

North American BioFortean Review



Discovery should come as an adventure
rather than as a result of a logical process of thought.
Sharp, prolonged thinking is necessary that we may keep on the chosen road,
but it does not necessarily lead to discovery.

—Theobald Smith

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From the Editors

This second issue of the North American BioFortean Review includes a number of brief summaries of zoological folklore, a few notes from the scientific literature, and some odds and ends. The article on the *Zuiyo maru* cryptid may seem incongruous in a newsletter devoted to North American anomalies, but as mentioned in the first issue, we will occasionally publish articles that involve interesting methodology or means of pursuing cryptozoological leads. In this respect, Goertzen's article suggests a closer look at archaeological representations. We expect that this will create some debate over how far these can be used — but that's one reason to publish such an article. Healthy debate can suggest a new perspective. We can't agree with those who dismiss new resources merely because they may not support a favored theory.

We are very interested in seeing submissions from other individuals. If you would like to run some ideas past us, please contact us via e-mail.

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Honey Bears: a piece of local folklore

Brad LaGrange

There are currently no known populations of bears in Indiana. In “Perry County, A History,” (de la Hunt 1965), two bear stories are listed from about the 1840’s. One of the stories tells of a bear hunt gone wrong. The tree the bear sought refuge in fell on the hunter, injuring him. His wife then took up her own firearm and smote the bruin. The second story involved a bear that raided a hog pen and carried off its cloven-hoofed victim down a dark hollow, escaping the farmer.

I was unable to find out exactly when bears were last in Perry County, but it was just a few years on one side or the other of the Civil War (1861-1865). Black bears and red wolves both disappeared around this time, as did the native Indians.

However, I have grown up in the shadow of bear stories. No one specific ever saw one, but the talk of loose bears always popped up, usually around June and July. The lack of specifics in the stories has brought me to the conclusion that the bear stories are just that — stories. Nevertheless, they do contain some interesting features. First, the bears are called “honey bears,” and are always supposed to be black. Second, they always seem to be seen in June and July. And third, the bears are always small.

While not cryptozoological, they are an interesting piece of folklore. In fact, the hollow below my house has been known for generations as “Bear Hollow.” The bear tales are even more ingrained north of my home, near Patoka Lake. Most of Patoka (made from the Patoka River) is surrounded by state and federal land. Most of the residential areas are owned by city dwellers who are unfamiliar with wildlife, which no doubt contributes to the ursine lore.

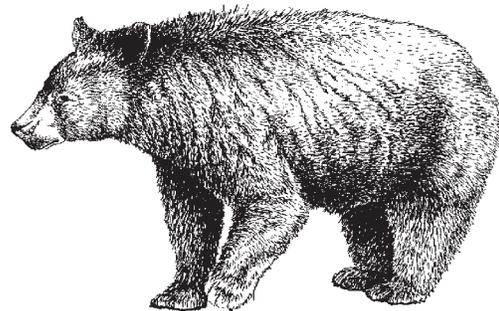
Local game wardens have told me that they are very sick of the whole subject. Vandals and black chow dogs, they say, are behind Patoka bear reports. The only solid report of a bear I could nail down was a report of a bear/dog fight on the eastern side of Patoka. This was, in the game warden’s opinion, after a serious inquiry, a dog/dog fight.

Tim Cassidy, a naturalist employed by the state, did tell me, however, there may be some bears in Indiana, and maybe in 20-40 years there might be a breeding population. While that may be true, I am inclined to think all bear reports from at least Patoka South are to be relegated to the folklore realm. I can’t speak for Crane Naval Weapons Center, Knox County, Morgan-Monroe State Forest, or any other areas of bear reports, though.

Nor can I explain why the reports come in June and July, why they are always black, why they are always small, or why they call them “honey bears.”

Reference:

de la Hunt, T.J. 1965. Perry County, A History. Reprint. Indianapolis, IN: W.K. Stewart Co.



Giant Centipedes in the Ozarks

Chad Arment

Few people are fans of centipedes. Frankly, they give many people the willies. Small centipedes are bad enough, but what about the really big ones? *Scolopendra gigantea* of Central and South America reaches 265 mm, a little over 12 inches, in length (Sandefur 1998). The largest centipede is *Scolopendra galapagoensis*, with some specimens measuring at 40 cm, or 15-17 inches long (Schear 1999). Other large scolopendrids around the world are known for their painful and, rarely, dangerous bites.

The largest known species in North America is *Scolopendra heros*, which reaches up to 210 mm (Sandefur 1998). Two subspecies are found in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, while *S. h. castaneiceps* ranges from New Mexico to western Florida and Georgia, going as far north as Kansas. A second large species is *S. alternans*, which is found in Florida and reaches 190 mm in length. No scolopendrids in North America are known to reach more than seven inches in length. Rowland Shelley (1999, pers. comm.), Curator of Terrestrial Invertebrates at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, told me that his study of preserved specimens suggests that adult *Scolopendra heros* are fairly uniform in size throughout their range.

There are reports, however, which suggest that large centipedes could have been found at one time in the Ozarks of Arkansas and Missouri. In a fascinating collection of early tales, Silas Claborn Turnbo (Allen 1989) noted several incidents where large centipedes were seen or collected. Turnbo was a folklorist who wrote numerous articles for newspapers and published two volumes of tales as *Fireside Stories of the*

Early Days in the Ozarks.

Here is a  brief overview of these tales.

An eight-inch centipede was seen crawling out from under a rock in the hills near the “head of Little Creek that puts into Lick Creek below Gainesville.” It was captured and taken to Gainesville, Missouri, given to a local doctor, placed in alcohol, and displayed in his drug store.

Another centipede, between seven and eight inches long, was captured between Dugginsville and Gainesville, Missouri, and given “to an old settler who managed to sell it to someone for a half pint of whisky.”

A centipede bite was described by one man, when a seven and one-half inches long centipede supposedly bit a young child on the foot in Stone County, Missouri. “It was said the child lay a year before he recovered. All the flesh surrounding the wound sloughed off. When the sore healed, the child remained a cripple.”

A nest of centipedes was found in a hollow tree on the east side of Big Buck Creek, Taney County, Missouri. This was in the fall of 1861. The man was cutting down a tree when he found a cavity inside which held an eight-inch long centipede. The animal was coiled in a knot in the upper part of the cavity. The man used sticks to unroll the animal. “It was wrapped around numerous young centipedes which were massed together in the shape of a little ball. The old centipede was almost white in color.” I should note that this is perfectly normal centipede maternal behavior. One of my *Scolopendra heros* wrapped around her offspring in this manner until they were big enough to forage on their own.

A large centipede scared a young boy who was squirrel hunting near Bradley’s Ferry

(Missouri?). A friend of the boy ran over and “was much surprised to see an enormous centipede pursuing the boy. When Jones reached the spot, the centipede stopped and bowed its body up preparatory to jumping, and while it was in this position, Jones shot it. He said it was twelve inches long and one inch wide.”

Another twelve-inch centipede was killed on Mountain Creek, Marion County, Arkansas. It was seen running into a stump, which was set on fire to remove the animal and dispatch it.

Sometime after 1854, one Marion County, Arkansas, man saw a large centipede about one and a half miles west of Powell. It was seen crawling into a tree, where it was killed. “I had no way of measuring it accurately, but a close estimation proved it was not less than fourteen inches long and over an inch wide.”

The largest centipede that Turnbo records would give nightmares to many folks. “The biggest centipede found in the Ozarks I have a record of was captured alive by Bent Music on Jimmie’s Creek in Marion County in 1860. Henry Onstott, an uncle of mine, and Harvey Laughlin, a cousin of mine, kept a drug store in Yellville and collected rare specimens of lizards, serpents, spiders, horned frogs and centipedes, and kept them in a large glass jar which sat on their counter. The jar was full of alcohol and the collection was put in the jar for preservation as they were brought in. Among the collection was a monster centipede. It was of such unusual size, it made one almost shudder to look at it. Brice Milum, who was a merchant at Yellville when Mr. Music brought the centipede to town, said he assisted in the measuring of it, before it was put in the alcohol, and its length was found to be eighteen inches. It attracted a great deal of attention and was the largest centipede I ever saw. The jar with its contents was either destroyed or carried off during the heat of the war.”

Unfortunately, without any specimens to

back these claims, they have to remain stories. Over its expansive range, *S. heros* is not known to exceed seven inches in length, although it is possible that a regional morph might have developed in the Ozarks at one time which may no longer be extant. The largest reported centipede, eighteen inches, is only an inch longer than recorded specimens of *Scolopendra galapagoensis*.

Shelley is in the process of reviewing the North American scolopendromorphs. As centipede systematics is in dire need of revision, this will be a welcome review. Perhaps it will incite interest in these fascinating invertebrates. And, maybe squirreled away in some old tree stump is a really big centipede waiting to be found. Just don’t get bit.

Citations:

- Allen, D.W. 1989. Turnbo’s Tales of the Ozarks: Snakes, Birds & Insect Stories. Conway, AR: Arkansas Research.
- Sandefur, C. 1998. The Giant Centipedes of the Genus *Scolopendra*: Their Captive Care and Husbandry. Published by Carl Sandefur.
- Scheer, B. 1999. E-mail to Discussion List. Millipede@onelist.com.

Anomalous Abstracts

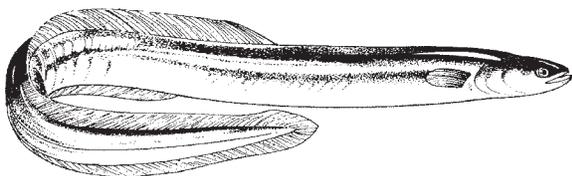
Chad Arment

Costa, J.T. 1997. Caterpillars as social insects. *American Scientist* 85(March-April): 150-159.

We usually think of ants and bees as social insects, but scientists also study caterpillars in these terms. There are some intriguing behaviors known from various species, including synchronous group displays, herding behavior, and group foraging.

Fricke, H., and K. Tsukamoto. 1998. Seamounts and the mystery of eel spawning. *Naturwissenschaften* 85(1999): 290-291.

