it. Its speed was greater than that of its pursuer; but as it fled its howling and yelling continued. That it was no creation of an excited imagination—[and from what I know of Mr. Cox, he is not a likely subject of wild hallucinations; but, on the contrary, a remarkably cool, intrepid fellow, too well enlightened and educated to magnify a simple fact into a chimera]—is confirmed by this, that in his pursuit he met several wallabies tearing up the gully in such alarm that, though passing close by, they took not the least notice of him. These were followed presently by a herd of cattle similarly scared. Further pursuit was vain, for the thing had now gone beyond sight and sound.

The sceptical may reasonably object that this account in detail of what they might consider the fabled Yahoo, needs corroboration. Pity it is that Mr. Cox had no one with him to confirm his testimony. Let the objection be accepted in this instance; but it certainly will not apply to the story that follows.

There are no better known, more respected, or reliable men in these parts than the Messrs. Webb of Urayarra. There are three brothers, Messrs. George G., Joseph, and William Webb. They are natives of the district, and now elderly gentlemen—

sober-minded, matter-of-fact, and well-informed. Yet if any one of them had had the experience that befell Mr. Cox, his story of the Yahoo would have been equally discredited by the sceptical. It is quite another matter, though, when two of the Messrs. Webb (the brothers Joseph and William) are still with us to tell the story of their adventure in company with this strange beast.

They were out in the ranges preparing to camp for the night. Down the side of a range to the eastward, and with only a narrow gully separating them from the object which attracted their attention, they first heard a deep guttural bellowing and then a crashing of the scrub. Next moment a thing appeared walking erect, though they saw only its head and shoulders. It was hirsute, so much of the creature as was visible, and its head was set so deep within its shoulders that it was scarcely perceptible. It was approaching towards their camp. Now it was in full view, and was of the stature of a man, moving with long strides and a heavy tramp. It was challenged: "Who are you? speak, or we'll fire." Not an intelligible word came in response; only the guttural bellowing. Aim was taken; the crack of a rifle rang out along the gully; but the thing, if hit, was not disabled; for at the sound of the shot it turned and fled. The two gentlemen, filled with amazement and curiosity, but not alarm, went to where they had seen and shot at this formidable-looking creature, and sought for its tracks in verification of what had happened. There were its footprints, long, like a man's, but with longer, spreading toes; there were its strides, also much longer than those of a man; and there were the broken twigs and disordered scrub through which it had come and gone. They saw no blood or other evidence of their shot having taken effect.

Let these two instances suffice. The gentlemen concerned are all still in our midst to confirm what is recorded. So much for the Yahoo and its home. Some day a shot may bring down a specimen of this strange and rare creature. Til then, let the stories of the Yahoo be regarded as fiction or fact, as scepticism or belief may elect. . . .

*Molong Express and Western District Advertiser (NSW), April 11, 1903*

A Hairy Man.—A reputable resident of Meranburn furnishes the Express with a weird story of an alleged hairy man seen in the

vicinity of that centre. A party were out kangarooing when they came across the monstrosity at the foot of the tree. The object opened its huge jaws and with outstretched arms scared dogs and men almost to death for the lot raced home pell mell.

More about the Mountains of Cowley. [excerpt]

*Queanbeyan Observer* (NSW), June 26, 1903

Writing from Rothsay, Adaminaby, under date 21st instant, Mr. Alex A. McKeahnie, has sent to Mr. John Gale the subjoined letter—evidently not for publication; but coming as it does from one of the oldest residents of Cowley County . . . Mr. Gale has handed us the manuscript for publication. . . . The writer says:—

. . . Referring again to your interesting little book, I am highly amused with your reference to the “yahoo.” I have heard of the yahoo as long as I can remember, both from the oldest hands and from the aboriginals. The yahoo of the aboriginals is a large bird of the mope-poke or cuckoo species, described to me by both white and black men as about the size of a turkey-hen. Personally I have never seen the bird, though I have heard it several times in the coast ranges south of Malacoota and Gabo Island. They stay during the day in the densest of the coast-range scrub and are heard only at night. No one who has not heard them could credit that any bird could make so loud a sound. Listening to it, it is wonderfully human in sound and as loud as the coo-ee of a man. The last time I heard one was on the Wingham River, about 25 miles south of Gabo Island, where there is a large tract of uninhabited country, densely scrubby. As for the “hairy man” or yahoo, no such animal was known to the aboriginals. Many times have I questioned them when there were large numbers of them in and about the mountains of Cowley, and the head waters of the Murrumbidgee. It is utterly impossible that any animal could exist unknown to the blacks, who were the most skilful hunters and trackers possible. Their skill in all kinds of woodcraft was almost beyond belief; nothing escaped their notice. I learnt a good deal of their skill from them—enough to know the track and sign of every wild animal in southern New South Wales. For many, many years, I had cattle in and about the Cotter and Cowley mountains, and have year after year been on and over every part of them,

camping every where, and never have I caught sight or sound that I did not know the animal from which the sound originated, neither have I ever seen or heard of a skeleton strange to me; and I am very certain that no such animal can exist in the mountains of Cowley. Nor have I ever met any old hand that believed there were such, though I can well imagine how such beliefs originate. For instance, I have more than once been startled by the appearance of the head and shoulders of an old black buck wallaroo out of or above the thick scrub or undergrowth on the Cotter mountains, which was wonderfully like the head and face of an old black man. The short, thick face, the broad ears, like a head of hair, the broad chest and thick arms—all very human at the first glance. In such place there is a deep feeling of awe or predisposition to imagine that something unusual will appear. This feeling, I know, causes normal things to take queer shapes. Now, about tracks: they are, to a bushman, indisputable signs and facts. Yet I can imagine, and have often seen, what at the first glance appeared to be a human track, but upon closer inspection proved to be a wallaroo. Here, I may say, than an old buck wallaroo is a very heavy, thick-set animal, much more so than the kangaroo. Its chest is very broad, and its arms very thick and closely like to man's; the soles of its feet are thick and broad, the heels especially like a human heel, and in dust or mud leave an impression exactly like the human heel, and the toes often leave an imprint like the large toe on the human foot. Its cry, when suddenly startled, is both loud and discordant—much like the startled cry of a wild pig, only more continuous. . . .

#### Something More about "The Hairy Man."

*Queanbeyan Observer* (NSW), July 31, 1903

Sir,—Through the *Observer* which had Mr. Alex McKeahnie's letter to Mr. John Gale not coming to hand, I was unaware of its contents until told about it, and the *Observer* of the 26th ultimo sent to me. The opening paragraph states it was evidently not meant for publication—nevertheless its having been published, leaves it open for criticism. As a contemporary of Mr. McKeahnie's, I fancy he must have smiled to himself when he wrote such stuff as he did, as "crashing through scrub over logs and rocks as they

came in one's way," etc., as he knew that kind of sport (as he called it) was not in the grand old pressman's line. And what he states about the "hairy man" and the aboriginals is at variance with the facts of the case, and he shows a total ignorance of the matter he writes about. Just fancy in the dusk of the evening, for a man to take an old buck wallaroo for an old black man! I never thought my old friend would write such stuff as that.

The account that appeared in the *Observer* under the heading of "An Alpine Excursion," and relating to the strange animal that came to where myself and brothers were camped, is not in the remotest way a true statement of what really took place. Whoever gave Mr. Gale the information as published is entirely wrong. As the senior member of that party I will, at an early date, send a true account of it to the *Queanbeyan* papers, also an account (if he remains at Urayarra, and is still in Mr. McDonald's employ) from a man (an aboriginal) who saw a hairy animal killed and dragged out of some rocks by the leg by the blacks who had killed it. This man was a piccaninny at the time. Yours, &c.,

Geo. Graham Webb.  
Woodstock, Urayarra.

Was it the "Hairy Man," "Yahoo," or the "Wild Blackfellow"  
of the Aboriginals? If neither, what was it?

*Queanbeyan Observer* (NSW), Aug. 7, 1903

Sir,—According to promise I send you an account of what took place when some strange animal came very close to where myself and brothers were camped many years ago. On this occasion we were out on Tearce's Creek (a small stream between Tidbinbilla Mountain and the Cotter River) in search of cattle. In the early part of the day we came across the remains of a cow of ours (we could recognize the beast by the head, as the blacks would only take the tongue out) that the blacks had speared and roasted, as evidenced by their stone oven which was close by. We searched the creek during the day, and having seen no indications of cattle being there, decided to return to the place where the cow had been killed and camped there for the night as it was a good place for the safe keeping of our horses. The weather was very hot and dry—it was in the month of March. There was no moon. None

of us had a watch. We had supped as usual and lay down. Some time in the night, I think it must have been late. I was awake, the others were asleep, and I heard a noise similar to what an entire horse would make when looking over a fence at a mare. I heard it again, and awoke the others. We heard it for some four or five times, when the noise ceased, but we could hear something walking along the opposite side of the range, and when in a line with our camp, we could hear it coming down in the direction of our camp. As it came along we could hear the heavy breathing of it. At this time our dogs became terrified with fear, and were crouching against us for protection. On account of a fallen tree intervening, the thing had to make a detour to get to where we were. Joseph was at the lower end of this tree, I was on the upper and William in the middle. Not many seconds passed before Joseph sang out, "Here the thing is," and fired at it with a small pistol he had. Neither William or myself, owing to the scrub, etc., got a sight of it. Joseph says it was like a blackfellow with a blanket on him. We did not hear it going away, but tried to set our three dogs after it, thinking they might find out where the thing went, but we could not get them to move. Had the thing been a little later in coming, we could have seen what it was, as the day began to dawn in less than a quarter of an hour after Joe fired at it. Yours, etc.,

Geo. Graham Webb.

Woodstock, Urayarra.

Having interviewed Harry Williams in re the animal he saw the blacks kill, he pointed out to myself and Mr. John McDonald of Urayarra, the height he (Williams) was at the time, and we considered he would be from 10 to 12 years of age. The locality where the blacks killed it was below the junction of the Yass River with the Murrumbidgee. The animal got into some clefts of rocks, and the blacks got torches to find out where it was hidden, and then killed it with their nullah nullahs. There were a good many blacks at the killing of it, and he saw two blackfellows dragging it down the hill by its legs. It was like a black man, but covered all over with grey hair.

Geo. Graham Webb.

*The Southern Star* (Brisbane, QLD), May 17, 1905

A Hairy Man.—At various times for many years past different people have vowed to seeing an animal resembling a hairy man in the mountains and almost unknown country around Beloura. The late C. J. Byrne, who frequented those parts a good deal many years ago, is reported to have seen this strange animal, as did also a man who was employed by Mr. Cowdroy, of Bega. The blacks in those days also spoke of such a thing, and were always very frightened when in the vicinity of what is known as Wyoila Creek. Now comes the story that four persons—Messrs. J. Wall, sen., Harry Staples, J. L. Wall, and W. Roberts—who are employed up there by Mr. Cowdroy, have seen the monstrosity. Three of the persons named belong to Bega, and they have addressed the following letter to this paper: “While exploring on Sunday, May 7, we saw a strange-looking animal, just like a hairy man, run out of some rocks and along a beaten track, leaving a foottrack similar to a man’s. The footmarks were about 14 inches long, and the animal appeared to be about 7ft. high, with tremendously long arms, reaching to below the knees. When it got about 100 yards away it stood and did not appear to be frightened, but after a while walked away gently in the direction of the Wyoila Creek mountains. None of us tried to hinder it, as it looked too fierce, and the dogs refused to go near it, crouching at our feet.” This is the story. The strange thing about these “hairy men” is that no one has ever captured one, although men are quite capable of capturing lions, tigers, and other wild animals. There should be a fortune in it for the man who will bring a “hairy man” along, dead or alive.

### That Strange Animal

*Molong Argus* (NSW), August 25, 1905

A considerable amount of interest has been displayed throughout the district with regard to the identity of that strange animal whose appearance in the ranges near Eucareena was recorded last week. On Tuesday, a talk with Mr. F. Horton, of Euchareena, furnished information to the effect that his son saw a gorilla right enough, and that he could not be deceived as to the character of the animal, having seen several in Sidney. Mr. Horton,

senr., states that this beast has been in the ranges for some time, its harsh cries at night being frequently heard. It is on record that a gorilla was known to inhabit another part of this district for some time—it was seen by several people, including Mr. A. A. Kerr, of Orange side, a man of the world, who had no difficulty in recognizing the beast as a gorilla. How these two hairy representatives of Africa came to locate themselves in the Orange-Molong District partakes somewhat of a mystery; the only feasible explanation is that they escaped from some travelling menagerie.

*Clarence and Richmond Examiner* (NSW), June 5, 1906

Wyan Mountain, on the Richmond River, which has many caves, is the reputed home of a hairy man of gigantic proportions and ferocious nature. In the same country, according to native tradition, there is a red snake which has the speed of greased lightning down a lamp-post, and which never relinquishes a chase until it has caught and bitten its quarry. The bunyip and the wahwe are old identities; but these are supposed to haunt deep lagoons and miry pools.

