



The Ornerly Crab

➤ FOR BEING down-right ornerly, it is hard to beat the edible crab.

With his body encased in a hard armor edged with spear-like projections and brandishing his two very effective pincers, the crab generates little affection from the beholder. Indeed, this seems to suit him fine; for he craves no companionship.

Place a half dozen big blue crabs in a pail and they attack each other with vigor, even breaking off each other's legs and claws.

For that matter, if you poke a stick, or a finger, at the crabs in that pail, it will receive a mighty bite from the claws, too.

The blue crab, *Callinectes sapidus*, common edible species of the East Coast, begins life as one of 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 eggs laid by the female, each egg being about one-hundredth of an inch in diameter. These eggs are carried about by the female in a mass called the "sponge," attached to her abdomen. They hatch in about 15 days.

The newly hatched crab is quite unlike its parents in appearance, and must pass through two separate stages before its mother might care to claim it. In the first stage, the young crab, called a zoea, is about 1/25 of an inch in length. After about six separate molts as a zoea, it becomes a megalops, in which it appears to be two large eyes being wiggled by a short tail.

It stays a megalops for only one molt,

after which it is a full-blown miniature of its pugnacious parent, ready to give a junior-sized pinch to anything that comes near it. From here to maturity takes about 15 additional molts for the crab to attain full size.

Crabs grow in "spurts," increasing in size only when the old shell is cast off and before the new armor plate has hardened. It is in this molting condition that the crab is vulnerable, lacking both its hard covering and the power to bite. Then it forsakes the defiant position to lie buried, hidden—it hopes—in the mud.

Most blue crabs attain full growth and mate during their second summer, when from 12 to 14 months old. Three years is probably the top age for the species.

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METEOROLOGY

Reliable Weathercasts

➤ WHETHER PRETTY GIRLS or trained weathermen should present TV weathercasts, long the subject of private discussion among weathermen, now is being openly debated.

For the first time nationally, representatives of the Weather Bureau and the broadcasting industry met in Hartford, Conn., with TV weathercasters to discuss how weather news should be televised. The goal is more reliable and useful weather broadcasts and telecasts.

To reach it, many weathermen strongly urge a seal of approval be issued by the American Meteorological Society to weathercasters meeting certain standards.

Charming models who mix weather maps with the latest fashions but stick close to official Weather Bureau predictions may earn a better rating than self-styled "experts" who often get themselves out on a limb by making their own interpretations.

Many weathermen think only trained meteorologists should draw for TV viewers the daily maps and make explanations of tomorrow's weather.

Broadcasting authorities argue that the public wants to be entertained as well as informed, and that few professionally trained weathermen can do both.

That the public wants to know whether the next day will bring sunshine or rain and will be cold or warm, everyone agrees. But neither group really knows for sure what more the public likes and wants in the way of weather information.

That interest in daily weather news has increased because of television is also agreed. People are learning to see there are patterns in the high pressure and low pressure air masses that generally move from west to east across the United States.

A few programs already rate high alike with weathermen, public and broadcasters. With some exceptions, these are given by men with some meteorological training

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Farsightedness of Old Age Complete at 52

➤ YOUR EYESIGHT gets old, so that you have a hard time focusing on close objects, sooner than scientists thought.

In fact, your ability to focus on close objects, which begins to decline in the middle forties, gets as bad as it will ever be at around 52. The age of 60 was believed to be the date at which the decline reached the terminal stage.

Studies of "presbyopia," or old sight, were reported by Drs. Elwin Marg, D. Hamasaki and Jin Ong of the University of California School of Optometry, Berkeley.

Science News Letter, March 17, 1956

combined with several years of radio or TV experience.

When severe storms threaten, however, even the most competent non-professionals often turn directly to Weather Bureau forecasters for the weather picture.

Then the exact language used becomes considerably more important than in telling about rain or sunshine the following day. Lives as well as hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars are affected.

One difficult problem discussed at the Hartford meeting, organized by the American Meteorological Society and the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, is that of sponsorship.

Because of their high popularity, weathercasts are considered choice programs by sponsors. Meteorologists and much of the public object to interruptions in a weathercast for a commercial. They dislike having the same person present both, even when weather information is given without interruption.

Many would like to see weather programs presented as a public service, but this would mean a loss of revenue to the TV station.

A final result of the Hartford conference is expected to be, within a year or two, the award of a seal of approval to reliably presented weather programs on TV and radio.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Hall of Health Is Planned for Smithsonian

➤ THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION in Washington is developing a Hall of Health, part of the museum's division of medicine and public health.

Exhibits in the new hall, to be opened in 1957, will cover man's knowledge of his body, both past and present. An advisory committee has been appointed.

Science News Letter, March 17, 1956



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