



EXOTIC ZOOLOGY

The Bimonthly Magazine of Cryptozoology

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Matthew A. Bille, Editor

NEWS FLASH: THE ISC IS BACK!

After a three-year hiatus during which many cryptozoologists feared the organization was permanently defunct, the International Society of Cryptozoology (ISC) has returned to life.

Founded in 1982, the ISC had done much to give the field of cryptozoology scientific legitimacy. The refereed journal *Cryptozoology* gave researchers a chance to publish their best-documented findings in a format acceptable to "mainstream" science. The *ISC Newsletter* covered cryptozoological news from around the world and helped tie together the subject's widely-scattered aficionados.

In early December, the *ISC Newsletter* resumed publication with a much-delayed Vol. 11, #2 (originally slated for 1992). According to J. Richard Greenwell of the ISC Secretariat, the group has recovered financially and will be making up publications owed to paid members.

The initial issue carried a single article on cryptozoology itself, a detailed and well-illustrated piece on the pygmy elephant controversy. Clear color photographs taken in the Congo in 1982, showing what appear to be adult and juvenile pygmies together, raise anew the question of a species or subspecies which was first described in 1906, but which most zoologists have since written off as invalid. In one picture, a great egret stands just in front of an adult elephant, providing a scale which shows the animal to be no taller than 1.5m (5 feet). This new publication with a significant article helps reestablish the ISC as an important contributor to cryptozoology.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Administrative note: *Exotic Zoology* will publish its Subscriber Directory again this year, probably in the August/September issue. Look for survey forms in the March-April *EZ*.

The discovery of a unique new bird, requiring creation of a new genus, has been announced from Brazil. The most interesting thing about *Acrobatornis fonsecai*, a diminutive black-and-gray member of the ovenbird family, is the precise location of its discovery. The bird's large nests are clearly visible from the main highway in Brazil's state of Bahia. No one knows why it wasn't found long ago. It was finally brought to the attention of science by a dedicated amateur birder, Paulo Fonseca. Ornithologist Jose Pacheco said, "Imagine how many biologists drove by and never even noticed." The bird, incidentally, runs along the undersides of branches, spending more time upside down than right side up. This is the origin of the genus name, which means "acrobat." (Astor, Michael. 1996. "New Bird Found, Nearly Extinct," AP, November 16. Thanks to Randy Garlipp for this article.)

From Cuba comes another new discovery: the **Northern Hemisphere's smallest frog**. In fact, the "eleuth frog" (so called after its genus, *Eleutherodactylus*) is the hemisphere's smallest terrestrial vertebrate of any kind. Ten millimeters long and about the size of a fingernail, the dark brown frog with a copper stripe down its back is only a hair too large to claim the title of smallest terrestrial vertebrate in the world. That honor goes to a Brazilian frog, itself discovered only in 1971. Dr. S. Blair Hedges, one of the frog's discoverers, commented, "It's not one of those things where you go out and search for the largest or smallest. You just sort of stumble onto it." (Fountain, Henry, 1996. "Under Cuban Ferns, a Very Small Frog," *New York Times*, December 3 // Vergano, D., 1996. "Smallest frog leaps into the limelight," *Science News*, December 7, p.357.)

