

EXOTIC ZOOLOGY

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RECENT DISCOVERIES: 1995 ROUND-UP

1995 has been a good year for cryptozoology. New discoveries continue to disprove the notion that all Earth's "important" animals are known. In point of fact, every recent year has been a good one for cryptozoology: the story just has not been properly told.

In addition to animals discussed in earlier issues of this publication, 1995 has seen the description of a new nightjar from Ethiopia, a "prehistoric" wasp from California, and a new tortoise from Australia, plus the rediscovery of the pygmy mouse lemur, *Microcebus myoxinus*, on Madagascar, and the announcement of the apparent rediscovery of Schomburgk's deer.

The nightjar was identified based on a single specimen, or rather on what could be salvaged after said specimen had been run over by a truck. According to the item in *New Scientist*, a park warden and four visiting British scientists dug out the remains of the bird. Feathers on the only surviving part, a wing, showed markings unlike those of any known species. The discovery was named *Caprimulgus solala*, or the Nechisar nightjar. (The Nechisar National Park was the site of the discovery, and the species name, *solala*, means "only a wing.") The living bird has not yet been observed.

New insects usually don't make news, but it's not every day you find a primitive wasp which has supposedly been extinct for millions of years. Russian entomologist Alexander Rasnitsyn was browsing the collection at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.

1995 ROUNDUP (Continued):

Rasnitsyn noticed unusual features, including serrated teeth on the ovipositor, or egg-laying tube, on two wasp specimens. To him, this meant they belonged to the same undescribed species as another wasp he'd seen: a fossil, 20 million years old, in a German museum.

The two modern specimens were both from California, one dating to 1937 and the other to 1966. Donald Burdick, the entomologist who captured this second wasp in the Sequoia National Forest, recalled that he knew his catch was something unique, but had no idea just how significant it was. A full scientific description is being formulated by Rasnitsyn and the Academy's entomology curator, Wojciech Pulawski.

The story of the world's newest tortoise began in 1963, when an Australian scientist, John Cann, spotted hatchlings which appeared to belong to an unknown species. This find came, not in the outback, but in pet stores in Sydney. Despite getting no help from the store owners, Cann eventually tracked down a supplier in Queensland, who was collecting the eggs from the wild. It took Cann until 1990 to actually locate an adult specimen. The Mary River tortoise, with its 38cm-long shell and long, heavy tail, proved to be deserving of a new genus. Cann and an American colleague, John Legler, named the genus *Elusor* in honor of the animal's success in hiding from the view of science.

The pygmy mouse lemur, *Microcebus myoxinus*, dates much further back, to 1852. The smallest primate in the world, this reddish-brown animal was written off following its initial description as an error - an immature form or a variation of the gray mouse lemur, *M. murinus*. A lemur caught in western Madagascar in 1992, however, began the work that would set the story straight. Two researchers from the German Primate Centre, Jutta Schmid and Peter Kappeler, determined that the animal, which weighed only 30 grams, was an adult and was neither a gray mouse lemur nor any other known species. Finding and examining more animals of the same type, they showed the 1852 description had been correct after all, and the primate was restored to its rightful place.

Finally, only one species of deer has become extinct in modern history. This is Schomburgk's deer (*Cervus schomburgki*), last seen in its habitat in western Thailand in 1932. Nothing was heard of the animal for nearly six decades, and it was universally classed as extinct by 1991, when a United Nations agronomist found a set of its antlers for sale in a shop in Laos. According to the shop owner, the specimen came from a remote, forested region of that country. The story ends there so far, but it appears that Laos, which has produced so many recent zoological surprises, may house one more discovery.

Sources: Anonymous. 1995. "Return of the little lemur," *New Scientist*, 15 July, p.11 // Perlman, David. 1995. "Primitive Wasp Has Scientists Abuzz," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 4, p.A15 // Eliot, John. 1995. "New Tortoise Found After 30-Year Quest," *National Geographic*, August // Schroering, George. "Swamp Deer Resurfaces," *Wildlife Conservation*, December, p.22.

