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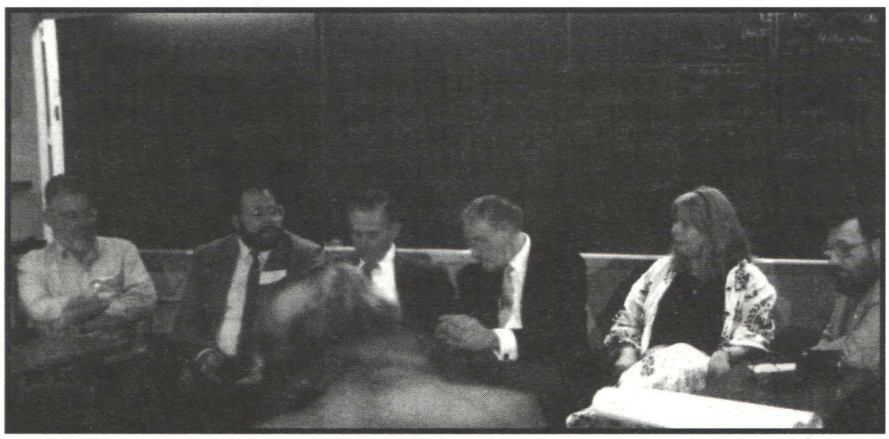
THE FUTURE OF CRYPTOZOOLOGY

A Panel Discussion to Celebrate the Society's 10th Anniversary



Panelists discussing "The Future of Cryptozoology" during the Society's Annual Membership Meeting held at Brown University on May 16, 1992. Left to right: James E. "Skip" Lazell, Aaron M. Bauer, Charles W. Wyckoff, Roy P. Mackal, Christine Janis, who hosted the meeting, and J. Richard Greenwell, who chaired the panel.

On May 16, 1992, the Society held its Annual Membership Meeting in the Division of Biology and Medicine at Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island. The meeting was hosted by Christine Janis, a paleomammalogist in the Division and a new member of the ISC Board of Directors. At the end of the day, a panel discussion titled "The Future of Cryptozoology" was held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Society. The following edited version of the panel discussion is based on the taped transcript.

Minor editing has been done to improve clarity of expression, and some deletions of repetitive or extraneous material have been made. In addition, a few exchanges could not be completely transcribed due to poor sound reception.

The panelists were Christine Janis; Aaron M. Bauer, a herpetologist at Villanova University, in Villanova, Pennsylvania, and another new ISC Board member; James E. "Skip" Lazell, a zoologist and President of The Conservation Agency, in Jamestown, Rhode Island; Roy P. Mackal, a retired University of Chicago biochemist and ISC Vice President; Charles W. Wyckoff, an optics engineer and a member of the Academy of Applied Science, in Concord, New Hampshire; and J. Richard Greenwell, ISC Secretary in Tucson, Arizona, who served as panel chairman.

Greenwell: Well, I'm not sure how far we'll get, but I threw some ideas together for discussion here. Let me start with you, Skip. We hear a lot today about rainforest destruction and reduction of habitats, and a lot of species being on the brink, and that sort of thing. What do you think are the implications, not just for all animals, but specifically for cryptozoological animals? Do you think there is a real possibility that some cryptozoological species could become extinct before we even discover them?

Lazell: I certainly do. I think that's going to be true for many, many known species, but I think that the ones we are most in-

terested in here, the ones that are very rare to begin with, and apparently have very restricted habitats — or they probably wouldn't be cryptozoological species — are the most likely to be badly affected. I think that is certainly true with two of the ones I am most interested in, the Eastern cougar [puma], right here in the Eastern U.S., and the thylacine in Tasmania. Both of these could be very sensitive to further habitat destruction.

Greenwell: Might it not also be true, though, that some of these animals are in such remote areas, such as New Guinea, or parts of Tasmania, or wherever, that the danger is less than the impression one gets from reading the newspapers.

Lazell: Well, there's a certain amount of truth to that, of course. Maybe in the depths of the Equatorial forests of Africa things are safer for a little while, but as the human population increases, and with the rapidity with which it is increasing, even large areas like that are not safe. There is likely to be grave ecological destruction in such areas before any kind of thorough zoological investigation can be undertaken there.

Greenwell: What do you think, Aaron?

Bauer: I definitely agree, and I think another important point concerning a lot of cryptozoological species is that islands are particularly critical as refugia. If you look at the history of cryptozoology, where things have occurred, you'll find that there's probably a disproportionate number of at least smaller cryptozoological organisms that are reported there, or where present there prior to extinction. And islands, of course, are much more susceptible to the ecological problems that are affecting all areas of the world, so I think that's an important point to add.

Mackal: I might add that I have nightmares about this kind of thing, because in Africa, for example, there are traditions about animals, and these traditions may have carried on even though the animals may have already disappeared. On the other hand, in thinking about the possibility that Mokele-Mbembe may be some form of surviving sauropod dinosaur, you think: "Well, if it made it for 65 million years, what is the probability, at this moment in time, coinciding with our interest in it, that it should suddenly become extinct?" On the other hand, some people win the lottery. I think it's a serious problem, and it seems so sad to me that large numbers of rainforest species should vanish forever, unknown to us, because of the ecological damage we are doing.

Greenwell: What are the direct implications of all this for the future of cryptozoology? Should we perhaps try and link up more with the established conservation agencies, and try and get these cryptic animals plugged into programs that are already ongoing. Is that a viable possibility?

Mackal: I think that has the potential to get things moving.

Wyckoff: It certainly wouldn't do any harm. I don't think many of the conservation people you are referring to even understand what cryptozoology is all about, but they do understand that certain species are going to die out if we keep going the way we are. So it wouldn't do us any harm at all to try to encourage them to do something to help us out.

Lazell: This is another reason why I think The Conservation Agency and the International Society of Cryptozoology fit so well together, because I think we can very effectively piggy-back the saving of the habitat, or potential habitat, for a really remarkable cryptozoological animal. A true cryptozoological problem can very well be piggy-backed onto programs for saving other species that are well known but close to extinction. Its the habitats we're talking about, and they are likely to be in the same places. We're talking about the big tracts of Equatorial forest, isolated lake systems, small islands in oceans, all of which are very vulnerable habitats, and all of which are likely to contain other endemic species.

