

in different levels fluctuates sharply. In levels where the density of occurrence is highest, they have found a liberal sprinkling of most of the other life forms also. From this evidence they conclude that, at the time of the frequency-peaks, conditions were unfavorable to life, causing many animals to die and be buried. But those conditions changed as indicated by the abrupt decrease in the presence of fossils in succeeding levels. What circumstances caused this rhythm of change may be revealed as the study progresses.

Although much has been accomplished in the study of the Mecca fossils, most of the work still lies in the future. But the rewards so far have been encouraging. Specimens of sharks have been found of which, up to now, nothing but teeth have been known. Other specimens that might prove to be entirely new, such as a shrimp-like invertebrate, have been uncovered. We await the conclusions of the Mecca study with interest, anticipating the time when a look backward to a more complete picture of life 240,000,000 years ago may be possible for the layman as well as the paleontologist.

## 1,425 BIRDS AND MAMMALS ARRIVE FROM AFRICA

A collection of approximately 1,000 birds and 425 mammals has been received from Angola (Portuguese West Africa) as an interim shipment from the operations there by the Conover Expedition. The expedition, financed with funds provided by the late Boardman Conover, Museum Trustee and Research Associate in the Division of Birds, began its work in January under the leadership of Gerd Heinrich, zoological collector from Dryden, Maine.

Included in the shipment of birds is a species new to science, a number of new subspecies, and specimens that indicate extensions of ranges beyond previously known limits. Nearly all the mammals received represent species new to the Museum's collections. Although the mammal specimens are not yet in condition for study, the first general survey shows a number of species not recorded from Angola.

### Peruvian Mammals Received

Mammals collected by the Peru Zoological Expedition, 1953-54, from the almost unworked part of northern Peru (west of the Andes) were recently received by the Museum. This collection of 470 specimens, together with the first shipment from southern Peru (south of Lima), fills many gaps in our knowledge of the north-south distribution of Peruvian mammals, reports Colin C. Sanborn, Curator of Mammals. Bats new to Peruvian fauna are also included in the collections.

Celestino Kalinowski, leader of the expedition,

has resigned from the staff but will continue to collect for the Museum. He is now exploring the Alto Madre de Dios River in southeastern Peru, a rich and zoologically unexplored area.

### 4-H Youths From All U.S. To Visit Museum

Approximately 1,300 boys and girls from all parts of the United States and Canada will visit the Museum on November 30. These rural youths, who are coming to Chicago as delegates to the National Congress of 4-H Clubs held simultaneously with the International Live Stock Exposition, have been selected for excellence of achievement in their local communities. The entire staff of Raymond Foundation lecturers will be assigned to guide the young people to exhibits of most interest to them.

### Audubon Lectures to Begin

The Illinois Audubon Society will open its 1954-55 season of five free "screen-tours" on Sunday afternoon, November 28, in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum. "Wild America" is the title of the first presentation, a color film accompanied by a lecture by Roger Tory Peterson, one of America's noted ornithologists. The program begins at 2:30 P.M.

The other Audubon film-lectures will be: January 9—"A Missouri Story," by Alfred G. Etter; February 27—"Canada North," by Bert Harwell; April 3—"Mormonland," by Patricia Bailey Witherspoon; April 24—"The Grass Forest," by Robert C. Hermes.

Admission to all of these lectures is free to the general public. Members of either the Museum or the Audubon Society may obtain reserved seats by presenting their membership cards before 2:25 P.M.

How mosquitoes spread malaria is shown in an exhibit in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18).

### MEMO TO CAMERA FANS

Send your entries now for the 10th Chicago International Exhibition of Nature Photography, to be held at the Museum February 1-28. Final deadline is January 15. Entries are accepted in two divisions, prints and color slides. There are three classifications in each division: animal life, plant life, and general. The contest is jointly sponsored by Nature Camera Club of Chicago and the Museum. Entry forms with full information are obtainable by request to the Museum.

## CURATOR DENISON BACK FROM EUROPE STUDIES

Dr. Robert H. Denison, Curator of Fossil Fishes, has returned from a year's study-trip to Europe under a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The primary purpose of his work there was to acquire information from museum collections and from the field on the occurrence of early vertebrates in an attempt to determine their habitats.

He first visited the Paleontologisk Museum in Oslo, where there are large collections from the Devonian of Spitsbergen as well as a small but important collection from a single quarry in Ringerike (not far from Oslo). During his stay he was fortunate to participate in the discovery in Ringerike of abundant fishes in a road cut. He worked next at Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet in Stockholm, which possesses large collections from Poland and Spitsbergen. This museum, which is extremely active in the study of early fishes, has developed important techniques for the determination of details of their internal anatomy from preserved skeletal parts. At the beginning of the year he moved to London and the British Museum (Natural History). Here is the largest collection extant of fossil fishes, which includes classical specimens representing the first known examples of many groups.

Curator Denison devoted the spring and summer months to field work in many parts of Great Britain. In Cornwall the Devonian rocks outcrop along the shore cliffs, and fossils are not uncommon but are poorly preserved. In Pembrokeshire, South Wales, where rocks of similar age are well exposed along the coast, fossils are better preserved but are not at all common. The borderland between England and Wales, an area where the geology of the Devonian "Old Red Sandstone" was first deciphered, is the source of many of the early collections of Devonian fishes. Today the rock outcrops are very scarce, since there is no longer any quarrying of the Old Red Sandstone and the railroad and road cuts are all overgrown, but there are a few localities where good specimens may still be obtained. In contrast, the Scottish collecting is excellent, sometimes yielding entire fishes that are beautifully preserved.

More than 500 specimens were obtained, an important addition to the Museum's study collection, for they include many genera and some families new to us. A few of the finer specimens will eventually find their way into the exhibits.

"Trips to the bottom of the sea" may be made by visiting the submarine dioramas in the Hall of Fishes (Hall O). There is also an underwater view of the life of a fresh-water lake in Michigan.





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