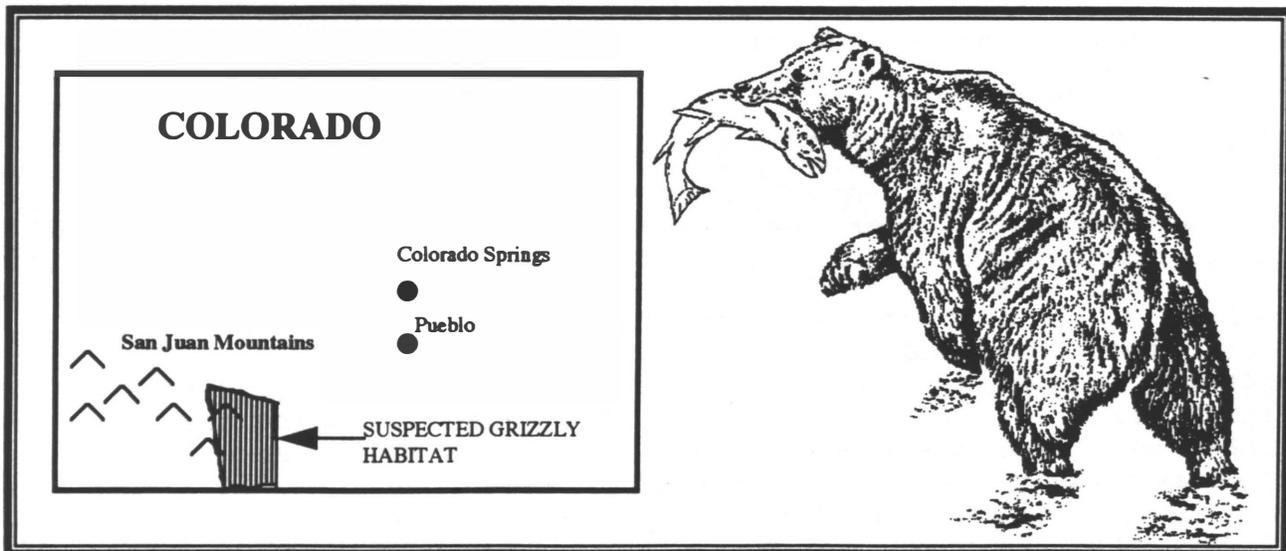
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... The FERRET and the GRIZZLY

If cryptozoology is defined as the search for new or presumably extinct animals, then it's not just a science to be pursued in Africa or Indochina. For example, the editor's home state of Colorado, located in the western-central United States, is playing a role in at least two zoological resurrections.

First, the state is home to efforts to resurrect the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*). Since this "extinct" animal was rediscovered in Wyoming in 1981, the federal government has spent \$10 million attempting to save the species through captive breeding. The Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs operates one breeding colony. Near the city of Pueblo, at a former Army depot, ferrets go through "basic training" to prepare them for life in the wild. This has proved to be the difficult part of ferret reintroduction.

The first 300 released animals have been decimated by predators and winter conditions. The efforts continue, however, and the ferret seems to be back for good.

More exciting to most people is the prospect that Colorado's grizzly bears, supposedly wiped out by a government-funded extermination campaign concluding in 1952, may still be hanging on. Any surviving population would not be a species and probably not a subspecies, as all grizzlies in the continental United States are now considered members of a single subspecies, the brown bear *Ursus arctos horribilis*. Interestingly, one other brown bear still recognized as a unique subspecies, *U. a. nelsoni*, the Mexican grizzly, is also presumed extinct, but in this case, too, there are occasional reports to the contrary.



From a cryptozoological point of view, however, classification isn't the most important thing. What matters is this: if we have overlooked a breeding population of predators which can weigh 400kg, what else might have been missed? Finding Colorado grizzlies would give hope to those searching for the Eastern cougar, the ivory-billed woodpecker, and countless other animals.

David Peterson, who examines the problem thoroughly in his new book *Ghost Grizzlies* (see review), finds the case for survival to be strong but not yet irrefutable. Exhibit A is a dead grizzly, an aging female killed in 1979 in the San Juan Mountains when it attacked a man who managed to stab it to death with a hand-held arrow in a desperate struggle.

