

Earthworm Gains Attention As Fishing, Farming Begin

Washington — Again with spring at hand, people turn to the earthworm as a lure for fish and a fertilizer of gardens. Sometimes called fishworms, angleworms, nightcrawlers, dew worms and rain worms, the multitudinous wigglers have served mankind since antiquity. Cleopatra guarded the rich Nile Valley worms as a state secret. Naturalist Charles Darwin doubted "whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world as have these lowly organized creatures." Others have called them the world's first plowmen, chemists, irrigation systems and fertilizer factories.

From burrows lacing the soil, the worms venture to the surface at night to feed on decaying plants and other organic material. Sometimes they drag the provender underground to eat at leisure. The digested product is a black substance called earthworm castings, a powerful natural fertilizer. Some authorities say that fruit and vegetables grown in such enriched soil have more flavor and often greater size.

The worms' burrows help the earth to hold air and moisture. Upward of 50,000 earthworms inhabit each acre, Darwin estimated. Over 15 tons of soil per acre may be brought to the surface each year by the untiring "cultivators."

Earthworms came into commercial importance in recent years. An Ohio fishing-tackle firm recently ordered 25,000,000 loebworms (lugworms that burrow in sandy places) from England. Millions of Egyptian worms have been exposed to the United States to fertilize soils. A Washington, D. C., fishing hobbyist decided to raise a few for his

personal use, later to find himself in the earthworm business with an inventory of 2,000,000 worms.

Student Sells Worms
An Arlington, Va., resident some years ago treated his barren backyard with earthworm castings. Today, tomato vines climb almost to the eaves of his bungalow. His flowers are the envy of his neighbors.

A New York City student earned his way through college selling worms to anglers. A "worm farm near Hereford, England, sold more than 1,000,000 specimens between last June and September to fishermen seeking trout, perch, roach and grayling. The redder worms are anglers say, the more attractive they are to fish.

To satisfy increasing demands, worms often are packed in tins with preparations that feed and insulate them from undue heat and cold. Tins for individual fishermen may contain only a hundred specimens. Huge commercial shipments for fishing interests and agriculturists move by truck or train.

Worms As Food
Earthworms live in all parts of the world where conditions are favorable. They have been found at 15,000-foot elevations in the Andes Mountains. In Australia worms sometimes grow 10 feet long as compared to the 10-inch whopper of the United States. Some peoples, including the Maoris of New Zealand, use worms for food.

Twin-tailed African earthworms have been raised at the New York Zoological Park as feed for duckbilled platypuses. The double-tailed kind occurs perhaps once among every 500 of the creatures. One of the worms' outdoing its own kindred, showed up with three tails.

Catfish Take Over For Long-eared Mule

Paris, Tenn.—U.P.—The balky, long-eared mule used to have its "day" here every spring, but now the fat, tasty catfish has taken over.

Farmers who came to town every year to swap tales and mules still come to town—to take part in the "world's biggest fish fry."

The Fish Fry—all 3,000 pounds of it—helps publicize nearby Kentucky Lake and its fine fishing, swimming and boating. It will be on April 27.

Time was when the mule was the workhorse of the farm and king of the spring celebration here. But farm machines began to take the place of the mules, and a couple of years ago it was decided to make the catfish the big attraction at the spring gathering.

There will be lots of pretty girls, bands, a parade, selection of the "queen of the Tennessee Valley" and a dance. Festivities start the day of the fish fry and continue the next day.

Also a big event is a 30-day fishing rodeo on Kentucky Lake with anglers out to pull in bream, crappie, bass and other species of fish, as well as the catfish.

Bryant Williams, publisher of the Paris Post-Intelligencer, is president of the Chamber of Commerce which sponsors the event.

SOUP'S ON
Warren, O.—(U.P.)—Restaurateur, Pete Costianes filed a \$25,000 suit against Lloyd Cose, who allegedly said "this soup is slop," in front of other customers. Costianes said the remark was embarrassing, injured his business and was untrue.

Use Tribune Want Ads QUICK and EASY!



EARLY GAME — Senator Estes Kefauver, Democratic presidential aspirant, takes in an early, 8 a.m. game of checkers at the Building Trades Temple in San Francisco. He is visiting California for the third time on a vote-getting tour of the state. His opponent at right is Emil Josephson.

Men in Dormitory Relieve Boredom

Salt Lake City—(U.P.)—Some enterprising University of Utah men's dormitory residents found a way to relieve the boredom of studies during the winter months.

Although the jig is up now, the residents of newly built Ballif Hall spent a month talking long-distance to everybody from Marilyn Monroe to Mom and Dad—at the university's expense.

The students found they could get a direct line to a long distance telephone operator by dialing certain numbers on the Ballif Hall telephone. Through what was termed "mechanical failure,"

the boys started putting through calls to New York, the Russian Embassy, a Las Vegas hotel and virtually every state in the nation. One call to Miss Monroe was noted.

At the end of the month, the unusual size of the university's phone bill prompted an investigation that led to the men's dormitory and discovery of the "mechanical failure" that allowed the students to dial long distance. The spree is over.

The nation's trucks move more petroleum than any other single commodity.

New Set of Scales Measures Moon Weight

Boston—(U.P.)—Chubby persons would willingly weigh themselves on a new set of scales at Boston's Museum of Science.

A 420-pound circus fat lady, for instance, would tip the scale at a mere 70 pounds. A 186-pound "lightweight" would register only 31 pounds on the scale specially manufactured by Fairbanks Morse & Co.

The scales are designed to show what the user would weigh on the moon where, because of the difference in gravity, objects on the earth's surface are six times as heavy as they would be on the moon.

The first American fighter squadron to operate in World War I was the 103rd Pursuit Squadron, AEF, formed by members of the Lafayette Escadrille. It began operations under control of the French on the Western Front Feb. 18, 1918.

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