The authors propose a possible solution to the old mystery of where *Anguilla* eels actually spawn in the Atlantic. They suggest that the eels mass around seamounts and offshore banks during their last stage of maturation, 2-3 weeks before their death. A pheromone-like chemical is released, allowing the normally solitary individuals to find each other. The authors continue to search for the exact spawning locations.



Heinze, J., et al. 1999. A female caste specialized for the production of unfertilized eggs in the ant *Crematogaster smithi*. *Naturwissenschaften* 86(1999): 93-95.

Studies of ant colonies have revealed that the simple reproductive hierarchy once commonly reported is not nearly as simple. There may be multiple fertile queens in a single colony, reproduction by workers, production of female offspring from unfertilized eggs, etc. This article presents the finding of a female caste in the North American ant *Crematogaster smithi* which produces unfertilized eggs. The authors suggest that the caste converts perishable food into eggs which can be stored and eaten by other members of the colony at a later time.

Lee, D.W. 1997. Iridescent blue plants. *American Scientist* 85(Jan.-Feb.): 56-63.

Certain tropical plants produce iridescent structures. The fern *Selaginella* will produce normal green leaves when growing in sunlight, but in the shade it develops layered filters which create constructive interference. Other plants, such as *Begonia pavonina* and *Phyllagathis rotundifolia*, utilize modified chloroplasts known as iridoplasts. Some marine algae are also iridescent. The electric blue color of the rudraksha tree's fruit is produced structurally rather than through pigmentation. In many cases, the function of these structures is unknown, although the authors speculate on a few possibilities.

Parker, A.R. 1999. Light-reflection strategies. *American Scientist* 87(May-June): 248-255.

This article details the various ways that organisms use light in order to blend into their natural environments. Transparency, pigmentation, bioluminescence, and reflection are noted. It also discusses antireflection and its usefulness to certain species. Some insects, like moths and butterflies, have compound eyes with numerous facets (ommatidia). These are covered with small protuberances which maximize light absorption by minimizing reflection.

Wijnhoven, H., and M.P. Berg. 1999. Some notes on the distribution and ecology of iridovirus (Iridovirus, Iridoviridae) in terrestrial isopods (Isopoda, Oniscidae). *Crustaceana* 72(2): 145-156.

Occasionally, someone will find a blue pillbug (isopod) and query one of the online entomology boards. It turns out that while there are some pillbugs which are naturally blue, there is also a disease which infects these invertebrates and causes them to turn bluish. In the past, several new blue-colored species were described which were probably just infected animals. This paper discusses the distribution of Iridovirus in isopods around the world. It has been found in Africa, Europe, and North America. The authors state that the isopods “become light blue to violet and are apparently totally covered with a pearl-shell glow... The discolouration originates from light reflection by para-crystalline virus particles in the tissues cells.” The virus is lethal, and will kill the isopods in about a month.

Clarification on the “Harrison County Ape”

Brad LaGrange

I would like to clarify a point about the illustration drawn by the witness (see *North American BioForteian Review*, vol. 1, no.1), in particular the view showing it from the side.

Several people have remarked on the “face” or lack of a face in that view. It has been likened to an alien and Spiderman among other things.

The witness did not get a clear view of the face. All he could tell about it was a lack of snout and it’s reflective eyes. Thus, in the picture he only shows those features, leaving the nose, mouth and cheeks absent, rather than speculating.



Leonhard Stejneger on Steller's Sea-Ape: Reprint

[Editor's Note: This reprint comes from:
Stejneger, Leonhard. 1936. Georg Wilhelm Steller -
The Pioneer of Alaskan Natural History.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. pp.
278-281, plus footnotes.]

THE SEA-APE

The evening of August 10 is noteworthy because it was the night when Steller saw the famous "sea-ape," the identification of which has been a source of endless conjectures by later naturalists.²⁹ I myself have discussed the matter at some length on another occasion,³⁰ but my discovery of a reference by Steller³¹ to his own description as an "imperfect sciagraph," or shadow-picture, and a "defective description," which has been generally overlooked, is of sufficient importance to compel a reconsideration of the whole question, as it is now evident that he wrote in sober earnest. Let us then examine the circumstances under which the observation was made.

The *St. Peter* on that day, according to Captain Bertholf's calculations and chart, was about 180 nautical miles from the nearest land, the outlying Tchirikov Island. According to the log of the ship (first half of astronomical day August 11, i.e. afternoon of August 10, civil time) it was in approximately 53° north latitude. The weather was fair and the southwesterly wind light, so that the vessel drifted along at not more than one-half to one knot per hour. The sun set about 7.15 P.M., and the moon, though rising about 3.15 P.M., and in the south about 7.30, was probably not visible because of light clouds until about 9 P.M., when, the log says, "moon and

stars were out." It may therefore be safely assumed that the light for accurate observation was not of the best, and we may not be far wrong in assuming that the event took place at or near sunset.

In examining Steller's description in his diary it is first to be noted that the printed version of 1793 (Pallas) of this particular page was not based on the original German text but on a retranslation into German of a Russian translation. The earliest *published* version, however, is in the Russian language, namely on pp. 295-296 of Krasheninnikov's *Opisanie Zemli Kamtchatka* published in 1755, and translated into French by Chappe d'Auteroche (1768 and 1770) and into English by Grieve (1764). These accounts are somewhat more condensed than the one given in the German manuscript discovered and published by Golder. However, Krasheninnikov's version is undoubtedly based on some original note by Steller. It runs as follows:

Mr. Steller saw near America a new and uncommon marine beast which he describes in the following manner:

"The length of the beast was about two arshins [5 feet], its head like that of a dog, the ears pointed and erect. On the lower and upper lips on the sides long hairs like a beard, eyes large: the shape [of the body] roundish [cylindrical] and oblong, thicker towards the head, but much slenderer towards the tail. Hair on the whole body thick, on the back gray, but on the belly of a chestnut white, but in the water the said beast appeared entirely like a chestnut cow. The tail [flipper] was divided in two parts, of which the upper was longer."

In the meantime the author [Steller] was very much astonished that he could notice on it neither paw nor gusset (————) [“feet nor flippers” in the various translations] as in other marine animals. As to its exterior appearance in general it greatly resembled that beast of which Gesner received a drawing from a correspondent of his and which he made known in his famous *History of the Animals* under the name of marine ape. At least the author [Steller] writes:

“This marine animal, considering its resemblance to a marine ape, might in very truth be called by that name because of its characteristics as displayed by its astonishing manner, tricks and agility. It swam about their ship for more than two hours looking with an air of wonderment now at one person, now at another. At times it came so near to them that it would have been possible to touch it with a pole; at times it went far away, especially when it saw them stirring about. It raised one-third of its body out of the water, and stood upright like a man and did not change its position for several minutes. Having looked at them attentively for about half an hour it darted like an arrow under their ship and came out of the water on the other side, but soon dived again under the ship and reappeared where it was first seen; and this it repeated about thirty times. In the meantime, as there drifted by a long American seaweed the lower part of which was hollow and like the bottom of a bottle but pointed at the top, the animal darted at and seized it, and holding it in its mouth swam to their ship, making with it such funny tricks as can only be expected of a monkey.”³²

It will be noticed that Steller’s reference to the animal as a sea-monkey is prompted more by its manners and motions than by a resemblance to any particular description or picture by Gesner. Disregarding this reference, therefore,

I have but little hesitation in saying that in all probability the animal which Steller watched in the light of the setting sun was a full grown bachelor fur-seal. Most of the peculiarities of behavior described are quite characteristic of such an animal when in a playful mood and not frightened. Certain of the bodily characters described are also those of the fur-seal, such as the doglike face, the large eyes, the long overhanging whiskers, the pointed ears.³³ Even the description of the tail as “divided in two parts” seems logical when it is considered that what Steller mistook for a tail fin was in reality the two closely set hind legs with their fringe-like flippers. That Steller, although particularly looking for them, failed to make out the fore legs is not so surprising, because of their position farther back than in any related animal with which he was then familiar. Moreover, when moving at high speed through the water the fur-seal keeps the fore flippers pressed very close to the body so that they are practically invisible. When it raises its body straight up out of the water to satisfy its curiosity, the fore legs are not exposed, and it is only when the animal makes a turn or swims slowly that they are noticeable; furthermore, the oncoming darkness probably prevented very distinct observations of the parts under water. Nor is it surprising that he did not realize that he was dealing with a seal, for the appearance of the kinds with which he was as yet familiar is as different from that of a furseal as can be imagined, and it must not be overlooked that Steller, at the time he made his observation, had never seen a fur-seal, dead or alive. That he did not realize its identity afterwards, when he made the acquaintance of this animal on the rookeries of Bering Island, is no reflection on his ability as an observer and scientist. It should be noted, however, that it was part of his own observation there that while the fur-seal is swimming “the front flippers never, and the

hind flippers only occasionally, appear out of the water.”³⁴

Since this was written I have discovered that Tilesius, in an article entitled *Die Wallfische*,³⁵ came to the same conclusion regarding the identity of Steller’s sea-ape. On p. 715 he writes:

In the Bay of Patience of Sakhalin . . . near Cape Patience . . . I observed on July 22, 1805 the same seaweed,³⁶ as well as the animal itself . . . and clearly noted four extremities. I watched both the old and the young animals, which were continually diving up and down under our keel, staring at us and carrying on their saucy antics, and noted the motion of the four fin-like limbs in swimming. By the dog-like heads, with their large, black, protruding eyes, short upright ears and white whiskers, as well as the thick-set, round, conical body, I also recognized them as being seals and named them *Phoca mimica*, although they agree in all other particulars with the account of Steller, who however does not seem to have noted the four fin-like limbs.

Steller, as indicated above, noted the hind flippers, but mistook them for the tail.³⁷

Footnotes:

29. It was even given a status in zoological nomenclature under no less than three different systematic names, as follows:

1792. *Siren cynocephala* Walbaum, Artedi, *Genera Pisc.*, p. 560.

1800. *Trichechus ? hydropithecus* Shaw, *Gen. Zool.*, vol. 1, pt. 1, P. 247.