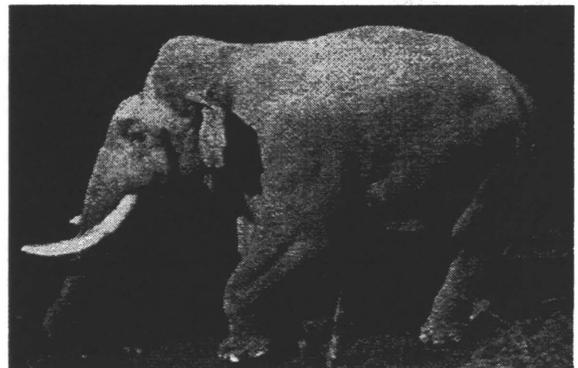
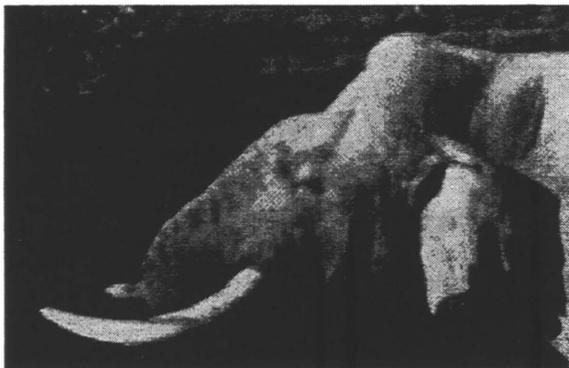
News Clips: A Wildlife Conservation Society survey of Laotian bats turned up 55 species, including 5 bats new to science. Also netted was the first specimen of Bouret's horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus paradoxolophus*, collected since 1972. A **North American downy woodpecker**, never seen in any color scheme except its normal black and white, has produced a blue example, photographed in the state of Wisconsin. Ornithologists are puzzled by the mutation. (*Wildlife Conservation*, Oct/Nov 96). In other bird news, a **new songbird**, the cryptic warbler (genus *Cryptosylvicola*), has been described from the island of Madagascar. (*WWF News*, Summer 1996).

Historical footnote: *Scientific American* recently reprinted an item from their **March 1846 issue**. The bulletin reported that "a wonderful account is given" of a **wild man** discovered near the Arkansas-Missouri border. The alleged creature had 22-inch footprints. Straining a bit for a witticism, the long-ago writer concluded that, "either the 'wild man,' or the man who raised the story, is a great monkey."

NEWS (Continued):

The same magazine reports continuing interest in the **possible survival of the Tasmanian tiger**, or thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*). Sixty years after the last definite example of the species died in a zoo, the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service receives "dozens" of sighting reports each year. Despite the eyewitness accounts, including two by park rangers, there remains a complete lack of hard evidence. The situation prompted author Daniel Drollette to call the creature "Tasmania's version of the Loch Ness monster." One park service official, Mark Holdsworth, laments that the tiger search is draining resources that could protect known endangered species. Undiscouraged thylacine researchers like former museum curator Robert Green, however, continue to press on with the hunt. (Drollette, Daniel. 1996. "On the Trail of the Tiger," *Scientific American*, October, p.32.)

A recent article in *Science* illustrates how many **discoveries are still being made about our own class, the mammals**. Lawrence Heaney, an evolutionary biogeographer, suggests there **may be over 3000 species** still unclassified. Some examples: University of California biologist James Patton found six new species (five rodents and a marsupial) in just two weeks in Columbia. The same scientist led a team which found seven new species in Brazil in 1991. The Field Museum's Steven Goodman found two new genera of rodents on Madagascar since 1991. Six new primates have been found in Brazil since 1990 (see **EZ** Vol. 3, #4). Then, of course, there are the discoveries in Southeast Asia, which continue to amaze everyone - the bizarre Vu Quang ox, the giant muntjac, the black muntjac, and three other large Vietnamese mammals still known only from their horns. During the years 1980-1990, more new mammals were described than in any decade since the 1920s. **Comment:** In view of these examples, the claim by cryptozoological skeptics that there are no major discoveries left to make has become an absurdity. (Morrell, Virginia, 1996. "New Mammals Discovered by Biology's New Explorers," *Science*, September 13, p.1491.)



Two views of Rajah, one of the strange Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) living in Nepal's Bardia National Park. Photos by *EZ* subscriber Marc Miller (see review of his book in the RESOURCES section). Thanks to Dr. Miller for permission to publish his photographs.

RESOURCES

BOOKS.

