



EXOTIC ZOOLOGY

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Matthew A. Bille, Editor

RECENT DISCOVERIES: FISHING IN SOUTH AMERICA

The discovery of a new species of fish is not, generally speaking, a major news item in zoology or cryptozoology. The explosion of new species from two recent South American expeditions, however, is another matter. These endeavors illustrate how much we still have to learn even about the inhabitants of well-traveled bodies of fresh water.

A team led by Dr. John Lundberg of the University of Arizona obtained National Science Foundation funding to trawl the deeper channels of the Amazon River. In water 30 to 150 feet (9 to 45 meters) deep, the team has hauled up 240 species, many never seen before. It turns out that the dominant groups in these muddy, nearly opaque waters are catfish and electric fish.

Some of these creatures would satisfy any cryptozoologist's taste for the bizarre. There are two species of electric fish which eat nothing except the tails of other electric fish. There are transparent catfish and armor-plated catfish: and one incredibly tiny species, one-third of an inch (8mm) long, that has both these characteristics. There is an electric fish with a tongue-like projection of unknown use above its chin, and there are two electric fish that appear identical but are separate species - distinguishable only by their differing patterns of electrical discharge.

SOUTH AMERICAN FISH (Continued):

Even after this effort, not all of the Amazon system has been explored. One area in the Rio Negro is over 300 feet deep, beyond the reach of the Lundberg expedition's nets. There is no question it holds new species - but what? And who will find them?



One of the new species from the University of Arizona project. This diminutive armored catfish is a yet-unnamed species of the genus Rhynchodoras, Family Doradidae (the "thorny catfishes"). Thanks to Dr. Lundberg for permission to reprint.

Dr. Lundberg's team has published a detailed account of their work on the Internet at <http://eeweb.arizona.edu/fish/calhamaz.html>.

Meanwhile, Conservation International sent its first AquaRAP (Aquatic Rapid Assessment Program) team to the Tahuamanu and Manuripi River basins in Bolivia. Over twenty scientists spent a month netting specimens in rivers, streams, and swamps. They produced five new species of fish, the most spectacular being what the CI newsletter describes as, "a dinosaur-like armored catfish covered in bony plates."

SOURCES: Yoon, Carol Kaesuk. 1997. "Amazon's Depths Yield Strange New World of Unknown Fish," *New York Times*, February 12 // *CI News From the Front*, Vol.2, No.2, October-November 1996 // Lundberg, John. Personal communication, February 1997.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

This editor will be joining Darren Naish, a British paleontologist (see next article), to write a book on cryptocetology. This encompasses the many mysteries concerning the whales and dolphins. Richard Ellis, author/illustrator of *Monsters of the Sea and Deep Atlantic*, has joined as illustrator. Completion will be 1998. All readers are asked to help out by forwarding any references, contacts, or other information on: cetacean origins and evolution; unconfirmed species or unexplained sightings; or unusual individual cetaceans (albinos and other unusually-colored specimens, hybrids, or species collected far from their known habitat.) All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

SECOND ANNUAL SUBSCRIBER DIRECTORY

Since many of our members like to exchange information on new, rediscovered, and unknown animals, we will be publishing a subscriber directory in the July/August 1997 issue. As with last year's directory, this will include ONLY those readers who want to be listed. If you wish to be included, please fill out this form and send it in.

Directions: Include as much or as little information as you like. Return the form by June 1, 1997.

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RETURN TO: Exotic Zoology, 3405 Windjammer Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80920, U.S.A.

RESOURCES

PERIODICALS.

The ISC Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 3. This is the second issue of the revived publication. It concerns mostly news of the last Membership Meeting (1992) and other ISC doings, but includes an article on the rediscovery of gorillas in Nigeria and one on research underway in Vietnam into alleged unknown primates.

The January 1997 issue of *Discover* had two interesting articles in addition to the finding of the Gulf snapping turtle (above). "A Marmoset With Appendages" describes the new primate *Callithrix saterei*. "Where the Running Rodents Play" concerns the Panay cloudrunner (*Crateromys heaneyi*), another new mammal described in 1996.

Horvitz, Leslie. "Cryptozoologists Try to Separate Strange Fact From Science Fiction," *Insight*, January 27, p.44. Sympathetic and generally well-written overview of cryptozoology.

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.