FERRET AND GRIZZLY (Cont.):

Study of the remains showed the animal had given birth to at least one litter of cubs. Where, Peterson wonders, are the cubs now? For that matter, who were this animal's parents, since she must have been born after the "last" Colorado grizzly was killed? The southern San Juans are considered the most likely habitat for survivors. A search by grizzly experts following the 1979 encounter turned up nothing, but a handful of hairs, fecal samples, tracks, and sighting reports keep the question open. Considered most impressive is a 1990 sighting by a ranch foreman with many years of wilderness experience. Dennis Schutz was watching through binoculars at a range of about 75 meters what he thought were three large brown-furred adult black bears (*Ursus americanus*). (The "black" bear may be a variety of colors, including white.) Then a fourth bear appeared that dwarfed the others, and "it dawned on me that I was watching a family of grizzly bears."

Three years later, an experienced hiker and hunter took a good but not definitive photo of

a bear he thought was larger than the 290kg grizzly in the Denver Zoo. In July 1995, a wildlife photographer hiking in the San Juans had a terrifying close-up encounter with what he is sure was a grizzly. The animal displayed a characteristic grizzly action known as a "bluff charge," convincing the hiker he was about to be eaten, then walked away.

The elusiveness of definitive evidence is what led Peterson to term the animals "ghost grizzlies." He explains: "It's like the grizzly is out there. It keeps giving us little ghostly hints of itself, but you can never get a full-on look at it. There's always some little something about it that keeps it just short of 100 percent proof."

SOURCES: Bradley, Carol. 1995. "Returning ferrets to the wilds a struggle," *Denver Post*, November 5, p.7B // Day, David. 1981. *The Doomsday Book of Animals*. New York: Viking Press // Eddy, Mark. 1995. "Ghost Grizzlies," *Empire*, November 5, p.18 // Peterson, David. 1995. *Ghost Grizzlies*. New York: Holt.

MYSTERY ANIMALS: A SEA SERPENT EXPLAINED?

In a previous issue, I reviewed Richard Ellis' book *Monsters of the Sea*. Ellis discussed the most famous "sea serpent" sighting of all time, that made by the H.M.S. *Daedalus* in 1848. He suggested this animal, seen on the surface as it swam past the British frigate, was a giant squid. I disagreed, noting that Captain Peter McQuahe's description included a mouth, an eye, and the comment that the creature passed close enough that "if it had been a man of my acquaintance, I would easily have recognized his features with the naked eye."

Ellis has passed along a new piece of evidence: a letter from Maldwin Drummond, O.B.E. Maldwin is the grandson of Lt. Edgar Drummond, the watch officer on the *Daedalus*. He enclosed a drawing from Edgar Drummond's journal. This drawing shows less detail on the animal and places it much farther from the ship than appears to be the case from the famous picture drawn under McQuahe's supervision and published in the *Illustrated London News*. Maldwin Drummond calls the squid theory "very convincing."

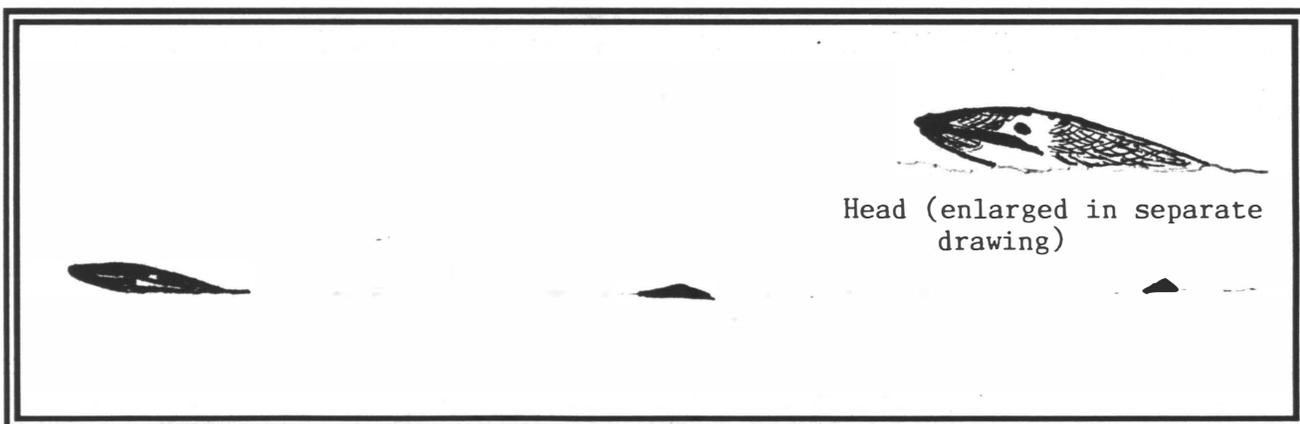
DAEDALUS SEA SERPENT (Continued):

