

## Rare Lizards in New York

*Zoology*

Two specimens of the northern skink, a lizard hitherto unknown in western New York, have been captured and brought to the Buffalo Museum of Science. One of them has added to the interest of the discovery by laying six eggs in captivity. The eggs are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, dull white, and soft-shelled.

Gardiner Bump, assistant curator of education at the Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, New York, while on a field trip with some members of one of his evening science classes, found at Bergen Swamp, near Batavia, what is believed to be a northern skink.

Two of the lizards were caught in their native habitat underneath fairly wet stones under a rotten log. One of them had cast off his tail, put part of this has been regenerated since he took up his abode in Buffalo.

This is the only record of a lizard found west of Geneva, N. Y. Thirty years ago another lizard was found in Bergen Swamp, but not of the same species as the present find. The northern skink is related to the famous chameleon and has the power to change its color.

*Science News-Letter, September 28, 1929*

## Delusions of Grandeur Vary

*Psychology*

Delusions of grandeur are twice as common among men as among women, according to a study of patients in Chicago Psychopathic Hospital reported by Dr. Irene Sherman.

Studying patients who believed themselves to be famous characters of history and personages of great importance and power, Dr. Sherman found that the men were most frequently obsessed on the subject of money and business. Delusions of being financial geniuses were twice as common among American-born men as among foreign men. Not one woman patient believed herself to be a lady of great wealth. The women were more apt to be obsessed with delusions of great religious powers.

Men of foreign birth tend to become deranged particularly on the subject of their professional or religious abilities, the psychologist reported. Delusions of grandeur are more frequent among the people of clerical and professional classes than among domestic workers and laborers.

The investigation sheds light on the subjects which affect the sexes

and different nationalities intensely to the point of mental unbalance.

*Science News-Letter, September 28, 1929*

## Bus Drivers Tested

*Psychology*

Paris bus drivers who apply for driving licenses are now required to face a strange piece of apparatus, with a stranger name, the "perceptotaquimeter." The inventor, Prof. Emilio Mira of Barcelona, recently arrived in this country.

The prospective driver is seated fifteen feet away from a table on which three rods are rigged so that they can be moved at varying speeds and in different directions. If the driver can estimate quickly and accurately the time at which the rods will meet, he is considered a good risk at estimating the speed of passing street cars, autos, dogs, and other traffic hazards.

*Science News-Letter, September 28, 1929*

The average length of a rural free delivery mail route in this country is 30 miles.

## Science Conquest of North Pacific

*Oceanography*

Canada and the United States from the east, Japan, China and Russia from the west, will meet in mid-Pacific in less than ten years with a well-rounded preliminary picture of the biology and physical oceanography of the northern section of that great ocean. This is the prophecy of Dr. T. Wayland Vaughan, director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, made after a survey of the programs of ocean science now embarked upon or contemplated by the powers bordering upon the North Pacific.

Currents, tides, winds, air and water temperature—all the complex phenomena that interact to make climate in air above, and what might be termed "water climate" in the aquatic element beneath, form one part of the program. The geology and geography of the solid land that forms the shores, and of the deep-drowned rocks that make up the ocean basins, jutting up here and there as islands or volcanoes, occupy another section. Then there are the multitudinous forms of life that swim

as fishes and whales, or float as sea-jellies and protozoa, or cling and creep on the bottom, as well as the plant life, ranging from microscopic single cells to hundred-foot kelps, on which the animal life ultimately depends. A fascinating and challenging group of problems can be found where biology becomes geology, that is, in the formation of coral islands and reefs.

All these phases, and others besides, are actively under way in the North Pacific area, and it is here that the most rapid advances may be expected, according to Dr. Vaughan. Promising initial steps are being taken in the southwestern Pacific also. As yet little has been done in the southeastern section of the ocean, although some of the South American countries, notably Chile and Peru, have evinced interest and may eventually bring the scientific knowledge of their oceanic "spheres of influence" up to the level of that attained in regions where scientists have had an earlier start.

*Science News-Letter, September 28, 1929*

## Russian Lake Like Well

*Geography*

A lake that is really a well, being deeper than it is wide, has recently been investigated by Russian geologists. It lies about 40 kilometers south of the health resort of Nalchik in the North Caucasus, and is known as Cerik-köl, or the Blue Lake.

It is only a small body of water, being 235 meters long and 130 meters wide, but it has the surprising depth of 258 meters, with practically vertical walls. Except at its surface, the water temperature remains constant the year round, at about 17 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the average annual temperature of the air. The lake has no surface inlets, not even the smallest of brooks, but a little river flows out it. The water is presumed to come from subterranean springs.

The lake is charged with hydrogen sulphide and also contains gypsum, so that nothing can live in it. There are never any leaves or pieces of driftwood to be found on its surface, which has given rise to the local superstition that nothing can float on its water. The people of the neighboring highlands also believe the lake is inhabited by a monster in the form of a bull.

*Science News-Letter, September 28, 1929*