1815. *Manatus? simia* Illiger, *Abh. Kön. Akad. Wissensch. Berlin, Phys. Klasse*, 1804-11, pp. 64, 68.

subspecifically distinct from the Kommander Islands herd, its systematic name may in reality be *Callotaria ursina cynocephala* and not *Callotaria alascana*.

30. Golder, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 64-67.

31. *Novi Comm. Acad. Sci. Petrop.*, vol. 2, p. 292. “However, I am at least going to mention the tracks of a certain unknown animal seen on Shumagin’s Island, and also to insert an imperfect sketch (shadow-picture) of a sea-ape, appeasing by their defective description the desire of myself and others.” Apparently no such description was inserted or added to the original manuscript.

32. Krasheninnikov, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 295-296.

33. Steller describes the ears as pointed and erect. Strictly speaking, the ears of the fur-seal are not erect but directed backwards. However, the impression is as indicated by Steller, and it is to be noted that in the detailed description of the fur-seal’s ears in *De bestiis marinis* he uses the same expressions, “acutae ... et erectae” (*Novi Comm. Acad. Sci. Petrop.*, vol. 2, p. 334)

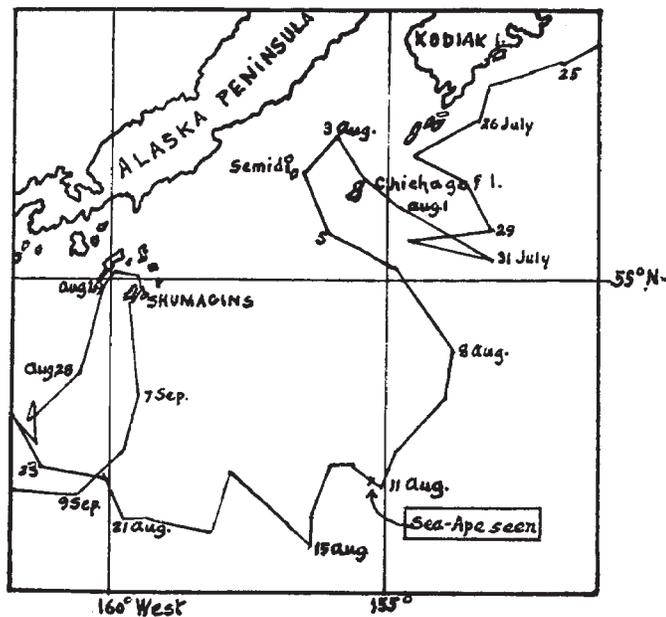
34. *Novi Comm. Acad. Sci. Petrop.*, vol. 2, p. 355

35. Oken (ed.), *Isis*, 1835, p. 709 ff.

36. “*Ulva priapus*,” Gmelin, *Hist. Fucor.*, p. 231, pl. 31, fig. 2.

37. The Okhotsk Sea fur-seal seems, then, to be entitled to the name *Callotaria ursina mimica* rather than *C. curilica*.

As the fur-seal of the Alaskan herd is considered



TRACK CHART OF THE *ST. PETER* SHOWING HER POSITION AT THE TIME STELLER OBSERVED THE "SEA APE"

This is the "type locality" of *Callotaria ursina cynocephala* (Walbaum), the Eastern Fur Seal
(See p. 278)

Commentary on Stejneger's Sea-Ape Review

Chris Orrick

In 1882, the National Museum, today known as the Smithsonian Institute, sent a young scientist, Leonhard Stejneger, to Bering Island directing him to recover whatever skeleton material he might find of the extinct Steller sea-cow. When Stejneger first landed on that remote island, his only knowledge of a then obscure German naturalist named Georg Wilhelm Steller, was a handwritten copy of a pamphlet, entitled, "Steller's Description of Bering Island," taken from a privately owned collection. Stejneger spent the next eighteen months on Bering Island retracing Steller's steps. He would revisit that same area four more times in his life.

Later, Stejneger would write that from the

moment he first stepped foot on that desolate island, "my amazement and admiration for his intrepidity, his industry, his many-sided learning and accuracy and truthfulness grew." Nor would that initial fascination or admiration for Steller ever end. During the next fifty-four years, Stejneger collected every scrap of information he could find about Georg Wilhelm Steller: manuscripts, unpublished letters, photostats of official records from the Russian archives. He visited Steller's native city of Windsheim, and Halle University, where Steller was educated. He searched old town and church records, even examining inscriptions chiseled on the tombstones in the Steller family graveyard.

In 1936, his biography of a then largely forgotten naturalist, "Georg Wilhelm Steller; The Pioneer of Alaskan Natural History," was published by Harvard University Press. Even today, Stejneger's work is considered the definitive source on all things pertaining to Georg Steller. To Leonhard Stejneger alone must credit always go for resurrecting the reputation of one of history's truly great and significant naturalists.

Yet, unlike most popular biographers, Stejneger did not become Steller's biographer by choice. Stejneger was a serious scientist, and although he published over 400 papers in a career that spanned almost seventy years, significantly, his biography of Steller was the only non-scientific work he ever wrote. "I became Steller's biographer," he once said, "compelled by the subject." The depth of admiration and respect Stejneger felt for a fellow naturalist, can perhaps be best summarized in a single sentence Stejneger once wrote when describing his book about Steller. A simple sentence, but perhaps no higher or more eloquent praise could one man of science pay to another. "It is only the plain tale of the life of a great naturalist who during a brief but eventful career achieved immortality by the display of qualities which characterize the true scientist."

Today, the prevailing consensus within the mainstream zoological community is that Steller simply mistook the common Northern fur seal for the "Sea Monkey." It is not difficult to understand why. Steller's major biographer, Leonard Stejneger, was not merely a zoologist and writer. Dr. Stejneger was in fact one of the most significant and influential naturalists of the twentieth century. In 1911, after a notable and distinguished career, Stejneger was appointed Head Curator of Biology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Exempted from retirement by a rare presidential order,

Stejneger held this position, as well as Curator of the Division of Reptiles and Batrachians, until his death in 1943, at age 92. In effect, this made Stejneger America's most prominent zoological authority for over thirty years, in addition to being the world's foremost expert on Georg Steller. Thus, in 1936, when Stejneger identified the "Sea Monkey," as a fur seal, it was universally accepted and has been seldom questioned since.

To illustrate, over the past eighteen months, I have been fortunate enough to correspond with some of the world's leading experts on pinnipeds. One of them is Dr. Brent S. Stewart, head of marine mammal research at the Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute in San Diego and co-author of the popular work, "The Sierra Club Handbook Of Seals And Sirenians." I once asked him what was his take on the Sea Monkey. He e-mailed back that he had gone to his bookshelf and after reading Stejneger's account, "I have no doubt that Stejneger's identification of the "sea ape" was in fact quite correct as having been a northern fur seal."

But, Dr. Stewart is wrong. Unfortunately, there is now clear evidence that we must reevaluate and rescrutinize virtually everything Leonard Stejneger ever wrote concerning Steller and the Sea Monkey. Careful examination of his English translations pertinent to the Sea Monkey when compared to other translations would appear to indicate that by subtle choice of words, and intentional omissions, Stejneger created his own version of those events surrounding that day and Steller's sighting; a scenario based not on fact, but only in Stejneger's imagination.

As but one example, we need look no further than the first paragraph in his account of the "Sea Monkey," in his 1936 biography of Steller. Stejneger writes, "my discovery of a reference by Steller to his own description as an 'imperfect sciagraph,' or shadow picture, and a 'defective

description,' which has been generally overlooked, is of sufficient importance to compel a reconsideration of the whole question, as it is now evident that he wrote in sober earnest." As the source for this apparently recent revelation, Stejneger cites a document from the Russian Academy of Science, now, as then, unavailable in the English language. But this revelation could hardly have been a new one to Stejneger.

During the years of 1896-97 the United States conducted an extensive investigation into the life history of the Northern fur seal. The commissioner in charge of that project was David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University. The result was a document, printed in 1899, by the United States Printing Office entitled, "The Fur Seals and Fur-Seal Islands of the North Pacific Ocean." That document contains an English translation of Steller's crowning achievement, his "Beasts of the Sea," in which he described the sea-cow, sea lion, sea otter and fur seal in almost exhausting detail. It remains even today, the most complete and the most recent English translation of that highly significant zoological work.

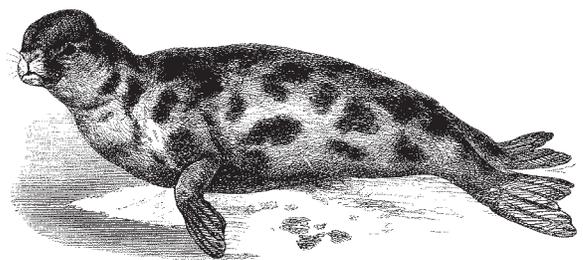
On just the third page of the translation, the following passage appears, "Thus, for instance, I describe the traces of a certain unknown animal upon the island of Shumagin, and I insert a sketch of a sea ape, and with this imperfect account I must content myself and others." As the world's leading authority on Steller we can be certain that Stejneger was intimately familiar with this work and must have read it many times. In fact, we know he must have been aware of this particular passage as early as 1899. Among the six "Official Associates" listed with David Starr Jordan, as having assisted him in preparation of the original document was Leonhard Stejneger of the National Museum.

This does not mean that there was anything

malicious in Stejneger's intent. To the contrary, it speaks louder than anything about the reality behind the mystery of the Sea Monkey. No man in history knew more about, or was better qualified, than Leonard Stejneger, to judge the accuracy of Steller's observations, yet, apparently there was one observation by Steller that even Stejneger could not satisfactorily explain: the story of the Sea Monkey. And so, he invented one.

Stejneger should have had more faith in his hero, Georg Wilhelm Steller. As a scientist, in 1936, he only considered those marine mammals then known to exist in Alaskan waters. Today, sixty years later, truly remarkable journeys by certain pinnipeds have become widely known. Had Stejneger but lifted his eyes just beyond his rigid geographical restrictions and looked over that horizon, he just might have caught sight of the "Sea Monkey."

