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HABITAT GROUP OF MANATEES OR SEA-COWS ADDED TO MARINE MAMMAL HALL

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Through the cooperation of the John G. Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum has been enabled to obtain specimens of the Florida manatee in perfectly fresh, natural condition. This has facilitated their preparation in an unusually life-like manner and provided material for an important addition to the Hall of Marine Mammals (Hall N). Two animals of this peculiar and little-known species have served to form the subject of an under-water scene which takes an appropriate place in the development of this hall.

The manatee almost defies popular definition. It is a sirenian, but sirenians as a group have no other vernacular name unless it be "sea-cow," which conveys no suggestion of their relationships and certainly none of their appearance. Sirenians are herbivorous, and, since they are mammals, they give milk; but, beyond this, reasons for calling them sea-cows are hard to find. They do not even live in the sea exclusively, but frequent fresh water most of the time. They are among those relics of bygone ages which have continued down to present times long after their near kindred have disappeared. Extant sirenians include, besides the manatee of Florida and the Gulf coast, a very similar if not identical species in the West Indies, another in the large rivers of South America, and still another in Africa. In addition, a very distinct but quite related animal, the

dugong, inhabits the shores of the Indian Ocean. Within historic times a very large species called Steller's sea-cow was found in northern waters about small islands in Bering Sea. This was at once exterminated by its discoverers.

Owing to their fish-like form and their aquatic habits, in conjunction with some anatomical characters, the sirenians were long regarded as somewhat related to whales, but recent information obtained through study of extinct forms points rather unex-

inoffensive animal living in fresh, brackish, or salt water at moderate depths where it finds an abundance of water plants which form its entire subsistence. One of these has come to be known as "manatee grass." The animal feeds under water, coming to the surface only to breathe and never appearing on land. It has no external ears and its eyes are very small. Its lips are very deeply cleft and furnished with heavy bristles which assist in cropping its food. It reaches a length of about thirteen feet,

and a weight of as much as 1,200 pounds.

Manatees are captured by spearing with heavy harpoons or by the use of strong rope nets. At times they have been sought especially for their flesh, which is reputed to be excellent. It is light-colored, and both in appearance and flavor is said to resemble lean fresh pork. The extinction of the American manatee was threatened some years ago, but some protection is now afforded it and possibly it will be able to maintain itself, at least in certain restricted localities.

The specimens in the Museum's group were prepared by Staff Taxidermist Leon L. Walters, assisted by Edgar G. Laybourne. The background is by Leon L. Pray. The method used with the



Florida Manatees

Commonly known as sea-cows, these animals are among the most curious mammals inhabiting water. They may be seen in the Hall of Marine Mammals.

pectedly to elephants as their nearest relatives among modern mammals. They are, like whales and seals, descended from land mammals and in their adaptation to aquatic life have lost all superficial resemblance to their ancestors.

The Florida manatee is a slow-moving,

animals is that so successfully employed elsewhere in the Museum for reptiles and hairless or nearly hairless mammals. By this method the skin is reproduced in a celluloid-like material in such a way as to preserve the finest details of texture and exact shades of color.

RAYMOND FOUNDATION PRESENTS PROGRAM BY INDIANS

Through the courtesy of The American Indian Villages at A Century of Progress, Field Museum is enabled to present for children a special program of songs, dances, and games, participated in by men, women, and children of several tribes, including the Navaho and the Hopi. This program, which will be given in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum, on Saturday morning, September 30, has been arranged under the provisions of the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures. There will be two performances, one at 10 A.M., and one at 11, so as to make it possible for several thousand children to attend. One

of the Indian chiefs is to be featured on the program in imitations of birds' songs.

Admission is free, and children from all parts of Chicago and suburbs are invited to attend. No tickets are required.

Museum Honors Geneva Scientist

In recognition of the important assistance he has rendered to Field Museum in carrying out its botanical work in its joint project with the Rockefeller Foundation, the Board of Trustees of the Museum has elected Dr. B. P. Georges Hochreutiner a Corresponding Member of this institution. This is a class of membership, bestowal of which is restricted to scientists or patrons of science residing in foreign countries who have rendered eminent service to the Museum.

Dr. Hochreutiner is Director of the Conservatoire et Jardin Botaniques at Geneva, Switzerland. Through his cooperation the important collections of type specimens of plants in that institution were made available for photographing for the Rockefeller Foundation-Field Museum project.

Rare Porphyry from Norway

A rare kind of porphyry called rhombenporphyry is found in Oslo, Norway, and seldom if ever elsewhere. Johan Eriksen, a citizen of Oslo, recently collected, without solicitation from the Museum, a specimen of the porphyry, shaped it to standard size and shape for exhibition, and sent it as a gift to the Museum. It now appears in the rock collection in Hall 35.



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