*Inverell Times* (NSW), June 16, 1906

It is reported that a gorilla or yahoo has been seen near The Gulf, in the Emmaville district.

### A Strange Animal

*National Advocate* (Bathurst, NSW), August 22, 1906

Residents of Pyramul, about 40 miles from Mudgee, have been terrorised by the appearance there of a strange animal resembling a baboon. Several reputable people aver that they have encountered the animal, and that its appearance is such as to inspire the greatest dread.

### What Was It?

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW), December 3, 1906

It would appear that Borneo is not the only place in the world to own a wild man. If three ladies who were until recently staying on a house-boat at Cowan were not greatly deceived, they saw a strange figure of a hairy man, tanned to a coppery hue, flitting

about among trees and rocks with the rapidity of a will o' the wisp. They state that he climbed trees with almost the agility of a monkey, and could run and double with great speed. Police from the surrounding districts toured the mountainous country, but without finding any trace of this wild being. At one place, where there is a sheer drop of a hundred feet or more, footprints were discernible down the face of what would appear to be an inaccessible cliff. If there is a man roaming about, he must have a wonderful knowledge of the hiding-places, for the police have not been able to catch a single glimpse of him.

*Bligh Watchman and Coonabarabran Gazette* (NSW), Sept. 29, 1908

The populace of Harvey Ranges, near Peak Hill, are in the throes of a "hairy man" scare, whose footprints are 18 inches long. We have it on good authority that the tracks are those of a local constable in search of the whiskered, or whiskeyed myth.

*Muswellbrook Chronicle* (NSW), November 4, 1908

Strange noises made by some wild animal in the bush in the vicinity of the Cordeaux River, a few miles from Wollongong, have greatly alarmed the natives. Fifty years ago it was commonly reported that a "yahoo" or gorilla had been several times seen there, and blacks declared there was a "devil devil" in the locality. But it may be the voice of the Tantanoola tiger again which is now disturbing the settlers.

Is there a Bunyip? [excerpt]

*South Coast Times* (Wollongong, NSW), December 26, 1908

One Monday morning in the eighties the town of Inverell was interested and amused by the story of two young men who had been spending the week, as was then the vogue, in a fishing expedition, that they had seen an animal like a gorilla. They made, indeed, an affidavit to that effect before the Police Magistrate, and so impressed was he that he despatched a constable (now a sub-inspector) to the place, but the officer returned with the report that he had seen nothing. The place was about 20 miles from town, on the Gwydyr River; a precipitous gorge and scrub grown, into which it is certain very few had ever penetrated. There

was a fine deep hole of the river at the bottom. These young men had thrown out there lines and were watching with the patience of their craft, when stones began to fall in the water in front of them. They attributed the stones to other fishers from town having observed them and indulging in some fun with them. But the stones were coming perilously close; they became alarmed, jumped up, and looked about. They got a glimpse of a gorilla-like animal disappearing. In 1886 the Grafton "Argus" reported that the constable at Blick's River had seen an animal like a gorilla. This is a lone spot on the Grafton-Armidale Road at the foot of the Dividing Range. Hereabouts such a creature might have lived long unseen.

### Hairy Man.

*Mudgee Guardian* (NSW), June 17, 1909

During the past few weeks the residents of the "Bar" have been disturbed from their slumbers by noises, resembling at times a person choking, and at others a woman screaming and then crying. These strange cries remained a mystery till Thursday last, when at about 5 p.m. they were again heard, and shortly afterwards several persons residing in the locality were astonished to see a peculiar animal, five feet high, standing on his two legs, and at the same time brushing away with his claw-like hands the long unkempt-looking hair from his eyes. The animal is covered with long white hair and when seen was uttering the cries which have been disturbing the peace of the neighbourhood. The hairy man, or whatever he is, was only seen for a minute, and disappeared as suddenly as he came in sight.

*Scone Advocate* (NSW), June 22, 1909

The scare at Maitland Bar, near Mudgee, has taken another form. Whilst two youths named Somerfield and Lue were among the hills, lopping kurrajong for cattle, they heard a peculiar noise, and, looking upwards, saw what they describe as a hairy man sitting on a rock staring at them. Taking fright, they ran, and were pursued by the stranger. In his efforts to escape Lue fell into the river, being nearly drowned before Somerfield rescued him. They continued their flight towards home. Mrs. Albert Brennan,

hearing cries, hastened to render assistance. The strange man still approached with a lumbering gait, and she hastened into the house, closing and barring the door. The stranger followed, and reaching the door scratched and fumbled about for a considerable time, and then slowly retreated toward the hills. Mrs. Brennan confirmed the boys' statements regarding his appearance, stating that the stranger had long black hair. A search party afterwards scoured the hills, but found no trace of the unwelcome visitor. The district is very mountainous, and there are plenty of hiding places.

*Warialda Standard* (NSW), June 28, 1909

[excerpt, following repeat of previous article]

A miner named Shaw was visited the following night. Hearing something among the pots, Shaw, taking a candle, went out to investigate. The first that met his sight was what he thought was a hairy man peering at him. Then, suddenly turning, the stranger cleared a 5ft. fence like a bird, and disappeared in the darkness. Shaw states that he had a very small face, and stood nearly 6ft. high, and was covered with long white hair.

### Maitland Bar Mystery

The "Hairy Man" said to be a Goat.

*Lithgow Mercury* (NSW), July 2, 1909

Hargraves, Tuesday. The Maitland Bar hairy man ended in a fiasco. Upon the police investigating the matter, the frolics of the hairy one suddenly ceased. It now appears that when the brothers Lue were lopping Kurrajong they took fright at a goat, and imagination did the rest. It is presumed that some local joker then took a hand, and, covered with a goatskin, paid a nocturnal visit to various houses, thereby scaring the inmates. Police interference upset his plans.

### Discovery of a Supposed "Hairy Man" at Creewah

*Bombala Times* (NSW), October 18, 1912

There's been a deal of talk this week in Bombala, Cathcart, and Bibbenluke about the discovery of a "hairy man." Mr. George Summerell, of Thoko (Holt's Flat), states that last Saturday he

was mustering cattle in the vicinity of Creewah Station, when he suddenly came upon a most peculiar-looking object drinking at a waterhole. Summerell's horse exhibited signs of great fear, but his rider urged him towards the waterhole, and he was able to get a good look at the strange creature. Mr. Summerell says it was like a huge ape; standing about 5 feet high, and covered with long grey hair. It had, apparently, but four toes on each foot, and arms dangling below the knees. It appeared to have a low receding forehead and little or no chin, and, emitting a growling sound, disappeared in the bush. Mr. Summerell informed Mr. Sydney Jephcott (owner of Creewah Station) of what he had seen, and the latter proceeded to the waterhole, where distinct tracks were seen. The tracks measured 14 inches in length by 6 inches in width. Mr. Jephcott, who was much interested at once phoned in to Mr. Sage here to forward a quantity of plaster of Paris, with which to take an imprint of the tracks. From Mr. Summerell's description, Mr. Jephcott is certain that the animal is an ourang outang. . . .

#### Mysterious Creature.

*The Sun* (Sydney, NSW), October 23, 1912

Three plaster of Paris casts of the foot and hand prints of the giant, or strange animal, which have been discovered in the neighborhood of Bombala, have been submitted to Professor David, of the Sydney University by Mr. Sydney Jephcott. After a careful examination Professor David is a trifle sceptical as to the genuineness of the impressions, though mystified as to the sincerity of the gentleman who sent them to him. The imprints resemble those of a human being, and Professor David says they appear to have been made by the putting down of a man's foot, and then by the added impression of a hand, the ball of which has obliterated the toes.

Professor David points out that the gentleman who sent him the casts does not profess to have seen the supposed animal.

#### The Bombala Story and the Strange Animal.

Confirmation by a Goulburn Resident.

*Goulburn Evening Penny Post* (NSW), October 26, 1912

Mr. R. W. Dawson writes—"In 1907 I was riding in the neighbourhood of Creeawah in the thick bush east of Bull Hill. At a

particular place on a bridle track my horse became very nervous, snorted, and trembled under me till I thought of dismounting. He evidently smelt something uncommon. However, I put it down to wombats and urged him on. I went about two miles, and got off my horse to cross a swamp, and left him to feed, with the bridle trailing. He was a rogue, which I did not know at the time, and when I approached him he made off at a good pace back on to the track I had gone. I lost sight of him, but followed his tracks. When I came to near where he was so nervous I found he had left the bridle track. Of course, I did not know why at the time, but I followed, and some distance afterwards looked along the track to see if the horse was in sight. I saw in front of me a dark object, which I mentally took to be a peculiar-looking stump, but before I could give a second thought it bounded off at right angles. My surprise cannot be described, but I took it to be a man running to block my horse. I listened to hear if my horse was running, and noticed the pace, the stride, and the force of the footfalls of my "friend." I saw it run quite 100 yards at a distance of about 75 yards away. It appeared to be a tall man with a fur cap and a pea jacket, and running with a peculiar attitude. Not hearing my horse or any sound, after a few moments I went on after my horse, and found his tracks, after he had deviated, apparently having sighted the same object as I did. I did not pay much attention to the experience at the moment, being too anxious to get my horse, being a distance from a habitation, and it being about an hour off sundown, with miles of open country. I got my horse about two miles on, and then the facts began to force themselves on me, and I concluded that I had seen something out of the common, either a wild man or animal. As the whole thing occurred so suddenly, and my conclusion that it was a man endeavouring to block my horse, I did not think about it until I was settled on my journey. I described what I saw that night to Mr. Charles Taylor, of Holt's Flat, but he did not give much credence to it; but one of the Summerells informed me that he had actually seen a hairy man in the neighbourhood a short time before. His description, given voluntarily, so concided with what I saw that I have remained convinced ever since that there was something unusual. Another feature is this—that I spoke to Mr.

Fred Heffernan, of Thoko, some time afterwards, and he said he had had many a hunt for some animal because of the peculiar footprints he had seen (if my memory serves me right similar to what Mr. Jephcott describes), but failed to find it. Subsequently I was approached by a resident living in the rough hills between Guaningrah and Bungarby to go out and take other citizens with me and examine some peculiar footprints in a creek. The description tallies with Mr. Heffernan's. Those two places, Creeawah and Bungarby, are forty miles apart.

[Mr. Dawson has in his possession a letter, written by him to his daughter in 1907, in which he gives an account of his experience as recorded above. Recent reports in the Sydney press naturally brought the whole affair back to his memory.—Ed. E.P.P.]

### Tantanoola Tiger Outrivalled.

A Story from Monaro. "A Fearsome Being."

*Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, NSW), October 28, 1912

There is, says the "S. M. Herald" of October 23, some talk of organising a hunting expedition to explore the wilds of Monaro in search of the unknown animal concerning which strange and wonderful stories have recently come from Bombala, Nimitybelle, and other places in the Monaro district. We have had in the past stories of strange animals from other parts of the interior—if report is to be believed, there are a dozen or more places where tigers have been seen from time to time—but we have had nothing quite so interesting as this story from Monaro.

Yesterday, Professor David received plaster casts of the footprints and "hand" prints of the animal from Mr. Sydney Jephcott, of Creawah, near Holt's Flat, Monaro. Mr. Jephcott secured these prints on a branch creek running into Sheffield's Creek, the eastern head of the Bombala River.

"I may say," he writes to Professor David, "that I took especial care on my first visit to observe any indication of human agency, and could perceive nothing of a suspicious nature. Indeed the character of many of the persons who claim to have seen such an animal during a period of at least 30 years precludes any likelihood of a hoax. Already I had over a dozen names of reputable witnesses who have had experiences. For my own standing I can

refer you to 'Notable Australians' and 'Who's Who in Australia.' I am not a man who would be likely to risk the infamy of an intentional, or the ridicule of an unintentional deceit. You will hardly need to be asked to take good care of these castings till such time as I may ask for their return. They are, at any rate, what few things are—a new thing under the sun, though hardly what would have appealed to the wise King of Jerusalem.

"I may explain that one cast is of a right foot in hard mud. Another of a right foot in very soft mud. This I took as evidence of flexibility of toes. The third is of a left hand, placed in front of a left foot, and confirming Summerell's account of the animal being on all fours drinking when first seen."

Professor David stated yesterday that only four toes were represented in the cast. "In reference to what Mr. Jephcott terms the hand-prints, all that I can say is that they certainly closely resemble the prints of a large human hand, as he suggests."

#### Mr. Jephcott's Story.

Mr. Jephcott sends the following account of his discovery to the "Herald":—

"After nearly 50 years spent in the 'bush' with every sense alert to catch the secret of the wilds, up to a few days ago not the faintest scintilla of first-hand evidence had reached me that any animal of importance remained unknown in our country. But about 10 days ago, when riding through the jungle which lies on the eastern slopes of Bull Hill (a trig. site, about 12 miles south-east of Nimitybelle railway station), I noticed on a white gum trunk a series of scratches such as could be made with the point of a dessert spoon. These scratches were in series of three on one side meeting a single scratch coming from the opposite direction, being exactly such as would be made by three fingers and a thumb of a great hand with abnormally stout and large nails. Beginning at a height of three feet six inches, the series of scratches rose to a height of about seven feet. All these scratches were made by a right hand, suggesting that the creature which had made them shared a peculiarity of mankind.

