



NINE FEET LONG—This model of the pirarucu, biggest fresh water fish in the world, is nine feet long. It is on exhibit at the Chicago Natural History Museum.

“Part of this accomplishment is due to the advances in medical science between the wars. Major credit should, however, be given to UNRRA for getting health departments on their feet and for supplying them with enormous quantities of effective new drugs and insecticides such as penicillin and DDT.

“Phenomenal results were obtained in Poland in the suppression of typhus with DDT powder and in Greece in a nationwide attack on malaria by airplane sprayings of marshes and hand spraying of houses and small streams with DDT.”

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pupae not killed when the tires were treated.

Some of the mosquitoes were identified as carriers of dengue fever and filariasis in their native Pacific islands. Some were not known as carriers of human diseases, though there is always a possibility that such mosquitoes may become carriers in a new environment. In 11 subsequent shipments of tires, water was found in eight and mosquitoes were found breeding in three of the shipments. Amphibious vehicles were also found to contain water, but no mosquitoes were found breeding in them. All material which contained water was routinely treated with DDT in kerosene.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Tires Hide Stowaways

Pacific island mosquitoes have ridden to this country in tires and shell cases. DDT is on the job to prevent the spread of disease.

► HUNDREDS of thousands of Pacific island mosquitoes, some of them potential disease carriers, have been coming to this country in tires and perhaps also in shell cases and amphibious vehicles returned from combat areas by the Army and Navy.

The stowaways were first detected by Sanitary Inspector John L. Chambers of the U. S. Quarantine Station, Port of Los Angeles. During a routine Public Health Service quarantine inspection of a cargo ship from the New Guinea area, he noticed several live adult mosquitoes in one of the holds of the ship. Crew members also complained to him that they had been annoyed by mosquitoes for five or six days after leaving port.

“An investigation revealed that mosquitoes were breeding heavily in fresh water contained in motor vehicle and aircraft tires which constituted a large part of the cargo,” Assistant Sanitarian John J. Pratt, Jr., Dr. Robert H. Heterick and Dr. John B. Harrison of the U. S. Public Health Service and Capt. Louis Haber of the U. S. Army Sanitary Corps report in the Military Surgeon.

“It was estimated that approximately one half of the 8,880 tires aboard contained water varying in amount from one cup to five gallons per tire and that a large proportion of these contained living mosquito larvae. It is conservatively estimated that the average tire examined contained from 20 to 30 larvae.”

Before the ship docked, all openings leading into the holds were closed and each hold was thoroughly sprayed with freon-pyrethrum aerosol. Many dead adult mosquitoes were recovered from the holds after spraying. Later a disinfection squad was stationed on the dock warehouse loading platform armed with knapsack sprayers containing 5% DDT in kerosene. As the tires were unloaded and rolled into freight cars they were quickly inspected for water. Those found containing any were sprayed with DDT. This avoided delay in moving tires from ship to cars for trans-shipment. The cars were also thoroughly sprayed before the tires were loaded against any adult mosquitoes that might emerge in transit from any larvae or

ICHTHYOLOGY

Biggest Fresh Water Fish Grow to 15 Feet Long

► THIS WEEK’S fish story, authenticated by the Chicago Natural History Museum:

Down South America way, in the Orinoco river, relatives of the herring grow to be 15 feet long. The pirarucu is the largest fresh water fish in the world.

Proof: Taxidermist Leon L. Pray has mounted a nine-foot model of this giant fish for public admiration. That 15-foot size is admittedly of one that got away, presumably, as the Museum put it down as an “unverified report” worth repeating however.

This story has teeth in it. The pirarucu has a bony tongue and natives collect the rasp-like teeth covering the tongue and use them to grate coconuts and roots for their dinner tables.

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