

ZOOLOGY

Soldiers' Pets

Many problems face service men bringing pets into the U.S.A., but in spite of this, many monkeys, coatis and kinkajous will come home with them.

By FRANK THONE

See Front Cover

► WHEN JOEY COMES marching home again, he'll be very likely to have a monkey roosting on his shoulder, or some even more exotic creature like a coati or a kinkajou. For young Americans are just as prone to acquire pets and mascots as they are to pick up souvenirs. The cockatoos seen on the front cover of this SCIENCE NEWS LETTER were sent from the Solomons by Maj. Gen. R. G. Breene, U.S.A. The photograph is by Fremont Davis, Science Service staff photographer. (See SNL, Nov. 18, p. 328.)

It isn't possible to wrap up an agouti or an anteater and ship it home as you might a pair of Zeiss binoculars or a Samurai sword, but despite all kinds of difficulty in care and feeding, thousands of service men are nursing all manner of strange beasts and birds, culled from the faunas of outlandish places from Iceland to New Caledonia.

One can almost hear already the frantic feminine protest: "But what on earth are we going to do with the thing?" as patient mothers are confronted with an exaggerated form of the stray-dog problem, or young wives try to adjust to the idea of a queer-looking creature in fur or feathers (or even scales!) as an extra lodger in the apartment.

Monkeys Are Appealing

In many cases, adjustment will be made readily enough. Most people find monkeys interesting and appealing, especially the smaller kinds. Marmosets and other "lapdog-size" members of the monkey family are usually gentle enough to be given the run of the place. Some of the other monkeys not too large to be house pets, like the spider monkey and the common rhesus or organ-grinder's monkey, may get into trouble through their inquisitiveness and incessant activity and may therefore have to be given a perch and chain or put in a cage.

A pet that may be brought back from tropical American lands where some of

our troops are stationed is the coati-mundi, often called simply coati, a long-nosed, long-tailed relative of the raccoon. Less acrobatic than the monkeys, the coati is nevertheless a good climber and can make surprisingly long leaps. Coati is readily tameable and becomes very affectionate. Like his cousin, the raccoon, he is exceedingly inquisitive. Also like the raccoon, he is peaceable in disposition, but still able to make the average dog regret his rashness if he bothers him.

Some soldiers' pets that have already arrived in this country from the South Pacific and Indian Ocean regions are among the strangest and most baffling of all evolutionary riddles. They are usually classified with the monkeys and apes (and ourselves), but are placed at the bottom of primate society.

Known by such names as lemurs,

tarsiers and phalangers, they are small, timid creatures, neither as active nor as intelligent as monkeys. They are mostly nocturnal in their habits, and have big eyes adapted for seeing in dim light. They are very interesting zoological curiosities, but on the whole are not lively enough to be satisfactory pets. Besides, they are difficult to feed properly.

Can't Bring Koalas

A pet which every member of the Armed Forces who gets to Australia would like to bring back is the koala, or native bear. Actually, it is not at all related to the bears, being a marsupial like the wallabies and wombats and most of the other mammals of that strange continent. But they look so much like cuddly live Teddy-bears that the name is inevitable.

They can't be brought home for two sufficient reasons. First, the Australians wouldn't let you. Like ourselves, the Australians for a long time thoughtlessly exploited their wildlife, and during those years of waste killed nearly all of their



FOREIGN FRIEND—It is easy for soldiers to get acquainted with such appealing animals as this monkey.



TEDDY-BEARS—These tiny koalas are very friendly, but cannot be taken out of their native Australia.

koalas for their fur. Now they are jealously conserving the remnant.

Even if you were permitted to take a koala out of its home country, it would almost certainly die on the way. Koalas feed only on the leaves of one kind of eucalyptus tree, and will starve in the presence of other kinds of food, no matter how abundant. So it's just no use trying.

Feeding a Problem

That problem of feeding is going to be a serious snag in the keeping of many kinds of pets from lands far overseas. If you had the nerve to bring in a young lion or leopard, where would you get meat enough for its growing appetite? Anteaters are fun, when you have them in the tropics where there are plenty of insects, but they are hard to provide for in our carefully debugged houses. Unfortunately, they cannot be trained to go after the termites in the woodwork.

