

the Arabic "Al Zuban al Janubiyah," which means "the southern claw."

The Romans seem to have separated the group from Scorpius during the reign of Julius Caesar as emperor. They showed these stars as the figure of Caesar holding in his hands the scales of justice. Later the emperor disappeared, leaving only the scales as we have them today. However, the old names of the two brightest stars were retained.

Zubeneschamali, or beta Librae as the astronomer usually calls it, is frequently described as being greenish in hue. When you look at it, however, you may not notice this; it may seem bluish white like the other stars. But this may be because it is rather faint; at low levels of brightness, the eye does not distinguish color very readily. Look at it through a small telescope or a pair of binoculars and you may detect a slightly greenish tint.

### Celestial Timetable for July

JULY	EDT	
3		Earth farthest from sun; distance 94,454,000 miles
	8:00 p.m.	Mercury passes south of Venus
4	5:00 p.m.	Moon passes north of Mars
5	3:37 p.m.	Moon in first quarter
13	1:02 p.m.	Full moon
14	1:00 p.m.	Moon farthest; distance 252,500 miles
18	3:00 a.m.	Moon passes south of Saturn
	7:00 p.m.	Mercury farthest east of sun
19	2:00 a.m.	Mercury passes south of Venus
21	1:54 p.m.	Moon in last quarter
25	10:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Jupiter
28	5:00 a.m.	Moon nearest; distance 222,000 miles
	7:45 p.m.	New moon
29	early a.m.	Meteors visible, apparently radiating from constellation of Aquarius
30	6:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Venus

Subtract one hour for CDT, two hours for MDT, and three hours for PDT.

• Science News Letter, 87:406 June 26, 1965

### CONSERVATION

## Nations Agree to Save Whales From Extinction

► AN INTERNATIONAL WHALING Commission with representatives from 14 nations met in London and unanimously agreed to start drastic measures to save the whale.

The agreement has been hailed by many organizations, especially the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which has been trying for years to get nations to go slow in the orgy of slaughter that has killed all but relatively few of the sea giants.

The most important part of the agreement sets a quota of Antarctic whales to be harvested during the next hunting season, 1965-66, to 4,500 blue whales, 9,000 fin whales and 27,000 sei whales. Humpback whales are under complete protection and are not to be killed at all.

Each year, the Commission agreed, this quota will be reduced until more whales will be born than killed and the whale species will slowly begin to recover.

• Science News Letter, 87:407 June 26, 1965

### ZOOLOGY

## Huge Bat Population Thrives on Trinidad

### See Front Cover

► THERE ARE PROBABLY more bats in the belfries and fruit trees of Trinidad than in any other country of its size.

Representatives of all the nine bat families in the New World are found on this West Indies island, about the size of Delaware, stated Arthur M. Greenhall of the bird and mammal laboratories, University of the West Indies.

Some of these insect- and fruit-eating creatures are seen on this week's front cover. They are becoming so numerous that they are now called house bats, Mr. Greenhall reported in *Natural History*.

Certain free-tailed bats, *Molossus ater* and *M. major*, even prefer the hot underside of metal roofs where temperatures of 130 degrees Fahrenheit have been recorded, to cooler roosts under palm fronds. The house-loving bats infest private houses by the hundreds, annoying people by their noisy thumping and scuttling, and creating dangerous stresses on ceilings from the increasing weight of their droppings over the years.

Trying to control this bat population is complicated because the island is only six miles from the South American mainland.

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## Nature Note

### Polar Bear

► THE THICK-COATED polar bear, one of the largest meat-eating animals on earth, has just been put on the danger list—the list stating that he is in possible danger of becoming extinct.

For many years, these valuable bears, *Thalarchos maritimus*, have been easy targets. Unsporting hunters in airplanes are using high-powered automatic rifles to kill the bears throughout their North Pole territories.

At present there are no international laws prohibiting or limiting the shooting, and their numbers have been decreasing throughout their arctic habitat that stretches across Alaska, Canada, Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Russia.

The white and creamy bears are land animals quite at home in water. With thick oily fur to keep their bodies warm and dry, they sometimes spend much of their lives on ice floes hundreds of miles from land. They eat the sea creatures around them—seals, fish, young walrus and sea birds. In summer they eat the berries and leaves of tundra plants and algae.

On land the bear can run faster than a reindeer, and in the sea he can swim two and a half miles an hour.

The bear is said to have a superb sense of smell and canny intelligence in tracking down prey over the barren regions of snow. Since his coal-black nose does not blend into the background of snow and ice, a bear sometimes will cover his nose with his paw and slide across the ice on his stomach to stalk his prey.

• Science News Letter, 87:407 June 26, 1965

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