"From these indications I judged that some animal unknown to science was at large in this country, but took no further action

in the matter. However, on Sunday (October 12), I heard that George Summerell, a neighbor of mine, while riding up the track which forms a short cut from Bombala to Bemboks, had that day, about noon, when approaching a small creek about a mile below 'Packer's Swamp,' ridden close up to a strange animal, which on all-fours, was drinking from the creek. As it was covered with grey hair, the first thought that rose to Summerell's mind was: 'What an immense kangaroo.' But, hearing the horse's feet on the track, it rose to its full height, of about 7ft., and looked quietly at the horseman. Then stooping down again, it finished its drink, and then, picking up a stick that lay by, it walked steadily away up a slope to the right or eastern side of the road, and disappeared among the rocks and timber 150 yards away.

"Summerell described the face as being like that of an ape or man, minus forehead and chin, with a great trunk all one size from shoulders to hips, and with arms that nearly reached to its ankles.

"Hearing this report, I rode up to the scene on Monday morning. On arriving about a score of footprints attested to the truth of Summerell's account, the handprints where the animal had stooped at the edge of the water being especially plain. These hand-prints differed from a large human hand chiefly in having the little fingers set much like the thumbs (a formation explaining the 3-1 series of scratches on the white gum tree).

"A striking peculiarity was revealed, however, in the footprints; these, resembling an enormously long and ugly human foot in the heel, instep, and ball, had only four toes—long (nearly 5in.), cylindrical, and showing evidences of extreme flexibility. Even in the prints which had sunk deepest into the mud there was no trace of the 'thumb' of the characteristic ape's 'foot.'

"Beside, perhaps, a score of new prints, there were old ones discernable, showing that the animal had crossed the creek at least a fortnight previously. After a vexatious delay, I was able, on the Wednesday afternoon, to take three plaster of Paris casts—one of a footprint in very stiff mud, another in very wet mud, and a third of the hand with its palm superimposed on the front part of the corresponding foot. These I have forwarded to Professor David, at the university, where, no doubt, they can be seen by

those interested. Anyone acquainted with the nature of mud will not expect to find a cast taken therein three days after imprint as technically perfect as a casting from a regular model, but I believe that any reasonable being will be satisfied by an inspection of these three casts that something quite unknown and unsuspected by science remains to be brought to light.

“Since this matter has made such a stir that people in this district have felt that they could attest their experience without further fear of ridicule, an astonishing number of confirmatory cases have come to my knowledge ranging across the country between Cape Howe and Wee Jasper. Such of these accounts as seem of significance I hope to collect.”

*Newcastle Morning Herald* (NSW), January 8, 1913

Another story has cropped up in connection with the hairy man alleged to have been seen on Creewah Station, in the Bombala district, about six weeks ago. Mr. James Allen, a former resident of this part of Monaro, but now living in Toowoomba, writing to the editor of “The Bombala Times,” says he saw a hairy man at Creewah 38 years ago. It was a very powerful looking animal, and was carrying a young steer, and made off into the jungles when disturbed. The animal (writes Mr. Allen) should now be about 100 years old, for it looked fully 60 when he saw it, being covered with long grey hair. Mr. Jephcott, the present owner of Creewah Station, it will be remembered, recently forwarded to Professor David, of Sydney University, what he fully believed to be the footprints of an enormous animal, hitherto unknown to science. Mr. Allen warns Mr. Jephcott not to go out without a gun or a sword, as the hairy man is sure to be annoyed at Mr. Jephcott taking the impression of his footprints.

*Bombala Times* (NSW), November 14, 1919

Jephcott’s hairy man has again appeared out Creewah way. His latest feat is pulling up a lot of fencing posts with his teeth. Great place for hairy men, this Creewah!

*Freeman’s Journal* (Sydney, NSW), December 11, 1919

The hairy man, of which we have heard so much, but of which no person has been able to give any definite description, has once

more been located—this time in the vicinity of Creewah. A Tanta-wanglo resident, who has a grass run near Creewah, states positively that he, with others, saw an animal in a swamp with some cattle. It appeared to be feeding, and was on all fours until disturbed, when it stood upright like a human being. It was covered with long reddish hair, and had a big head and very large mouth. It turned over with ease a large log as if looking for grubs to eat. When it sighted the visitors it made towards them, but they were not looking for a closer acquaintance, and jumping on their horses, made off. A search party is to be organized at Candelo to try and capture the (as yet) mythical creature. In captivity it should be worth its weight in gold. An enterprising Begaite has offered £1000 for the animal if taken alive.

#### Wolumla.

*Nowra Leader (NSW), March 10, 1922*

The residents of Horse Flat, a couple of miles out of town, have been for some considerable time under the impression that there is a "hairy man" in the vicinity, and several aver they have had a glimpse of him at night time. However, last week Mr. A. Spence conceived the idea of setting a large trap or cage, with a nice ready meal of bananas; he now has the supposed hairy man entrapped, which is a species of gorilla, or Egyptian monkey. He intends shipping the animal to Sydney.

#### Strange Animal at Nullica

##### What Is It?

*Delegate Argus (NSW), June 19, 1930*

Children of the Nullica River settlement have been scared and excited by the appearance in proximity to their homes of a strange animal, brown in colour, much larger than the average cattle dog and resembling a monkey in shape. That, at least, is the description given of it by Tommy Bobbin, the biggest of the two boys who have seen it. He has seen it on several occasions, once at a distance of only a few feet. The first time he saw it the animal was sitting up in a gorilla-like attitude, with what appeared to be a stick in one of its hands. Terrified, but brave, Tommy threw at it a cob of corn which he was eating, and thereupon the horrible

looking creature disappeared into the scrub. Subsequently it was seen by other children, and they ran homeward, screaming hysterically. All attempts to convince the children that the animal may have been a strange dog are scouted by the children, some of whom at least are old enough to know the difference between a monkey and a dog. The parents have not so far sighted the animal, the identity of which is so far a complete mystery.—*Eden Magnet*.

### Ellalong “Bunyip”

#### Native Superstition Was Taboo

*Newcastle Sun* (NSW), February 10, 1931

Ellalong swamp, in which, according to legend, exists a Bunyip, was known to the aborigines before the advent of the white man in the district as “catch-a-boy.”

According to old inhabitants of the district a legend was handed down from generation to generation among the natives that a piccaninny had been stolen from the banks of the swamp by some strange animal, which roared at night in the watery wastes.

For many years strange noises have emanated at night from the swamp.

Although parties have made repeated searches, nothing has, up to this day, been discovered as to what was responsible.

In recent times, on occasions, noises like a roar have been heard apparently coming from the swamp. Local residents now do not worry. They simply refer to the noise as the “swamp bull.” They have heard it so often.

The vicinity of the swamp was “taboo” to the blacks owing to their fear of the alleged bunyip.

The animal was captured near the swamp on Sunday, however, is not likely to solve the mystery of the bunyip. One Newcastle man, after reading the published description of it, stated that it answered in all respects to the description of an English badger.

### Strange Animal

*Grafton Daily Examiner* (NSW), March 3, 1932

William Nutall, of Myrtleford (Vic.), accompanied by his sister and a companion, was returning from Bright, and near the Eurobin

railway station he alighted from his horse and entered a paddock, holding the reins, the others riding on a short distance. A strange animal, which snarled, attacked Nutall and tore his shirt to ribbons. The horse broke away, and when Nutall ran the animal followed him to the railway line, where a wire fence apparently stopped it. Nutall described the animal as being about 7ft. in height, with round, hairy head, and four tusks. It stood on two legs. It is believed to be an animal which escaped from a travelling circus when it was at Yackandandah some time ago. The animal has been seen by residents in different parts of the district, its tracks being plainly discernible. It is said to resemble an ape. Parties are out searching for it.

### Wild Monkeys in Australia?

Prospectors' Report from York Peninsula—Or, Giant 'Possums!

*Sydney Sun* (NSW), September 18, 1932

Wild monkeys are reported to have been discovered in the tropical bush of northern-most Australia, according to telephone messages received by "The Sunday Sun" from Townsville last night.

Prospectors from York Peninsula holidaying in Townsville have bade out a strong case for the existence of an Australian bush monkey, although they say it is probably related to the monkeys of Malaya.

On the other hand, Mr. Ion L. Idriess, well-known Australian author, who has explored the whole region of York Peninsula from Cooktown north, believes the prospectors have confused giant phalanger opossums with monkeys.

The region where the monkeys are alleged to have been seen is between Lockhart and Pascoe rivers, 130 miles south of Cape York, and about 40 miles from the coast.

It nestles in a vast natural amphitheatre at the source of those rivers in the McIlraith Ranges. The prospectors had to fight their way through tall cane grass into dense scrub country, where it is believed that white men have never been before.

In large trees, heavily covered with red nuts—never seen by the prospectors before—the prospectors suddenly came upon groups of about 15 to 20 monkeys.

There were numerous groups, the monkeys totalling some thousands.

The prospector remained in the vicinity of the monkeys for about five weeks. The animals appeared to be of the Malayan breed, about the size of an average dog, weighing about 30lb.

The country was ideal for them, with an abundance of wild fruits and vegetable roots, and nuts of all description.

The monkeys inhabit an area 60 miles by 30 miles. They were not seen anywhere else during the long exploration made by the prospectors on this journey.

They were first reported by aboriginals, who told the white men that the monkeys had been "plenty feller time, altogether!"

This story was received too late last night for Australian Museum authorities to be interviewed.

Mr. Idriess, who is in Sydney, said:

"I think the prospectors are confused with the tree-climbing kangaroos or the flying phalanger. Of course, if the prospectors have specimens or skulls and skins of the monkeys, that will settle the question.

"I know every inch of York Peninsula, and have never heard of monkeys, not even from aboriginals, with whom I lived for several years.

"The country is so wild and vast that it is possible a few monkeys were dropped ashore from trading steamers, or escaped from wrecks, and so raised a tribe within the confined area mentioned.

"Malayans and Japanese, who sometimes carry monkeys on their boats, have been working along the coasts for at least 100 years.

"Very few white men have travelled the entire length of the east coast of the peninsula.

"Along it are some quite inaccessible spots, with patches of scrubby country containing an abundance of monkey food, in which monkeys could live and breed without being discovered for a long time.

"However, not much more can be said until more positive proof is forthcoming. I am taking the story with a grain of salt."

[Determined soon after to be cuscus: *Sydney Mail*,  
May 24, 1933]

## “Abo.” Superstitions

### The Hairy Man

*Cobar Western Age* (NSW), March 9, 1934

By George Melvor, in “S.M. Herald”

The tribe that inhabited the country about the middle Auburn River, in south-eastern Queensland, had an outstanding superstition in “the hairy man,” who lived in a haunted cave at the Auburn Falls. In this instance there were no sceptics, every member of the tribe believed that he was there, and, like *debil debil*, was an evil-doer. No white man ever saw a black approaching the cave, even in the day time, and at night, they would not camp within miles of it. Still in the remote past, some of them must have ventured sufficiently close to have heard the hairy man at work and observed the products of his activities, for those who had never seen the cave could give a fairly accurate description of the interior. It was at flood time that the hairy man was always busy, and it was then that he made the loudest noise, as he chopped away with his tomahawk at the varied assortment of sticks in his workshop.

It must be conceded that there was some ground for the belief in the existence of the hairy man. The country in the vicinity had a weird appearance. The river near the falls contained elongated and deep, dark waterholes, overshadowed by frowning cliffs. Along the edge grew giant gum trees and curving ti-trees with dense foliage. Close by were masses of semi-tropical undergrowth, which in places merged into a dense scrub. It was an ideal place to conjure phantoms of the unreal and fantastic. The falls were more in the nature of a series of rapids than a sheer drop, and in flood time the roar of the seething waters could be distinctly heard more than ten miles away. Behind the first leap—the principal one—was the cave. Beyond the entrance it was enclosed by granite walls and roof. In flood time it was a veritable whirlpool, where logs and sticks brought down by the river, and drawn in, were rapidly swirled round and round, continuously striking against the hard, rocky walls and thus producing the thudding sounds which the blacks believed were caused by the hairy man at work. Contact with the rock also wore away and rounded the ends of the sticks as evenly as if they had been through a turning lathe. When the rainy season was over the

water in the cave gradually receded, but most of the sticks, now with oval ends, remained. So neatly done was the rounding process that it would be hard for anyone not knowing the circumstances to realise that it was not the work of man.

### Belief Shared By Some Whites

The blacks also believed that if the sticks operated on by the hairy man were removed from the cave, they would eventually find their way back again. Strange as it might appear, the belief in the haunted cave, the hairy man, and the migratory sticks, was shared by some of the early white pioneers. An instance of savage tradition influencing civilised culture. As late as some 20 years ago, a gathering of about 200 blacks could be seen at a corroboree at Hawkwood Station, not too distant from the falls, but they have since dwindled. At that time I saw a black rather past middle age, known to the whites as Chapman. He claimed to be the rightful chief of the tribe. He could speak English well. Since then Chapman and most of the gray beards of that time have gone the way of their ancestors.

