

in its reckless destruction of irreplaceable species.

This indictment and warning were uttered by Dr. Francis Harper of the American Committee for International Wildlife Protection. He said, in part:

"The American Committee for International Wildlife Protection is preparing an account of the extinct and vanishing mammals of the world. Approximately 390 species and subspecies come within its scope. Among the 54 which have become extinct since Graeco-Roman times, 46 have been lost within the last century.

"A majority of these mammals have been exterminated by hunting (including trapping and poisoning), chiefly by civilized man.

"In Australia the chief agencies of extinction are such imported pests as the fox, rabbit, domestic cat, and house rats; in the West Indies, introduced rats and the mongoose.

"The rate of extinction is being steadily accelerated."

Musk-Ox Skull

No human hunter, probably, was responsible for the death of Indiana's last musk-oxen, yet they apparently died during comparatively late prehistory. A skull of one of these animals, now represented by a species that lives only in the high Arctic, was described by Drs. Marcus Ward Lyon and Fred T. Hall, of South Bend, Ind.

The skull was found near Crawfordsville, Ind., shallowly buried beside a creek with one of its horns protruding from the bank. Kept as a local curiosity for a while, it was finally sent to the U. S. National Museum.

This particular musk-ox did not belong to the living musk-ox genus, but to a related type long since extinct.

Once a Swimmer

That pesky mole that roots around in your garden and tunnels under your lawn—is he the descendant of a race of swimming animals?

Nothing would seem more unlikely, yet there are features in his anatomy that strongly suggest the evolution of moles from aquatic forebears, Dr. Berry Campbell of the Western Reserve University School of Medicine told the meeting.

The shape and arrangement of the bones of the shoulder and forelimb are particularly suggestive of originally aquatic use, Dr. Campbell explained. Further link in the chain of evolutionary evidence is the existence of a somewhat mole-like aquatic animal known

as the desman, with an intermediate arrangement between the mole's set-up and the skeletal anatomy of primitive and possibly ancestral forms with longer bones.

Animals Hold "Real Estate"

Many wild mammals, like many birds, have a tendency to "stake a claim" to a certain area and vigorously defend it against all comers, Dr. William Henry Burt of the University of Michigan told his fellow-scientists.

The defense of the territory is displayed chiefly during the breeding season, although some species, such as the

squirrels, are known to defend foraging territories as well. Young animals, Dr. Burt said, usually leave the home territory as soon as they are grown up; in some instances their parents actually drive them out.

Old animals in established territories are familiar with every retreat and are relatively safe from enemies. Young animals, on the other hand, while pioneering in new territory are more vulnerable. Here is where predators, such as hawks, owls, and foxes, get in their effective work in keeping down the number of fast-breeding species.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1937

PUBLIC HEALTH

Lead Poisoning Rates Worst As a Hazard to Workers

Worse Than Silicosis; Carbon Monoxide and Other Fumes Also Constitute a Serious Health Danger

LEAD poisoning, and not silicosis or any of the other newly prominent occupational diseases, is the chief hazard to the health of workers in industry, Dr. William D. McNally of Rush Medical College, Chicago, reported to the Midwest Conference on Occupational Diseases in Detroit.

Carbon monoxide and fumes from oxides of nitrogen in dynamite explosions were described as other serious industrial health hazards.

"Wherever dusts are found containing lead, whether it be in mines, smelting, in the manufacture of lead pigments, or in the manufacture of storage battery plates," Dr. McNally said, "poisoning is certain to result."

"There are over 900 occupations causing injurious effect upon the health of the individuals engaged in them," Dr. McNally stated.

Silicosis, caused by inhalation of silica-laden dust, predisposes the lining of the bronchial tubes to attacks of bronchitis, he explained. The bronchitis lays a foundation for later-developing pneumonia and tuberculosis.

Preventive measures must include the examination of every new employe, good ventilation, masks, and the use of wet processes wherever feasible. Post-mortem examinations are advocated in all cases of death where the worker had been engaged in a dusty atmosphere, as microscopic and chemical examination

of the lungs will definitely prove whether or not the cause in question is one of silicosis.

Carbon monoxide, one of the most important poisons associated with human life and industry, is without doubt the oldest known poison, Dr. McNally said. Wherever gasoline engines are operated, wherever gas heat appliances are used or wherever there is incomplete combustion of any carbonaceous material, this gas is present. The excellent results obtained in the treatment of carbon monoxide by carbon dioxide and oxygen renders all other methods superfluous.

The danger of inhaling oxides of nitrogen was emphasized because of their delayed action. A workman may leave his job complaining of only a bronchial irritation after inhaling the fumes of a dynamite explosion. Several hours later, his lungs become edematous and death may occur within 24 hours.

Danger in the use of solvents such as benzol, carbon tetrachloride, and trichlorethylene, lies not only in industry but in the home as well. Quantities larger than one pint, Dr. McNally warned, should not be sold to the laity.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1937

The Anarctic region is almost covered by glaciers, Greenland is about three-fourths covered, and Alaska, which ranks third in glaciers, is only about three per cent. overspread by glacial ice.