On August 10, 1741, while sailing off the coast of Alaska, Georg Wilhelm Steller, accurately reported his sighting of a "very unusual and unknown sea animal," an animal that in 1741, was indeed unknown to western science. But, no longer. The overwhelming evidence would now seem to indicate that Steller's Sea Monkey was either a young male California sea lion, or more amazingly, a juvenile male Hawaiian monk seal.



An Imprint in Stone

Chad Arment

The photograph shown here  of an imprint which looks very much like a footprint. The photograph was taken on the northwest coast of Washington State. The photographer found the rock along with another which had a possible partial print in an area which he says may have been subtidal at time of formation. He states that the rocks are believed by geologists to be between 10 and 20 mya. The photograph is 14 years old, and he did not take the rock with him. He plans to return and recover the rock. Neither of us are stating that this is a true human footprint, and it may indeed have a very mundane explanation, but it is an interesting artifact. If the photographer is able to recover the rock, he would like to have it examined by scientists to determine what exactly it is.



New *Zuiyo maru* Cryptid Observations: Appears to be an Unknown Marine Tetrapod Species

John Goertzen, M.S., M.A.

Abstract: Another look at the *Zuiyo maru* pictures reveals that the aquatic cryptid had a **symmetrical pair** of small upper fins, placed on each side above the anterior flippers. If this observation is verified, the suggested basking shark identification must be abandoned. Previously, the fin on just one side was observed and thought (wrongly) to have been a shark's dorsal fin that had slid from the mid-dorsal ridge. Interestingly, some archaeological representations of 'longnecks' display that small symmetrical upper fin. The appearance is like Yano's pictures, tending to provide confirmation of this feature. Also, a Nessie sighting on land may provide support for the upper fin idea. Consideration of all the data suggests that the cryptid may not be identified with either living creatures or specific fossils known now, though possessing characteristics of marine tetrapods, perhaps the phylum Sauropterygia (with fossils like pachypleurosaurs, nothosaurs, plesiosaurs, and pliosaurs). A second aspect of some archaeological representations of plesiosaur like creatures are the soft horns on the head. That would tend to match the underwater picture of Nessie's head with that feature. There is also a cryptozoological sighting of marine creatures in Malaysia with that phenomenon.

Introduction

Ever since the Japanese fishing vessel, the *Zuiyo Maru*, brought up a big animal carcass on the morning of April 25, 1977, from a depth of 300 meters, about 30 miles east of Christchurch, New Zealand, the phenomenon has attracted considerable attention. Mr. Michihiko Yano, a section chief for the Taiyo Fishery Company who was present, took pictures, made measurements, and sketched the cryptid. A team of scientific specialists was later convened with their findings published in July, 1978 by La Societe Franco-Japonaise D'océanographie, (Tokyo) [hereafter denoted by CPC, the Collected Papers]. The committee did **not** reach an unanimous conclusion about the identity of the creature, though a significant amount of data was considered.

In subsequent years there has been a tendency

to say that the identity of the cryptid was a basking shark, *Cetorhinus maximus*. The strongest shark proponent may have been Kuban (1997-8) who said, "Several lines of evidence strongly indicate that the *Zuiyo maru* carcass was a large shark, and most likely a basking shark." Moreover, he demanded that inquiry be halted: "[scientists should] refrain from any further suggestions that the carcass was a likely plesiosaur." However, there were a number of observations that would challenge that idea. After presenting the new evidence for a symmetrical pair of small upper fins, seen fairly clearly with Yano's photographs, and the correlating archaeological evidence for those fins, I'll quickly review some of the other CPC data challenging the basking shark identification.

Some of the archaeological depictions of longnecks display the soft horns on the head,



Figure 1

similar to the underwater picture at Loch Ness. Also, there is cryptozoological correlation for that feature from Malaysia.

A Small Pair of Symmetrical Upper Fins

The primary morphological reasons justifying the basking shark identification for Omura, et al., (1978) were 1) the myocommata in the dorsal muscles, and 2) what is thought to be a dorsal fin visible above the front right pectoral fin (figs. 2-3; fig. 3 is an interpretive schematic of the picture taken behind (fig. 2) identifying the small

upper fin, by Jerlstrom (1998)). For Hasegawa and Uyeno (1978), the idea of a shark's dorsal fin that slid sideways was "the decisive factor" in their conclusion that the carcass was a shark (p. 65). It should be noted that M. Yano, who conducted the primary examination of the carcass, insisted that there was no dorsal fin (Omura, et al., 1978). No one else from the crew that was present thought there was a dorsal fin with the creature (Obata and Tomoda, 1978; Omura, et al., 1978). Now, for that structure to be the dorsal fin it must have "slipped from the



Figure 2

mid-dorsal line” (Omura, et al., 1978), since it is on the side, toward the top, of the creature.

However, there may be another reasonable explanation for the “dorsal fin.” A careful look at fig. 1 reveals a small triangular fin against the body of the creature above the left anterior fin. (It is easier to observe it from a color print enlargement, like Taylor (1989), p. 47, with a thicker vertical shadow delineating the front edge and a thinner line, pointing towards 1 o’clock, denoting the trailing edge of the fin. The front border is thicker since the camera angle is toward the oblique front edge of the fin while the back edge is the other way.) Now that fin (on the left side) would correspond with the size and location of the other fin (figs. 2-3), on the right side of the creature, indicating that the cryptid had a matching symmetrical pair of small fins located above its anterior flippers. A schematic of fig. 1 helps to identify the upper anterior fin above the anterior flipper (fig. 4).

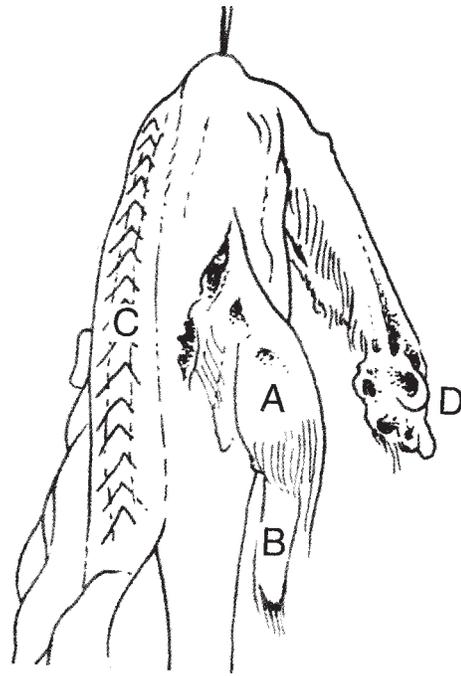


Figure 3

Interpretive sketch for Zuiyo m. cryptid from front left side displaying symmetrical upper fin

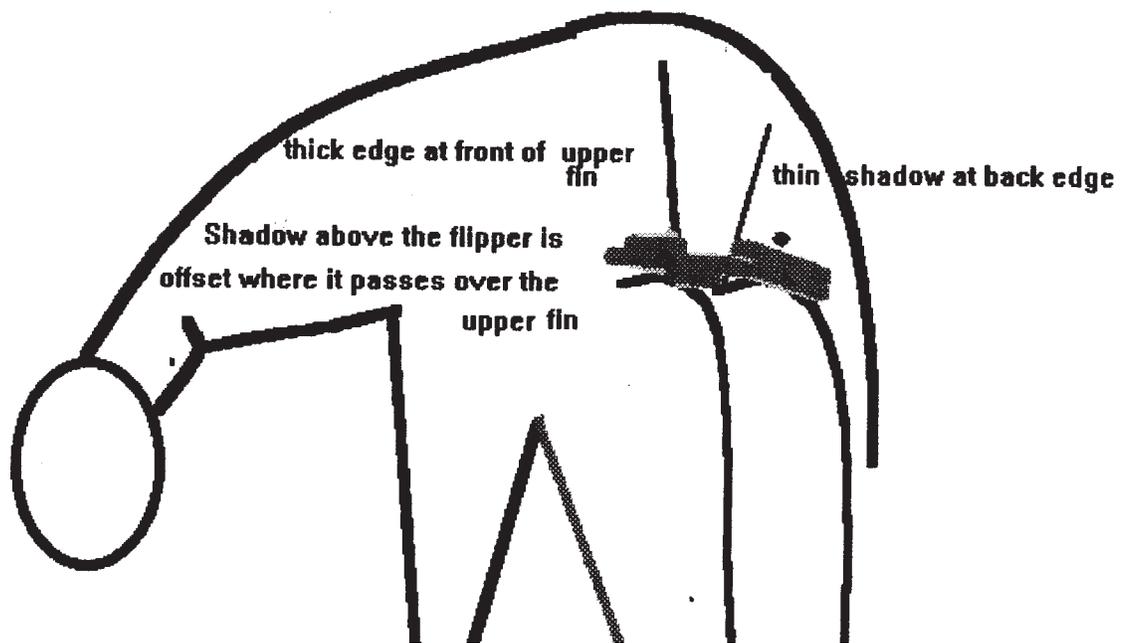


Figure 4

The clincher is a shadow just above the left pectoral flipper running across the fin (fig. 1). The shadow is offset, slightly down, for the length that it traverses the upper fin (which is resting against the body, see schematic interpretation, fig. 4). The displaced shadow would tend to verify that there is a solid object outlined by the vertical shading lines that I've suggested are the edges for a fin, and that it is not merely extraneous coloring. Indeed the symmetrical fin appears on both of the pictures from the front left side of the cryptid that Yano took, though I've only examined one of them in depth. Perhaps the pictures could be analyzed by photographic experts to verify the presence of the fin, though it appears fairly certain.

Now marine tetrapods could have had soft-tissue, cartilage fins that were not preserved with the fossil record. Since these were not preserved with the fossil record, though, researchers did not consider that creatures like a plesiosaur would have had "unexpected" fins.

