

BOTANICAL WORK IN EUROPE FOR FIELD MUSEUM

Field Museum has received from the Botanical Garden and Museum of Berlin several boxes containing material forwarded by Assistant Curator J. Francis Macbride, who has been engaged for three years in obtaining, with the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, photographs of historical plant specimens preserved in the large herbaria of Europe.

The present shipment includes 4,000 negatives of plants of the Berlin Herbarium, the total number of such negatives now exceeding 20,000. These represent as many species of plants, chiefly South American, and comprise one of the most practically useful collections for the study of the South American flora that ever has been brought together. When prints from all these photographs have been inserted in the Field Museum Herbarium, it will afford facilities for studying the plants of South America such as are possessed by scarcely any other American institution. Duplicates of these prints are made available also to other botanical institutions at a nominal price.

In addition, there were returned by Mr. Macbride more than 2,000 sheets of Peruvian plants, mainly those collected by the several Marshall Field Expeditions. These have been studied and named at Berlin, and compared with authentic specimens, thus affording standards for future study of Peruvian plants.

Mr. Macbride is now engaged in further study and photographing at the Botanical Museum of Munich, which owns the largest series of Brazilian plants collected and studied by Martius, pioneer explorer and author of the monumental and still unrivaled *Flora of Brazil*.

THE PERMIT FISH, LARGEST OF THE POMPANOS

By ALFRED C. WEED
Assistant Curator of Fishes

Pompanos are found in all tropical seas and are noted in this country because of the especial excellence of the pompano of Florida and the Gulf Coast, one of the most delicious of all fishes. Others of the group are not quite so well liked, perhaps because they are not usually so well prepared for the table. All or most of them have a very delicate flavor, of which the best part is lost when they are carried far to market. Most of them are of small to medium size, a weight of four pounds being above the average.

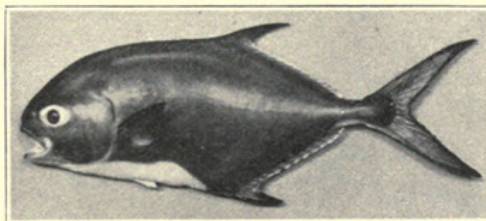
The largest of the American pompanos has been given the curious name of "permit." It is very much like the common pompano in general appearance but grows to a great size, specimens of twenty pounds or more being not uncommon. One of four specimens given to Field Museum by Colonel Lewis S. Thompson, of Red Bank, New Jersey, was thirty-three inches long from the tip of the snout to the end of the middle rays of the tail-fin (more than a yard long to the tip of the tail) and weighed twenty-five and one-fourth pounds. It is now on exhibition in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18). Larger ones are occasionally taken, but a fish of this size, with its broad side of glittering silver with golden reflections, is a prize worthy of any angler's efforts.

The general color of the permit fish, as described by Taxidermist L. L. Pray who mounted it, is a pleasing gray tone through which glows a variety of tinted pearly

luster. Over the dusky back there are flashes of brilliant metallic or pearl greens and blues. The face and midside are broadly suffused with lilac-pearl. The lower side has a broad band of salmon-colored gold extending in an arc from in front of the anal fin forward under the pectoral fin and across the gill cover and jaw. The belly and throat are gleaming white, while the fins are grayish, tipped with shaded black. At the forward end of the base of the anal fin is a mottled spot of cadmium yellow and black—the only touch of vivid tropical color upon this otherwise richly but quietly dressed fish.

The permit has not been sufficiently advertised to be widely sought by anglers. Those who do go after it and are able to find it have good sport. They report that it is very active and puts up a strong fight. Colonel Thompson asserts that it is exceedingly shy and will leave a locality entirely at a slight disturbance.

Permits are occasionally caught by commercial fishermen and may sometimes be seen in the Chicago markets. They are not generally considered fine food and are



Permit Fish

Largest of the pompanos, this fish provides great sport for anglers. The above specimen is on exhibition in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18).

mainly used for display purposes. A large one in a show window is sure to attract attention.

