

rows of broad dorsal scales within the broad light dorsal stripe, there is a double row of broad scales beneath the belly. In addition to the spectacle these characters afford a striking distinction from the skink *Mabuya*, to which *Gymnophthalmus* bears a superficial resemblance. The colouration is in shades of bronze like an old penny. On top of the head, down the back as a broad stripe and onto the tail is light bronze; the sides of the head, trunk and tail are dark bronze. There are fine speckles on the dorsal side of the tail. The underside is whitish.

I found these lizards in fairly dry litter in contrast to the damp situations in which *Scolecosaurus* was found. These nimble lizards are not easy to catch as they wriggle away through the litter.

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Cyclorotating Eyes in the Tadpole of *Phyllomedusa burmeisteri*

Some snakes, fishes and turtles have eyes which can rotate about an axis passing through the centres of the two eyeballs⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾. The best name for this phenomenon seems to be cyclorotation. I had the opportunity of observing it in the tadpoles of the large green frog, *Phyllomedusa burmeisteri* (Boul.)⁽³⁾. In this animal the observations are easily made, since, although the pupil is round, a "nick" which projects into the iris is readily seen and serves as a marker. This "nick" points vertically downwards, whatever the position of the head, so long as the animal is not upside down.

From photographs of the tadpole with its head pointing both upwards and downwards actual measurement showed that the angle of rotation is at least 125°, greater than the angles previously recorded: 65° for the copperhead snake⁽¹⁾, 120° for a goldfish and 70° for a turtle⁽²⁾. When the tadpole turns on its back, the eye is locked in position with the "nick" pointing ventrally.

VICTOR C. QUESNEL.

REFERENCES

- (1) Scientific American 190: 1001, 1954.
- (2) Scientific American 191: 116, 1955.
- (3) Parker, H. W. A list of the frogs and toads of Trinidad. Tropical Agriculture 10: 8, 1933.

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Record of a Beaked Whale from Balandra

On January 5th, 1953, we found the skull and some vertebrae of a beaked whale on the beach at Sena Bay, Balandra. Photographs were taken and sent to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) for identification. From the pictures the whale was provisionally identified as *Mesoplodon bidens*. As this is a rather rare species we were asked by the curator if we would consider selling the specimen to the museum but we preferred to donate it and sent it to London. There it was identified as *Mesoplodon gervaisi*, an exceedingly rare species which is represented in the British Museum only by our specimen and one other, ours being the first.

The discovery of the Trinidad specimen was reported in the London newspapers at the time. It was then the seventh to be discovered but two other specimens were subsequently found in Jamaica and recorded⁽¹⁾ before

the report on our specimen was prepared, and, consequently, have been listed before it in the report⁽²⁾.

This species is new to Trinidad and according to Fraser⁽²⁾ our discovery extends its known range by about 900 miles.

T. F. TWIST,
D. M. TWIST.

REFERENCES

- (1) Rankin, J. J. Nature 172: 873, 1953
(2) Fraser, F. C. Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., Ser. 12, Vol. 8: 624, 1955.

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Is the Yapok or Water Opossum found in Trinidad?

The water opossum, *Chironectes*, has never been reported from Trinidad although there are records from South America. I am certain that it is found here, as certain as any one can be from looking at a photograph which clearly showed an opossum with the characteristic markings on the back and the webbed hind feet of a yapok. In 1955 a hunter shot this animal in the swamps of Guayaguayare in south-eastern Trinidad. It was photographed before it was eaten because it looked different from other "manicous".

I have asked professional hunters in various parts of Trinidad, and particularly in this southern area, to save any opossums with an overall length of up to thirty inches, having webbed hind feet and black and grey dorsal markings which may form bands across the back, and to notify me immediately when such an animal has been shot.

ARTHUR M. GREENHALL,
Curator, R.V.I. Museum.

The Club's Emblem

The emblem of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club is the Inca Beetle. This much is recorded in the Journal of October 1892, but the reasons for the choice were not recorded and may forever remain lost to posterity, since all the original members have died. The beetle itself was unknown to the island's entomologists whom we consulted and eventually, in order to have a new drawing made, a specimen was obtained on loan from the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology. The new drawing was made by Mr. J. S. Kenny.—Ed.

TRINIDAD FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1954

The Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club was reorganized at the beginning of 1954 after a lapse of a year or two and has had, on the whole, a successful year with a full schedule of activities. Nine meetings were held; there were lectures at five of them and discussions of various topics at the others.

The lectures and lecturers were as follows:

- Certain Aspects of Natural History by—Dr. G. A. C. Herklots.
The Snakes of Trinidad by—Mr. L. Wehekind.