I was just thinking of Lake Champlain, for example. There are two turtles in Lake Champlain. They're not critically endangered on a world-wide basis, but in the northeastern U.S. they are found only in Lake Champlain and Lake George. So anything done to protect that habitat in terms of the supposed Lake Champlain monsters is also going to help those two northernmost isolated populations of large turtles.

Wyckoff: I'd like to make a comment about Loch Ness in relation to what Skip was saying. There has been so much ridicule connected with Loch Ness that very little limnological work has been done there. I think that our pitch in Parliament helped reduce a lot of the stigma of ridicule connected with it. Even the British Natural History Museum has now taken the stand that they would like to participate in limnological studies. I think this is very encouraging, because we don't really know everything that's in there. Its possible that something like the depletion of the ozone layer may affect such bodies of water, and may even be responsible in the future for the demise of some of these forms of life about which we know practically nothing.

Janis: I think what also needs to be done is more education about the full range of what we do in cryptozoology. Nessie and Bigfoot are what captures the public's attention. Of course, if we found one of those that would be great. But we are also interested in many more things than that, and that isn't generally known. One of the things that we discussed yesterday at our Board meeting is that those of us who are members of other scientific societies should try to disseminate more information about the other, less well-known kinds of cryptozoological animals, those that in the public eye are minor things.

In terms of some of the things that we've discussed here that would be interesting, like the Eastern cougar, for example, they represent a very different prospect than Bigfoot. The Eastern cougar is a very different kind of animal. It's not as exciting to the public, perhaps, but it's also part of what we do. It's that kind of thing that needs to be emphasized more, especially to the conservation agencies like the World Wildlife Fund, so they don't think we're just a bunch of cranks looking for monsters.

Greenwell: That's right. Now, we've been talking about terrestrial habitats, but three quarters of the surface of the planet is actually covered by water, and I was wondering about the future of cryptozoology in the oceans, the marine habitats that are less affected. They're still affected, but less so. We don't have a marine biologist or oceanographer on the panel, but Malcolm Bowman over there might have some thoughts on this.

Malcolm Bowman (oceanographer at the State University of New York at Stony Brook): Well, of course, the oceans are so vast and so deep that 99 percent of them are in darkness, and that's very hard to explore. And that may be the last cryptozoological habitat that we will explore, simply because it's so inaccessible. But big advances have been made in modern technology, like that used in finding the *Titanic*, and new acoustic techniques. I think the oceans could be an exciting area for the Society in the future.

Greenwell: And big things turn up sometimes, like Megamouth, so we know that the potential is there.

Bowman: Exactly.

Greenwell: The way I look at it, if there are larger animals that are undiscovered, unknown to zoology, its basically due to two reasons. One is the habitats. They are very remote or rugged, or of difficult access. And the other relates to the behavior of the animals themselves. That they are very elusive, or nocturnal, or whatever. And when these two factors, habitat and behavior, are combined, that is when we can have a cryptozoological situation.

Janis: There's times I've been ridiculed about this. I mean, I've had people who start by saying: "How come with you guys, all these crypto-animals are bizarre things in strange, remote places." Well *of course* they are!

(*laughter*)

Greenwell: Otherwise we'd know all about them, right?

Janis: That's right.

Wyckoff: I think that's the problem, right there. These animals are something that the public just isn't familiar with. One of the things we're going to have to do, in particular when we're talking about places like Loch Ness, Lake Champlain, and Lake Okanagan, is more work with sonar to try to determine the life habits of these animals. And study them this way first, before trying to take photos, because trying to take photos in these lakes is one of the most difficult things one can do. And probably nobody is going to believe in photos anyhow.

Greenwell: Well, I remember Bernard Heuvelmans, writing in our journal once, made an interesting analogy with the discovery of the planet Neptune. Le Verrier, a theoretical astronomer, had studied the problem mathematically, based on measurable perturbations of the elliptic motion of Uranus, and he was able to predict where and when the new planet would be found. Well, it was discovered by optical astronomers exactly where he had predicted, but to him the visual observation was so mundane that he reportedly never even bothered actually looking at it himself. Looking at it visually was of no consequence whatsoever to him. Once it had been found, to him, that was that.

Now, if we could just do the same thing with cryptozoological animals, as Heuvelmans suggested...get enough information to predict when and were to find one, to trap one, or whatever...

Wyckoff: Well, that's what we need to do. If its underwater, we should use sonar. I think we have to use more equipment like this. Now, with some of the things that Skip, for example, is working on, you don't need to do that sort of thing.

Lazell: Yes, with the terrestrial animals, its more a matter of inaccessible habitats, and difficult places to get to. Cliffs and swamps, and that sort of thing. And I think what we need to do here is recruit more young people into field biology. Field biology is lacking right now. There are rather few people growing up who are interested in this absolutely fascinating, adventurous world. We need to get a lot more young people coming into field biology.

Wyckoff: Well, one of the ways we can do this is to get out and give some lectures. We can stimulate the kids that way. That's the way to do it.

Michael J. Manyak (urologist at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.): I think that something that goes along with some of your previous comments — and your concerns about not being taken so seriously because we are interested in what are viewed as bizarre kinds of animals — is a review that Richard wrote about a year ago in the newsletter. It was excellent, and should be publicized everywhere. It was about a variety of animals that have been very recently discovered or rediscovered, such as the Sumatran rhino, the Nigerian gorillas, a number of birds...that stuff needs to get out to the public. That's cryptozoology too, and that's very much accepted.

Janis: Well, look what happened today. I had two volunteers come in to help me with this meeting who thought the whole thing would be a bunch of kooks and silly stuff, and they've been sitting here with their ears peeled and their eyes wide open, and they're saying "Boy, this stuff's really interesting."

Unidentified Man: Obviously, there are several nettlesome animals that have been worked on by cryptozoology for a long time. Do you think that the indisputable discovery of one of these landmark cryptozoological animals could have a powerful spilling-over effect into funding, energy, and interest in some of the others? In other words, I'm sure there is frustration among everyone, but if we could just crack one of these big cases, and somebody could come up with a Sasquatch, for example, and there was absolutely no dispute about it, that that might really be a big breaking point.

Greenwell: I think that's absolutely true, because there is a sort of psychological resistance or social resistance to a lot of this. I often say that cryptozoology is a

branch of zoology, but that it also involves social science because of the social interactions between cryptozoology and the media, and the public, and the scientific community, and a lot of that is social not zoological. So, if something like that happened, we'd probably get a blank check to do the next project. I mean, I'm sure that half the millionaires in the country, never mind the agencies, would then be wanting to help us. Right now, though, we're sort of like an orphan. An illegitimate orphan.

