

of the Brazilian Matto Grosso, regard the tapir with awe and never kill it.

USED IN CHARMS, MEDICINES

Besides its value for food, Indians hunt tapir for the hoofs, which, it is believed, possess strong preventive and curative powers against epilepsy. The hoofs are strung and worn as amulets or may be hung over the fireplace to protect the entire family. As a cure for epilepsy, the nails of the toes are ground down and taken in powdered form. For pneumonia, the medicine man may prescribe the powder mixed with skunk liver. An old Inca formula for curing malaria is the powder ground together with three roasted lice, then boiled in a solution of cacao and taken internally.

Tapirs offer little in the way of trophies to the sportsman. A skull or the hoofs with the hide of the foot converted into an ash tray are about all that might interest the trophy collector. The thick hide is difficult to prepare and usually spoils before it reaches the tanner. The leather is too brittle when dry and too limp when wet for making shoes but can be carved into thongs, whips and bridles. Also, the untanned hide is sometimes formed into a large rigid chest the size of a wardrobe trunk. During the Spanish conquest, it was noted that soldiers of the organized armies of the Inca empire used shields of tapir hide.

LATE IN BECOMING KNOWN

In spite of their size, abundance and importance in native economy and superstitions, tapirs were surprisingly late in becoming known to the scientific world. The first species to receive a technical name was the Brazilian or crested tapir. Its name, *Tapirus terrestris*, dates from the

It was not until 1816 that zoologists became aware of the Malay tapir and the name *Tapirus indicus* was applied in 1819. The existence of the third species, the unusually hairy and comparatively small tapir of the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador was first brought to the attention of scientists in 1829. Its discoverer proposed for it the name *Tapirus pinchaque* because he wished to associate this tapir with the "pinchaque" of native legends, a large fabulous animal that may have been the now extinct mastodon. For a long time the Central American tapir had been regarded as identical with the Brazilian species. It was not until 1870 that a naturalist examined a skull and discovered that it was different from all others. He named the species *Tapirus bairdii* in honor of the then secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Spencer Fullerton Baird. The term tapir, borrowed from the language of the Tupi Indians of Brazil, means "large animal."

GROUP IN MUSEUM

The adult specimens in the Museum habitat group of the Brazilian tapir were obtained in Matto Grosso in 1927 by Mr. Colin C. Sanborn, Curator of Mammals. The striped and spotted young from the same region was secured and contributed to the group by Mr. Sascha Siemel. A large male and female of Baird's tapir collected in British Honduras in 1923 by Staff Taxidermist Leon L. Walters and Chief Curator Karl P. Schmidt (then Assistant Curator of Reptiles) provide the only complete skeletons of this species in the Museum.

Three expeditions of Chicago Natural History Museum are covering this year some of the territory inhabited by each of the four known kinds of tapirs. The Rush Watkins Siamese Expedition, though primarily concerned with birds, may have an opportunity to bring back specimens of the Malay tapir. Personnel of the Guatemala Zoological Expedition have traversed the haunts of Baird's tapir. Their interest in securing insect parasites of mammals may lead to collecting a tapir host. The leader of the Colombian Zoological Expedition may find representatives of the Brazilian tapir in the headwaters of the Orinoco River and will attempt to secure a specimen of the extremely rare hairy tapir in the high altitudes of the Colombian Andes.

All lost articles found in the Museum are sent to the service counter at the Main (North) Entrance, where they are held until they are claimed.

A lounge where smoking is permitted is located at the center of the north corridor on the ground floor. Photo-murals on the walls of the lounge illustrate stages in the growth of the Museum and the nature of its expeditionary work.

BIRDS FROM ALGERIA

The true dividing line between the birds of Europe and the birds of Africa is the Sahara Desert and not the Mediterranean Sea. In northwest Africa there are mountains. In some parts there are forests of oaks and conifers, vineyards and olive orchards and fields of grain, as well as arid and rocky terrain. This is more like the country to the north of the Mediterranean than like that south of the great Sahara. One would expect the birds from these areas to be more like those of England and France and Spain than like those of central and south Africa, and one would predict that they would be paler in plumage and represent subspecies different from those of northern Europe, the result of the blue skies and bright sunshine of the Mediterranean area as compared with the duller skies of the north.

This is well brought out by a collection of birds received at the Museum from M. Julien Laenen, of Brussels, Belgium. It comes from northern Algeria, with such exotic sounding place names on the labels as Camp des Chenes, Col de Ben-Chico, Berrouaghi, Chellala, and Ain-Sba.

The collection contains about 50 bird species. There are nightingales, blackbirds, spotted flycatchers, stone chats, chiffchaffs, goldfinches, greenfinches, and even a raven and a crossbill, birds one thinks of as being truly northern. At least 15 of them represent subspecies new to our collection.

Of course not all the species are European. A few, such as a dull-colored bulbul, are intruders from the African fauna to the south of the Sahara. And there are pale, sand-colored endemics, larks and warblers, which are found only in the north African area. At least three full species in the shipment are new to our collection.

M. Laenen writes that he has finished his collecting in northern Algeria and is leaving for the Haggar Mountains in the interior, where the country will be dryer and less friendly and the birds less known. We are looking forward to his further shipments that will add more new birds to our collections.

—A.L.R.

Transportation to the Museum

Service to the 14th Street entrance of the Museum is maintained by the Jackson Boulevard buses (No. 26) marked "Grant Park" on the front and by State Street-Soldier Field parking lot shuttle buses (No. 49—"Red Top"). The Illinois Central main and suburban stations are two blocks west of the Museum. The subway and certain interurban lines have stations at Roosevelt Road within a few blocks of the Museum. The eastern terminus of Roosevelt Road street cars is about one block west of the Museum. There are excellent drives for automobiles and free parking space.



YOUNG SOUTH AMERICAN TAPIR

Its striped and spotted coat is characteristic of many juvenile animals.

great Linnaeus' tenth edition of the *Systema Naturae* published in 1758, the starting point of zoological nomenclature. Actually, the species was made known to Europeans two and one-half centuries earlier, but many naturalists, including Linnaeus himself, doubted the very existence of such an animal.



1949. "Birds from Algeria." *Bulletin* 20(9), 7-7.

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