The last time I saw Chapman was in the bush. As the day was hot, we both dismounted. The conversation turned on the hairy man. I told him that there was no hairy man, that I had examined the cave and found no one there. He replied that he was always there at night. I inquired if he had ever seen or heard the hairy man. His answer was in the negative, but he averred that the hairy man was there all the same. He then got a short thick stick, and began tapping the ground with it, at the same time explaining that the sounds he made were similar to those produced by the hairy man at work. I informed him that I intended visiting the cave at night and would thus prove to him that there was no hairy man. He at once seemed concerned and implored me not to do so. If I did that some serious evil would be sure to overtake me. After a time the conversation turned upon other matters, but I could see that he was ill at ease. Before leaving I promised him that I would not visit the cave at night.

On another occasion, while riding out after cattle, I met an aged black, whom I knew. His long, flowing beard, heavy moustache, and straggly hair were quite white. He was walking very

fast and looked tired and despondent. I pulled up and asked him where he was going. He replied that he did not know, but he wanted to get as far away from the falls as possible—that the hairy man was very angry and making a “big fellow noise.” We would then be about four miles from the falls and as the breeze was from that direction, the thunderous roar was very pronounced.

The Panther. More Evidence. Other Incidents [excerpt]

*Inverell Times* (NSW), June 19, 1936

“Black Sal” No Joke.

Mrs. E. A. Campbell, Henderson Street, Inverell, writes to the Editor:

It appears that Mr. Smith has got mixed up a little in regard to the black gin who was supposed to have started the “joke” of the huge animal that was seen at the Big River, which had scared numerous people during fishing parties etc. I remember the black gin referred to quite well, and also the incident of which Mr. Smith writes, but it was not the fishermen who got the fright in the first place, it was the gin herself. Sarah Walker, or “Black Sal,” by which name I knew her, was a frequenter at the Gilgai Hotel (now the wineshop) of which my mother (Mrs. W. Goodfellow) was the licensee, and although just on 57 years ago, I remember the afternoon very vividly when “Black Sal,” after recovering from a three or four days drinking bout, left for Auburn Vale, where she was employed. Later the quietness of the bush was disturbed by the thundering hoofs of a horse and the calling out of a woman; on looking up the road we could see Black Sal with her shawl, which she wore, flying in all directions. Upon arrival at our place she was overcome, and quite a while elapsed before she could tell us what had happened. Between exclamations of “Oh, Mrs. Goodfellow,” she said she had seen what she described as a “big hairy man” before she had reached her place of destination. I remember how, although the old woman certainly showed signs of having received a severe fright of some sort, we thought that she was “seeing things,” the result of too much celebrating. However, the scare Black Sal received was forgotten until years after, during which time mother had sold her business at Gilgai and took over the boarding house at Elsmore, and a party of men,

including three or four of our boarders, members of whom were the Brandford Bros. and a young man named Alfred Wright, went to the Horse Stealers Gully, on a fishing expedition, and it was the same object that they saw that had frightened Black Sal, and which made them beat a hasty retreat, most of them leaving their belongings near the camp fire. I remember quite well the description they gave us on their return and it certainly coincided with the story that had been told by Black Sal years before. The object was described as something between 7 and 8 feet high, humanlike and certainly was, as the black woman stated, a "hairy man," the men stating it was a gorilla. It was first seen by the fishermen on the opposite side of the river and it was not until the animal commenced to swim across the stream and make queer noises that the men realized that it was more than an ordinary beast. Upon reaching the bank it took only one glance to satisfy the terrified onlookers, most of whom just took time enough to jump on their horses and gallop from the scene. Old hands can certainly vouch for my story as in later years the same object was seen at the Limehills, between Bingara and Warialda, and evidently Mr. Smith has been misinformed and the "joke" was certainly something of a weird nature and not Black Sal as he stated.

#### A Human Gorilla.

Old Timer writes:—

Mr. Smith's reminiscence about the black woman frightening the fishing party on the Big River reminds me of an incident related by some Invered graziers who were camped with their stock on the Guy Fawkes during the 1902 drought. Frequently of a night they would hear strange noises in the darkness which were followed by a stone being thrown into their camp fire evidently from a considerable distance. This only happened during the very dark nights. On one or two occasions the campers caught an elusive sight of a large creature on the skyline as it disappeared over an adjacent ridge. They described it as a very tall animal, six or seven feet high with short legs and long arms. On occasions their tucker box used to be raided during the day when they were absent with their stock.

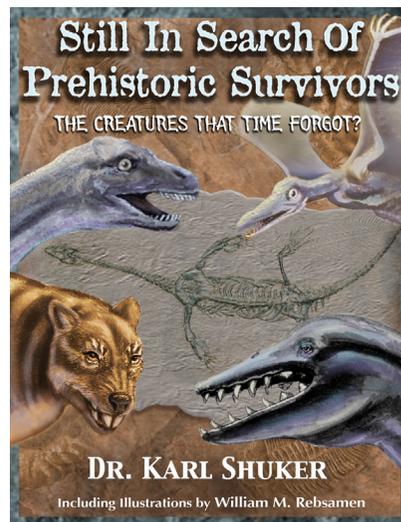
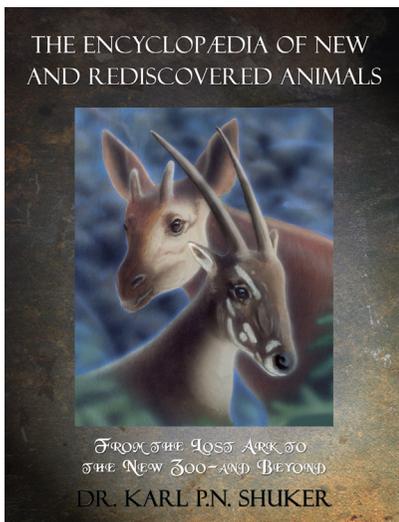
Some ten years later a number of bushmen were sitting round a camp fire at Delungra spinning yarns of dreadful happenings,

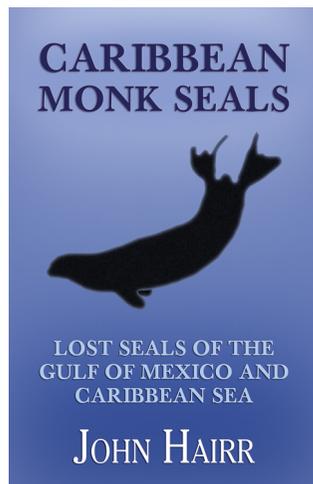
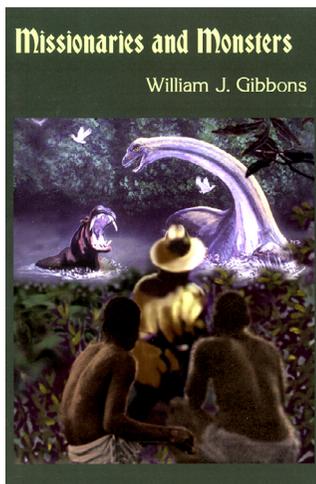
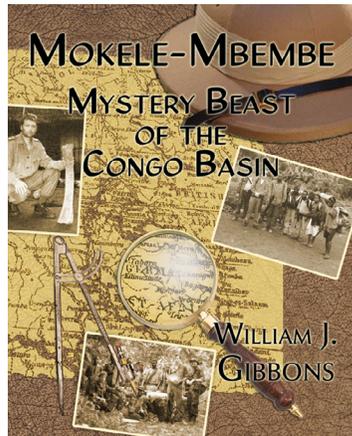
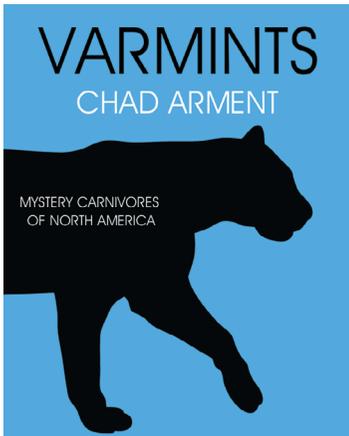
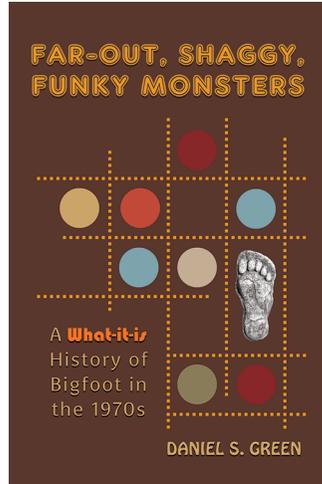
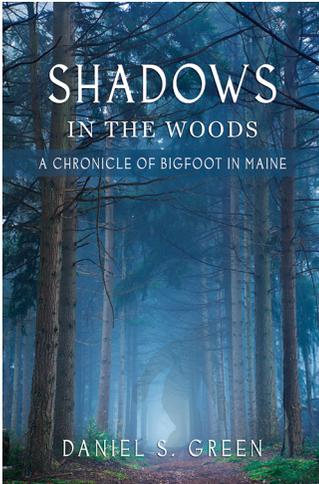
when one who hailed from Guyra told the following: A certain wild Irishman who lived out Guy Fawkes way was always ready to play some practical joke. He was a very tall man with unusually long arms, a clever bushman, a fast runner with an uncanny capacity of getting through the bush on the darkest night. One of his favorite pastimes was to haunt the campfires of passing drovers and give them a fright. He would cover his body with a chaff bag, approach their camps on dark nights, making awful noises by blowing through a bullock horn. Being a very good shot with a stone at long distances he would supplement this noise by throwing stones into the camp fire. Then he would rapidly run around the camp and hurl stones from that direction, while making these terrifying noises the while.

Putting these two stories together we find a simple explanation of the terrifying happening of 1902. The fact that Terry put a chaff-bag on himself would make him look to have short legs like a gorilla, being a big man with long arms would aggravate the effect. We all know that on looking at any thing that is up-hill from us it looks larger than it really is, hence the idea that the creature was unusually tall.

This is a very simple explanation of a happening inexplicable to those who were the victims of the joke.

## CoachwhipBooks.com





# An Ivory-billed Woodpecker?

Tony Gerard

I have a friend who very sincerely believes he saw an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in southern Illinois. Did he? I don't know, but I can say that he sincerely believes he did. He's never told anyone beyond his closest friends about his sighting. I asked him to write the story of his sighting and he agreed.

"I live in southern Illinois, in close proximity to the Shawnee National Forest, Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. I think it was 2007, I could be wrong about the exact year. My girlfriend and I were mushroom hunting on private land which adjoins Cache River State Natural Area. The area we were in was a steep sided creek canyon forested with relatively old growth woods. The hillsides had small outcrops of sandstone at various points. My girlfriend, being a more motivated mushroom hunter, had left me behind and I was just casually walking along the creek photographing insects and such. After a bit I noticed what I thought was a pile of litter far up the hillside. I couldn't tell exactly what it was, I thought it was a pile of plastic or paper, but it was too far up steep hillside for me to want to go investigate. Eventually curiosity got the better of me and I climbed up the hillside. What I found was a dead tree which, starting about 10 feet up from its base, had been peeled of bark for almost its entire length. The pieces of peeled bark were piled all around the base of the tree. They were in strips about 4 inches wide and a foot and a half long. The inner side of the bark was really pale, it was this I had seen from down below. I'd wandered around the woods all my life, but I couldn't recall seeing anything like this before.

"About a month or so later there was an Audubon Society sponsored birding event which I was helping out with. I'm not

actually a birder, just more of a general nature geek, but I was a volunteer for the event. Tim Gallagher, author of the book *The Grail Bird*, was the keynote speaker for the event. He'd given a talk on Ivorybills the evening before. That day I ended up at a table with him for a couple of hours as he signed books and answered questions.

"I happened to mention the peeled tree, he said it sounded like old descriptions of Ivorybill work. He then asked me if I was the guy locally that claimed to have seen an Ivorybill. That was news to me. He said the interpreter at the Wetlands Visitor Center had told him about a local guy who claimed an Ivorybill sighting.

"A couple of days later I stopped by the Visitor Center to ask about it. In the Visitor Center they actually have an old mounted pair of Ivorybills. The interpreter told me that a local guy had come in and said his mother-in-law had an identical bird at her feeder on a regular basis. When she tried to tell him it was a pileated woodpecker he was insistent it was just like the mounted specimen, complete with the white feathers on its back.

"As it turned out I knew who the guy was and where his mother-in-law lived. It was actually on a road I drove daily going to and from work. When the old woman was in the yard I always waved. She never waved back, just scowled.

"That October, I'm not sure of the date, but it was early in the month, I was driving home. As I came up over a small rise, a bird, which had been setting on the ground right at the edge of the road, flew up and away from me. It flew at about a 45-degree angle away from me toward the woods. I had an excellent view of the bird, just the dorsal surface, for just a couple of seconds.