Manyak: Historically, the Society seems to have been reluctant, for financial or political reasons, to appoint consultants. I was curious if there are any thoughts about the future in terms of compiling a panel of experts in various fields, not only from our own Society members but also people from outside of the Society, so that when something is found and tissue samples are obtained, they can be evaluated appropriately without delay. Any further thought on that?

Greenwell: Well, what happened early on in the Society is that some of us, at least Roy and me, tried to have a panel of consultants established, but the Board felt that that was an unnecessary bureaucratic step, and basically that all members of the Society are potential consultants. And when something, happens, we just ask the most appropriate member, and that's what we've done, and it hasn't worked bad. I suppose the Board could re-evaluate that one day.

Mackal: In order to get an expert that does DNA sequencing to be sympathetic to you, that's at least as difficult as getting him to actually join the Society. It seems to me, Mike, that the thrust should be that we should push for more professionals in the Society. Not because we don't want non-professionals — we do — but we could then draw from more professionals. I mean, if I go to somebody and say: "Please do this DNA stuff for me today," he may do it on a friendly basis, on a one-to-one basis. On the other hand, it is just as difficult for me to get him or her to do the analysis as for me to say: "Look, you should join the Society; this is interesting stuff," and have him join.

Wyckoff: I think your comment this morning about the size of the membership, that we aren't at the critical mass yet...I think that's one of our problems. Once we get to the critical mass, whatever that is...a thousand people...fifteen hundred people, whatever it is, I think it is going to be a lot easier to get people to do that sort of thing.

Lazell: There are also practical problems involved in some of the biochemical things that Mike was talking about that plague everybody. It's not just the Onza, that large, remarkable cat from Mexico on which we don't yet have biochemical data. We've been working for years now trying to get biochemical data on an endangered species of mouse. Biochemical data is regarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as critical for evaluating the status of that species, but we just can't...we've got the tissues, they're in the freezer, they're ready to run, but nobody has managed to get around to doing it yet.

Now, recruiting more scientists into the Society will help, because there's an awful lot of people out there who now have DNA sequencing capabilities at small universities who really need projects to do, and would love to get involved in studies that would get published, and be beneficial.

Wyckoff: This is kind of what I was referring to in my talk, about being scroungers. We have to be better scroungers in trying to find the people you are referring to, and get them to join.

Greenwell: Well, one of the questions we discussed last night was how do we get more scientists, more zoologists to join the Society. There's thousands of members in the professional zoological societies, like the American Society of Mammalogists, for example. It would be nice to able to recruit more of these people, those who have an open mind. It's getting the word across, that we are really trying to do something sensible.

Janis: Aaron and I were talking about this. We feel there's a lot of people out there who went into biology because they loved nature, and loved animals, and loved going out and finding things, and putting them in jars, and bringing them home. And many of those people went on to become professional zoologists, and now they're dealing with computers, and algorithms, and grant deadlines, and they don't have time for animals any more. And this, what we're doing, is really good old-fashioned zoology in many ways, and maybe we can tap some of those people, and say, "Look, we can take you back to your childhood love affair!"

Greenwell: That's right. I know some zoologists who haven't actually looked at an animal in 10 or 15 years.

(laughter)

Bauer: I think there's a big problem among professional zoologists and other professionals, in that there's a certain amount of peer pressure that, if you're doing Victorian natural history, you're not doing science, and cryptozoology has the perception of being Victorian natural history. The fact of the matter is there's nothing wrong with doing that if it hasn't been done. There is a basic level which needs to be reached before you can go beyond that.

To get more professional zoologists into the Society, one of the stumbling blocks to overcome is that reticence related to the fact that there is this sort of peer pressure, this social pressure that, as a professional biologist, you shouldn't be doing this. This is 19th century work. You should be in the 20th century, not in the 19th century.

Greenwell: You mean now everything is in the laboratory, the molecular work, and all of that.

Janis: Yes, but you can't have a cladogram without characters, and you can't have characters without animals.

Unidentified Man: I was pleased when I received that newsletter that had the list of significant vertebrates that had been discovered in the past 10 years or so. I think it's important that the Society emphasize the various points along the cryptozoological spectrum, be it a new insect of cryptozoological interest, all the

way up to vertebrates like Nessie and the unknown hominids. Or rediscoveries, like the Javan rhino in Vietnam recently. That's a very exciting discovery —

Greenwell: — It's one of the largest land mammals in the world —

Unidentified Man: — It's incredible! A 2-ton animal, overlooked for 75 years, or more. And the Nigerian gorillas, unknown since 1958. Nobody knew that there were 150 gorillas living in Nigeria. That's unbelievable. That's nearly as exciting as the discovery of something entirely new. It draws attention to the fact that there are some incredible pockets of things still living under our noses, and that they can be overlooked.

Jack Sepkoski (paleoecologist at the University of Chicago): And don't forget the oceans. Over the past decade, exploration of the hot springs [thermal vents] have produced one new phylum, several new classes, and a gastropod thought to have become extinct in the Jurassic. A treasure trove of new animals have been discovered down there.

Greenwell: Well, we're going to wrap this up soon. Maybe one or two more questions from the audience.

Unidentified Man: I think you may be overestimating the concern or interest of the public in cryptozoological discoveries. I think it's very tempting to imagine that, if somebody turned up with a Sasquatch or a Loch Ness Monster or something, the public would go wild for it. And maybe they would for a few weeks or a few months, but the truth of the matter is that there have been a number of significant discoveries over the years, such as the ones which were just mentioned, like the Javan rhino and the Nigerian gorillas, and so forth. The public hasn't gone wild over them. The public couldn't care less about them.

The truth of the matter is that, barring some kind of commercial exploitation, some kind of P.T. Barnum-type thing, even if we did find the Yeti or something like that, it would be very wonderful for all of us here, and we would all be very excited — I know I'd be tremendously excited — but to think that the public at large would really care that much is, I think, very unrealistic. Maybe for little while, but very quickly the enthusiasm would die down, and what would really happen is that you'd have the Yeti or whatever it is in the zoo, and the same orthodox scientists who all those years were saying that there's no such thing as the Yeti would then be saying: "Oh, of course we knew all along. We were just waiting for a specimen. It's no big deal." And people would go to the zoo, and they'd see it, and they'd say "Oh, look at the Yeti. Now let's go see the giraffes." And that's that.