Cardawine, Mark. 1995. *Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises: The Visual Guide to all the World's Cetaceans*. London: Doris Kindersley Limited. 256pp. Well written and superbly illustrated guide to all the known cetaceans. Most interestingly, it includes two cryptic species as well. Martin Camm's illustrations include what may be the only attempt at a reconstruction of *Mesoplodon indopacetus*, known only from two skulls and a few unconfirmed sightings, and a drawing of "Species A," the widely reported but unclassified beaked whale of the Eastern Tropical Pacific. (Confusingly, this animal is also referred to in some professional literature as "Species X.") These two drawings alone make this book worth having for the cryptozoologist.

Miller, Marc E. W. 1990. *Chasing Legends: An Adventurer's Diary*. Stelle, IL: Adventurers Unlimited Press. 220pp. Marc Miller, a psychologist, is a dedicated amateur explorer and cryptozoologist. This book recounts his travels in search of the yeti, mokele-mbembe, and an alleged African ape-man. He collected no new physical evidence, but heard a lot of intriguing reports. This book serves best to describe the difficulties and perils of hunting new animals in the last wild regions of the world. The writing could be more polished, but the reader will certainly gain an appreciation for the challenges of cryptozoology.

Shuker, Karl P.N. 1995. *Dragons: A Natural History*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 120pp. In this sumptuously illustrated, thoroughly enjoyable romp through dragon lore and legend, Dr. Shuker has collected and "classified" dragons and related creatures from every culture. Noting that mythical creatures are often based on exaggerated fact, he speculates that some dragon tales may have their origins in sightings of sea serpents, giant snakes, and other creatures reported to exist in the real world. Not much hard information, but a lot of fun.

Wade, Nicholas, Cornelia Dean, and William A. Dicke, Editors. 1994. *The New York Times Book of Science Literacy, Volume II: The Environment from your Backyard to the Ocean Floor*. 480pp. This imposingly titled book is mainly about environmental issues, but includes some articles of interest to cryptozoologists. These include "A Cornucopia of Life," describing the diversity of the seafloor and how little we know of its denizens: "The Aye-Aye," an update on the bizarre little primate once feared extinct: and "To Conserve or Catalog Rare Species," concerning the discovery of Somalia's boubou shrike and the controversial decision to release the type specimen back into the wild.

BOOKS (Continued):

Salvadori, Francesco. 1990. *Rare Animals of the World*. New York: Mallard Press. 192pp. This tour of the world's rarest creatures, illustrated with Piero Cozzaglio's paintings, includes a number of animals declared extinct but found again. Salvadori discusses, among other species, the Seychelles owl ("extinct" 1906, rediscovered 1959,) the Persian fallow deer (lost 1917, found 1955) and the bridled nail-tailed wallaby.

Whitlock, Ralph. 1981. *Birds at Risk*. Wiltshire, UK: Moonraker Press. 159pp. Detailed compilation of data on the world's rarest birds, including a surprising number of species whose status (i.e., living or extinct) was unknown at the time of writing. Also includes information on many recent discoveries. Whitlock missed a few species that should have been included, like the Madagascar serpent eagle, but there's still a wealth of knowledge to be gained from this book.

PERIODICALS.

Andreas Trottman of Switzerland has created a *Loch Ness Newscipping Service*, collecting published accounts of the alleged "beastie." A recent sample issue (Vol. 2, No. 2) contained 16 pages of news clips, mainly from 1996. It looks like a valuable service for dedicated Loch Ness researchers. For information, write to: Andreas Trottman, Les Pretresses, 1586 Vallamand VD, Switzerland.

READER RESPONSE

After the first article of the recent two-part series reviewing evidence for the Yeti, researcher Angel Morant-Fores wrote to inform me there is more data than I was aware of. According to Morant-Fores, a Russian zoologist, Satunin, has published (in Russian, of course) a description of his first-hand sighting of a "wild man." There is also a report of a dead creature examined by Wan Zeling, a Chinese biologist, in 1940.

