

MARINE BIOLOGY

Fish Found in Mid-Pacific Once Called "Desert of Sea"

► THE OPEN waters of the tropical Pacific, the so-called "deserts of the sea," are far more productive than was once believed.

Dr. Milner B. Schaefer, research director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, with headquarters at the University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, reports that large schools of tuna have been found in the tropical mid-Pacific where it was once thought that none existed. The recent U. S. Navy-University of California expedition, "Operation Midpac," found many varieties of sea animals in latitudes once thought barren.

Three large-scale investigations of these "deserts of the sea" are now under way. One is the California Cooperative Sardine Research program in which four agencies are investigating coastal waters from Canada to Lower California. The second is the U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigation which is studying the waters around the Hawaiian Islands. The third is Dr. Schaefer's own organization which is surveying Central American waters.

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Hell-Diver

► THE U. S. Biological Survey lists the grebe as a friend of the fishes, because it eats the giant water-bug and a number of other predaceous little monsters of the shallow waters, that prey upon infant fish, and make the hatcheries worker's life a burden. Investigation of the digestive systems of these birds has disclosed the remains of scores and hundreds of these ravenous winged dragons of the lesser world.

But even aside from usefulness to us, the grebe is an interesting bird on its own account. The grebe gets its infernal nickname not in mockery or derogation, but as a compliment. It is the champion submarine of freshwater birds, the "down-deep-divin'-est, long-under-stayin'-est" of feathered swimmers. Wary and easily alarmed, it disappears in a split second, leaving scarcely a ripple to show where it has been. And if

you can guess where it is coming up, you are better than any hawk or hunter.

To all appearances, it often stays under water for half an hour on end. But it really is not making a submarine voyage to a place where water is reputed to be very scarce; if you watch carefully, you will see on the surface of the water a tiny ripple. That is made by the tip of the grebe's nose. The bird is still with us, breathing the familiar air, but is using the better part of valor and taking advantage of the best garment of invisibility known. Presently, if you don't shoot or throw stones, the bird will stick its head and part of its neck up for a periscopic look around; then, if the situation is satisfactory, up will come the dusky back and wings.

The hell-diver spends its time so little in the air and so much in the water that it has given up almost all of that very important flying organ, its tail. But its twin propellers, its feet, are ideally adapted for work in the water. Instead of being fully webbed, as a duck's are, it has a separate web for each toe. This makes its feet "feather" more easily than those of a duck, and also permits it to have longer toes with freer movement.

These large feet act more or less like snowshoes when the bird goes ashore on soft mud, which it frequently does. It seems to like this kind of terrain and builds its semi-floating nest of reeds on the oozy margin of its stream or pond. This habit has earned the grebe its other nickname of mudhen.

The hell-diver is one of the most widely distributed of American birds. It is found all over both North and South America, excepting only the very extremities of the continents.

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MEDICINE

Watch for Polio Symptoms

► THE POLIO season calls for alertness without panic. Good treatment during the acute stage of the disease will help to save lives and reduce paralysis, medical authorities teach.

The onset of the disease is rapid. The first stage is comparatively mild. Sore throat, a "head cold," nausea and sometimes vomiting may be among early symptoms. There may be some fever, diarrhea and, conversely, constipation. There may be considerable pain, particularly in the muscles of the legs and arms. The appetite often disappears. Tremor or trembling of the hands and other parts of the body and pain and stiffness of the neck and back are important early symptoms, all of which may occur in almost any combination.

The virus causing poliomyelitis attacks certain nerve cells in the spinal cord which control movement of muscles. When the nerve cells are damaged or completely

destroyed, the dependent muscle withers away in proportion to the amount of nerve damage. If the damage to the nerve cells is slight, the results in crippling are slight. Seriously affected nerve cells do not regrow. When this occurs, the paralysis is permanent.

It is generally conceded in polio season that children should not be removed from their normal routine. This is also true of adults. In this day and age complete isolation cannot be achieved, and quarantine in poliomyelitis has not had the expected results. There are some instances of an entire family developing the disease, while in others a single case in a large family has been reported.

Parents should be alert to the slight symptoms of early poliomyelitis. A healthy youngster is not ordinarily listless. Watch for fever and fatigue. Then get the child to bed at once and call your physician.

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