Greenwell: Well, I've actually stated several times that, if a Bigfoot were discovered, there'd be a lot of excitement for a number of years, a decade or two, but probably within 30 or 40 years, the new generations growing up would begin to forget that it was once controversial — just like happened with the gorilla. I've no doubt about that. But it's not quite the same as what we were saying earlier, in the sense that if there was a dramatic find like that...I think what we meant more was that the agencies or individuals who could help us financially would then be more willing to do so. We weren't really talking about the public at large. I agree that in about six months, or one month, that would be old news.

Manyak: But that would drive conservation for those areas were those kinds of animals are found. It would ignite that, as a matter of fact. All they need is one good example.

Lazell: If you look at the tremendous response that the coelacanth got, a fossil fish that was discovered in 1938, I mean it made *Life* magazine when the second specimen was found in the early 1950's. It certainly gave the undersea world a big shot in the arm at that time. The search beneath the sea for the coelacanth and everything. All we'd need is just a couple of years of enthusiasm to really get things rolling. And then, as I said earlier, I think we could piggy-back the search for the really strange animals — the wild hominids, the possible surviving dinosaurs, and so on — through the discovery of more mundane species, which can carry us along between one really big discovery to the next.

Unidentified Man: I was going to say that even something that's been well known for a long time, like the spotted owl, can be a major player in conservation. Certainly something like the Sasquatch or a Yeti, or any other large unknown animal, would generate the same kind of galvanization for the environment if nothing else. I see no way that that would not be an extremely exciting thing for a lot of people in conservation.

Unidentified Man: I just want to make the point that nowadays, with the technology that we have, it's going to be possible to answer a lot of questions in terms of biochemistry even with very small tissue samples. So that's an advantage for cryptozoology that zoologists in the past didn't have.

Unidentified Man: I have just a comment really, a sort of reiteration that the umbrella of the piggy-backing you were talking about is just so important. It's easy to get trapped into the charismatic megafauna scenario, but the effectiveness of that can be a conservation tool which can also embrace our own interests and efforts tremendously. Maybe the African elephant is the most important land animal in the world to try to save simply because the turf that it requires is also going to protect just an incredible host of other species. You can't get attention for an exotic rodent. That's very tough. But with that in mind, you can sell the idea that elephants are very important, and you can save that animal, and also a hell of a lot else with it. And that's a powerful effect.

Greenwell: Well, I'd like to conclude all of this with a brief comment. It's something that just popped into my mind, I suppose, because its our 10th anniversary. When we founded the Society — the meeting was hosted by George Zug at the National Museum, at the Smithsonian — during the discussions, while we were working on the constitution and the bylaws, a strange thought suddenly occurred to me, and I sort of looked around at the other Board members, and I said: "You know, what we're

really trying to do here with this Society, trying to discover all these still unknown cryptozoological animals, is to eventually put ourselves out of business. That's sort of a little weird, isn't it?" And George Zug looked up at me, and, with a serious tone, he said: "The true purpose of every scientific society in the world, ultimately, is to put itself out of business."

Mackal: You could say the same about the medical profession.

(laughter)

Greenwell: Well, I thought with those words, we could end. I'd like to thank all the panelists, and the audience. Thank you for helping us celebrate our 10th anniversary, and maybe we can do it again in another 10 years. □

Renewal Information

Now that the Society is publishing again, several years are being consolidated into one membership period in order to get caught up with publications. Thus, Vol. 12 of both the journal and newsletter will be designated for 1993 - 1996. Afterwards, we will return to an annual volume, and Vol. 13 will be for 1997.

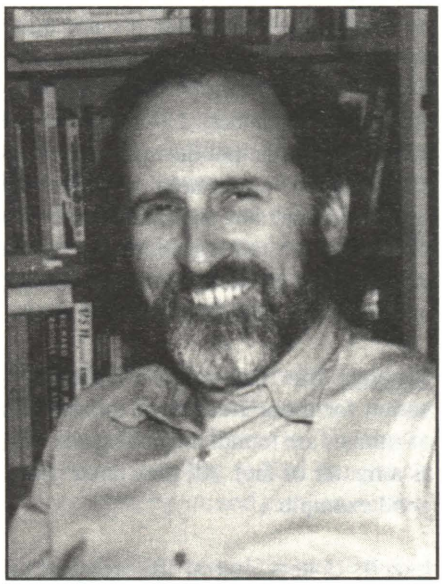
Members who have already paid for the 1993 membership period will be processed as members for this special 1993 - 1996 period, and they will receive all Vol. 12 publications. Members who may have already paid for two (or more) years will be credited the extra year; that is, they will be processed for 1993 - 1996 — thus receiving all Vol. 12 publications — and they will also be processed for 1997, thus receiving all Vol. 13 publications. In this way, all members will receive the number of publications they are entitled to through their membership payments, and nobody will be shortchanged.

The enclosed renewal envelope is to facilitate advance renewals for this 1993 - 1996 period. Any additional financial support members can provide to help get the Society's publications program caught up would be very much appreciated. □

NEW EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Three ISC members have joined the Editorial Board of the Society's scholarly journal *Cryptozoology*. They are John Colarusso, a linguist, Leigh M. Van Valen, an evolutionist, and Michael P. Walters, an ornithologist.

John Colarusso attended Cornell University, where he studied engineering physics for three years; however, his interests then turned to philosophy, in which he graduated with a B.A. in 1967. He then obtained an M.A. in philosophy from Northwestern University in 1969, and a Ph.D. in linguistics from Harvard University in 1975. After teaching for a year at the University of Vienna, in Austria, he joined the faculty of McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where he is now a professor in the Department of Anthropology.



John Colarusso

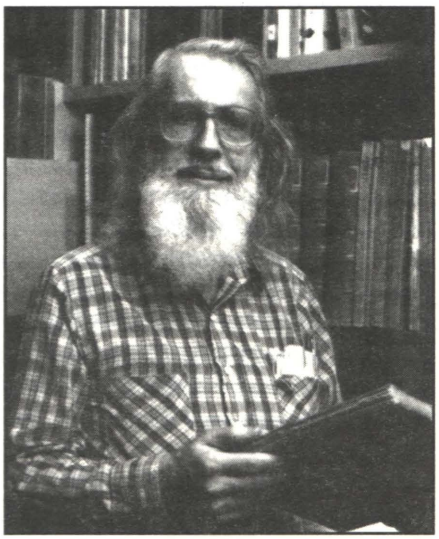
A native Californian, Dr. Colarusso has conducted extensive fieldwork and research on the languages of the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union, particularly Bzhedukh, Abadzakh, Shapsegh West Circassian, and Kabardian East Circassian. He also has had experience with Digoron Ossetic, Khasi, Tamil, Bzyb Abkhaz, Yoruba, Farsi, Tuareg, Dinka, Galla, Georgian, and Western Armenian. He is the author of many scholarly publications, as well as two books: *The Northwest Caucasian Languages: A Phonological Survey* (Garland Publishing, 1989), and *A Grammar of the Kabardian Language* (University of Calgary Press, 1991).