There is a great difference of opinion in regard to the value of this fish as food. The general belief seems to be that it is tough and tasteless. However, some who have eaten it call it very good. Others object to the lack of a fishy taste and say that, both in flavor and texture, it is like a piece of tender, fried pork.

MORE CHINESE REINSTALLATIONS

Four newly installed exhibition cases of Chinese archaeological material have been added to George T. and Frances Gaylord Smith Hall (East Gallery), bringing the reinstallation of that hall about halfway to completion. The most recent additions are a case of celadon porcelain of various periods, one of colored porcelain and pottery of the Ming period, one of bronzes of the Ming period, and one of bronze vases of the Sung and Ming periods. The new cases have concealed lighting which adds to the effectiveness of the display, and they are thoroughly equipped with interpretative labels embodying the most recent knowledge about the subjects covered.

The case of celadon porcelain consists chiefly of objects from the Sung period (A.D. 960-1279) but contains also examples of the Ming period (A.D. 1368-1643) and the K'ien-lung period (A.D. 1736-95). This ware was manufactured in the district of Lung-ts'üan (Dragon's Well) in the province of Chekiang. Celadon is a porcelain of white or grayish white body coated with a thick vitreous translucent glaze varying from grayish and bluish green to sea-green and plant-green. The color originated from

the desire to rival that of jade. The decorations, usually floral patterns, are brought out in the body of the porcelain, either in relief or intaglio, and covered by the glaze. In the Museum collection, censers, dishes, jars, bowls, vases, etc., are dominated by a tall and unique funeral urn designed to hold cereals for the deceased.

The colored porcelain and pottery of the Ming period, occupying a near-by case, represent a period when the potters broke with traditions and developed new processes of applying a wealth of colors to the glaze. An original spirit is shown in the work of this period. Amazing results were attained by the Ming potters in modeling porcelain figures representing the principal Buddhist and Taoist deities, of which many are shown in the Museum exhibit.

In the other two new cases the work of the Ming period bronze founders as well as the Sung period is represented by extremely interesting collections. Modern ideas are exemplified in the Ming collection by two large and heavy braziers from the imperial palace, used for heating in winter, and, by filling them with ice, for cooling rooms in summer. A bed-warmer shown is of great scientific interest because it embodies the mechanical contrivance known as Cardan's suspension, commonly styled gimbals, the principal modern use of which is to keep a mariner's compass level regardless of the rolling and pitching of a ship. The collection contains a variety of other bronze objects, both decorative and utilitarian.

Most of the material in these four cases was collected by Curator Berthold Laufer as leader of the Blackstone Expedition to China in 1908-10.

HISTORIC PLANT COLLECTIONS

Recently Field Museum returned 800 sheets of tropical American plants that had been received for determination from the University Botanical Museum of Copenhagen, through its director, Dr. Carl Christensen, one of the foremost fern specialists of the world. The sending consisted chiefly of South American plants of the Rubiaceae or coffee family, which were studied and named by Associate Curator Paul C. Standley, largely by comparison with authentic specimens in the Museum Herbarium. There were many specimens collected a hundred years ago by Lund and Warming, pioneer Danish botanists who worked in Brazil. Of unusual interest, too, were numerous collections made along the Amazon about 1850-60 by Richard Spruce.

The loan received from Copenhagen included also a large number of legumes obtained in Mexico seventy-five years ago by Liebmann, perhaps the most industrious collector who ever has worked in that country. Many of the plants he discovered never have been found by later botanists.

The Copenhagen museum has generously presented to Field Museum a substantial number of duplicates.

New York Scientists Visit Museum

Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and Walter Granger, Curator of Fossil Mammals at that institution, were visitors at Field Museum on August 16. They were passing through Chicago on their way to join Barnum Brown, Curator of Fossil Reptiles at the American Museum, in paleontological excavations in Montana, after which they were to engage in further operations in Nebraska and Colorado.



1932. "More Chinese Reinstallations." *Field Museum news* 3(9), 3-3.

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