"Three thoughts went through my mind: 1) What's that big, black and white bird? I had traveled to Australia years before. There they had a crow-like black and white bird. It reminded me of them. It actually seemed to have more white on it than the mounted specimens in the Wetlands Visitor Center (but they are mounted with the wings folded). 2) It's as big as a Muscovy duck! My grandfather had Muscovy ducks which were black and white; both the color and the size reminded me of them. 3) Oh my God, it's a woodpecker! That realization came upon me when I noticed the red head and obvious bill. I was stunned. There was no mistaking what I'd seen. It was an Ivory-billed Woodpecker.



An old mounted pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers at the Henry Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center.



An Ivory-billed Woodpecker by woodcarver Duane Gaffney at the Henry Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center.

“I then realized I was about 20 yards from the old woman’s driveway. When I thought about it, I realized it was less than a quarter mile, in a direct line, from where I’d seen the peeled tree.

“When I got home, I told my girlfriend, who was more of a birder than me. That evening we were having dinner with some friends. He was a retired resource management professional. Both he and his wife are hardcore birders.

“As soon as we got into their house that evening, my girlfriend announced, ‘Guess what \*\*\*\*\* saw this afternoon!’ I could have crawled under the table. I hadn’t planned on telling anyone else. Of course, I had to tell now. They didn’t ridicule me, or try to tell me I’d actually seen a pileated. They just looked at each other for a second, then the wife said, ‘We have a biologist friend that saw one, too.’ They had promised the guy to keep his sighting a secret. I said I’d like to talk with him and they said they would ask him if he would speak with me. A few days later my friend called to tell me he’d talked to the biologist, who said he didn’t want to talk about it.

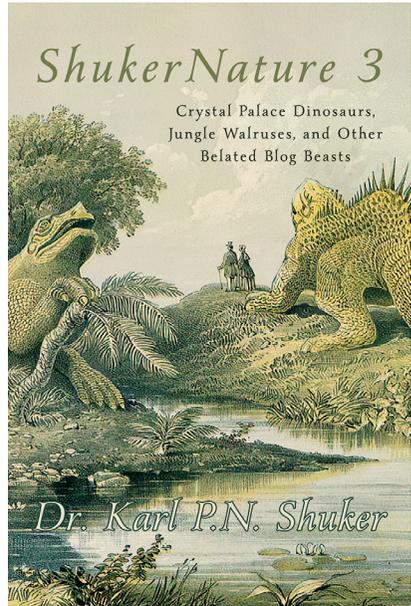
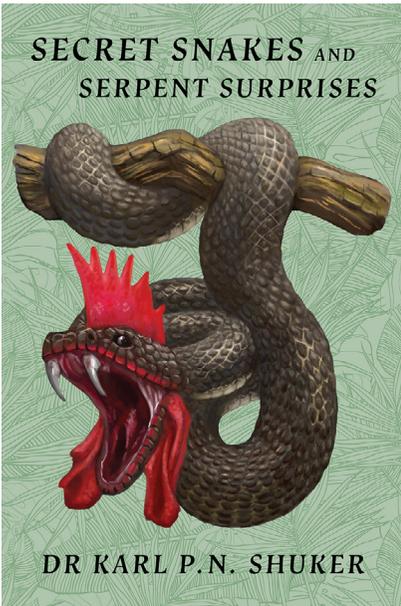
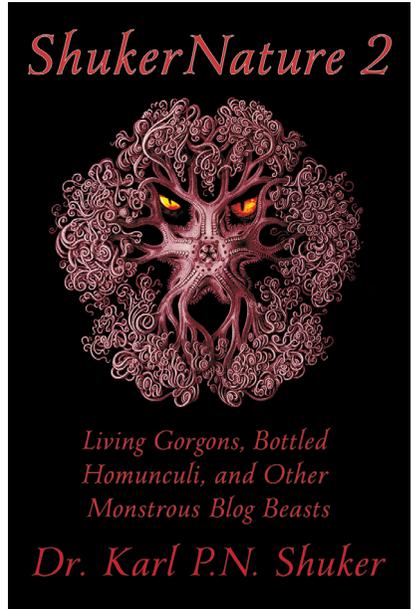
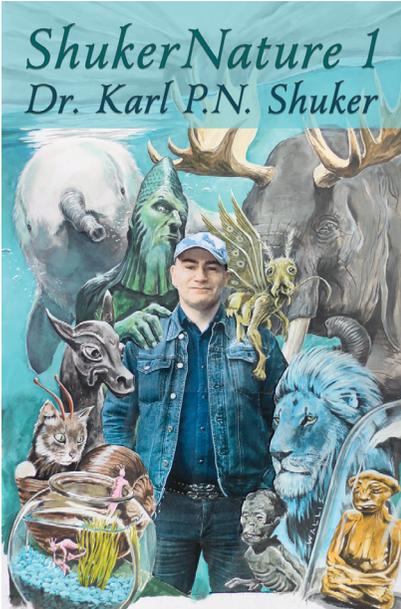
“About three years later I was at another environmental function. A guy I knew casually, a field biologist, caught me by myself. He was the guy. He told me about his sighting. He was certain he saw an Ivorybill fly across an open field very near what is now Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

“Well, that’s my story. For three years afterward I turned my camera on and sat it in the seat beside me as I drove past that area twice a day every weekday. I still drive past it almost daily. The old woman had passed away and her house is abandoned in ruins now. Even if I’d had the camera on and setting beside me that day, I doubt I could have gotten a good picture in the brief time involved.

“I fully realize that extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof. I have nothing of the sort. Honestly, I’d almost rather claim to have seen a Bigfoot than an Ivorybill. I’ve been very reluctant to tell my story. To this day I’ve told only 8 people. I’ve never seen anything since. I always try really hard, every time I see a pileated, to turn it into an Ivorybill. It doesn’t work. The time I saw the Ivorybill it was so obvious. There was no question what it was.”



Ivory-billed Woodpeckers by J. J. Audubon (1829)



# Cryptozoological Notes

Stephen J. Karsen

## The Burin

Background: The Burin is allegedly a large, python-sized, aquatic snake. It is reputed to occur in various rivers and large streams of northernmost Burma (Myanmar). The following incidents involving the Burin were personally experienced by either various members of the Morse family or Lisu people (a tribe living in Burma/Thailand) that the family knew. The Morse family felt called by God to be missionaries for the Church of Christ and worked in north Burma from 1950-1972. Their extensive family continues to minister in Thailand and Burma today. A number of the Morses were experienced hunters in the Burma wilderness. All of the following information on the Burin and the Yeti comes from the book *Exodus to a Hidden Valley* (William Collins: 1974).

All of these encounters were in lowland/montane rainforest streams/streams/streams.

A. A swimmer was taken by a Burin near the north Burma town of Putao. A man was swimming in a stream pool some distance away from other swimmers. Suddenly the swimmers saw him being dragged under the water by the coils of a giant snake. Neither the snake or the man ever reappeared. This encounter probably took place sometime between 1950-1965. Apparently a Lisu pastor in charge of this group of people told his story to one of the Morses.

B. Bobby Morse and two of his brothers were on a hunting trip along with Lisu tribesmen, and were camping along a river. Bobby stayed and tended the campfire, while his brothers and the Lisu went hunting. When the hunters returned, they noticed a

long gash-like mark in the sand as though something had been dragged up. They thought maybe Bobby had dragged up a big piece of firewood, but when asked about the mark, he said that he had nothing to do with it. Hearing this, the hunters decided that there might be a Burin in the river. Several of the Lisu then went fishing in the river with a type of cast net. When the net was thrown into the water there was a big splash. Thinking a big fish was in the net, Bobby stood up to have a look and yelled that it was a snake. His brothers also stood and looked. All three Morses then saw the snake raise its head near some rapids in the river. Apparently this was the only likely Burin sighting made by the Morses. This sighting was probably made in the early 1960s.

C. A Burmese soldier was allegedly attacked and carried off by a Burin while on a journey with other soldiers between the remote jungle communities of Namling and Binuzu. Apparently the soldiers told their story to the Morses and the villagers of Binuzu. Apparently the soldier's body was not recovered. This incident took place in November-December 1971.

#### D. Other Information:

1. The Morses commented that there were numerous authenticated cases of the Burin attacking swimmers, and that some bodies recovered from these incidents had numerous puncture marks.
2. Apparently, the male Burin is believed to have a crest on the head, while the female has no crest.
3. Lisu women will not wear ruby jewelry while swimming because the sparkle of the jewelry might attract the Burin. It is also believed that silver or lead drives it away—the net mentioned above had lead sinkers on it.

## Yeti Tracks/Encounters:

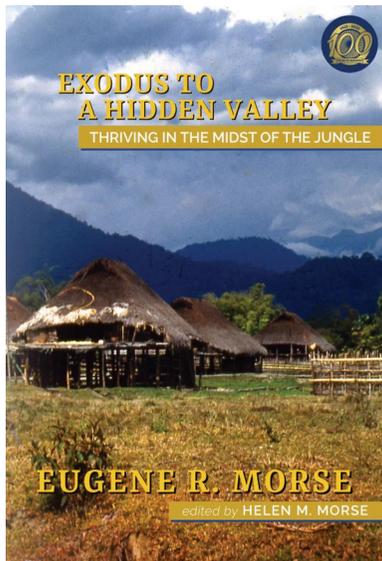
A. Since the Yeti is much more well known there is no need for any general comments about it. This encounter was of tracks only, which were seen by Laverne Morse while on a preaching tour in the mountains east of Putao. He considered the tracks to be “strangely human-like.” This happened in 1955.

B. A Lisu hunter related this story to the Morses: This man had been hunting musk deer in the mountains and was following a deer trail. While doing so, he noticed large human-like tracks in the snow that were approximately 12-14 inches long. Intrigued by this, he followed the tracks for 4-5 miles through the forest until he came to a small clearing. On the other side of this clearing (which was 40-50 feet away) was a “strange animal” standing 7-8 feet tall. “It did not look human and had a mane of longer fur on its head which looked like a big monkey’s.” It had reddish brown fur and was “several times as big as a gibbon.” The animal imitated several gestures that the hunter made, such as raising his hands and also taking aim with a crossbow. The hunter then shot the animal in the chest with a poisoned arrow. The arrow hit the animal’s chest and dropped into the snow. The animal then ran off into the forest. The hunter returned to his village to get help in carrying the body back. Two hours later, he and a friend returned to the clearing. The two men tracked the animal through the snow for some time. They noticed that the tracks showed no sign of slowing down as if the animal had been wounded by the poison arrow. When sunset approached they gave up the chase and returned home. This encounter took place in January 1968, about ten miles from the village of Zi-Yu-Di.

Note: The villages of Binuzu and Zi-Yu-Di are located in a general area of far northwest Burma that is now part of the Hukawng Valley Tiger Reserve (see map next page). This area is very close to the border of India. The bordering area of India is located in the Nampong Forest Division. In the Morses’ time of residence in this area (1966-1972), this area of Burma near the Indian border was called Hidden Valley.



Location of the Hidden Valley in Myanmar (Burma) along the India border. Approximate positions of Binuzu (1) and Zi-Yu-Di (2) noted.  
Google Map data © 2024



*Exodus to a Hidden Valley*,  
currently in print with College Press.

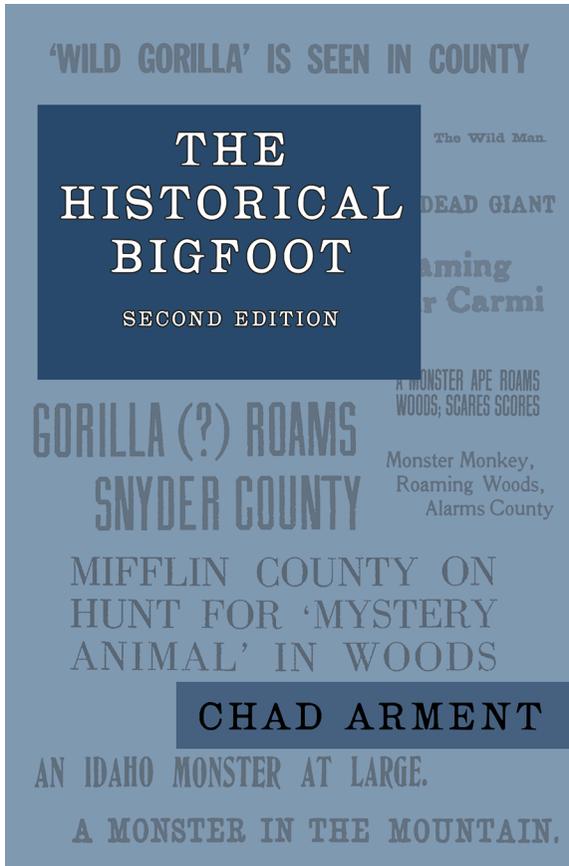
## A Tiger-like Cat in Suriname

I taught in Suriname, South America, for two years at a Christian school in Paramaribo (International Academy of Suriname or IAS) from 2021-2023. I did a lot of jungle herping and saw some neat mammals too! While there, I was told about a large tiger-like cat in Suriname by two different people.