Some good evidence supporting the symmetrical fin idea is found with the *Yarru* painting by the Kuku Yalanji tribes people of North Queensland, Australia (fig. 5, from Jerlstrom, p. 345). In that picture, a number of hunters with spears flank



Figure 5

an apparent long-necked Sauropterygian. On the creature's left (lower) side are the posterior and anterior flippers of a Sauropterygian. However, on the creature's right side (top) there appears a much smaller, narrower fin not bent like the flippers with its left side. The fin's position would correspond to that of the symmetrical fins of the *Zuiyo Maru* creature, above the anterior flippers. Also, there is no posterior fin depicted for the right (top) side of the *Yarru* sketch, though it should be there if the ventral flippers of its right side were being thought of. Based on considerable study of ancient representations of animals I can verify that often for symmetrical features, only those of one side of the animal are depicted; with the *Yarru* sketch the perspective observes the ventral flippers only for the creature's left side and the upper fin just on its right side. Jerlstrom points out that the internal organs are sketched, indicating that creatures like that had been butchered and eaten. A number of fish and other marine creatures are also present: maybe some of them could be identified too.

Corroborating evidence for the matching pair of upper fins may be found from Nessie eye-witness observers Mr. & Mrs. George Spicer (Shuker, 1995, pp. 89-90). On July 22, 1933, between 3-4 PM, they observed Nessie on land. The interesting facet of their observation for our purposes is that "something protruded from the area of its shoulder." That could have been a symmetrical upper fin like the Yano picture and Kuku Yalanji sketch. Later the Spicers suggested that the shoulder feature could have been the tip of its tail, curling forwards along the side of its body that was facing away from them. I suspect that idea may have been influenced by the idea that Nessie did not have a shoulder fin so that another explanation for the shoulder feature was sought. The Spicers' sighting had some verification from cyclist William McCulloch, a



Figure 6

cyclist they had spoken to just after seeing the reptile. He pedaled “back to the spot where the creature had emerged, and confirmed that bushes on both sides of the road and leading down to the Loch were extensively flattened, as if a steam roller had been driven over them” (Shuker, p. 90).

Yano was questioned by Obata and Tomoda (p. 45) regarding the upper fin(s) (observed during the scientific conference just with picture taken behind the animal (figs. 2-3), and not on the other side like now). Obata and Tomoda say, “[the picture] appears to show a partly broken right posterior fin overlaying an almost complete right anterior fin, this judgment was denied by Yano, who stated that the fin is the right anterior fin which had an unusual structure

in having exposed rays near its base as well as on its edge.” That is the same fin that other scientists thought was the dorsal fin of a shark that had slid sideways from the center. Obata and Tomoda observed that the fin is considerably smaller than the ventral propulsion fins, suggesting that it was somehow the broken posterior fin, though other scientists correctly stated that it was located too high on the cryptid to be the posterior ventral flipper. Yano denied that the fin was broken, stating instead it was intact, simply manifesting “exposed rays.”

It appears that Yano specified that there was a pair of anterior fins (distinct from the flippers) on the creature. Obata and Tomoda (p. 49), based on Yano’s testimony, say, “it is also strange that the carcass had paired fins but no

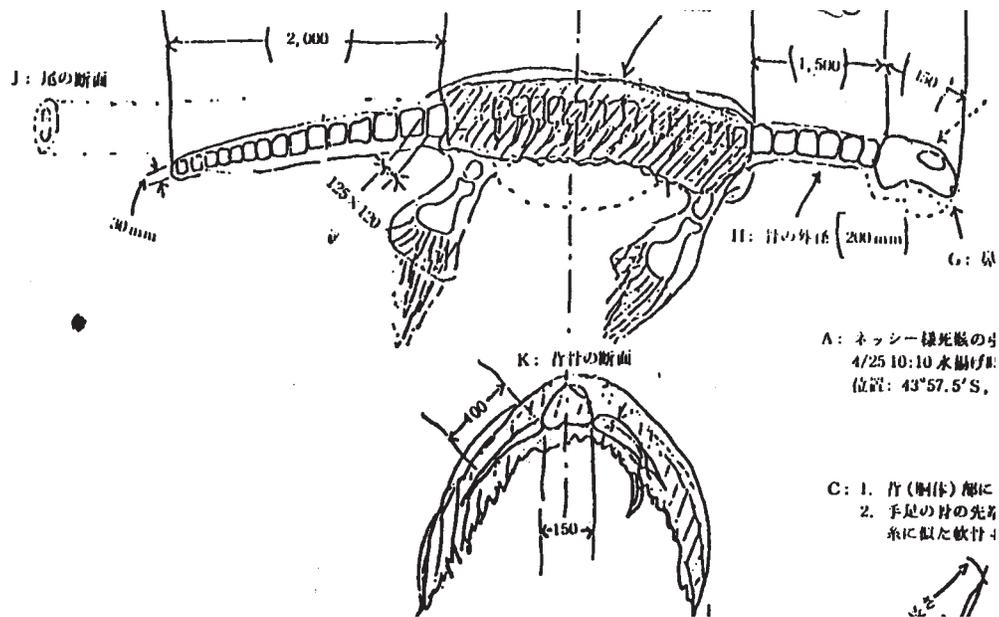


Figure 7

dorsal fin,” based on the testimony of Yano and the crew members. They had already mentioned the flippers; it appears that they were speaking of the small symmetrical fins on the anterior dorsal area.

Moreover, for sharks the dorsal fin is attached to the body by muscle tissue; similarly the myocommata is embedded in the muscle (Obata and Tomoda, 1978). It is difficult to believe that the myocommata remains perfectly intact on the carcass but the dorsal fin has substantially slid, though without falling off. It appears more reasonable to accept the eyewitness testimony of M. Yano and his colleagues that there was no dorsal fin. Instead, there were horny fibers at the tip and base of an anterior fin (not the flipper). Now the pictorial evidence appears to confirm that there was a symmetrical pair of fins above the anterior flippers.

Is Myocommata Inconsistent with a Plesiosaur?

The very presence of myocommata is provided as a reason for the basking shark identification

since they are known to have that feature. (The myocommata may be seen on figs. 2, 3, also 1.) However, there is no reason why Sauropterygians could not also have myocommata. In fact an Egyptian seal with the cartouche of Tutmosis III (c. 1400 B.C.), depicting a Sauropterygia like animal, displays myocommata on the dorsal side of the tail (fig. 6). The seal could be from later since Tutmosis’s cartouche may have been a memorial to a former ruler, not necessarily the current ruler. The anterior and posterior flippers of the creature are distinctively represented with the narrow stem connecting to the body and the wider surface for forward propulsion. The appearance is somewhat similar to the flippers pictured underwater by the submersible at Loch Ness (fig. 8, Shuker, 1995, pp. 89, another on p. 96).

The seal is from the Mitry collection (1D, 96.351HD) and unquestionably authentic. It was obtained by Mr. Philip Mitry when working at the Anglo-American bookshop in Cairo, Egypt during the 1920s-1950s. Mitry was licensed by



Figure 8

the government to deal with antiquities and often conferred with archaeological experts including professionals at the Cairo Museum. He returned to the United States in the early 1960's, with his seals being sold in the past couple years.

The Egyptians are known for their accurate zoological depictions. Although they were occasionally creative, combining human and/or zoomorphic features, the majority of their animal artwork may be fairly precisely recognized. Houlihan (1996, p. 129) claims that twenty-six species of Nile fish may be readily identified in Egyptian art and hieroglyphs, not including wonderful exotic species that may also be identified. Swords (1985), in a study of the zoological basis for the Egyptian god 'Set' claims, "All other theriomorphic deities of Set's antiquity have been clearly associated with known animals. And all of these "contemporaries" of Set display coherent behavioral characteristics of such animals in their myths, a display apparently also true of Set" (p. 18). Although the identity of Set has not been solved yet, all the other contemporaries have been confidently identified with the zoological world because of the

Egyptian's keen powers of observation and accurate representations.

The head of the tetrapod on the seal points up toward about 1 o'clock and there appears to be a pair of soft horns on the top and back of the head (toward 10 o'clock on the head). There are interesting similarities with the Egyptian seal and Yano's sketch (fig. 7). The flippers have a concave cutaway at the distal ventral point, best seen with the posterior flipper on the seal. That is not like the Loch Ness flipper pictures (fig. 8) or similar to known fossil flippers (Callaway & Nicholls, eds., 1997, pp. 174-5). However, the lower portion of the cryptid's anterior right flipper that may be seen in fig. 1 may be consistent with Yano's sketch. It does not look like the Loch Ness picture. There is a small convex bump on the cryptid's front shoulder for both the seal and Yano's sketch; also a longer convex hump behind it. With the seal the shoulder bump is anterior to the point of the trunk where the flipper is attached, unlike the sketch. The body types for the seal and sketch are similar, including the dimensions of the neck and tail, and the rotund abdomen.

The Bible mentions a marine reptile in connection with Egypt; a TANNIN. That Hebrew word is from a root that means "to extend," perhaps thinking of a long neck and reptilian tail. Ezekiel 32:2-8 may be thinking of a Nessie type creature, "a monster in the seas" who "bursts forth in your rivers." The idea is a marine reptile swimming up the Nile delta from the Mediterranean, who "muddies the water with his feet (or flippers)." The verbal picture may be to the powerful flippers of a big marine reptile trying to propel it in a too small channel. It is also reminiscent of the sightings of Nessie and Champ (the Lake Champlain, NY/Vermont, cryptid) on land. Then "a company of many people catches it in a net," which is not the way a crocodile was/is hunted (see next paragraph).



Figure 9

Ezekiel was clearly thinking of a big animal, perhaps like that pictured on the seal. Also, a scenario like Ezekiel described could explain how the Egyptians may have gotten an accurate sketch of a marine tetrapod (the Tutmosis III seal).

Ezekiel 29:3, another reptile allusion says, “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, The great TANNIN that crouches in the midst of his rivers [perhaps the Nile delta and its canals]. ... And I shall put hooks in your jaws, and I shall make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales and I shall bring you up out of the midst of your rivers and all the fish of your rivers will cling to your scales.” There the creature is a crocodile with a “crouching” stance on his squat legs that was caught with hooks in the jaws (according to Herodotus, II, 70) and has scales. Also, the TANNIN there does not come from the sea.

