

bubbles of air. The excess oil will be displaced to form a perfect seal. Immediately, the liquid portion of the medium spreads out between the oil and the cover-slip and the more solid portion of the medium is held firmly in place. The reason for this is apparent when one considers the free surface energy of the system in the light of the high surface tension and low adhesion tension of the oil and the relatively low surface tension and high adhesion tension of the solution in preferentially wetting the glass.

The practice of placing the chamber on the microscope stage and then placing the whole apparatus in an incubator was found to be objectionable. In a prolonged observation of a specific germinating spore or a dividing cell, any movement of the microscope will cause the organism to be carried from the field by the fluid flow or to gravitate. The many warm stages previously described in the literature were found to be unnecessary. In this method, the substage mirror is removed and a standard frosted 40-watt electric light bulb resting on a sheet of asbestos is inserted into the horseshoe base of the microscope. This is capable of providing the optimum temperature ($37 \pm 2^\circ \text{C.}$) for the germination of the spores of the butyl alcohol-acetone group of anaerobes. For other organisms the required temperature can be obtained by changing the distance between the bulb and the stage or by using bulbs of varying intensities.

STANLEY THOMAS

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

ATTEMPTS AT TAGGING SMALL SALAMANDERS IN LIFE HISTORY STUDIES

AMONG the vertebrates, with the exception of small salamanders, fairly satisfactory methods of marking individuals for ready future identification are known. Jaw-tags probably will be satisfactory for tagging larger individuals of such species as *Cryptobranchus* and *Necturus* as they have proved to be with frogs.¹ However, the writer is not aware of any satisfactory tag, commercial or otherwise, which may be used to encircle the jaw of such small salamanders as *Triturus*, *Desmognathus*, *Plethodon*, *Eurycea*, etc. The failure of another method is recorded here, namely, that of inserting a clip through the musculature of the back or tail.

On July 28, 1939, at the Edmund Niles Huyek Preserve, Rensselaerville, New York, a number of adult newts, *Triturus viridescens viridescens*, averaging 95 mm in total length, were tagged with small surgeon's suture clips. These clips are smaller and considerably lighter than any of the commercial types of strap tags which are now on the market. However, they can not be bent over and locked at the tip. Clips were placed

on the newts at various points such as through the musculature of the lower hind leg and about the jaw. They appeared at once to be much too large and heavy and when the newts were liberated in an aquarium they were quickly carried to the bottom and were able to reach the surface again only by great effort. The most satisfactory point to attach them appeared to be through the dorsal part of the tail muscles back of the anus. A few were also marked by inserting a clip through the musculature of the back just anterior of the anus. Several tagged specimens were placed in an aquarium and 17 were liberated in a small pond in a bed of emergent grasses near shore where they had originally been obtained.

After five days this grassy area was seined and several specimens were recovered very close to the spot where they had been liberated. Only one newt which had been tagged through the muscles of the tail was holding the clip securely. In five other recovered newts it had either pulled out, leaving a large hole in the tail or back, or was very loose, and the nearby flesh had a putrid appearance. The entire tail, posterior to the point of attachment of the suture clip, had dropped off in one newt. The tagged specimens placed in aquaria had lost their tags.

Dr. William C. Senning tagged over 500 *Necturus maculosus maculosus* in a limited area in Cayuga Lake near Ithaca, New York, by inserting strap-tags through the muscles of the tail near its base. These tags held well for at least two weeks, the period over which the actual tagging was done. After a lapse of two years the area was collected again, but no tagged *Necturus* were recovered, although many specimens were taken. It can not be assumed that the *Necturus* lost their tags since the marked specimens may have moved out of the area. However, in the absence of evidence to the contrary the success of this method of tagging must be viewed as questionable with *Necturus*.

EDWARD C. RANEY

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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¹ E. C. Raney, *Amer. Midl. Nat.*, 23: 733-745, 1940.