A. While eating dinner at a school Christmas party, I was talking about tigers with Renny Singh (head of maintenance for IAS and also a pastor at a local church). He casually mentioned that there were tigers in Suriname too. I replied that this was impossible since tigers are only found in Asia. Renny then said that he had once seen two tiger skins from Suriname. Very intrigued, I asked him for more details. He then told me that a hunting relative of his had shot two tigers some years ago and that he had actually seen the skins of the animals. He said that they were clearly striped rather than spotted as in the jaguar. He didn't know where the skins came from—somewhere in the jungle. He didn't mention the actual color of the stripes. Renny promised to try to ask the hunter if I could see the skins and at least get pictures of them, but I never heard anything else from him about “tigers” as long as I was there. I'm still in contact with him so maybe there's still a chance. The date of this supposed incident is unknown.

B. A former student of mine (Stefan Bijkerk, who I taught to be an enthusiastic herpetologist—now in 11th grade at IAS), told me about a large, striped cat that was seen by an older hunter that he knew, along a jungle road between the town of Nieuw Nickerie and the small village of Apoera (also spelled Apura). There are no other details except that the sighting was at night and took place several years ago—maybe between 2018-2022.

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*The Historical Bigfoot (2nd edition)*

Chad Arment

This updated and expanded edition is a state-by-state (and province) chronological list of sightings and stories of hairy wild men, gorillas in the woods, and other monstrous man-beasts from North America from the time before 'Big-foot' entered American popular culture. Alongside hoaxes, misidentifications, and tall tales are a significant number of encounter reports from newspapers across the continent that describe a tall, hairy apelike creature. Whatever its origin, this is not a recent phenomenon, but goes back hundreds of years.

# Audubon and the Nature Fakers

Chad Arment

Over the last couple of decades, the reputation of artist and naturalist John James Audubon (1785-1851) has suffered a number of hits. Some of the stories told about him, or by him, are now considered intentionally misleading (Halley 2018). Some of his discoveries have been ‘debunked’ as hoaxes. And, of course, he is known to have pranked a gullible colleague. Still, some of his findings, originally decried as apocryphal, are now recognized as reasonably accurate (e.g. Henninger 1910). A thorough sorting of fact and fantasy in Audubon’s life would likely take a volume, but a look at some of the highlights of alleged and actual nature faking surrounding Audubon is warranted by anyone who is examining the historical records for anomalies in natural history. First, though, historical context requires a reacquaintance with the nature fakers.

## Nature Faking

Nature faking is the folkloric communication (often through ‘professional’ media like books, journals, or newspapers) of natural history misinformation. Sometimes this is deliberate (hoaxing for amusement, for scientific acclaim, to garner attention to commercial attractions, or to simply fill a book), but can also be unconscious. The literary battles of the early 1900s between opposing groups of naturalists and amateur naturalists alike over the veracity of alleged animal behavior gives testimony to ‘true believers’ on every side. There is a spectrum of veracity with such claims. Some are very subtle (perhaps just leaving out context), and may require an expert eye to distinguish, while others are far more obvious. (See Rieppel (2018) for a good, though brief,

discussion of con artistry and hoaxing in Early America, which includes discussion of Koch's manufactured 'sea serpent'.)

An obvious example can be seen in the following 'wild man' story from the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier-Journal*, January 18, 1831 (reprinted there from the *Kentucky Gazette*):

#### Wild Man of the Woods.

Mr. Trotter:—Five or six days since, my business called me to Danville, and thence to Harrodsburg. While descending the cliff on the north side of the Kentucky river, I very unexpectedly encountered a being whose strangeness of visage inspired me with the most horrible sensations. When I first saw him he was lying upon the ground, his tail tied to the limb of a tree, about twenty yards distant. I would judge it to be thirty yards in length and about the size of a bed cord. The tramping of my horse's feet startled him; and he bounded to the tree, climbing up by his tail, which, as before stated, was tied to a limb. Recovering somewhat from my confusion, I advanced nearer the tree, where I minutely surveyed his whole appearance. His head was of the usual dimensions, and his hair was long and flowing, reaching nearly to his waist. His eye (he had but one, in the centre of his forehead), was almost white, and near the size of a silver dollar. His body was covered with hair and feathers, and his feet resembled those of the bear. He skipped with the greatest facility from limb to limb, and muttered some unintelligible words in a harsh tone. Whilst he was intently gazing at me, I rode around the tree about four times, his head turning each time with me. When I stopped, his head was still for a moment, when it wheeled with the velocity of a toy until it resumed its former position. Seeing him about to descend by means of his tail, I put spurs to my horse and reached the ferry, greatly terrified and nearly out of breath.

The above statement is sent you at the request of my neighbors, who will certify to my good character, having resided amongst them for nineteen years.

Patrick C. Flournoy

Jessamine county, Ky.

Jan. 3, 1831.

This is one typical category of newspaper hoax seen during the period Audubon was active, presenting a 'marvelous' nondescript with random strange features. It is an obvious hoax intended to amuse the readers, fooling only the most gullible. Audubon's only attachment to this sort of 'creature' hoax was an attempt to exploit his reputation in an 1843 letter published in several newspapers (here, taken from the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, *Public Ledger*, August 5, 1843). At the time, he was engaged in expeditions out West, which greatly interested the public.

Interesting Letter from Audubon.—We find in an Exchange paper the following interesting letter from Audubon, written to Dr. Bachman, of Charleston, S.C.

Latitude 49, 10 N, June 20th, 1843  
110 Miles above Fort Union.

To Dr. J. Bachman:—My dear Friend—It is with a transport of pleasure that I avail myself of this opportunity of sending a letter (by a hunter going down to Fort Union) to impart the gratification I have experienced since the date of my last, (at the Fort, 13th inst.) I cannot say but that I consider all my toils, troubles and travels in the wilderness are fully and amply repaid by the discovery of an animal which bids fair to become not only a valuable, but a domestic one—although I have been successful in this my last journey, in collecting a number more of beautiful specimens of birds, attended to with great hardship in some cases; but still they are nothing in comparison with that which I have so lately discovered existed in these regions; and from my own

observations, together with the inquiries I have made of the Indians in this neighborhood relative thereto, I am satisfied that these animals can be procured in great plenty in certain portions of this territory. But I must proceed, as you always expect, with my doings since the date of my last.

We left the Fort (Union) on the morning of the 11th instant—a more beautiful day I never beheld. Just picture to yourself a clear sky, and not too warm a sun, with the most beautiful scenery in the world before you, affording wide plans for your researches, filled with the melody of innumerable wild songsters, scented with the delightful perfume of a thousand variegated and useful unknown plants and herbs, which not only delight the eye by their various hues, but at once show the vast fields that nature has provided for the use of man and the improvement of science; it was indeed a beautiful subject for reflection, though I cannot say I paid it just tribute, being so intent on my pursuits. We travelled that day a distance of forty miles, and I procured two more additional and beautiful specimens to my collection, but nature seemed afterwards to be not quite so munificent; continual heavy showers have molested us daily, and it is in a great measure owing to this that I accidentally came up on the animal I am going to describe. Yesterday, about 10 a.m., we saw dark, heavy clouds coming from the South east, attended with heavy peals of thunder and vivid lightning, when, in the distance, about a mile to the westward, we perceived a large wood or forest, on the borders of a lake, some ten miles in circumference, towards which a number of flocks of birds were directing their course. This led us there, not for the mere purpose of shelter, (for that, to a man of my pursuits, would be feminine,) but that we might be enabled, among so great a variety of the feathered tribe, to procure something in addition to my stock.

We had no sooner arrived at the place described, than it rained in torrents—my companions placed themselves under shelter of a large tree, while myself, too well aware of the abundance before me of that which I have so long made my study, sallied forth with my fowling piece, (with the lock well protected from the rain). I had proceeded the distance of about 400 paces when, to my horror, I heard not far from me, a very singular cry, in some measure resembling that of a human being in distress, but much louder. For a moment I did not know what to do, having nothing with me but small shot; however I was determined to proceed towards the spot from whence the cry arose, and ascertain, if possible, what was the cause, knowing from its continuance and loudness, that my companions would be attracted thither. I had not advanced in my paces to the left, verging on the margin of the lake, before I perceived some animals moving among the trees. I approached very cautiously, and to my surprise saw two beasts, engaged in playing, or fighting, they appeared to be of enormous heights, when they stood on their hind legs, which I have since ascertained they continually sit on. I remained watching them a short time, uncertain what to do, when to my great joy my friends came up, being attracted by the noise, and having some fears for my safety. Inactive spectators we could not remain—so determined, therefore, to attack them, as they then lay exhausted. I thought if they were not too vicious I might procure one alive. Filled with this intent, we advanced towards them, they both sprang up and set on their hind parts, with their fore paws upraised, seeming to threaten descent upon us. One of my companions being somewhat afraid, immediately shot one, and the other bounded off with the most fearful leaps. Another such an animal I never saw—your buffalos or mountain elk are nothing in comparison, in the

scale of worth. To give you a proper description will be to liken it somewhat in shape to a kangaroo, but varying in many particulars. It sits on its hind legs the same way, but not shaped in the abdominal regions the same; its front legs or arms are short, but armed with sharp claws, and they bound or jump with their hind legs. They have a tail somewhat like that of a sheep, about 10 inches long, and round the middle of the body they have a ring of flesh, about 12 inches wide and 8 inches thick in the middle or centre, which produces a great quantity of oil. On their head they have two horns very similar to the horns of the deer, but not more than 12 inches long, the head is shaped also very like that of the deer, and has the same kind of teeth; but what is more remarkable than all the rest, their coat is of the most beautiful fur I ever beheld, of a dark brown color. The proportions of the one we killed were very great, it weighed, to the best of our calculations, upwards of 600 pounds, and it measured from the top of the head to the end of the tail 9 feet 4 inches, which appears to be their full grown size. We had no sooner killed this one, than some Indians, attracted by the report of the rifle, joined us. Our interpreter conversed with them—they said that in these woodlands these animals were in great abundance. They called it in their tongue the Ke ko ka ka, or Jumper; they feed on grass, herbs, and foliage. Upon observing us take off the skin, the Indians expressed a desire to have some of the flesh, which we gave them. We cooked some of the same, and found it delicious; it was very white and tender, tasted very similar to veal, but the ring on the body was nearly all oil, and the whole upper part will produce a great quantity. The Indians took us to their huts, or village, which consisted of but six families; there we saw no less than six of these animals domesticated, two young ones, male and female, which I bartered some beads

for, and intend to send down to the fort by the first opportunity.

I think, without doubt, in point of usefulness and value, I may pride myself in surpassing most of my compeers, in thus bringing so great a discovery to light. Every information respecting them I shall endeavor to obtain before leaving here.

Attaching the names of not one, but two well-known naturalists to the alleged letter and ludicrous story was too much for the Charleston, South Carolina, *Mercury*, which published a rebuttal on August 9, 1843:

### Hoaxes

This species of imposition should have either an innate absurdity, so that the believing it should be a proper punishment of fools—or it should lead to absurd and ridiculous consequences, so that those who are taken in may have at once the consolations of laughing and being laughed. But the essence of the true hoax is wit. Without this a hoax is merely a lie. Thus the man who sometime since reported that Mr. Wise was dead, simply manufactured a lie—which there was no merit in concocting, and no stretch of credulity in believing. We observe that a Boston paper is hugging itself very warmly for having successfully started a similar imposition—from which nothing in the world has come, except that many people believed, not caring a copper whether it were so or not, that Count D’Orsay was in this country. If merely the statement of what is probable but not true, is to pass for hoax, then there is no species of lying which could not hereafter be classed under the generic head of “Wit,” and an appropriate change in dictionaries and moral philosophy must ensue. We think it better, however, to let the latter remain untouched, and to apply the remedy by scourging these pitiful sinners equally against wit and morals, out of the community.

Under this head hardly can be classed the last imposition that has been palmed upon the public, by one "James Brown" of the numerous family of the Browns, and "an old and valuable subscriber" of the New York Herald. This 'James Brown,' moved and instigated by the patron goddess of dunces, "kindly placed at our (the *Herald's*) disposal, a very interesting letter from the great American naturalist," Audubon. We said the imposition belonged not to the class mentioned above—there is 'innate absurdity' enough about it, but the greatest of all absurdities is his supposing that any one who had sense enough to love the great naturalist, could be deluded into mistaking the miserable tawdry daubs of "James Brown" for the glowing pencil of Audubon. The whole letter is as much below Audubon in spirit and style, as the 'Ante-Diluvial' is below 'Paradise Lost.' As some proof of this, the letter has fallen still born, and we should not notice it at all, if it were not to direct public attention to this newly discovered opening for hoaxing, in fictitious letters from the several adventurous parties now exploring the great West. Much attention is directed to these parties at present—valuable results are anticipated from their explorations, and news from them is eagerly read in all parts of the country. The interest felt in their movements, pursuing as they are, high and valuable objects, in the midst of privations and perils of no common sort, is too respectable and general to be trifled with by the press.