Undoubtedly, the Hebrews used TANNIN for a variety of animals. Specifically, the Leviathan is also a TANNIN (Is. 27:1). The RAHAB, a symbol of Egypt, is also a TANNIN (Is. 51:9). The Leviathan swam in the open sea, a salt water ecosystem (Ps. 104:26). I concur with Shuker

that the identity of Leviathan may be “more likely to be a living mosasaur” (p. 128), and had decided that before finding he also thought that. I’ve found a couple accurate Mediterranean archaeological representations of the mosasaur that I want to develop and publish sometime.

It could be that the creature on the seal is the TANNIN, RAHAB, that is specifically identified with Egypt (Is. 30:7, Ps. 87:4; 89:10, and probably not identified with Egypt in Job 26:12-13; 9:13). On the other hand the TANNIN of Ez. 30:3 is not necessarily the creature of the seal (though it may be).

Another apparent elementary sketch of marine tetrapods is found in Tiglath-pileser III’s (745-727 B.C.) palace in Nimrud, capital of ancient Assyria (Modern Iraq). There is an island city with fish and marine tetrapods just above the turtle (fig. 10). It has what could be anterior and posterior flippers, also a long tail and neck somewhat like the Egyptian seal, though the proportions don’t match. At the top of the sketch is a serpent and curious cryptids on either side of it. The location may well be the Mediterranean where Tiglath-pileser campaigned often, with the Persian Gulf a less likely alternative. (The

engraving was originally printed by Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1849, Vol. 2, p. 395 and was reprinted by Russell, 1991.)

The Yarru longneck (fig. 5) also has a sketch of what appears to be myocommata running down the dorsal line, matching the Egyptian seal and the *Zuiyo maru* cryptid. The Egyptian seal has the upper anterior fin; it is not easy to see since it impinges on Tutmosis's cartouche just above the creature, though inspection with a magnifying glass revealed that it is a deliberate design feature on the seal. It is directly above the point where the anterior flipper connects to the body.

Reexamination of Evidence Against a Plesiosaur Identification

It is well known that the amino acids of the cryptid were somewhat close to those of the basking shark (Kimura, et.al., 1978). I wonder, though, if that necessarily precludes the marine

tetrapod identification, especially since no one knows what their amino acid profile was. Also, a special type of protein—elastodin found only in sharks, was detected. Once again, is there any reason that extinct marine reptiles could not have had elastodin too? The reasoning here is analogous to that of the myocommata just mentioned, where it was assumed that marine tetrapods would not have had it.

Another problem is that the dimensions of the cryptid did not match those of fossil plesiosaurs that have been found. Maybe it was a species not yet found in the fossil record. That could also resolve the problem of the 'wrong' number of neck vertebrae; though Yano's estimate may have been incorrect, especially since he did not directly observe them. Perhaps the peculiar morphology of the flippers sketched by Yano could suggest a species unknown from the fossil record. The same phenomenon is found with the Egyptian seal, which also has similar neck

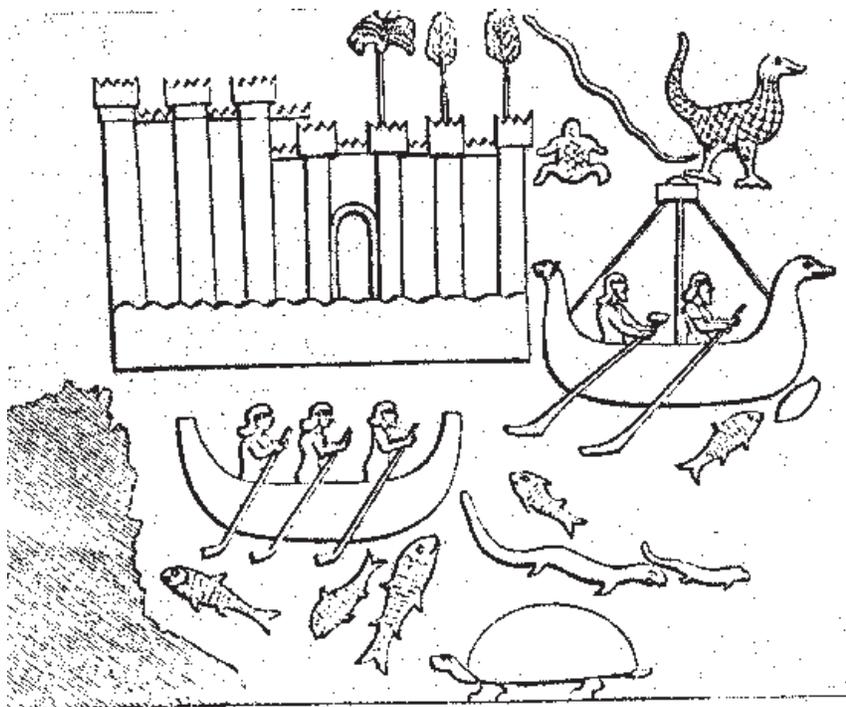


Figure 10

and tail dimensions with the Yano sketch (though I understand his measurements are not in precise accordance with his sketch).

Longnecks with ‘Soft Horns’ on their Head

There appeared to be soft horns on an aquatic cryptid’s head pictured by an underwater submersible in Loch Ness during 1975, perhaps the head of the longneck Nessie (see Shuker, 1995, p. 85, 96). There were also pictures of Nessie’s flippers obtained that way (discussed earlier). What appears to be soft horns are also present with the longneck representations of the Roman Nodens mosaic at Lydney Park during the 2nd century A.D. (fig. 9, from Costello, 1975, p. 75, also Taylor, 1989, p. 38) The soft horns are found at the top and back of the head of the plesiosaur like figure on the Egyptian seal (fig. 6), the Roman mosaic, and the Loch Ness photo.

Reports of large marine cryptids in Malaysia, at Tasek Bera, relate that “another strange feature was that the monsters had two horns on the top of the head, very small and soft horns” (Costello, 1975, p. 219). If the *Zuiyo maru* cryptid had soft horns, they probably would have rotted away, like the skin and lower jaw. There could be a number of marine cryptids with the soft horns though they are most likely for longnecks, perhaps plesiosaurs, with the Roman mosaic, Egyptian seal, Malaysian description and especially with the underwater picture evidence at Loch Ness.

The Value of Archaeology for Cryptozoology

The use of ancient and/or tribal art for cryptozoological leads is somewhat new, and not being used to its full potential heretofore, I think. Shuker, a highly regarded zoologist, has probably advanced the furthest (pp. 21, 57, 66, 97, 104, 106, 107, 108, 112, 114, 116, 120, 138, 148, 158, 170). Others are Janis (1987, a study of ungulate mammals depicted by archaeological

artifacts), Swords (1985, mentioned earlier), and Mayor (1991, griffin representations and descriptions). Classicist Mayor (1989) formally suggested a collaboration among classicists (those studying ancient texts), students of archaeological representations of animals, and cryptozoologists. An initial look at cryptids of Anglo-Saxon records, with a couple archaeological representations, may be found in chapters 10-11 of Cooper (1995).

I had studied the *Zuiyo maru* cryptid for two years and suspected the fin thought to be the displaced dorsal fin of a shark was instead a feature of a marine tetrapod that was not preserved with the fossil record (and therefore not expected). However, I did not find the fin on the picture until I had observed it on the Yarru sketch, then knowing what to look for and where to find it. It is rare when the accuracy of archaeological morphological data for a cryptid may be confirmed by a picture, or by finding a live specimen.

I also think that paleontology and cryptozoology could benefit from some archaeological representations of extinct creatures. Ancient artwork occasionally, though not always, provides an accurate representation of creatures that were observed, especially when mutually confirmed by a variety of **reliable** sources that are chronologically or culturally independent. Earlier, I presented a study of what the soft tissue looked like (not preserved with the fossil record) that appeared on the sagittal head crest of the rhamphorhynchoid pterosaur, *Scaphognathus*. (Goertzen, 1998; though it is in need of revision, the main ideas/conclusions are sound).

Additional CPC Data Challenging a Shark Identification

Obata and Tomoda (pp. 46-48) said that the picture on the deck, “shows the slender neck part connected to the high, strong built trunk

and the thin, long tail bending forward. This aspect of the body is somewhat suggestive of the body structure of a tetrapod. ... The actual state of the carcass when it was being laid down is not to be disregarded in studying the character of this animal.” They also declared (p. 48), “[u]nlike sharks in which the nares are situated in the lower surface of the skull, the carcass had nares at the front end of what remained of the cranium” and the head was “not shark-like.” Another observation (p. 49) was reddish muscles around the caudal vertebrae when the tail was cut near the base (unlike sharks). Then, “the putrefactive smell was not like that of teleostean fishes or sharks, but resembled that of marine mammals” (p. 49). Again, “the surface of the body was whitish and covered by dermal fibers which intersecting each other like in whales and other mammals but were not weak as in fish.”

Yasuda and Taki say that if the cryptid was a basking or whale shark, 1) we must assume that while the pectoral fins and the lower lobe of the caudal fin had remained attached to the body, the two dorsal fins, pelvic fins, anal fin and the upper lobe of the caudal fin had all been lost or otherwise overlooked by the observers, 2) anterior parts of the skull were also lost, and 3) M. Yano counted by mistake a single lobe of a fin as two. They conclude (p. 62), “[w]e consider it difficult to arrive at a conclusion on so many assumptions.” Finally they say that if it is a species of shark, it may represent a species unknown to science.

Another biologist who was inclined to the ‘shark concept’ who had recently seen a large specimen of the basking shark, said that the animal in question was not a basking shark (Obata and Tomoda, 1978). The point here is to emphasize that a number of the experts conducting the initial investigation had doubts about the shark identification, though some thought it probable.

Conclusion

The fin on the upper right anterior portion of the carcass has always been recognized, though often thought to be a displaced dorsal fin of a shark. Now it appears fairly certain that there was also a small fin on the upper left anterior portion of the carcass. In addition to its outline, clearly discerned in both photos from the front, the displacement of the shadow falling across it seems to confirm its presence. Therefore the idea that there was a displaced dorsal fin must be abandoned; and since known shark species don’t have a matching pair of upper anterior fins, the shark idea is obsolete.

