

Brazilian Fish for Southern Rivers

Zoology

A giant Brazilian shad weighing 200 pounds, another big fish known as "dourado," and a fresh-water species with red-gold flesh like a salmon, are among the South American fishes recommended as possibilities for fish culture in the southern United States by Dr. R. von Ihering, noted Brazilian naturalist.

The possibilities of Brazilian fresh-water fish have only begun to be realized even in Brazil, Dr. von Ihering states. Hitherto they have attracted only the attention of zoologists and local fishermen, but now economic studies are being undertaken, with interesting results.

The real prize of the Brazilian fresh waters is the "dourado," a fine black-striped gold-scaled fish that reaches a length of three feet and a weight of 60 pounds. It yields a great mass of roe as well as of re-

markable meat; its egg stock frequently contains as many as two and one-half million eggs, as against a mere half-million in such familiar fish as the carp and members of the salmon family.

The fish with the salmon-colored flesh is known to the native Indians as "piracanjuba." It is rated second only to the dourado by them. One of their favorite methods of preparing it is to grind up its red flesh and make it into a thick soup or porridge mixed with tapioca.

Dr. von Ihering states that there are so many fish in the Brazilian streams that during the spring, when the runs take place, they can be netted by the boatload at the foot of every waterfall. A casting net nine feet in diameter often brings in ten or twenty large fish at a haul.

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Indian Ecstasies

Anthropology

Among the southwestern Indian tribes, America has groups resembling in their mental outlook the frenzied followers of the Greek god Dionysius and other groups that compare with the calmly formal mediæval Christians. The importance of understanding the striking psychological differences between these Indians is brought to the attention of scientists by Dr. Ruth F. Benedict, of Columbia University.

The Pimas and allied wandering tribes of the southwest place a high value upon danger and horror and excesses because these abnormal states enable them to reach through to the supernatural. Peyote, datura and other drugs and intoxicants are aids in gaining the desired state of ecstasy. The Zuni, Hopi, and other pueblo tribes have none of these things. Their religious dances are formal, and unlike most Indians, they place no value on dreams or visions.

These psychological differences which affect the manners and customs of these people are not based on racial differences, Dr. Benedict said. There are some seven different pueblo groups in the region all of which have fallen under the influence of the idea of valuing normality and calm dignity. The fact that the American government has never had trouble with intoxication among these pueblo peoples is pointed out as significant.

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Skill, Intelligence, Intellect

Psychology

Skill, intelligence, and intellect are considered as three distinct things by Prof. T. H. Pear, of the University of Manchester. Skill, in his definition, is the integration of well-adjusted performances. Intelligence is the capacity for planning. Intellect is the ability to express concepts in words.

Man is spectacularly unskilled at birth, but acquires from his environment most marvelous skills, for instance the ability to use language. Many animals are born skilled, able to do such things as build nests or dig burrows, but do not learn new skills to as great an extent as man does.

Creative skill, either unconscious or artistic, analytic or inventive, is rated highest by Professor Pear, while the imperfectly adapted responses of domestics and laborers rank lowest in the category of skills, with the stereotyped actions of the drilled soldier only a little higher.

Skill at work may prove easier to acquire than skill at play, despite the complexity of some tasks in industry, according to Prof. Pear. The athlete, in his opinion, overcomes only non-intellectual difficulties in mastering his sport, and never pursues undreamed-of possibilities which might lead to the development of new strokes or methods of play.

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Rabbits Raise Beef Price

Ecology

A pointed suggestion as to the relation between rabbits, salt bush, and the price of beefsteak was made recently by C. P. Wilson, of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. The destruction of valuable forage plants by rabbits, mice, and even quail and lizards, may limit their distribution and substantially reduce the productiveness of range lands. Rabbits, since they are able to crop the vegetation more closely than cattle can, are likely to be even more serious in their effects on plants. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the salt bush, locally known as chamiza, winterfat, and mesquite.

Experiments at the New Mexico Station have shown that six or seven acres of unirrigated mesa land with a good stand of mature chamiza will support a cow for a year or longer. Under protection from rabbits this plant can be successfully seeded on certain unproductive areas, even, in places, on the open desert. The presence of rabbits and other rodents, however, makes such propagation impracticable.

Similar conditions obtain in relation to winterfat and mesquite. These studies indicate that small and insignificant browse and grass feeders such as rabbits and mice, exercise an important and far-reaching effect on present-day overgrazed ranges in the Southwest, tending toward further depletion, and, in some instances, probably effectively preventing recovery. In this way they may be of economic importance to every citizen, as they tend to cut down the carrying capacity of the range lands, which means a smaller number of cattle and a higher price for beefsteak.

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Not "Dumb" When Sick

Psychology

We may "feel dumb" when we are ill, but we really aren't. We are just as intelligent as ever; all that the illness does is prevent us temporarily from using our wits fully. Dr. S. Dawson of the University of Glasgow tells of the results of six years of research on the intelligence of sick children. By comparison with their brothers and sisters, and with their own records when well, he showed that even prolonged illness did not affect their intelligence quotients. Only a few diseases, such as European sleeping sickness and epilepsy, result in decreased intelligence.

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