However, Drummond's very competent drawing also includes an object 20-30 feet behind the "head" which is labeled "fin." Thirty feet behind this is another "fin." Most published accounts do not mention fins at all. Could these have been tips of tentacles, occasionally flailing above the water? Also, Drummond's sketch shows a small eye on the head. The huge eye of a squid would have stood out much more than is mentioned or pictured in any account of the *Daedalus* animal. Accordingly, if it was a squid, only the forward section, with the fins, was exposed, and the witnesses' minds must have filled in an "eye" where they expected one to be.

On balance, the "head" shown in Drummond's drawing looks like it could be part of a squid jetting along at high speed with its front end held just out of the water. Why a squid would act this way remains unknown. A point worth making is that, if this was a giant squid, and Drummond's estimates of size are correct, it would have ranked among the biggest ever seen. (Incidentally, McQuahe originally guessed the whole animal was 120 feet long: Drummond convinced him it was closer to 60.) The largest specimen universally accepted, the squid stranded at Thimble Tickle, Newfoundland, was 55 feet long. Michael Bright, in his book *Giants in the Sea*, presented reports of squid from 72 feet to over 100 feet long, but he did not give references.

Squid or serpent? Perhaps the bottom line is that we are still left with something of a mystery...and we probably always will be.

Sources: Drummond, Maldwin. 1995. Correspondence, February 28. Bright, Michael. 1989. *There are Giants in the Sea*. London: Robson Books. Ellis, Richard. 1994. *Monsters of the Sea*. New York: Knopf. **Thanks** to Richard Ellis for forwarding the letter.



Object drawn by Lt. Edgar Drummond in 1848. The distance between the head and the first fin was marked as 30 feet on the drawing, but Drummond revised this estimate to 20. (adaptation by editor from original sketch.)

NEWS AND COMMENT

Zoologist David Oren has launched an expedition into the Brazilian rain forest in search of the *mapinguari*. According to locals in western Amazonia, this is a shaggy, reddish animal, weighing about 270kg. Oren believes it is a ground sloth, a survivor of an ancient line that gave rise to creatures as large as elephants. Oren believes the living ground sloth is nocturnal and vegetarian. It reportedly rears up to a height approaching 2 meters when startled and is reportedly accompanied by a stench that could gag a predatory jaguar. Oren is armed with a tranquilizer gun and accompanied by an assistant with a video camera. Questions about the effort include the skepticism of many scientists that the animal exists and the likelihood of whether, if it does, a single expedition in such a vast region has much chance of bumping into one. **Source:** Pearson, Stephanie. 1995. "Load the Stun Gun, Pass the Old Spice," *Outside*, November, p.34.

Nothing has been published by the International Society of Cryptozoology for some time, and there were fears it had become extinct. I spoke to J. Richard Greenwell, the ISC secretary, at the end of October. He assured me the Society was alive and more or less healthy, and that an issue of the *ISC Newsletter* would be out before the end of 1995. Another newsletter and the next volume of the journal *Cryptozoology* will be published in January, followed by another volume a few months later. Mr. Greenwell asks members for patience and thanks them for sticking with the Society through its financial difficulties.

CORRECTION: The last issue referred to a work entitled *The Book of Whales and Dolphins* by Richard Ellis. This is actually two books: *The Book of Whales and Dolphins and Porpoises*. Sorry, Richard....

RESOURCES

BOOKS.

Peterson, David. 1995. *Ghost Grizzlies*. New York: Henry Holt. 296pp. This well-written zoological detective story takes readers on the trail of a possible relict population of grizzly bears in Colorado's San Juan Mountains. While the proof is not yet final, the reader will learn much about bears, conservation, and animal tracking in this book.

Weiner, Jonathan. 1994. *The Beak of the Finch*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 332pp. Weiner's award-winning story of evolutionary studies on the finches of the Galapagos Islands. There's no cryptozoology here, but there are valuable explanations about DNA, hybrids, natural selection, and the dynamics of small, isolated animal populations.