In addition, Morant-Fores believes there is reason to accept the Minnesota Iceman, the disputed type-specimen for Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans' description of a new species, *Homo pongoides*. He argues that the Iceman's features were consistent with descriptions of the *almas*, or wild man of the Caucasus. (Yet unexplained is how the corpse of such a thing could turn up in Minnesota, USA.) He also believes that the Iceman looks very much like a Neanderthal, although I disagree here. Some ambiguity is due to the fact that not every detail of Neanderthal appearance is known (for example, the shape of the nose and the degree of hairiness). While Dr. Heuvelmans has made some sketches based on his viewing of Iceman that do resemble a Neanderthal, I cannot match these to his photographs of the original corpse (if, of course, it was truly a corpse). The Iceman's head and general body structure still do not appear to me to resemble a Neanderthal, and there are no reconstructions in other works I've checked which suggest Neanderthal was as gracile or as hirstute as the Iceman.

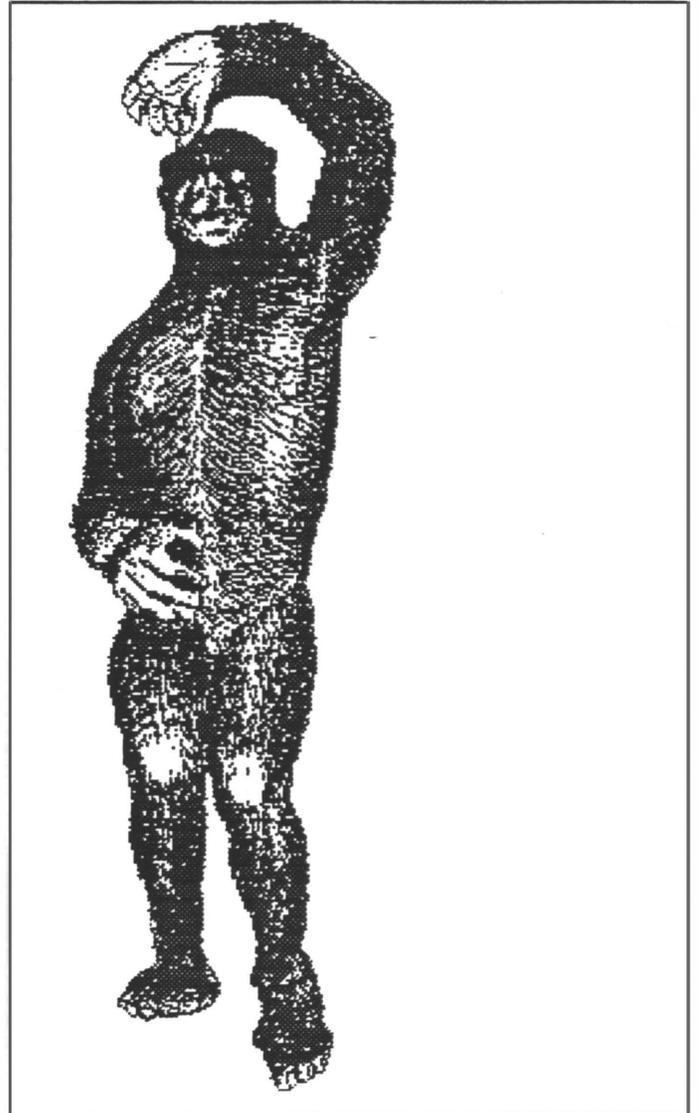
READER RESPONSE (Continued):

In discounting the Iceman, I relied mainly on arguments made by the late primatologist Dr. John Napier in his book *Bigfoot*. After reading Morant-Fores' letters, totaling 13 well-argued pages, I still think most of Napier's points about the seemingly illogical mix of human and pongid features displayed by the Iceman are valid. Morant-Fores responds that Dr. Heuvelmans has published a point-by-point refutation of Napier (not available in English, unfortunately.) All of Heuvelmans' books, however, are due to be published in new English editions, so this subject will be revisited in the future.

Finally, Morant-Fores suggests that my criteria for considering unknown animals (physical evidence or a sighting by a qualified expert) are "a bit arbitrary and unnecessarily severe." He may well be correct: I may be excluding some valid animals that do not yet meet these requirements. Still, every researcher must draw a line somewhere to avoid being inundated with data, and my personal inclination is to use a narrow definition of acceptability. If a given animal is genuine, evidence meeting these criteria will surface sooner or later. (In some cases, such as the Yeti, the criteria may have been met, but the evidence is only published in a publication this editor cannot obtain.)