Because of these and similar difficulties in pet rations, many service men's pets that have already been brought home have soon found their ways to zoological parks. Experienced keepers there, with better facilities, can take good care of animals that in the average household eventually starve or sicken.

One thing that many service men over-

seas may not always know (although efforts have been made to keep them informed), is that to bring any kind of animal into the United States he must have a formal permit, issued through the Fish and Wildlife Service. His pet must be scientifically inspected before it can enter. This is required partly to prevent, if possible, the introduction of any more pests like the English sparrow and the starling, partly to make sure that sick animals and disease-germ carriers get no chance to spread epidemics among domestic animals already here.

There is a fairly long list of mammals and birds that ordinarily may not be admitted at all. At its top are parrots and all their kin, such as cockatoos, macaws and lovebirds. They may be carriers of psittacosis or parrot fever, a deadly malady that raised a lot of trouble in this country some years ago. Most other suspected disease-carriers are kept out primarily because of possible danger to other animals, rather than to human beings.

Excluded as possible pests in themselves are the weasel-like mongoose, the crested Chinese mynah (an Asiatic starling), European hare and rabbit, and a number of species of rodents. So if G. I. Joe has made friends with any of these undesirable foreigners he will have to

Unusual Unique Christmas Gifts

For those who appreciate worth while educational gifts in the scientific field. Or, if you wish to augment your own private collection and equipment, this is a good opportunity.

CORALS

From a recently acquired museum collection. Sets of beautiful specimens (our selection) world-wide in origin, available while they last.

Set of 10 small corals \$5.00

Set of 10 medium corals . . . 10.00

Set of 10 large corals (includes 8"-10" brain coral) 30.00

MICROSCOPY



(Sets of accessories for making slides (not including microscopes) for those having their own microscopes. Includes book of directions, in beautiful polished-wood gift box.

Bio-Set \$10.50

Bio-Set Jr. 6.50

Little Bio-Set 4.50

Booklet "Introduction to Slide Making," postpaid. .60

Parstains. Set of 10 common stains, postpaid . . . 1.50

ROCK COLLECTIONS

In Compartment Boxes (postpaid)

Set—12 Igneous Rocks . . . \$1.50

Set—12 Metamorphic Rocks . 1.50

Set—12 Sedimentary Rocks . 1.50

Set—12 Soil Formation . . . 1.50

FOSSILS

Set of 24 specimens (including a Trilobite) covering wide range of Animal Kingdom, in fine box.

Postpaid \$7.50

COCOONS

Live moth cocoons, including Luna, Cecropia, Cynthia, Promethea, and Polyphemus moths.

Dozen, with directions . . . \$1.75

Play safe! Don't wait for last minute. Order Now!

Est.



1919

Send remittance to

New York Scientific Supply Co.

Supplies for Biology and Chemistry

28 West 30th St.

New York 1, N. Y.

Do You Know?

Electric household *clocks* are not yet 30 years old.

Doves often complete *three broods* during one season.

Salt is the most common mineral in existence and one of the most useful.

Japanese beetles are not usually severe agricultural pests in Japan because they are kept in control by natural enemies.

Excellent protection against *chiggers* is secured by an application of a mixture of dimethyl phthalate and indalone inside the legs of trousers.

Rotting apples under fruit trees should be picked up and removed or they may hold over for the next season diseases that might affect the new crop.

The Chinese *alligator*, a species of crocodile that lives in a small area near Shanghai, may not survive the war as both Japanese and Chinese soldiers have fought back and forth over the area and killed many of them.

Lactic acid, which gives the flavor to many soft drinks, is now under government allocation because it has war uses; it is employed in cleaning, sterilizing and processing textiles, in leather tanning and in lactates used in plastics.

bid them adieu before starting on his homeward voyage.

Permits to bring in pet animals are obtained by addressing the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Ill. This is best done in advance, if date and port of probable arrival are known. Since this information is often not available, application may be made while en route, by cable or radio. The Service clears all applications as promptly as is humanly possible, and often has its volunteer inspectors waiting at the dock when the ship lands.