One of Dr. Colarusso's main interests in cryptozoology is the analysis of native languages in order to shed light on the possible biological reality of mythical or folkloric animals. This he did in relation to the New Zealand Waitoreke of Maori folklore in *Cryptozoology*, Vol. 7 (1988). His first involvement in cryptozoology, however, was his participation in a 1978 conference titled Sasquatch and Similar Phenomena, and the subsequent book loosely based on it called *Manlike Monsters on Trial* (University of British Columbia Press, 1980), which contained his chapter "Ethnographic Information on a Wild Man of the Caucasus." Dr. Colarusso also prepared the paper "Linguistics and Cryptozoology" for the Society's conference (sponsored jointly by Britain's Folklore Society) Fabulous Beasts: Fact or Folklore?, held at the University of Surrey in 1990.

After obtaining a B.A. in zoology from Miami University (Ohio) in 1956, Leigh Van Valen attended Columbia University, where he obtained an M.A. in 1957 and a Ph.D. in 1961, both in zoology. In 1962-63 he was a NATO postdoctorate fellow at University College, London, and was a research fellow at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, in 1963-66. He joined The University of Chicago faculty in 1967, first as an assistant professor of anatomy, and now as a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution.

A well-known evolutionist, Dr. Van Valen's research interests cover a very wide spectrum. His publications in evolution, paleontology, paleoecology, mammalogy, and various other fields number several hundred, and, as examples, range from Paleocene primates to the ecology and extinction of the dinosaurs, the evolution of bats, the origin of rabbits, monophyly or diphyly in the origin

of whales, South American Cretaceous paleontology, how climate affects evolutionary rates, photosynthesis and atmospheric oxygen, molecular evolution, the origin of multituberculates, and, not to be forgotten, null hypotheses and variation.

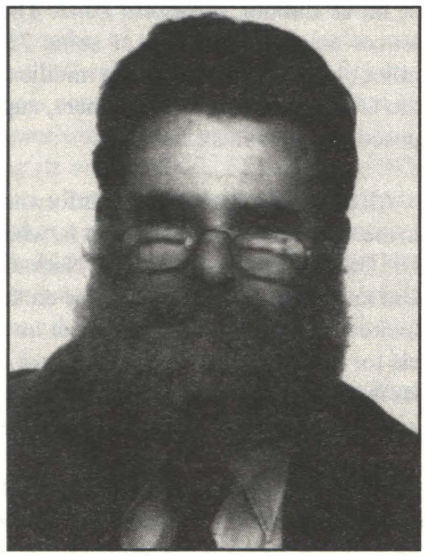


Leigh M. Van Valen

Dr. Van Valen has served in various capacities with the Paleontological Society and the Society for the Study of Evolution, and has held editorial positions with the *Journal of Molecular Evolution*, *Evolution*, *Paleobiology*, and *Current Anthropology*, among others. Since 1973, he has also been the editor of *Evolutionary Theory*, in which prospective authors are advised that "papers that disagree with the editor's views have a higher probability of acceptance than those that agree." In 1982, Dr. Van Valen was one of the founders of the Society, and has served on the ISC Board of Directors until his recent appointment to the Editorial Board of *Cryptozoology*.

Michael P. Walters, a native of Northern Ireland, attended school at Coleraine and later at Friend's School, coming under the tutelage of the well-known naturalist Arnold Bennington. Failing to gain admission to Northern Ireland's only university, Mr. Walters worked for the Department of Education and pursued ornithology very actively, joining several ornithological organizations and eventually being elected to the British Ornithologist's Union (BOU). In 1970, upon the strong recommendation of R.E. Moreau, president of BOU, Mr. Walters was appointed as a staff member of the Zoololgy Department of the British Museum (Natural History) — now The Natural History Museum — in London. (Tragically, Moreau died the same day that Mr. Walters learnt of his appointment; he later dedicated his first book to him.)

For the first two years at the Museum, Mr. Walters was instrumental in the move of the vast bird collection from London to the Walter Rothschild Zoological Museum in Tring, Hertfordshire, where the Zoology Department's Bird Group (formerly the Sub-Department of Ornithology) is now housed (Lord

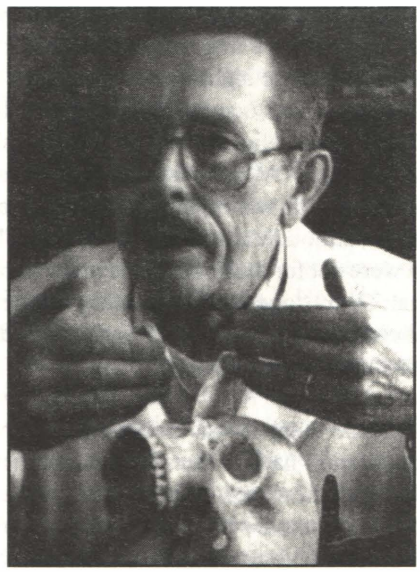


Michael P. Walters

Rothschild bequeathed his museum, its collections, and its library to the nation upon his death in 1937, and the Tring Museum is now a division of the main Museum in London). For many years, Mr. Walters worked on the bird egg collection — about a million specimens from all over the world. In 1985, he also assumed curatorial responsibilities for bird skin, skeleton, and alcoholic collections at Tring.

Mr. Walters is the author of over 60 scholarly papers and books, including *The Complete Birds of the World* (David & Charles, 1980; Illustrated Edition: TFH Publications, 1981), and *Birds' Eggs* [of the World] (Dorling Kindersley, 1994). He has a particular interest in rare, extinct, and cryptozoological birds, and he has studied much of the historical literature containing many references to forms not referable to known species. He has also researched possible bird species based on artwork and native names. His paper "The Cryptozoological Implications of Old Bird Names in Native Vocabularies" is now in press in the journal *Cryptozoology*. Mr. Walters is currently working on the volumes *The Rare Birds of China*, *Extinct and Hypothetical Birds of the World*, and *The History of Ornithology*.