However, a Sauropterygia identification remains viable, especially in light of the morphologically accurate depictions by the Kuku Yalanji and Egyptians of longnecks with a small upper anterior fin. (If the creature is found, either alive or a fossil specimen, it may not match the criteria for Sauropterygia even though that classification seems to have potential.) Also, the Nessie sighting mentioned above appears to support the upper anterior fin idea. At the present, I suggest that the cryptid may be unknown from the fossil record because the dimensions don’t match any known fossil, and because of the peculiar morphology of the flippers, corroborated by the similar appearance on the Egyptian seal.

Perhaps a marine biologist and/or paleobiologist could investigate the function of the fins. My conjecture, based on their placement, is that they helped stabilize the creature during propulsion, accomplished by its flippers.

The *Zuiyo maru* creature still has the capacity to fascinate us now, two decades later. Much of science is based on inferences; occasionally they are right; with the Japanese fishing vessel’s unusual catch, some of them were wrong. Perhaps continued study will reveal further information about the cryptid. If any of the horny fibers remain, a DNA profile would be of

considerable value. It now appears likely that a marine tetrapod identification for the creature is the best direction to pursue.

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A Tale from Ohio

Chad Arment

I suppose that most of us would enjoy a brief glance at one of the mystery animals that we read about. If they exist, they certainly include some fascinating species. After reading this tale, though, I wonder if you are going to be quite as eager. This story was related to me by a friend, Penny. (Full name and contact information on file.)

“The story starts in April of ’76. We were looking for a place in the country to move to. Jeramy [Penny’s son] was 3-months old. We stopped at a farm on U.S. 20 in Wood County to see about buying some geese. The mailing address was Stony Ridge, but it actually was nearer Woodville on the north side of the road. To make a long story short, the farmer needed a farm hand and offered \$300 a week and a rent-free trailer. This farm happened to be a dairy farm. They also raised geese, I believe 150 pairs. All went well for the first few weeks. We bought a pony and kept it in the small meadow next to the creek, in turn for feeding the landlord’s pony as well.

“Then things started to happen. The first thing I remember is the goose kill. 175 baby geese were killed next to the meadow the ponies were in. I heard the ponies put up a fuss that night, and the cows were agitated (louder than normal). The geese were awful-sounding that night. Spooked. The next morning Fish & Game were there. They were just leaving. I was told by F&G and the farmer’s wife that a lynx had killed the baby geese. The farmer was using a Bobcat to doze over the dead geese when I arrived. At this point I was no longer permitted access to the meadow. I was told if I wanted the pony to ask and it would be brought up to the farm.

“A few days later, a trapper showed up and set a line of traps along the creek. I think it was a few days, no more than a week. I saw him coming up from the meadow. He looked like he was in a hurry, so I asked him if he got the lynx yet. He never stopped walking. He said he was getting the **** out of this place, jumped in his car and left. He told me to tell the farmer he wasn’t coming back. (The trapper did have a fox and a opossum in his traps when he left.)

“Now things really started to happen. The cows would go nuts at night and run through the electric fence, like a stampede, you could hear them start to get agitated and next thing they were out in the road all having a fit. When this happened the dog would have a fit too. He loved to herd cows, but wanted no part of it. All he wanted was to be in the trailer. I’d have to get the cows back in and we’d have to fix the fence. The farmer was having a cow (lol) because if you agitate a dairy cow too much, it wrecks the milk. We had too many cows not producing.

“Right about this point, the cows started to calf. They did this mostly at night. From the goose kill to this point I had heard screams at night, but we were told it was a lynx. Now, the screams were on my side of the farm. I thought they were loud before, but no way was this a lynx now. I was the one that found the first dead calf. It was up against the front of my trailer with a broken neck. The farmer’s wife tried to tell me our dogs did it, but mine had been in all night since the cows had been loose that night around 2 am. Right around this time the door to the veal barn was ripped off. We fed them a powdered milk and all the buckets were thrown outside the barn.

“Now we have 3-5 dead calves, and a neighbor

brought over two dead horses to be buried where the geese were buried. The man stated the horses were around 14 years old and just went crazy the night before, one was hit by a truck and the other was caught up in barbwire fence. Both were cut up badly. The one looked like it was hit; its legs were broken. (I saw this kind of damage from a couple of cows at the farm that had been hit also.) A semi does a lot of damage.

“I had a chicken coop in back of my trailer, the run was completely enclosed. I kept rarer chickens. Well, one night the dog went nuts and so did the chickens. There was no light in back of my trailer, so the next morning I went out and found a basketball-size hole in the chicken wire on the top, approx. 4 1/2 feet off the ground. I was missing two Peking ducks. The night this happened I thought I smelled a skunk, so I had brought the dog in. He had growled all night and was under my bed - great place for a German shepherd!

“Now to give some perspective here, by this time my hubby was long gone and I was stuck here with two kids doing the farm work so we have a place to live. By this time I was scared! It was getting to be mid-summer. Things calmed down for a while. There was a trailer next to mine between the barn and my trailer. There were three kids who lived there. They had a habit of playing in the wheat field behind the trailers. I never paid much attention to them. Now looking back, I should have. They told me stories of the “boogie man” in the trees that ran between the fields. They said he was ugly and smelled. Often they’d run out of the field screaming he was after them. But I always thought they were scaring each other. Now as I look back on it, I wonder if it was true? You could see the trails the kids made in the wheat and there was a path to the trees. The only other thing that I should have paid attention to was

the deer that were in the orchard behind the wheat field. When things happened at night the deer weren’t seen that evening either.

“Sometime in early July, now, things calmed down for about a month. Then it seemed like we were right back to where we were in the spring. It seemed like the cows were never quiet and always running the fence. My landlord had a second farm about 1 1/2 miles away that his mother lived at and things were happening there too. The worst night was the night the bull got loose. He was a monster. He was kept chained in the middle of the barn, but he had access to the cows and food. He had almost killed the farmhand my hubby had replaced. Back to what happened - we had milked and gotten done around 2 a.m., I’d say I was back home an hour or two when all hell broke loose. Cows were screaming like they were all being killed in the barn (they were out at night, but had ran back into the barn). The only time I heard animals scream like that was when a pig farm caught fire next to my sisters farm, and the pigs were trapped inside. The first thing I thought was fire! But the cows weren’t the only screaming you could hear here. I got out of bed and ran towards the farm just in time for the cows to come running right at me. I was between them and the road, but I made it behind a truck. I noticed I was the only person out there. The farmer was not fast at coming outside after dark in months. By now the geese were heading for the road too. I had a bull that went totally wild, charging everything in sight, cows are still screaming, and some thing from hell screaming in the barn behind me. Now I don’t know what to do, I’m in the back of a truck with a bull on the ground, no help and whatever it is behind me in the barn. The cows had come out the back and front of the barn. So whatever it was could too. Here comes a semi, I could see the lights. There are cows in the road, but he doesn’t stop, just lays

on the horn! Well, three cows down. Goose feathers look like snow.

“Now the farmer shows up - I went home and locked the door. By this time the farmer was trying not to be home as much as possible, and I wished I could have too.

“By the time the truck had hit the cows, the barn was quiet. I think the horn scared it away. Things got real quiet for a couple of weeks, just long enough to think it was safe again. The screaming started back up - this time it was in the steer pen between the barn and meadow and behind the veal barn. This just had a barbed wire fence around it. The steers crashed the fence a few times. There were a lot of cut-up steers over a few days period, and not much sleep. The farmer’s son went to feed the steers at the end of this week and the steers went nuts and he got gored really bad. We had to run a truck in the pen to get the steer off him. He was hurt pretty bad and ended up in the hospital. That was strange because I had fed the steers most of the time until the uproar had started in they’re pen that week.

“In September, the kid started school in a cast. All the field work is about done for the year. It’s quiet again, around Halloween now. The screaming started back up - same old, same old.

“It’s late one night and I don’t have to milk, so I’m just sitting in my living room watching television. I hear a scream right outside my living room! This is the closest I have ever been, it’s so loud I’m frozen, I’m afraid to move! I had no phone and it’s between me and the farm and almost 30 feet from my car. I have one kid on the couch with me and one in her bed. I’m afraid to look outside. Next thing I remember is my dog digging at the door. I think it’s safer to have the dog inside. It’s quiet now so I sneak and let the dog in. The dog promptly tries to dig a hole in the floor as soon as I let him in. This isn’t good. Then I hear a sickening thud against

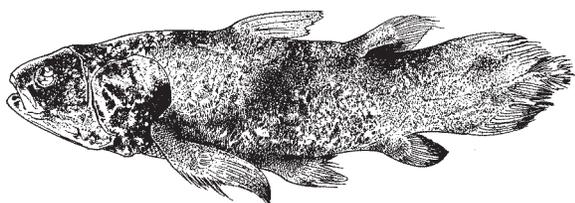
my living-room wall. So I grab the kids and head for the back bedroom. The dog dives under the bed. Can’t scare the kids, the older one is 5, I’m trying to get her back to sleep and to stop talking. Its approx. 15 minutes later, now, O.K., I can breathe again, the kids are asleep, dog’s not crying, time to get a grip. I turn on the little t.v. and start watching Carson. The windows are open a crack. There’s a window that faces out back over my bed. The skunks are back, I think, I’m lucky I got the dog in. I’m sitting up in bed leaning against the wall when the neighbor’s dog starts to bark. It’s barking at the skunks, I think. Then this scream from hell comes from right outside the window. It’s back and I can tell it’s taller than I am from where the scream came from. Both kids are up now, no hope of keeping them quiet. I’m frozen again, no way I’m moving. I grabbed for the 5 year old. This is not a good place to be! So we just sit there for what seems like forever. Nothing. I heard the neighbor yelling for their dog, maybe they scared it away. I got brave and looked out the window. Now I’m past scared. All I can see is two red eyes about 5 inches apart. Nothing else. Whatever it is, it’s bigger than the window because any other time I can see the light behind the barn from that window. The lynx thing is b.s. I’ve known this for awhile. This thing stands over 7 foot tall. There’s no trees in my back yard, so it wasn’t in a tree either. By the way - I discovered that the sickening thud I heard in the living room was a calf hitting the side of the trailer.

