

Report Of Poisonous Snake In County Prompts Articles From Young 'Expert'

Recently a man on the Tiller-Canyonville Highway reported having seen a snake resembling the deadly coral snake of the Southeast. It was later identified

as a king snake. This prompted a young man, Jim Riggs of Roseburg, to write a three-part series on the snakes of Douglas County. It is designed

not only to clarify descriptions of the snakes but also to outline ranges, habits and economic importance of the snakes. Riggs, considered an expert of

no mean knowledge on the subject of snakes, has gleaned the information both from books and personal experience. He is a member of Portland, Ore., and Philadelphia, Pa., herpetological societies.

This is the first of the three-part series. It deals with the king snakes which inhabit the county.

By JIM RIGGS

The final identification of the supposed coral snake incident was reasonably close, as the snake was a king snake, one of the two kinds found in Douglas County. This particular kind, the California mountain king snake (commonly called just mountain king snake), is easily identified because of its black, white and red rings. For several years this snake was called the coral king snake because of its resemblance to the poisonous coral snake confined to the desert regions of the Southwest. As can be seen, the very word "coral" tends to arouse excitement and confusion. Consequently, the fact that it is just a harmless and beneficial king snake is often forgotten. The mountain king snake is not common in our county, but seems to be found just often enough to keep "coral snakes" going.

The common, or California king snake is the other kind found in Douglas County. It also is easily identified. Its entire body is ringed with alternating rings of black and white. A local name given this snake is "milk snake," and, although it is closely related to the

true milk snakes of the East, there is little similarity in appearance. The name milk snake originated because, as these snakes frequently inhabit barns in search of mice, they were thought to milk cows. Needless to say, this is an old fable, and even if it were possible, the snakes couldn't drink enough to cause a noticeable decrease in a milk supply.

King snakes are constrictors. That is, they kill their prey by squeezing it. The snake grabs its prey, quickly loops its body around it and tightens its coils. The prey dies from suffocation or pressure exerted on the heart. The king snakes' main diet is mice, but they also eat lizards and other snakes. Another common myth is that king snakes spend their whole life relentlessly tracking down and killing rattlesnakes. If a hungry king snake came upon a rattlesnake, the chances are that he would eat it. However, he would just as soon eat a mouse or rat.

California king snakes are found quite often in Douglas County, especially in the farming areas, since these attract mice and other rodents. The California mountain king snake is usually found in or near wooded areas, but is not common.

Common king snakes are usually less than four feet in length, while mountain kings are usually less than three feet. They both are completely harmless to man and should be considered beneficial for the toll of rodents they eat.

The mountain king is ringed with black, white and red, while the common king is ringed only with black and white. (In both species, the white sometimes appears yellowish.)

The true poisonous coral snake is found only in the extreme southeastern states and is not found in Oregon nor any of the states bordering it.

If, however, you find a red, black and white snake and want to be absolutely safe, check the order of the rings. This is easily done by remembering the following rhyme: "Red touch yellow, kill a fellow (Coral snake); Red touch black, safe for Jack (harmless snakes). Of course, in the mountain king the red does not touch yellow, showing that it is perfectly safe. All snakes in Douglas County, except the rattlesnake, are harmless.

Next: The rattlesnake and Gopher snake.

SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

NEW YORK (UPI)—The award of 134 scholarships to young men for study in 35 U.S. colleges and universities was announced Monday by the Alfred P. Sloan foundation.

The grants range from \$200 to \$2,000. Foundation President Everett N. Case said they were to "identify young men of talent, imagination and intellectual curiosity who offer promise of excellent and becoming leaders in their professions."

Field Crews Seek To End First Phase Of Wood Density Survey In Northwest

A massive Pacific Northwest survey sponsored jointly by the lumber industry and U.S. Forest Service moved into high gear late in June for the second summer. Following a two-week training session at Forest Grove, 22 two-man field crews moved into southwestern and eastern Oregon to wrap up "phase I" of a wood density survey, which will involve taking sample borings or increment cores from more than 40,000 trees in western states.

The survey was started in 1960 by the Forest Service, with the cooperation of industry and several public agencies, to discover the range of variation of wood density within each of nine major commercial timber species. Since wood density is an indicator of strength characteristics, this data will contribute to more efficient use of wood as a structural material.

Forest Service officials point out. Several wood associations are financially aiding in the speedy pursuit of this information, \$300,000 having been committed in 1961 by the West Coast Lumbermen's Association, Western Pine Association and Douglas Fir Plywood Association.

