

# Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS  
Ranger-Naturalist

On a camping trip to Yosemite National Park I was awakened before dawn by a Scout master. He reported that his scouts were scared half out of their wits by a wolf scream which seemed to come from within a few yards of their tents and the scream was followed by a howl, and then by a wild brush-grating noise.

In the black of night, there was little I could do. But obviously sleep was out of the question. We built a fire and the campfire lit up quite naturally in the darkness. It rained from bats to cougars. From porcupines to wolves. From cougars to grizzlies—and always come back again to the weird cry they had heard just out of their tents.



About bats, that was easy. No, wolves, bats are not blind, even in the daytime. And they do not seek refuge in people's hair.

About porcupines. No, they cannot shoot their quills. Nor are the quills poisonous. But each of the 3,000 or so quills have a series of short, backward-pointing barbs which work deeper and deeper into the flesh of the victim and if not promptly removed, wounds may fester. The quills have been known to work into vital areas of grizzlies, laying low even this largest of American carnivores.

About grizzlies. Grizzlies, like the closely related Kodiak bears, are truly man-killing mammals. They are the only ones in North America. His range is now limited to the Yellowstone area. And as for the Kodiak, it lives in only a few spots in Canada. But even with these animals they will rarely attack unless provoked.

**Skunks Policy**

About skunks. They are polite creatures, asking to be left alone to hunt their beetles, grubs and mice and other such small fare. It is only when someone approaches too close that the skunk will unfurl his banner—fluff out his tail, to give the "stay-clear" signal. That ignored, the skunk will stamp his forefeet. And if that doesn't stop the intruder, the skunk will whirl and let go with both barrels. The noxious secretion can be sprayed with tolling accuracy up to a dozen feet.

About cougars (also called big cat, puma, mountain lion, panther, panther, Mexican lion, deer tiger, tiger, catamount). Although they once ranged over most of temperate North America they are now found mostly in the wilderness areas of the western states with a fairly heavy concentration in northern California. Wherever there are heavy deer populations they will average about one a week. Few campers ever see its tracks and still fewer ever catch a glimpse of this long-tailed cat.

True, when I have walked a trail and turned back to retraced my steps, I have found cougar tracks in my own. But despite all the stories of its attacking man, such attacks are extremely rare, virtually nonexistent. When terrorized or cornered, they may use claws and teeth—and so will a chipmunk. But if the animals are left alone, they will not come hunting for trouble.

**Wolves Shy, Secret**

About wolves. Like the cougar and wildcat, they are shy and secret and prefer to watch rather than be watched. Despite this, the woods are full of stories of men being killed by wolves. As far as I know, not one authentic case exists in America for the past 50 years. The danger is in the imagination.

And now to get back to that alarm. When the sun rose, the scouts investigated. They soon found broken bushes and a jumble of tracks. Then one alert scout found a few hairs on a rock. Near it were some prints in the soft earth. We soon pieced together the story. A raccoon trail went down to a spring where the scouts got their water. That night, while the raccoon was on his way for a drink, he was waylaid by a bear. Apparently, the raccoon saw the bear, at the last moment and screamed in fright. One swipe of the huge claw and the raccoon moaned his last. Then, carrying the raccoon with him, the bear crashed off through the woods and left a scout camp in an uproar.

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**CURIOUS COW CASE**

Swansea, Wales — U.P. — Pilots landing at Fairwood Airport the other night were taking their chances because a cow was in the control tower. She climbed to the top of the 60-foot tower via a three-foot wide spiral staircase.

The first United States troops to reach France in World War I landed May 26, 1917.

# Casualties In Andrea Doria Collision at Sea Cut To 29

New York — U.P. — The list of passengers unaccounted for as a result of the collision of the Italian liner Andrea Doria with the Swedish ship, Stockholm, Sunday night that there were two known dead, 18 "missing and presumed dead" and 37 unaccounted for among the passengers of the lost liner. Two Stockholm crew members were known dead and three others were missing and presumed dead.

The bodies of some of the victims of the collision may be entangled in the twisted remains of the Swedish liner's bow. The Stockholm, whose bow was torn off when it crashed with the Andrea Doria Wednesday night, is in drydock at the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company for an estimate of damage prior to undergoing repairs.

**Senators Ask Curb On Imports of Oil**

Washington — U.P. — Thirty-one Democratic and Republican senators have appealed to the government for assurance that it will take action to limit oil imports to 16.6 per cent of domestic production.

The senators, in a letter to Defense Mobilization Arthur S. Flemming, said oil imports "have continuously exceeded" this ratio despite Flemming's efforts "to obtain a voluntary restraint on these imports through a number of appeals to the importing companies."

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**FEAR PASSENGERS TRAPPED**

Italian Line officials said some of the passengers missing and presumed dead might have been down with the Andrea Doria

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Monday, July 30, 1956

MEDFORD (OREGON) MAIL TRIBUNE—THREE

# Unknown Virus Checked in Chicago

Chicago — U.P. — Authorities were checking today to determine whether some unknown form of virus may be involved in the record outbreak of polio here this year.

There have been 359 cases and nine deaths from the disease so far this year, compared with 66 cases and three deaths for the same period last year. The polio onslaught is the worst in the city since polio records first were kept in 1911.

While authorities checked on the possibility of an unknown virus, they also hoped to find answers to why the outbreak occurred earlier than in previous years and why some 50 per cent of the cases are in an area which contains only 16 per cent of the city's population.

Most of the cases have occurred this year among children five years and younger, the group least inoculated with Salk polio vaccine. Experts believe an epidemic can be averted if all children in this age bracket and pregnant mothers receive inoculations.

**DIVIDENDS DECLARED**

San Francisco — U.P. — Dividends of \$1.50 on preferred stock and \$1.75 on common have been declared by the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company.

"It is our further understanding," the senators said, "that the future programs of these companies... show greater excesses in scheduled imports at a time when domestic production is being curtailed."

It costs the Army \$159.29 to clothe an enlisted man when he enters the service.

New York — U.P. — John Laakso was found sleeping in the wrong bed Sunday and blamed it all on a faulty memory.

Gertrude Neggesmith, 28, found the 42-year-old man in her bed when she arrived at her family's home. She awakened her father who called police. Laakso told the police he and his wife had moved so many times lately he couldn't remember exactly where they lived.

The month with the highest Army reenlistment rate is July. January and February have the lowest reenlistment rates.

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