“I never saw tracks because they ran farm equipment around the fence line at the farm and the cow pasture was just muck. If there were any tracks, the cows would have trampled them by the time we got them back inside. I wasn’t allowed in the meadow as soon as things started to happen.

“Also, when I went to wrap my well pipes for

the winter, I did notice that the dog had dug a pit near the pipes under the trailer. It was deep enough for him and the other dog. Once I found three dogs, three ducks, and a rabbit down there together hiding after one of these incidents, which was not normal for him at all.”

Penny stayed on at the farm until after a blizzard in January or February of 1977, when she had enough money to move on. After this incident, she learned of other reports in the area. Her nephew had on two occasions (mid-1980's) tracked a similar animal in the snow, once for almost three miles and then for about a mile.



Lost Cryptid Book Comes Home

Brad LaGrange

I frequent junk shops always hoping I'll find some rare piece of military paraphernalia to add to my shelves, but only once have I found any thing crypto-related. Nestled among dark green vinyl couches and rotary phones being sold "as is" are the books and records. While flipping through the 33's for a Jerry Reed album, I saw a book to my left with an ugly, lizard-like fish on it.

The fish was our old buddy, the coelacanth. In the middle of the cover he sat amidst other line drawings of scuba divers, an airplane, and a dugout canoe. All had the look of a middle school adventure book, and I was right.

Eleanor Clymer's book, "Search for a Living Fossil" was published by Scholastic Books, who printed books for school book fairs and libraries. While originally retailing for 45¢, I got it for 25¢.

I found this mostly true account of the world's most exciting fish hunt an interesting read, though I've long passed my schooling years. No doubt one of the sages of our field could find errors in the pages, but I didn't see any obvious mistakes.

The story was certainly more exciting than when usually told, especially Dr. Smith's adventures with the French Government. The book is suspenseful, even though I knew the ending.

It does not mention coelacanths elsewhere in the world, but does touch on the South African specimen coming from so far away from the others. True to the coelacanth's propensity for popping up (both proven and unsubstantiated) in odd places, this book was inside the basement thrift store in the "dead" area of Cannelton, Indiana's old business district.

Clymer, Eleanor. 1969. Search for a Living Fossil: the story of the coelacanth. NY: Scholastic Book Services.

A Problematic Translation

Chad Arment

In his exhaustive survey of the exploration of Florida in the 1500's-1600's, Andrés González de Barcia Carballido y Zúñiga (1951) noted that Robert Cavelier La Salle's lieutenant, Henri de Tonty, traveled into the land of the Oumas (in Louisiana). There, he was shown "a strange animal called 'michichibi' by the Indians, which has the head and body of a wolf and the manes and claws of a lion. All the other animals are afraid of it; they hate it so that none of them will come near the remains of the food it tears up to eat. It does not harm human beings, however."

Barcia published this in the early 1700's. Tonty does not mention this animal in his Memoir on La Salle's Discoveries, (1678-1690), written in 1693. Rather, the report comes from the Narrative of La Salle's Voyage down the Mississippi, by Father Zenobius Membré, Recollect, reprinted by Cox (1905).

He states of the local wildlife, "There are no wild beasts formidable to man. That which is called Michybichy never attacks man, although it devours the strongest beasts. Its head is like that of a lynx, though much larger; the body long and large, like a deer's, but much more slender; the legs are also shorter, the paws like those of a wildcat, but much larger, with longer and stronger claws, which it uses to kill the beasts it would devour. It eats a little, then carries off the rest on its back and hides it under some leaves, where ordinarily no other beast of prey touches it. Its skin and tail resemble those of a lion, to which it is inferior only in size."

Such wonderful possibilities vanish when you look at the original source. Barcia's account conjures up thoughts of dire wolves and the odd hyena-like animals from the midwest that Loren Coleman (1996) has noted. It's obvious from

Membré's ount, however, that he was describing a mountain lion.

It is not difficult to understand how the mistranslation occurred. Membré's account was originally in French. Cox translated it straight to English, but Barcia's account was translated from French to Spanish, then from Spanish to English. Somewhere along the line, "wolf" was inserted for "lynx." An obvious morphological difference, but perhaps not so great from an etymological standpoint.

I ran into a similar dead-end when I read about large raptors from the Ozarks (Allen 1989) which the locals called "gray eagles." They specifically distinguished these birds from bald eagles. Some were rather large, though one reported eagle, shot and measured at a nine-foot wingspan, may certainly have been the victim of exaggeration. We really don't have any large gray-colored raptors, so I thought the tales were intriguing. However, a birder checked some old texts for me and discovered that "gray eagle" was a name given to golden eagles in the past (from *Birds of America*, Garden City Publishing, Garden City, NY, 1936).

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Strange Crustacean Folklore

Chad Arment

Reports of strange crustacean-like animals in the western states are uncommon, but not unknown. Here are three reports of distinctly different creatures which seem to share the traits of crabs and shrimp. Note, however, these are not what I would consider good supporting evidence for unknown invertebrate species. A thorough investigation into each would be necessary before even tentative conclusions are reached.

A letter to the editor of *Strange Magazine* was published (Chorvinsky 1990) in which the woman claimed to have seen an extraordinarily large shrimp-like animal while living in Bremmerton, Washington in 1948. She stated that while in the basement, she saw an animal “as tall as I was [five feet]. It had a bright orange colored body and little spidery thin legs and antennae on its head that kept moving back and in and out.” It was in staring out of a hole in the wall, which was rumored to lead to water. She moved out, but wasn’t able to forget the event. She revisited the home years later, but found that the apartment house (on Denny St.) had been torn down.

An interesting legend comes from colonial times near Wallowa Lake, Oregon. “Crabs or lobsters of great size and of dangerous strength lived in the water and often came out on the shore. Sometimes they carried calves down into the lake. These crabs and lobsters were dangerous to people also (Clark 1966).” One settler in the area began to lose calves, and decided to stay up and surprise the thief. He claimed to have shot one of these “lobsters” when he saw it fighting a heifer. The story continues, “These frightful beings lived in the deepest part of the lake. One time a man saw one of them. He

said that  had great flippers with which it could dig and scoop out dirt and rocks like a steam shovel... These dangerous beings finally disappeared. Whether they were killed or traveled to the ocean, no one knows.”

On a smaller scale, but still as strange, is the folklore of small venomous “flies” or “crabs” from British Columbia. Wells (1987) mentioned these in an interview with Albert Louie, of Chilliwack heritage.

Louie: “There’s a little pond right there, and they call that little pond Xwoxwá:ya, because that’s a fly. I’ve seen them swimming in the water that dep. It was way in the bottom, clear water. My grandfather told me, ‘Don’t you go there. It’s bad. If they ever bite you, well, they’ll kill you, you see.’ Well, I used to shoot duck in there. While I was wading there I seen them things, oh, bigger than my hand, like. They’re like flies, but they were crawling around.”

Later, Wells asked again about these “insects.”

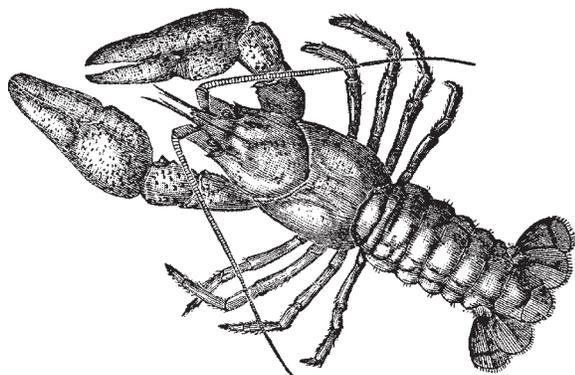
Louie: “Oh, yeah, the fly. Xwixwiyá:ye. I’ve seen them in not deep water when I was shooting ducks. Oh, they’re as big as that, big hands on them, black, just like a crab. I asked my father why it’s black, and he says if it’s a different colour that’s no good. Them things has kind of a poison. Get that black in you, if it bites you, it’ll kill you, just like a rattlesnake. Don’t go in there.”

This sort of folklore often gets overlooked by people who are fascinated with the larger, well-known cryptids. While these reports may be

nothing more than myths or urban legends, they certainly deserve more attention by investigators. It might be a little easier to track down a giant shrimp than a giant ape, if someone puts their mind to it.

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Submissions

Individuals who are interested in submitting articles, notes, or reviews should contact either Chad Arment (caa1snake@aol.com) or Brad LaGrange (ringneck2@aol.com).

A Tale of Texas Skeletons

Chad Arment

A Texas genealogy website includes a report of some odd skeletons found in there. The website is: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txbell/nannie21.htm>

From an uncited article from January, 1930, Dr. L. A. Chanslor of Killeen, Texas, stated: "I believe that my most interesting find was made in Coryell County on the head of Browns creek... we uncovered several skeletons of a race of people entirely unlike any Indian of 100 years ago or today. None of the skeletons exceeded five feet in height, were broad of hip and shoulder, and the skulls were very broad with extremely heavy jaw bones and the forehead receded to a degree remarkable for having a very low degree of intelligence... It is a regrettable fact that these skeletons crumbled to dust as soon as they were exposed to the air."

"Another interesting find was in Bell County near Brookhaven in the nature of an overhanging cliff... The cliff was almost level and was covered with three or four feet of ashes and three complete skeletons were found buried near the cliff wall. Two of the skeletons crumbled when exposed to the air but the third was found in excellent condition as it was lying farther from the cliff wall and had a deeper layer of ashes for protection... This skeleton was a male member of the tribe possibly 60 years of age, and from the length of the spinal vertebrae and other bones of the body was nearly seven feet tall when living. This savage had evidently met with an untimely and violent death as the skull showed two distinct fractures and the right femur showed a complete fracture. He was in all respects the complete opposite of those found in the Coryell County mounds, being a giant in stature..." Apparently, Dr. Chanslor kept the skull and femurs of this skeleton.