This manufacture of "James Brown" purports to be a letter from Audubon to Dr. Bachman of this city, and is mainly taken up with the description of a new beast discovered in the West, which is as atrocious a compilation of parts as the 'Mermaid' itself. It is a Kangaroo with a tail like a sheep—and therefore without any balance—weighing 600 lbs—9 feet 4 inches from head to tail, &c. But there is

no use in particularizing—the whole description is absurd and the mere statement that so large an animal abounded in that region and was domesticated by the Indians, though it had never been heard of before by civilized men, is sufficient to settle the character of this Kangaroo-Brown imposition.

Although contradiction of this very miserable attempt at imposition is scarcely necessary, yet as we have noticed the matter, we may as well say that no such letter has been received by Dr. Bachman—that our distinguished naturalist is as entirely unacquainted with “James Brown” as he is with said Brown’s short-tailed Kangaroo—conjecturing only that the two animals are near of kin, and of a species that it belongs not to naturalists, but to justices of the peace to specify and arrange—their proper museum being the house of correction.

In conclusion, we are requested by Dr. Bachman, to say, that any information reaching him from Audubon, of general interest, will be communicated to the public through the columns of the *Mercury*.

This wasn’t the last time a newspaper hoax used Audubon’s name. In 1913, one of Audubon’s granddaughters wrote to the mayor of Henderson, Kentucky, laying claim on behalf of Audubon’s descendants to a chest of old coins found under the ruins of an old mill formerly owned by her family, which had burned to the ground. Someone had sent her a copy of a local newspaper with the story in it. The mayor had to explain to her that the story was just an April Fool’s joke (Anon. 1913).

#### Audubon and Rafinesque

Audubon’s taxonomic pranks on the eccentric naturalist C. S. Rafinesque are among the most well-studied cases of nature faking. Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmaltz (1873-1840) was an eager and prolific describer of new species, plant and animal. His strange behavior, single-mindedness, and credulity created a schism between himself and his contemporaries in the American scientific community (Wheeler 1988). Haldeman (1841-2)

noted, “His greatest fault as a naturalist was not so much, perhaps, the shortness and resulting obscurity of his characters, as his passion for ‘new species,’ and the recklessness with which he proposed them, without sufficiently examining the works of his predecessors. . . . Rafinesque was very credulous, which led him to believe the exaggerated accounts of the vulgar; and to write essays and found ‘species,’ upon grounds which should be beneath the notice of any naturalist.” Similarly, Harlan (1825) noted that he “has described, or rather indicated, a great variety of animals; but his insulated situation, and almost utter ignorance of the labours of other naturalists, have seduced him into grievous errors, and occasioned much confusion in natural history. It is possible, that some of his animals may be new species, but from the looseness of his imperfect descriptions, we have been obliged to reject them in almost every instance.”

Rafinesque’s zeal and sense of adventure were unfortunately tied to an impetuous nature, so even though he collected a great deal of interesting data, there was little reflection or critical examination in his writings (Boewe 1988; Woodman 2015). For today’s cryptozoology enthusiasts, Rafinesque serves as a cautionary tale, having written about both sea serpents (Rafinesque 1819) and wandering jaguars in eastern North America (Rafinesque 1832), but primarily as a way to name new species rather than as a means of seriously investigating the issues.

Audubon wrote about his first encounter with Rafinesque in 1818 in a sketch, ‘The Eccentric Naturalist,’ in his 1831 *Ornithological Biography*. Audubon noted that Rafinesque was particularly interested in the botanical illustrations that accompanied Audubon’s bird paintings, so Audubon showed him his portfolios: “He chanced to turn over the drawing of a plant quite new to him. After inspecting it closely, he shook his head, and told me no such plant existed in nature;—for, kind reader, [Rafinesque] although a highly scientific man, was suspicious to a fault, and believed such plants only to exist as he had himself seen, or such as, having been discovered of old, had, according to Father Malebranche’s expression, acquired a ‘venerable beard.’ I told my guest that the plant was common in the immediate neighbourhood, and that I should shew it to him on the morrow. ‘And

why to morrow, Mr. Audubon? let us go now.’ We did so, and on reaching the bank of the river, I pointed to the plant. [Rafinesque] I thought had gone mad. He plucked the plants one after another, danced, hugged me in his arms, and exultingly told me that he had got not merely a new species, but a new genus.”

Rafinesque’s frenzy for new species appears to have incited Audubon’s exasperation that evening, after having settled the eccentric naturalist into a bedroom for the night. Hearing a ‘great uproar,’ he discovered Rafinesque running around the room naked, swinging Audubon’s favorite violin (now shattered) at bats that were flying through an open window. Rafinesque was convinced they were of a new species. Audubon didn’t think they were, but managed to secure a few specimens for his visitor. (Rafinesque did, in fact, describe the bats as a new species [Woodman 2016], though they have been synonymized since.)

In consequence for destroying a treasured violin, Audubon gave Rafinesque numerous descriptions of imaginary fish, mammals, birds, and invertebrates (Markle 1997; Woodman 2016), which Rafinesque then described in print, usually uncritically (with exceptions). Woodman (2016) noted that Audubon may have thought Rafinesque would recognize the prank at some point, or that any descriptions would never appear in print once an editor saw them: “If so, he underestimated both Rafinesque’s trusting naivete, and his ingenuity in finding and creating outlets for his work.” Uncritically using hearsay for scientific descriptions was Rafinesque’s undoing (Markle 1997). Within cryptozoology, of course, hearsay can point out potential areas of investigation; but it never rises to the level of confirmative evidence (Arment 2004).

### Audubon’s Mystery Birds

Audubon’s best-known work was *The Birds of America*, with 435 life-sized plates of North American birds originally published in sections between 1827 and 1838. Several of Audubon’s birds have been the focus of inquiry over the years, as they do not seem to be clearly identifiable with our recognized avifauna. Various suggestions over the years have included color mutations, hybridization, misidentification, or even hoaxing.

Cuvier's 'wren' (clearly a kinglet), *Regulus cuvierii*, was found by Audubon in 1812 along the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania. Only one specimen was obtained, and it has not survived to the present day. Scott (1905) suggested that it was a mutant golden-crowned kinglet. Brewster (1881) noted that it shared traits from both the golden-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, suggesting it was a hybrid (which would make it an intergeneric hybrid, at that: *Corthylio* x *Regulus*). Parkes (1985) supported the idea that it was just "a golden-crowned kinglet whose crown patch was bright red rather than the normal yellow with an orange center."

The carbonated warbler, *Dendroica carbonata*, is known only from Audubon's art and accompanying description, based on two specimens killed near Henderson, Kentucky (Scott 1905). Brewster (1881) suggested it was a hybrid blackpoll x Cape May warbler. Parkes (1985) noted that it might have been an immature Cape May warbler. Sibley (2008) suggested that Audubon was painting from faulty memory. Hertzell and Hertzell (1995) reported seeing a hybrid warbler in Minnesota that clearly shared a number of field marks with Audubon's carbonated warbler—a blackpoll hybrid parentage seemed most likely.

The Blue Mountain warbler, *Dendroica montana*, was first published by ornithologist Alexander Wilson, a slightly earlier contemporary of Audubon who described several other well-known eastern warblers (Walton 1987). The specimen was supposedly found in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia (Scott 1905). Audubon also figured the bird from a specimen lent to him, though Lund (2015) suggested Audubon only used Wilson's plate and fabricated the story of a loan specimen. No surviving specimens are known. Parkes (1985) suggested it might be a hybrid, though no possible parentage was offered.

The small-headed flycatcher, *Wilsonia microcephala*, was figured by both Wilson and Audubon (Wilson called it *Musciapa minuta*), with at least ten specimens claimed to have been taken in Kentucky and several other states, though no specimens are known to survive (Burns 1908). (As Holt [2002-3b] noted, 'flycatcher' was a generic umbrella term for small insect-eating birds at the time. This hypothetical avian was likely a warbler.) Scott (1905) noted that the bird is clearly distinguishable from



*Cuvier's Wren.* Male.  
REGULUS CUVIERI.  
*Plant Kalmia latifolia.*

Cuvier's Kinglet ('Wren') by J. J. Audubon



Carbonated Warbler

SYLVIA CARBONATA.

Male.

May bush or Service-tree, *Betula nana*.

Drawn from Nature and Published by John J. Audubon, F.R.S. &c.

Engraved, Printed & Coloured by R. L. H. B.

Carbonated Warblers by J. J. Audubon



Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S. F.L.S.

Engraved, Printed and Coloured by Robt. Havell, 1838

*Little Tyrant Flycatcher.*  
TYRANNULA PUSILLA, Swainson

*Blue Mountain Warbler.*  
SILVIA MONTANA, Wilson  
♂. Male.

*Short-legged Pewee?*  
MUSCICAPA PROBEA, Latham  
♂. Male.

*Small-headed Flycatcher.*  
MUSCICAPA MINUTA, Willd  
♂. Male.

*Parula's Vireo.*  
VIREO BARTRAMI, Swainson  
♂. Male.

*Rocky Mountain Flycatcher.*  
TYRANNULA NIGRICANS, Swainson  
♂. Male.

Blue Mountain Warbler (top) and Small-headed Warbler ('Flycatcher') (bottom left) by J. J. Audubon

other ‘flycatcher’ species, so hybridization is unlikely. Rather, he argued, either this was a species on the verge of extinction (and now gone), or they were mutations of some sort that have not been seen since. Elliott Coues (1903) stated, “Its whole record is a tissue of surmises. . . . There certainly was such a bird, for Wilson figured it, and he never drew upon his imagination; but we do not recognize his plate, nor that of Audubon.” He went on to suggest it might have been a pine warbler. Holt (2002-3b) noted that this bird was one of the sparks that created a feud between Audubon and Alexander Wilson, as Audubon’s description of the bird included the claim that Wilson had plagiarized Audubon’s figure. (Zoologist George Ord, who finished Wilson’s work after Wilson’s death, would go on to charge Audubon with plagiarism of various figures by Wilson.) Burns (1908) thought the bird completely fictitious, and that that fact acquitted Wilson; Holt (2002-3b) noted the illogical nature of Burns’ argument. Parkes (1985) suggested it could be a hybrid.

Townsend’s bunting, *Emberiza townsendii*, was originally discovered (specimen acquired) by Dr. John K. Townsend (1809-1851) of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1833. The bird was located in New Garden, Pennsylvania, and the specimen still exists at the National Museum of Natural History (Burns 1908; Parkes 1985). Townsend had intended to write up the description, naming it after Audubon, but when it was turned over to the latter for illustration, Audubon gave it a specific epithet after Townsend (Deane 1909). Scott (1905) noted, “The relationship of this bird is obvious; it can only be regarded as the close ally of the dickcissel,” and stated that the Committee of the Ornithologists’ Union could only offer, “Its peculiarities can not be accounted for by hybridism nor probably by individual variation.” Parkes (1985) suggested that it was a dickcissel with reduced pigmentation, specifically lacking carotenoid (yellow) pigments, also noting it appeared to be a female, though Townsend had considered it a male. Holt (2002-3a) suggested that, as young male dickcissels show delayed adult plumage, it may have been a young male that lacked yellow pigmentation. Lepage (2014) reported that a bird photographed in 2014 in Ontario had a very similar phenotype to that of Townsend’s bunting. (With modern genetic analysis, might it be worth re-investigating the NMNH specimen?)



*Sehensaw Sparrow.* *Mealy-Red Wren.* *Louisiana Tanager.* *Townsend's Finch.* *Buff-breasted Finch.*  
*FRINGILLA SPALTRIA.* *LINOTA BOREALIS.* *TANARUS LUDOVICIANA.* *EMBERIZA TOWNSENDI.* *EMBERIZA FUSCA.*  
*A. G. S.* *A. G. S.* *A. G. S.* *A. G. S.* *A. G. S.*

Townsend's Bunting ('Finch') (bottom left) by J. J. Audubon

The 'great eagle,' that Audubon also termed the 'bird of Washington,' *Falco washingtonii*, was published as the first plate in his *Birds of America*. Audubon reprinted his history with this bird in his *Ornithological Biography* (1831). He first saw it in February 1814, traveling with a Canadian fur trader on the Upper Mississippi. The trader called the bird a 'great eagle,' and said that it was rare, "that they sometimes followed the hunters, to feed on the entrails of animals which they had killed, when the lakes were frozen over, but that when the lakes were open, they would dive in the daytime after fish, and snatch them up in the manner of the Fishing Hawk [osprey]; and that they roosted generally on the shelves of the rocks, where they built their nests. . . ." Audubon considered it a new species, but did not have a chance to see one again until a few years later. Coming across a nest on the rocks along the Green River near the junction with the Ohio, in Kentucky, one of the locals claimed it belonged to a pair of 'brown eagles,' or immature bald eagles, though larger than usual, and that one of the birds had been seen diving for fish. Audubon disagreed that bald eagles would nest on the ground when trees were available, and waited for the adults to return to the nest, thinking they might be sea eagles. Eventually they returned, and Audubon recognized the birds as the 'great eagle' he had seen once before. The eagles abandoned that nest, however, and it was two years later before he encountered another near his Henderson, Kentucky, home. He was able to shoot that one, and took it to his neighbor, Dr. Adam Rankin, to show. Rankin agreed that it was a bird he had not seen before. The eagle, a male, was 3 feet 7 inches in length, with a wingspread of 10 feet 2 inches. The disposal of Audubon's bird is unknown, but he noted that a specimen of the same species was mounted in a Philadelphia museum, then acquired by Dr. Richard Harlan for the Academy of Natural Sciences. (A quick look at the searchable catalog for the Academy's ornithological collection does not bring up any likely candidates.)