Concurrent with the field survey, the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wis., is analyzing the cores taken from the tree at chest height and relating their density to average density of merchantable wood in a whole tree. Collecting data on the whole tree is another part of the wood density survey in which wood disks, crosscut from 100 or more felled trees of each of the commercial tree species, are being studied. Taken at several heights in each tree, these disks are being analyzed to establish a relationship of whole-tree density to wood-core density at breast height.

In the field, in addition to the full-time crew, there is more sampling being done by the Forest Service's regular forest survey, a periodic reinventory of commercial forest lands. Collecting of cores in

Oregon will be completed this summer; in Washington, late in the fall.

Data Collected Elsewhere Similar data is being collected throughout the western States. The Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station in Portland concentrates on Oregon and Washington; the Pacific Southwest and Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Stations at Berkeley, Calif., and Ogden, Utah, respectively, are covering other states of the west. Coordinating the findings of the western survey is the Forest Service's main wood products research laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin.

The findings will reveal the range of wood density and provide a better basis for finding strength values. Also, the survey may reveal the effect of altitude, slope, exposure and other site factors on wood density and related properties. A final bonus may be the discovery of superior trees in the remote forest depths that can be used in propagating the species in other areas.

The stakes are high and the whole wood industry and the West will benefit from this survey.



WOOD DENSITY survey forester is boring into tree with an increment borer, a hollow auger which extracts a core of wood for analysis. (U.S. Forest Service Photos).

Gonzaga Professor Sides With Court On Prayer Ruling

SEATTLE (UPI) — A Catholic professor of law at Gonzaga University has sided with the Supreme Court decision against prayer in public schools and at the same time attacked "the radical approach" taken by Justice William O. Douglas in his concurring opinion.

In a speech Monday night at Seattle University, the Rev. Francis Conklin, S.J., said the question of prayers in the public schools is strictly a political one. He agreed the government should not compose official prayers "because it is not the function of civil government to tell men when, where or how to pray."

But Father Conklin, a visiting professor at Seattle University, attacked Justice Douglas' opinion that the federal economic aid to religion would be unconstitutional. He said "the radical approach taken by Mr. Justice Douglas in his concurring opinion belies the American tradition of impartial justice under law."

Hospital News

Visiting Hours 2 to 3:30 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m.

Mercy Hospital

Admitted

Medical: Julie Jensen, Julie Stevenson, Clayton Williams, Peter Lofing, all of Roseburg; Mrs. Royce Bates, Winston; Mrs. Philip Hill, Oakland.

Surgery: Kathy Johnston, Mrs. Howard Whitten, both of Roseburg; Mrs. Gerald Emery, Paula Emery, both of Winchester; Mrs. Samuel Wagner, Glendale.

Discharged

Mrs. James Courtis and son Edward Glen, Gregory Standley, Joseph Laurance, Bruce Rogers, Kevin Crume, Richard Holmes, Cora Young, Robert Johnson, William Oldaker, all of Roseburg; Mrs. Glen Vicklan, Sutherlin.

Douglas Community Hospital

Admitted

Medical: Kathy Johnson, Janet Rothrock, Randy Young, all of Roseburg; Floyd Howard, Winston; Mrs. Claude Sulfridge, Sutherlin.

Surgery: Mrs. Charles Clinton, Mrs. Asa Irwin, both of Sutherlin; William Woody, Winchester.

Discharged

Mrs. Roger Burton and daughter Shelly Diane, Roseburg; Mrs. Wayne Helms, Marla McClain, Mrs. Clarence Warren, all of Roseburg; Mrs. Dovey Pfaff, Wilbur.

McGahuey Attorney Asks For Clemency

MEDFORD (UPI) — The attorney for condemned slayer Lee-roy Sanford McGahuey, 44, said Monday he has asked Gov. Mark Hatfield to commute McGahuey's death sentence to life imprisonment.

G. W. Kellington, Medford attorney, said he made the plea at a meeting in Hatfield's office in Salem two weeks ago.

McGahuey is scheduled to die in the gas chamber at the Oregon penitentiary on Monday, Aug. 20, at 12:15 a.m. PST.

McGahuey, a forest laborer, was convicted of first degree murder in the 1961 hammer death of 22-month-old Rod Cameron Holt in Central Point.

The Oregon Supreme Court turned down McGahuey's automatic appeal, and McGahuey's only hope now is a commutation by the governor.

Hatfield has read the legal briefs in the case, but is still studying the transcript, which he has had for a month.

LIKES CLEAN MONEY

CHICAGO (UPI)—The National Automatic Laundry and Cleaning Council asked customers for comment on coin dry cleaning and got this reply:

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