PERIODICALS.

Anonymous. 1995. "Lost World of New Creatures Found in a Romanian Cave," *National Geographic*, October. More information on the bizarre inhabitants of Movile Cave, a unique ecosystem where there is no sun and the oxygen content of the air is far lower than normal. The well-illustrated article reports that 32 of the 47 insects and other invertebrates collected from the cave so far belong to new species..

Anonymous. 1995. "Tear-drinking Moth: Nothing to Cry About," *National Geographic*, November. About the curious insect *Hypochrosis baenzigeri*, described in 1982, which jabs its proboscis in the eye of an elephant and obtains moisture and salt from the tears. In the same issue is Hal Whitehead's article, "The Realm of the Elusive Sperm Whale," (p.57), which has two items of interest to cryptozoologists. One is a photograph of a white sperm whale calf, apparently a true albino: the other is a photo of a whale's tale from the side. As the caption notes, this looks a bit like the neck and head of a large unknown animal. Thanks to George Kantner for all *Geographic* items.

Klos, Ursula and Heinz-Geog. 1995. "Are There White Elephants?" *Elephant Managers Association*, October, p.61. The white elephant in myth and reality, with photos of an albino Asian elephant displayed in Rangoon in 1960. Thanks to Beth Johnson for this article.

ON-LINE: There is a new **Cryptozoology Web site** reachable by using the search engine at <http://www.lycos.com>. Search using the word "cryptozoology" and you can find the site itself, whose address is <http://fugi.ucsd.edu/Drywall/cryptozoo/cryptozoo.html>. My initial check of the site showed it offered links to other cryptozoological and zoological sites, a discussion of sasquatch evidence, and some odds and ends, including a news item about a 77-pound slime mold (not an animal, of course, but not something you'd want decorating your office, either.)

A great deal of **dolphin information**, including pictures and descriptions of most species, can be found at <http://www.awinc.com/users/mbrent/dolphins.html>. All kinds of Web sites with information on **reptiles, amphibians**, and other wildlife can be accessed from the Herpmed site at <http://www.xmission.com-gastown/herpmed/>. An outstanding source for primate data is the **Primate Information Center** site at <http://uakari.primat.wisc.edu/pin/pic/>.

Finally, this is not exactly cryptozoology, but I wanted to mention an organization which deserves your support. **Wild About Cats** is a donation-funded operation dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating big cats, including many endangered species, abandoned by exotic-pet fanciers and breeders. You can Email director Dawn Simas at MXND53A@prodigy.com for more information.

Coming in the next issue: our first guest article, by Ben Roesch; and an opportunity to exchange information with other zoology enthusiasts for those readers who desire to participate.

EDITOR'S PAGE

PURPOSE: Cryptozoology is the zoological subspecialty of finding new or supposedly extinct species. The term has been misapplied by some to sensationalized "monsters" and even "ghost" animals. I hope that *Exotic Zoology* can help restore the word's proper usage: the name of a science devoted to collecting evidence.

IN CLOSING:

Interested readers should join the International Society of Cryptozoology, which labors to make searching for new animals a respectable scientific specialty. Contact Richard Greenwell, Secretary, ISC, P.O. Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733. The ISC puts out a newsletter and a journal, *Cryptozoology*.

Our address is 3405 Windjammer Dr., Colorado Springs, CO, 80920, USA. Email: MattWriter@AOL.com. Subscriptions are \$18 a year for U.S. addresses, \$20 for other countries. Prices include First Class mail or airmail. **All back issues are available** for purchase. **Guest articles** are welcome: payment is in copies.

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My book on new, rediscovered, and unconfirmed animals, *Rumors of Existence*, is finally in print. The book, published by Hancock House, lists at \$12.95. The ISBN is 0-88839-335-0. (Earlier plans for a hardback listing at \$24.95 were changed by the publisher without telling the author.) If your bookstore or library fails to obtain it, you can order direct from the publisher by calling 1(800)938-1114. I'd be happy to autograph anyone's copy, but if you send it to me, please include return postage.

Logo illustration: the mysterious cetacean *Delphinus rhinoceros*, described by French naturalists Quoy and Gaimard in 1819 and not reported since. Reconstruction by Craig Gosling copyright 1994.