

Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

The largest animal living, next to the whale, is a cold-blooded fish, the whale shark, first discovered off Capetown in 1828. Specimens up to 45 feet long are on record and some of 60 feet have been reliably reported. Weighing up to 134,000 pounds. This shark, with round white or yellowish spots on a dark gray or brown skin, is harmless to man unless attacked. It often basks and feeds on the surface—and is sometimes rammed by ships. It lives in the warmer areas of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.

The largest fish in North American waters is the great white shark, also called for good

reasons, "the man-eater." It is without question the most dangerous of all sharks. Not only does it main or kill bathers but without provocation will sometimes attack small boats. A specimen taken off the California coast was 36½ feet long. A 21-foot specimen weighed 7,000 pounds. Like many sharks, the females give birth to living young. Its appetite is prodigious: sea lions, seals, sea turtles, and large fish have been found—sometimes in whole condition—on its stomach.



Dangerous as this fish may be, fortunately it is rather scarce. A much more dangerous one is the Piranha—which although only 10½ inches long—has killed perhaps more human beings than the afore-mentioned great white shark. Its powerful jaws, equipped with angular close-fitting razor-sharp teeth, can snap off a finger or toe with grisly ease. Traveling in schools, they can rip the meat off a horse within minutes.

Russian Sturgeon Largest

Of fresh water fish, the giant Russian sturgeon, beluga, found in the Volga river is the largest in the world. It has been measured up to 25 feet in length and a specimen has been weighed at 3,210 pounds. A female of 2,680 pounds contained over 320 pounds of eggs, or roe, enough to provide caviar canapés for an army.

In American waters, a smaller edition, the white sturgeon is the largest fish found entering fresh water—which it does to spawn. It attains weights up to 1,900 pounds. Unfortunately, it is becoming rare due to heavy fishing, pollution, and large dams.

From the sublime to the ridiculous—now for the smallest fish. In the sea, that honor goes to the fully grown male guppy. It is a favorite in home aquariums. Its bright reds, oranges, yellows, greens and violets, its incessant activity, interesting reproductive habits, and above all, its extreme hardiness have made it one of the most popular and best known of all fish. In nature, males rarely exceed ¾ of an inch—smaller than a queen bee. Females grow to about twice that length. It brings forth its

young alive. Broods may be as large as 126. Females may have as many as eight broods after being isolated from all other fish—this begin made possible by the ability to store the male sexual element for many months.

Shortest Backboned Animal

As for the smallest fresh-water fish in the world, that distinction goes to the Pandaka pygmaea of the goby group in the lakes of the Philippines. It is also the shortest backboneed animal known. Adult males never quite reach ¼ of an inch. Females are about twice as long. With the exception of their prominent black eyes, these tiny fish are colorless and practically transparent. Its minute eggs are about 1/64 of an inch in diameter—smaller than the dot at the end of this sentence.

However, if one uses weight instead of length, there are two fishes which are still smaller. They have no common name, but belong to the genus Schindleria. They are tiny, slender, and transparent. The male never exceeds ⅓ of an inch. It weighs perhaps 1/2500th of one ounce—the lightest of all backboneed animals.

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Tape Recording Given At Osteopathic Meeting

A tape recording of the diagnosis and management of acute gall bladder disease by Dr. Philip Thorek, clinical professor of surgery at the University of Illinois, was presented at a recent Southern Oregon Society of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons meeting.

Dr. G. S. Jennings, III, presented the tape. The society also appointed a committee to study the standardization of physicians and fee schedules presented by different insurance companies. Dr. Paul T. Rutter will be host for the January meeting.

Chicory, crocus, hyssop, myrrh, and saffron are words borrowed from Mesopotamia.



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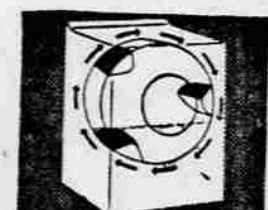
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