

as above set forth bears no apparent relation to the functional sexual activity of those organs, since it occurs from the time of hatching on. So far as the available histological or physiological evidence indicates, sexual activation of ovary and testis in the fowl begins at the earliest not until some weeks after hatching.

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A NOTE ON THE STAR-NOSED MOLE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: On April 20 of this year I discovered a star-nosed mole (*Condylura cristata* (Linn.) Desmarest) entering a half-rotten willow stump at the edge of a little pond in the woods at West Roxbury, Mass. The crevice it had entered proved to be a *cul-de-sac*, and, after watching for some little time its eager efforts to escape by burrowing out, I easily captured it by seizing the tip of the tail between thumb and forefinger. I dropped it on the path close by, where it at once burrowed below the surface of the humus and progressed with some speed there, its progress being indicated by a lengthening ridge of earth. Catching it again, I carried it home wriggling and placed it in a wire cage with a wooden floor. It was very active but, owing, I suppose, to the position of the fore paws, which, of course, were fixed with palms outward, it could not get over the ground very rapidly. In the cage it kept going the rounds, poking its nose between the wires in an effort to escape. I dug some earthworms and placed them one by one in the cage. Apparently the mole's power of scent was nearly or quite as weak as its eyesight, for it paid no attention to the worms unless they were dropped directly in the path it pursued about the edge of the cage. When it actually ran its nose into a worm, however, it ate with astonishing greediness, and in a curiously piggish way, with a constant shaking of the head, and shuffling the worm into its mouth with the help of the *backs* of its "hands," which it moved in unison. It devoured about ten worms before its appetite appeared to flag, but one worm, a

very large, fat one, it abandoned after cutting it into three pieces by transverse bites. Perhaps this worm was uncomfortably large for its mouth and gullet, for it afterwards ate one or two smaller ones. Little or no chewing took place, apparently, and the worm always disappeared down the animal's throat in a very short time. I heard no noise of the teeth in eating, such as Audubon and Bachman mention in describing the feeding of the common mole. A saucer of water put inside the cage, was not noticed for some time, but finally the mole put its nose into it and appeared to drink, with the same continual motion of the head that it used in eating. It tipped the saucer up a little and spilled some of the water, which it then seemed to drink off the board in a way that resembled sponging out the bottom of a boat. It continued the same operation on the dry part of the board, as if it could not tell where the water ended except by feeling. It struck me as a creature of very small intelligence. Its eagerness to escape was perhaps due less to fear than to a desire to get below the surface of the ground and to a habit of perpetual motion that seemed to possess it. I use the word "eagerness" advisedly, for that seemed to be the dominant mental attitude of the little animal. There was nothing frantic or nervous about its actions, simply eagerness to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of earthworms. The tail, and, in fact, the whole body, was very flexible and had a distinctly sneaky suggestion. This was especially noticeable as the animal climbed up and down the crevice in the stump. The mole escaped the same afternoon, so that my observations on its habits are not extensive, but certain mammalogists to whom I have told the story have advised me to put it on record in the pages of SCIENCE.

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WEST ROXBURY, MASS.,

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ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MITE PHYLLO- COPTES SCHLECHTENDALI NALEPA

THE introduction of this mite into the pear and apple orchards of southern Oregon