Another member of the *Cryptozoology* Editorial Board, Walter H. Birkby, a physical anthropologist, has joined the Forensic Science Center/Office of the Medical Examiner of Pima County, in Tucson, Arizona. Prior to his new appointment, Dr. Birkby, a nationally-recognized specialist in forensic anthropology, had for many years directed the Human Identification and Osteology Laboratory of the Arizona State Museum at the University of Arizona. He has been a consultant to numerous law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in Washington, D.C. He has also testified as an expert witness in many legal proceedings.



Walter H. Birkby

Besides his technical support of the Society's journal since 1982, Dr. Birkby has a particular interest in biological evidence produced for the supposed Sasquatch (Bigfoot), and he has conducted numerous microscopic analyses of purported Sasqauatch hair samples, none of them conclusive. □

EDITORIAL

GORILLAS LOST AND FOUND

The article appeared in Vol. 7, No. 2 (1988) of the *Newsletter*, but on p. 9 — "back with the corset adds," as Richard Nixon used to say. It was about the rediscovery of Nigerian gorillas

I never thought it would attract much attention. Gorillas in Africa — so what? And, after all, it was only a rediscovery of a known population thought extinct. Anyway, I was wrong. This rediscovery — which I personally thought was very important — *did* arouse much interest, and I have heard it repeatedly invoked by ISC members as an example of how large animals *can* remain unknown to zoology in these modern times. In the article, I myself stated: "If hundreds of gorillas could survive decades undetected by Western science in such a highly populated country as Nigeria, what other wonders may lurk in the more inaccessible regions of Central Africa?"

Nigeria, with a 1988 population of 110 million people (almost one fifth of the population of all of Africa), and the most industrialized nation on the continent, is thought to have lost its gorillas decades ago. In fact, no sighting of a gorilla by a European had occurred since 1930. In 1956, when Nigeria was still a British colony, E.W. Marsh, the chief conservator of forests, was unable to locate any of them, although he did find some nests. If it were not for those, he wrote in the journal *Oryx*, "one could probably explore these forests indefinitely and conclude that there are no gorillas."

Since then, it was believed that the population had, in fact, become extinct. In 1987, however, "native talk" proved once again to be true, and conservationists were able to track several bands totaling about 150 individuals. They now represent the most western population of this subspecies, the western lowland gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* — the original form described in 1847 after an initial period of disbelief in "native talk." Two other subspecies are recognized, the eastern lowland gorilla, *G. g. graueri*, described by primatologist — and ISC member — Colin Groves as a distinct taxon in 1970, and the mountain gorilla, *G. g. beringei*, discovered only in 1902 after further disbelief in "native talk."

The western lowland gorilla's range extends eastwards further than originally thought, as we — the 1981 Mackal expedition — found evidence of it in the Likouala swamps of the northern Congo. Their dispersal further eastwards is probably blocked by a formidable barrier, the mighty Congo (Zaire) River. The eastern lowland gorilla' range extends westwards as far as Lubutu, in eastern Zaire. That leaves an enormous gap of some 750 miles (1,200km) smack in the middle of the Congo Basin, and area where, supposedly, no gorillas exist at all.

All this seemed pretty straightforward to me. Until a few years ago, that is, when Dr. Groves, at the Australian National University, encouraged me to be on the lookout during any future African travels for evidence of a "lost" race of gorillas in north-central Zaire. Curious, I asked him for more details, which he then sent.

The story begins in 1908, when skulls and jaws from four gorillas were collected near Bondo, in north-central Zaire, about 400 miles (645km) east of the western lowland gorilla's range. Based on an anatomical examination, Henri Schouteden in Belgium named a new subspecies, *G. g. uellensis*, a taxon which was rejected two years later by Harvard primatologist Harold J. Coolidge. He concluded that the skulls could not have originated in central Zaire simply because, as was well known, there were no gorillas there! He proposed, instead, that the skulls had been taken there "by Arab traders or wandering natives."

Some years later, in 1936, Coolidge was to change his mind. He received further details from Schouteden confirming that two of the gorillas had actually been shot locally by a Belgian soldier. This, he then agreed, "was positive evidence of the existence of gorillas in this intervening region." But, he wondered, why was there no further evidence of this supposed lost race in the heart of Africa?

The same question still applies today, almost 60 years later. Dr. Groves thinks that the Bondo gorillas are now probably extinct — tragically gone forever before we could even learn anything about them. But he put me in touch with Robert Glaser, a German zoologist at the Justus-Liebig University in Giessen, whom he thought had some new information on the subject. Dr. Glaser kindly responded to my inquiry, informing me that the new reports had come from Azande, some 230 miles (370km) east of Bondo, and actually much closer to the range of the eastern lowland gorilla. Furthermore, his informant, a Kenyan named Chris Hillman who had worked in the area, had finally concluded that the sightings were merely of chimpanzees.

So, there we have it. Two skulls. That's all that's left of a mighty race of the world's largest primate. Gone forever. Except perhaps in village folklore around Bondo. Perhaps some ethnobiologist should make an effort to collect such folklore while it still exists. And, who knows, maybe he — or she — might stumble over more than he bargained for. Maybe he'd discover this now legendary lost race, an unknown population of the world's largest primate. Just as they did in Nigeria.

Richard Greenwell
Editor

Quotes

"...reception of novelty in science is typically analogous to the reaction incurred with foreign tissues in a host: rejection."

Beverly Rubik
"Three Frontier Areas of Science that Challenge the Paradigm"
Frontier Prespectives
(Temple University)
Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall, 1992

"Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know."

Daniel J. Boorstein
Historian, author,and former librarian of Congress

VIETNAMESE ZOOLOGISTS INVESTIGATE WILDMEN REPORTS

A Vietnamese zoologist has publicly supported the proposition that large and unknown bipedal primates — "wildmen" — inhabit the forests of Vietnam.

