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ANTARCTIC SEALS, COLLECTED BY ADMIRAL BYRD'S EXPEDITION, IN NEW GROUP

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A group of Weddell's seals, just completed at Field Museum, is the second representation of Antarctic life produced in Chicago as a result of the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition of 1934-35. The first was the group of emperor penguins, described in these pages in August, 1936.

Anyone who has seen the motion pictures taken by Admiral Byrd's party must have realized that penguins and seals are the most conspicuous animals to be found in the Antarctic, and in fact almost the only animals. In regions around the North Pole, if not actually at the Pole, there are polar bears, foxes, ermine, hares, musk-oxen, and wild reindeer, as well as various land birds. About the South Pole, on the other hand, there are no land mammals whatever, and no birds unable to swim in the icy seas. This is the case notwithstanding the fact that the Arctic ice-cap has only water directly beneath it, while that of the Antarctic surmounts an extensive solid continent. Obviously the present distribution and the history of the animals have been influenced by the history of the continents and seas surrounding them.

Although the only mammals of the Antarctic are seals and whales, there are various species of these, and among the seals the one called Weddell's has proved of greatest interest. Extensive additions to knowledge of the life history and habits of this animal have been made by the naturalists of the Byrd expeditions, especially by Messrs. Paul Siple and Alton A. Lindsey.

Weddell's seal is a large species, reaching a length of about nine feet, and a weight of somewhat more than nine hundred pounds. It belongs to the group (Phocidae) known as true seals or hair seals in distinction from

the fur seals and sea lions which have greater freedom of movement of the hind limbs. It progresses on land or ice with some difficulty, moving forward by heaving and undulating its bulky body much after the manner of some worms and caterpillars. Nevertheless, it goes inland for long distances, especially during the Antarctic summer when its young are born. At this time the heavy females work their way as much as eight or ten miles from open water, taking advantage of pressure cracks and temporary water-

protected bays more than other species, such as the crab-eating seal, and the leopard seal, which are commonly seen in the moving pack ice. Thus it gets some protection from its chief enemy, the killer whale. This voracious animal is not satisfied to confine itself to its natural element, but when conditions are favorable, it will project itself nearly out of water to snatch an unwary seal lying too near the edge of the ice.

The young, when born, have their eyes open. They are nearly five feet in length, and their weight at this time is about 65 pounds. Although nourished only by the mother's milk, they gain weight at the rate of seven pounds daily. Their first coat is soft and woolly, and dull-colored, but this is soon changed for a fresh, spotted coat of considerable beauty. There is much variation in color—some animals have grayish, and others brownish coats, but all are heavily spotted and blotched with irregular markings. Weddell's seal does not migrate, but remains near the coastline of the Antarctic continent through the winter, although occasionally a few individuals may be carried on floating ice northward as far as New Zealand and southern South America.

The Museum's group was prepared by Staff Taxidermist

C. J. Albrecht, with the co-operation of Mr. Arthur G. Rueckert who painted the background. Their combined efforts in solving the unusually difficult problems encountered in merging foreground with background have been conspicuously successful, and the result bids fair to find high rank among groups of this kind. It takes an important place in the Hall of Marine Life (Hall N), where it shares space with the walrus of the Arctic region, the sea elephant and manatee of warmer waters, the sea lions of the California coast, and Pacific harbor seals.



The Antarctic Brought to Chicago

Group of Weddell's seals added to exhibits in Hall of Marine Mammals. It is composed of specimens collected by the second expedition to the Antarctic under the leadership of Rear-Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Animals mounted by Staff Taxidermist C. J. Albrecht; background prepared by Mr. Arthur G. Rueckert.

ways which they keep open by sawing out newly formed ice with their teeth. Finally they take stations, a few hundred yards apart over a wide area, as indicated in the Museum's group. Each female has one young which stays by her side some three weeks. Then the loosely organized rookery breaks up, the young begin to shift for themselves, and the adults return to the sea. Actual weaning of the young, however, may not take place for six or seven weeks.

In general, the Weddell's seal seems to frequent the land ice and the waters of

the other from the Conservatoire Botanique, Geneva, through its Director, Dr. B. P. G. Hochreutiner. These last two sendings consist largely of type or otherwise historical material, and will be invaluable for systematic studies of the South American flora.

Examples of beautiful textiles from India are displayed in Stanley Field Hall.

Hopewell Mound Exhibit Enlarged

A collection of approximately 8,000 flint discs from the famous Hopewell Mounds of Ohio was added to the North American archaeological exhibits in Hall B last month. These round out the extensive and varied display of other material from these mounds. A feature of the exhibits is a miniature model of the winding Serpent Mound.

Brazilian Plants Added to Herbarium

Recently the Museum acquired more than 5,000 specimens of Brazilian plants for the Herbarium. Two collections, numbering more than 2,000 specimens, were purchased. Two lots, of greater importance, were received, one from the Natural History Museum of Vienna, through the Director of the Botanical Section, Dr. Karl Keissler, and



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