Science News Letter, December 2, 1944

PUBLIC HEALTH

Germ-Killing Soap Lowers Chances of Infection

► CLEANER hands and skin, with far fewer germs so that the chances of infection in cuts, scratches and blisters will be much less, is the postwar promise of a new germ-killing soap reported by Dr. Eugene F. Traub, of New York, and Dr. Chester A. Newhall and John R. Fuller, of the University of Vermont (*Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics*).

The soap will have in it a synthetic phenol, dihydroxyhexachloro diphenyl methane, known for short as G-11. Due to wartime restrictions, soap containing this germ-killing chemical cannot be made available at present except for experimental purposes or clinical trial.

In one of the tests reported, soap containing 2% of G-11 was used for all purposes from hand washing to dishwashing for a period of one week. The persons in the tests then washed their hands and forearms for 75 seconds in a good lather of ordinary toilet soap followed by a 20-second rinse. Samples of the soapy water had only about 250,000 germ colonies compared to about 3,250,000 in the same-sized sample of soapy wash water from persons who had used ordinary toilet soap for a week.

Included in the group using the G-11 soap for one week was a football player. He came straight from practice for the final soap washings. In spite of the dirt on his hands, and contrary to what the scientists expected because of the grimy state of his hands, the soap and water he washed in gave a count of only 290,000 germ colonies, only slightly higher than the average.

A person who uses G-11 soap regularly, the scientists state, has fewer "resident" germs on his skin after two minutes of washing than a person who washes for 20 minutes with ordinary toilet soap. Previous studies by other

scientists have shown that some of the germs on the skin are transients that can be easily washed off with soap and water but that others are in the nature of permanent residents and resist removal.

Daily use of a toilet soap containing G-11, it is suggested, would enable a surgeon or operating room attendant to keep these resident germs down to an extremely low level. The routine scrubbing before operations might be shortened and irritating germicides might be eliminated without sacrificing any surgical cleanliness. Omission of the alcohol and iodine rinse might be an important economy now, when these chemicals are not readily available.

While civilians at home may not be able to get any G-11 soap for the duration, members of the armed forces might get some benefit if front-line surgeons and their assistants are able to get it, the scientists suggest. Its use would keep germs on their hands to a minimum so that, even though lengthy surgical scrub-up procedures with alcohol and iodine rinses might be impossible, there would be less likelihood of the soldier's wound being contaminated by those dressing it.

G-11 has the advantage of not being irritating to the skin.

Science News Letter, December 2, 1944



pH INDICATOR HELPS MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY

Checking the pH of water is a job in which L&N equipment can help all the way from the stream, lake or well to the finished water tank or boiler.

For laboratory use, we recommend Glass-Electrode Indicator No. 7662 shown above. This instrument reads directly in pH and retains its full accuracy at temperatures up to 85 F (30 C) in atmosphere of 95 per cent relative humidity. It requires practically no maintenance; principal items are filling the reference electrode's salt bridge with KCl crystals every 6 or 8 weeks, and occasionally cleaning electrodes or replacing batteries. This indicator is furnished with all accessories and supplies. For details, see Catalog E-96 (2).

L LEEDS & NORTHROP COMPANY, 497 STENTON AVE., PHILA. 44, PA.
LEEDS & NORTHROP
 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS TELETYPE AUTOMATIC CONTROLS HEAT-TREATING FURNACES
 Jrl. Ad. E-96-701(1b)



LANGUAGE IS POWER

... Forge ahead, win special assignments, promotion, better job in global peace time opportunities through ability to speak a foreign language.

MASTER A NEW LANGUAGE quickly, easily, correctly by

LINGUAPHONE

The world-famous Linguaphone Conversational Method brings voices of native teachers INTO YOUR OWN HOME. You learn the new language by LISTENING. It's amazingly simple; thousands have succeeded.

HOME-STUDY COURSES IN 29 LANGUAGES
Send for FREE book—

LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE
31 RCA Bldg., New York 20 • Circle 7-0830

LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE,
31 RCA Bldg., New York 20, N. Y.
Send me the FREE Linguaphone Book.

Name

Address..... City.....

Language Interested.....