Dào Van Tiên, of the Department of Zoology of the University of Hanoi, revealed his opinion on the subject in a series of papers titled "The Facts About Forest Man" in Vols. 3-7 (1990) of *Tap Chí Lâm Nghiêp* (Forestry Review). The sections dealing specifically with the reported Vietnam wildmen (No. 6, pp. 39-40, and No. 7, p. 12) were translated into English by Oanh Collins of the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University (ANU), and were edited as a summary report — with Prof. Tiên's approval — by Helmut Loofs-Wissowa, of NAU's Faculty of Asian Studies. Dr. Loofs-Wissowa, an ISC member, kindly provided a copy of this report to the Secretariat.

In his writings, Prof. Tiên reviewed the wildman accounts he had encountered during his many years of zoological fieldwork. The oldest account dates back to 1963, when an informant reported his observation of a human-like creature which had raided his village dwelling in search of food. It was hair-covered, walked erect, and had a height of about 5 feet (1.5m). It reportedly withdrew rapidly when it was disturbed by a noise. Prof. Tiên, a skeptic at the time, wrote in his diary that the entity might merely have been "a burglar disguised as a wildman so as to frighten people."

In 1979, in the area of Sa Thây, a village about 12 miles (20km) west of Kon Tum in the Central Highlands, Prof. Tiên again encountered wildmen reports. He was told that they inhabited that area, and that they were known for piercing the trunks of banana trees with their bare hands for the purpose of extracting juice. These details were again entered skeptically into his diary.

Soon afterwards, in 1981, a colleague loaned Prof. Tiên the French book *L'Homme de Neandertal est Toujours Vivant* (Neanderthal Man is Still Alive) by Bernard Heuvelmans and Boris Porchnev. In reading it, Prof. Tiên was able to place the reports he had collected into a broader perspective, realizing that such reports are also made in other areas of Asia, including China and parts of the former Soviet Union.

Indeed, Dr. Heuvelmans, who has long supported the present existence of a Neanderthal form, maintains that the famous "Iceman" that he and Ivan T. Sanderson examined in Minnesota in December of 1968 was such a taxon, one that had originally come from Vietnam. He is convinced that it had been shot by American military personnel, later finding its way to the U.S. and the county fairs circuit. In support of this proposition is a short, enigmatic statement in a *World Journal Tribune* article dated November 1, 1966, which states — while describing the adversities then facing U.S. servicemen in Vietnam — that "other marines report they killed a huge ape."

The ISC Secretariat is aware of two other instances of U.S. servicemen reportedly encountering large "apes" in the Vietnamese forests, although no details are available. Paleoanthropologist Russell Ciochon and archaeologist John Olsen — who are highly skeptical of all wildmen accounts — also report in their 1990 book *Other Origins: The Search for the Giant Ape in Human Prehistory* that they had received several letters from former U.S. servicemen who claimed to have encountered such giant apes during their tours of duty in Vietnam.

The problem, of course, is that there are no known large apes, much less bipedal ones, on the Asian mainland, so the Vietnam reports, like similar wildman reports from China and neighboring countries, fall into a sort of scientific "limbo of the lost."

One possibility, at least for some of the reports, is that what is being seen are members of relict populations of orang-utans. Although orangs are not known to have inhabited the Asian mainland for at least centuries, and possibly millennia, Ohio State University anthropologist Frank E. Poirier and ISC Secretary J. Richard Greenwell were impressed by the orang-like nature of the Yeren reports they investigated in China in 1989. Whether such orangs would be related to the known form existing today on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra or to the giant Pleistocene form is not clear.

Dr. Heuvelmans, in his celebrated Annotated Checklist of Apparently Unknown Animals with which Cryptozoology is Concerned (see Vol 5, 1986, of the journal *Cryptozoology*), under section (4) In Tropical Asia (Oriental Region), cites two distinct unknown hominid/hominoid forms: "Neanderthal-like men in the southeast of the continent, including the Malay Peninsula," and "Gigantic hairy hominoids (*Gigantopithecus?*) in Burma, southern China, and North Vietnam." He also cites "Anthropoid apes (probably mainland orang-utans surviving from the Pleistocene, or just traditions about them)," in Assam, Burma, southern China, and Vietnam.

In his own papers, Professor Tiên states that, after being able to study the reports from other areas of Asia, "my doubts about the wildman's presence in Vietnam began to lessen." He also revealed that several Vietnamese zoologists had again investigated the areas of Gia Lai and Kon Tum in the 1980's, interviewing local officials. It was reported to them that several wildmen — with infants — were sometimes seen in the nearby forests, and that the vocal sounds they made were incomprehensible to the local Vietnamese.

He also discussed the reported death of a captive wildman, said to have been buried by a road at Dac Min. This account had already been published by Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett in a book. (Curiously, while the French edition, *La Seconde Resistance Vietnam 1965*, Paris: Gallimond, 1965, contained

the account, the U.S. edition, *Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerrilla War*, New York: International Publ. 1965, excluded it.)

In his conclusions, Professor Tiên called on the Dac Min authorities to initiate a search for the remains of the supposed buried wildman. He also called on villagers to immediately report sightings of wildmen to their local authorities, and he further proposed that some form of incentive be established by the authorities to encourage the reporting of such sightings.

Unfortunately, Professor Tiên died in May of 1993 with the question of the Vietnamese wildman still unresolved. However, wildman investigations in that country continue to be undertaken by Vo Quy, the dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Hanoi. For a number of years, Professor Quay has collected wildman evidence — including purported tracks — from the forests of Vietnam. □

Notice

The typesetting and layout of the Newsletter *is now being done with a desktop publishing system instead of the old method of having a graphic artist do a paste-up. While this new system is more efficient, and results in a more professional-looking newsletter, a few layout glitches are occuring on these first issues, for which we apologize.*

Quote

"It is all too frequently supposed that scientific method was discovered, and once discovered, that was that. It was then there to be used, and change in science has resulted from the regualr use of the tool. . . . Nothing could be further from the truth. We continually make discoveries in science, and there is every reason to suppose that we make discoveries in the area of methodology as well."

W.H. Newton-Smith
The Rationality of Science
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991

CRYPTOLETTERS

The Editor welcomes letters from readers on any topic related to cryptozoology, but reserves the right to shorten them or make slight changes to improve clarity or style, but not meaning.

To the Editor:

When fish evolved into land animals, they became dependent on breathing air with lungs. Their gills, which had been used for the extraction of oxygen in water, were lost. There is a debate over exactly how lungs developed, but all tetrapods (land vertebrates), except some amphibians, breathe with them.

In contrast to the loss of gills when vertebrates moved to the land, land vertebrates that have "returned" to the sea have retained their lungs, and have to come to the surface to breathe. There are many mammals, birds, and reptiles that live in the sea or in fresh water, but all have lungs, and they all are required to come to the surface to breathe.