It wasn't long after Audubon's publication in *Birds of America* that doubts were raised over the identity of the 'great eagle.' In 1829, a European critic noted that it seemed identical with an immature white-tailed eagle, other than the size (Anon. 1829).



'Bird of Washington' by J. J. Audubon

While a few regional naturalists would go on to include reports of *Falco washingtonii* in their bird lists (Read 1852-3: “specimen obtained near Toledo”; Haymond 1856: “observed on [W]hite Water River”), by the later decades of the 1800s, most naturalists assumed it was simply an immature bald eagle (Allen 1870). Without a physical specimen, there was no argument to be made, with Audubon’s measurements chalked up to “memory, fabricating, or exaggerating them to suit his inflamed fancy” (Mengel 1953). Notable, though, is that, as Mengel pointed out, all of Audubon’s measurements on the bird are proportional, so it is not simply a transcription error in the wingspan length.

Maruna (2004) argued that the evidence suggested that Audubon’s bird was not an immature bald eagle, but that without a specimen it isn’t a question that can be answered. More recently, Halley (2020a) has accused Audubon of outright fraud. Halley’s article is worth reading—but as much as he accused Maruna of overlooking citations, he is a bit careless in his attacks, inferring the “several ‘mystery birds’ . . . that have never been seen by any other naturalist” are part and parcel with Audubon’s “six cases of alleged plagiarism.” As noted above, that really isn’t accurate. The ‘great eagle’ may very well be a case of nature faking, but in the other small mystery birds, there is little evidence for deliberate fabrication. (I believe there are a few reasonable questions about the ‘great eagle’ that remain unanswered—such as, if Audubon made up the story of killing the eagle, why bring Dr. Rankin’s name into it? Wouldn’t that leave a large hole in the story if Rankin said the event didn’t happen?)

### Discovery Frauds

There have been several cases with claims that Audubon fraudulently manipulated collection dates to get prior discovery or took personal credit for a discovery that should have gone to others.

A pastel of a ruffed grouse in the Ernst Mayr Library, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, is inscribed 1805, yet the paper’s watermark is dated 1810. This has been used to claim that Audubon deliberately backdated the art to gain precedence over Alexander Wilson’s work. Olson and Mazzitelli (2017), however, demonstrated that this is an illogical assumption, as

Audubon had already depicted the species sometime between 1803 and 1805; his working habit of constantly adding, and updating, inscriptions provides a more reasonable hypothesis. He likely added the inscription in 1812, referencing his first depiction of the species. (Another grouse-related debate arose over Audubon's claim that his first engraved illustration of a bird was on American paper money. Over a century went by without any physical evidence of such, until Peck and Newman (2010) discovered proof private bank notes with a 'running grouse' vignette by Audubon. It is unknown if the Bank of Norwalk, in Ohio, actually issued any bank notes using the grouse to the public; the Bank disappeared after the 1940s.)

Halley (2020b) described how Audubon, visiting Philadelphia to collect subscription dues, somehow obtained a specimen of a new hawk that had been sent to the Academy of Natural Sciences museum by John Carmichael Jenkins of Mississippi. Jenkins had sent a description and name along with the specimen, but Audubon disregarded this and took the bird to Europe where he named it *Buteo harrisi* (and then claimed not to know about Jenkins).

Halley (2022) argued that Audubon's claim to have personally discovered Lincoln's sparrow on a voyage to Labrador in 1833, was likely fabricated. Audubon claimed to have heard an unfamiliar song, and called to his companions to help collect the bird. Young Thomas Lincoln brought it down with a shot, and Audubon promptly named it *Tom's finch*. Halley suggested that variance in published transcripts and a desire to protect the family reputation led to Audubon's granddaughter destroying Audubon's original diaries and changing the published versions to keep in line with the discovery 'myth.' In response to this, Logan (2023) pointed out key problems with Halley's argument, and noted 'multiple factual errors,' concluding: "Halley's revisionist claim that Audubon fabricated his account of the discovery of Lincoln's Sparrow requires more than conjectural proof of its validity. However, he has overlooked or ignored critical facts that refute his argument." He does note that Halley is correct that Audubon's work "cannot be entirely trusted, as serious scholars and biographers have known for decades."

## Audubon's Water-Lily

When Audubon's print of the 'common American swan' (i.e. tundra swan) was published, it included some distinctive yellow water-lilies which Audubon noted on the title as '*Nymphaea flava—Leitner.*' Dr. Edward Frederick Leitner was a young German botanist and naturalist who had graduated from the Medical College of South Carolina. Leitner was a friend of Audubon's, and it appears that he had collected this plant and shown it to Audubon, sharing his name for the plants. Audubon wrote to John Bachman in 1838, asking if he knew whether Leitner had officially published the name, as he was thinking of naming it after Leitner in the letterpress of the book (Corning 1930). (Leitner was killed a few months prior in 1838 during an altercation with the Seminole, and does not appear to have formally published the name. Leitner's collection of specimens eventually made their way back to Germany, but were destroyed during the bombings in World War II.) Audubon's print was published with Leitner's *N. flava*, in any case.



Tundra Swan with yellow water-lilies by J. J. Audubon

Without formal publication, botanists “had no positive evidence of its existence” (Curtiss 1902), and for decades the flower was ignored or considered a mistake on Audubon’s part. Curtiss noted that in 1875, he ran across the plant near Jacksonville, Florida, and sent samples to Dr. George Vasey, but never received a reply. Mrs. Mary Treat (1877) ran across the plant on the St. Johns River, in 1874 or 1875 (Curtiss 1902), and sent samples to Dr. Asa Gray and Professor Sargent at Harvard; they informed her that this was Audubon’s lost water-lily. Gray (1876) noted that a Dr. Edward Palmer also sent him samples of the plant from the Indian River in 1874. Today, the species is *Nymphaea mexicana*, and it is recognized as native to the southern U.S., with distribution into Mexico.

#### Audubon’s Rattlesnakes

Audubon elicited controversy over remarks made in 1827 (Audubon 1828), regarding his observation in 1821 of a large ‘rattlesnake’ that followed a gray squirrel up a tree, tracking the squirrel as it fell off the squirrel and then grabbing and enfolding its coils around its prey before it could take off. After suffocating the squirrel, the snake slowly swallowed the animal whole. After eating the squirrel, the snake remained unmoving on the ground until Audubon tapped it with a stick, when it began to rattle its tail. Audubon then killed it and cut it open to see how the squirrel lay within its digestive tract. This story earned the criticism of zoologist George Ord (supporter of Alexander Wilson), who published a response (O. 1827) noting that rattlesnakes are “at all times sluggish animals” and that “venomous snakes, of whatever genus, are never known to seize their prey and suffocate it in their folds, but restrict themselves to the use of their fangs solely.” Hutt (1908) revived the story, noting that a later issue of the *Franklin Journal* offered a notice from the editor stating that Audubon’s article had been hastily admitted, but soon after received a note from a ‘scientific friend’ (almost certainly Ord), calling the article “a tissue of the grossest falsehoods ever attempted to be palmed upon the credulity of mankind, and it is a pity that anything like countenance should be given to it, by republishing it in a respectable journal. The romances of Audubon



Mockingbirds with Timber Rattlesnake by J. J. Audubon

rival those of Munchausen, Mandeville, or even Mendez de Pinto, in the total want of truth, however short they may fall of them in the amusement they afford.” Two replies to Hutt’s letter suggested that Audubon probably just misidentified the snake, perhaps due to the tail rattling (Brimley 1908; Colles 1908). Otherwise, it sounds like a legitimate observation of a colubrid, probably a ratsnake. Ratsnakes and other colubrids, like racers, are known to shake their tail in agitation. (On dry leaves, the rattling can be a bit unnerving if you didn’t spot the snake first.)

One of Audubon’s prints is of a group of mockingbirds defending a nest from a timber rattlesnake. This, of course, similarly raised the ire of critics, who argued that rattlesnakes rarely if ever climb trees, so would not be engaged in nest-raiding. Bachman (1834) rose to Audubon’s defense, noting several cases of rattlesnakes discovered in trees. More recently, Rudolph et al. (2004) reviewed arboreal behavior in timber rattlesnakes in east Texas, noting, “*C. horridus* consistently exhibits arboreal behavior and vindicates portions of Audubon’s early observations.” Foraging was suggested as the best explanation for arboreality in timber rattlesnakes.

### Conclusion

Audubon was not an academically-educated naturalist, so readers today should be wary of accepting his notes uncritically. We also know that he was creating a social brand, to use modern parlance, that would allow him to rise in status and garner financial opportunities. He certainly embellished his personal history and background, and he gathered his fair share of scientific critics, for better or worse. He was not alone among his contemporaries in making mistakes or in passing along misinformation about natural subjects. (Alexander Wilson made a few errors himself, including thinking that the ‘ring-tailed eagle’ was a distinct species, when it was just a young golden eagle.)

Many of the alleged errors in describing new species from Audubon and his contemporaries could have been avoided, or quickly corrected, simply by following what is now standard practice in scientific systematics: pay attention to the published

scientific literature and deposit collected specimens in natural history museums.

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## Addendum: The Beetle Fakers

Faked beetles appear to have a lengthy history. Brown and Hancock (2008) discovered a beetle (with the epithet *Scarabaeus neptunus*, or the Neptune beetle) in the eighteenth-century insect collection of Dr. William Hunter (1718-1783). The collection included some 7,600 specimens. This particular specimen was a creation built from three or four different species, including the Hercules beetle and a rhinoceros beetle. The authors conclude, assuming it wasn't an accident or an attempt at a scientific hoax: ". . . then it might have been done for commercial reasons to gain from collectors' acquisitive greed."

The following article from the September 7, 1902, Davenport, Iowa, *Democrat*, sheds a bit of light on the 'faking' that inevitably occurs when a commodity rises in value.

### The Making of Beetles

Fakirs do Lucrative Business and Outdo Nature.  
Beetle "faking" is an industry concerning which the public knows little, but it is a flourishing one nevertheless. Thousands of faked beetles are turned out annually in England and in France and sold both there and in this country to amateur naturalists, at high prices. Many an English and American collector, with more money and enthusiasm than knowledge of natural history, has in his cabinet specimens of beetles which are beyond anything that nature ever attempted, and which he shows proudly to his friends as extremely rare insects, as indeed they are, for they are like nothing in the animal kingdom.

The manufacturer of beetles does not confine himself to giving to his specimens rare and strange colorings, but he makes them up from fragments of other beetles in the manner which strikes his fancy, and this fancy is often very whimsical indeed. Nature, especially in the tropics, produces beetles of strange form, but never so strange as those which come out of the shop of man. Auction sales of damaged collections of specimens of beetles are attended, and the collections bought for almost nothing.

These injured specimens are dismembered and their various parts put together again at the fancy of the fakir. He takes a beetle's body from a collection of several parts of beetles before him, spread out on a white paper, he deftly affixes a head here, a wing there and a leg or two where he thinks they will look quaint. He works rapidly, using a clear liquid glue, the composition of which is a secret of the trade, and which joins the various parts immediately so that they cannot easily be pulled apart, and so closely that even with a magnifying glass it is difficult to see where the joining is done.

The coloring and imitation markings are done with small brushes and other implements designed especially for the purpose, and are made permanent by plunging the built-up insect into a bath of some secret solution. When the work is completed only an expert naturalist can detect the fraud, and sometimes even an expert is fooled at first and thinks he has stumbled upon a new specimen of coleoptera. The beetle fakir advertises in the papers that he has rare specimens for sale and would like to hear from collectors in search of such things. If the bait is taken and he gets a letter from an amateur collector, he offers to forward the specimen "on approval." When the amateur sees the creature sent to him he thinks he has found a prize, and usually closes the bargain at a good fat price.

The fakir never guarantees the beetle to be genuine. He simply says to the intending buyer, "There is a specimen. Take it or leave it. I doubt if there is another like it in this country," which statement is probably true, for it rarely that the fakir duplicates designs. Besides evolving beetles out of dismembered fragments and his inner consciousness, the fakir of coleoptera makes copies of well-known but rare specimens, which command a good market price among collectors. London and Paris are the cities where most of the fake beetles are manufactured, and the French workmen are the most expert and gifted with the mostly lively fancy in composition.

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