NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

MILKWEED EXTREMES [1] — During surveys in 1943 common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L.) was twice found measuring 6 feet or more in height. At Preston, Ont., on Aug. 6, slightly the tallest of several stalks growing at the edge of a thicket on the slopes to a sluggish stream proved to be 6′ 6″ in height. It bore 40 leaves of moderate size, including 3 on a small axillary shoot and 2 others making up whorls from the prevailing pairs to a node. Pairs already lost from lower nodes would bring the full complement to 51. The 40 leaves, stripped some hours later, weighed a quarter pound. There were also 8 developing follicles and 5 peduncles without follicles.

Another stalk, not so accurately measured, but between 6′ and 6½′ in height, was growing through a pile of posts at Blackwater, Ont. The upper exposed half, which alone bore anything, carried a dense congestion of 66 leaves and about 20 flower clusters. Owing to delayed emergence through several feet of extra cover no pods were yet formed at this date, Aug. 12.

At Smith's Falls, Ont., a clone of milkweed 3′ high on June 25 consisted of 21 strong stalks all with developing flower heads, and all emerging from within a diameter of less than a foot. This is in sharp contrast with other clones which may extend by creeping roots to infest many square rods, either alone or intermingled with others. A nearby infestation of a highway embankment, about 40′ by 8′ in extent and probably one clone, consisted of about 285 stalks. Another roadside stand near Cornwall, 30′ by 6′, contained over 200 stalks or at the rate of close to 50,000 to an acre. One of the most vigorous stands of milkweed seen anywhere was growing on a mucky part of a large infested field west of Lake Chemung in Peterborough County.

Milkweed leaves vary greatly in size and in shape. Occasionally leaves were found up to 12″ in length, mostly blade. Leaf surfaces varied from 6½″ by 2″ in one case to 6″ by 4″ in another. In some examples the shape is approximately oval, in others with a distinct taper toward the tip. Any distinctive leaf character can usually be used to trace the extent of a clone. On a few occasions, (Carleton Place, Ont., Renfrew county, and Thurso, Que.), albino flowers gave an efficient demarcation of clones. Along a mile of the railway at Thurso several clones were thus found associated with others of normal colour. Stem colour in clones likewise falls into two categories, green and dull purple.—H. GROH, DIVISION OF BOTANY, SCIENCE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OTTAWA.

1. —Contribution No. 758 from the Division of Botany and Plant Pathology, Science Service, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Canada.

COYPU AT CRESCENT, B.C. — During the fall of 1943 a Coypu (*Myocastor coypus*) took up its residence at the mouth of the Nicomeki River. Mr. Spinning of Crescent fed it regularly at his float and it became extremely tame. The animal became a point of real interest for the people living in the vicinity. It would take carrots from the hand. Whether this South American rodent was a stray from some fur farm or whether it had wandered up from Washington where some of these animals are now established in a wild state we do not know.

Unfortunately on December 26th an irresponsible hunter from the city shot the coypu in front of Mr. Spinning's house much to the anger and sorrow of all concerned.

Mr. Kenneth Racey tells me one of these animals was killed in Burnaby a year or two back. — M. W. HOLDOM, CRESCENT, B.C.

(In *The Murrelet*, 28:1, *pp.* 3-9, January-April 1943, "Feral Coypus in the Pacific Northwest", by Earl J. Larrison, a map is given showing in the states of Washington and Oregon seven localities where coypu are kept in captivity and seven localities where they have been taken in a feral state. Oregon official states that "We do not feel that they are desirable animals to have in this State and would be glad to get rid of them." The fur is not of high value and in the Puget Sound region the animal does damage along the river valleys by foraging in vegetable gardens. Larrison states: "A careful evaluation should be made of the status of these animals while there is yet time to control them, should such action be necessary. — Associate Editor, Mammalogy.)