Many of the marine mammals have special adaptations allowing them to stay submerged for longer periods. The cetaceans have a system that reserves the oxygen in the lungs — mainly for the heart and brain — on long dives. Other aquatic and marine tetrapods have similar adaptations. Reptiles, with their low metabolism, can frequently stay down for a relatively long time, even with no special adaptations, particularly if they do not move. This is how crocodiles can wait motionless underwater, ready to ambush prey animals.

At least one tetrapod, however, has evolved a primitive gill — in addition to its lungs — totally unrelated to the gills of fishes and amphibians. These are the sea turtles. They have rectal gills, which are sacs branching off immediately inside the rectum. They resemble the urinary bladders of these animals, which also are sacs opening off the rectal end of the alimentary tract. Water is taken into these sacs through the rectum, and then expelled. The inside surfaces of these sacs are well supplied with blood vessels, which extract the oxygen from the water. This supplements the oxygen in the lungs on long dives. The only other known animal with a rectal gill is the dragonfly nymph, an arthropod.

It is possible that something similar to this may have evolved in prehistoric marine and aquatic reptiles, and it may be what allows modern "sea serpents" and possibly other sea and lake "monsters" — if they are indeed reptiles — to avoid detection. Some of these forms might even have a more developed version of this. Rectal gills would not be apt to develop in mammals and birds because they are warm-blooded, and the cold water coming into such a gill would extract too much heat; but it might well be possible in other reptiles besides sea turtles.

The combination of such a rectal gill, low reptile metabolism, and special adaptations such as mentioned above for cetaceans, would make an unknown marine or lake reptile's need to come to the surface so infrequent that it would be virtually impossible for an observer to simply wait for a surfacing to detect it. Such an animal would simply be able to stay submerged too long for that strategy to be practical. If, in addition, such an animal bears live young, as some reptiles do, then it would not have to come ashore to lay its eggs, thus making its presence even more difficult to detect.

John M. Green
Tucson, Arizona, U.S.A.

This is the kind of speculative but common-sense hypothesizing that is needed in cryptozoology, and the Editor invites readers to comment on or criticize Dr. Green's points. Editor.

To the Editor:

I have been interested in native black-phase mountain lions [pumas] since my youth, when my father told me of a black lion he saw while ploughing a field in Haskell County just before Word War II.

My interest was rekindled in 1980, when, while bow-hunting in western Greeley County, I encountered large cat

tracks while returning to my vehicle down a muddy river-bottom. The tracks were imprinted over my own entry tracks, as though the animal had followed me in the pre-dawn darkness. I told a rancher friend about the tracks, and he told me he had had a couple of calves killed and practically eaten, and had seen a mountain lion laying in the rocks at Barrel Springs, on the White Woman Creek. When I asked him about the cat's color, he reluctantly and rather sheepishly said it was black.

I now live in Finney County, and bow-hunt the Pawnee Creek, in the eastern part of the county. I know three farmers/ranchers in the area who have seen black-phase lions. Seventeen killed and partially eaten deer were found along the creek bottom in the winter of 1992-93, all within half a mile of each other. I did not find out about this until it was too late to investigate, and I never found any large cat tracks while hunting in that area.

The same area experienced large cat activity in the mid- to late-1970's. One of the ranchers described how a large cat had entered a 10-foot (3-m) high opening in a shed and had killed and maimed some pigs kept there during blizzard weather. Some of the pigs had had their ears chewed off, and were clawed on the sides of their bodies. The ranchers actually tracked the cat, but couldn't catch up to it because it had crossed some thin ice they were afraid to negotiate.

Keith Foster
Holcolm, Kansas, U.S.A.

As discussed previously (see Newsletter, *Vol. 8, No. 3, 1989), no black puma specimen has ever been obtained, and the form is unrecognized by zoology. Yet, hundreds of such reports have been made east of the Rocky Mountains, from Kansas to Maryland, from New Brunswick to Florida. Editor.*

To the Editor:

In October, 1991, I came across the following story in *Overseas Jobs Express*, a British publication.

"Killer lizard: A huge 50-year-old lizard, almost 5 yards [4.5m] long and weighing 1,320lbs [594kl], was captured and shot in a remote jungle in Panama after it killed a lizard hunter in a swamp. The lizard was caught using a giant hook baited with 24lbs. [11kg] of pigs tripe."

Having ran the reptile house at a local zoo in the past, I know that no New World lizards reach this size. Can you throw any light on this? Is this a new species, a wild exaggeration, an outsized freak, or a misidentification of a caiman or a crocodile?

Richard Freeman
Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England, U.K.

The largest lizards in the world are the varanids or monitor lizards. The largest is the Komodo dragon, Varanus komodoensis, *found only on two Indonesian islands. It is capable of attacking humans, as it is very bulky and may reach lengths in excess of 10 feet (3m); reports of 16-foot (4.9-m) lengths or more have not been authenticated. The Salvadori monitor,* Varanus salvadorii, *of Papua New Guinea, also reaches lengths of 10 feet (3m), and there are credible reports of 15-foot (4.6m) specimens, but this lizard is much more gracile, and most of its length is composed of tail. In any case, no varanids are found in the New World. The largest New World lizards are the iguanas, with a maximum reported length of 6 feet, 7 inches (2m) for the green iguana,* Iguana iguana, *which ranges from Mexico to Paraguay. This Panamanian report could perhaps be due to a misidentification of a crocodilian, but, more likely, it is a hoax. How did they know the reptile was 50 years old, anyway? Editor.*

To the Editor:

In August of 1933, when another girl and I were driving along the north road of Loch Ness, I noticed that the loch looked so empty. There didn't seem to be any of the boats, sail or powered, I'd seen in the U.S. that clutter up comparable mountain lakes in the Adirondacks.

Now, however, motorized vessels are continually plying the surface of Loch Ness. My question is: might this be one reason why there appear to have been relatively few sightings of "monsters" in recent years?

As you know, many such "monsters" have been documented from the oceans, and possibly they have entered Loch Ness from there. Taken together, so many sighting reports from perfectly reliable witnesses, in diverse locations and over a long period, constitute, to my mind, what lawyers call "a body of evidence." That is, that the "monsters" really do exist — the scientific enclave to the contrary notwithstanding.

Helen B. Houston Bock
Long Beach, California, U.S.A

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