I owe many thanks to Angel Morant-Fores for taking the time to provide a detailed response, complete with supporting articles. For readers wishing a more detailed explanation of his points, I will be happy (with Angel's permission) to reproduce his letters and forward copies to those requesting them.

THE MINNESOTA ICEMAN



EDITORIAL: INTERNATIONAL PARKS

Cryptozoologists must, by definition, be concerned with the preservation of the last wilderness areas on Earth. Who knows how many species have been lost without discovery because someone burned or bulldozed their habitat before any specimens could be collected? Who knows how many future discoveries we may miss?

I don't mean to start using this newsletter as a pulpit, but a suggestion by conservationist Richard Ives merits serious attention. In his book *Of Tigers and Men* (Doubleday, 1996), he notes that preserving wild areas is often beyond the means of developing nations. It is, after all, impossible to convince a starving man that he shouldn't poach a tiger to feed his family unless he is provided with alternatives. The preservation of critical habitats, Ives argues, requires creating international parks as well as national ones.

The idea of internationally funded and administered parks is not without problems, but I believe it's worth investigating. A pilot program could begin with a few critical areas. The Vu Quang region of Vietnam and Laos is an obvious first choice - a "lost world" where many species no doubt still await discovery. The last truly wild regions of Central Africa, which may house the problematical pygmy elephant and perhaps even the giant reptile called makele-mbembe, would be logical additions. The idea is to select those areas which have the highest zoological value, are in the most danger of being lost to development, and which are beyond the resources of the owning nation to preserve on its own. For instance, the Galapagos islands are certainly a vital habitat, but Ecuador is doing an adequate job of maintaining that area itself, so there's not a current need to put them on the list.

The United Nations has an uneven record in managing international projects. A better choice to administer international parks might be a conservation organization like the IUCN, the WWF, or Conservation International, all of which are well-respected and already have offices around the world. Financing would come from any source available - member nations, corporations, and individuals. Make no mistake, this would be an expensive idea. The regions designated international parks will have to be permanently closed to industry, except ecotourism. Some people may need to be relocated, and people remaining near the parks must be provided with development projects allowing them to earn a living without encroaching on the parks. Host nations, including people living around the parks, must be an integral part of the management team. This may avoid the ill will and political difficulties resulting from feelings of "conservation imperialism." (For some examples of these problems, see Raymond Bonner's 1993 book *At the Hand of Man*.)

Cryptozoology is all about the discovery and preservation of rare species. The international parks concept may be vital to both endeavors. Accordingly, I look forward to reader comments, whether pro or con. If you agree this idea is worth exploring, write a letter to your nation's leaders as well.

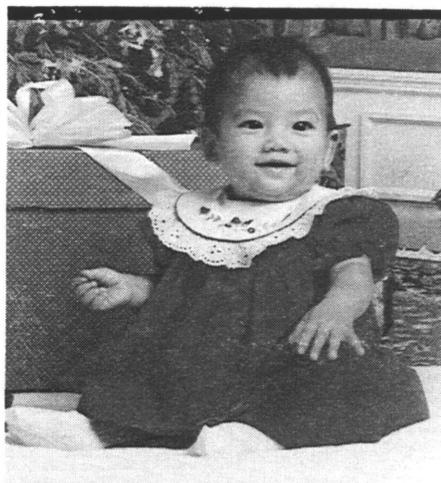
EDITOR'S PAGE

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. *Exotic Zoology* is intended to help restore the word's proper usage: the name of a science devoted to collecting and studying evidence.

IN CLOSING: Serious researchers should join the revived International Society of Cryptozoology (P.O. Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733). The ISC has resumed publication of its *Newsletter*.

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Logo illustration: *Delphinus rhinoceros*, described by naturalists Quoy and Gaimard in 1819. Drawing by Craig Gosling copyright 1994.