LETTERS

Z. LESZCZYNSKI/ANIMALS ANIMALS

Location, location

A flood of letters places exotic crabs (above) in their home phylum. Buying tritium from the Russians (instead of producing it in the United States) is said (again) to be an advantageous suggestion. Ernest Rutherford is placed at Cambridge University, discovering the nucleus of the atom. And the "biogeography and politics" of endangered species are discussed.

Misplaced Crabs

Concerning the Random Samples item "Green crabs advance north" (11 Apr., p. 203), how the crabs got from California to Oregon is less problematic than how they got from Arthropoda to Mollusca.

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David M. Hillis's comments about the renaissance of phylogenetic approaches in biology (Perspectives, 11 Apr., p. 218) are most interesting. Has *Science* taken the lead, identifing European green crabs as mollusks instead of arthropods?

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No wonder those crabs are green. Someone has turned them into mollusks! Next we will learn that Lassie is a goldfish and Flipper is an eggplant.

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Tritium Supply

With respect to Andrew Lawler's article "Test reactor touted for bomb fuel" (News & Comment, 4 Apr., p. 28), if anyone is concerned about any level of the environmental impact of *any* reactor or accelerator, they would support the suggestion in my editorial "The nuclear fleecing of America" (13 Sept. 1996, p. 1475). If we simply arrange, on an annual basis, to buy tritium from the Russians, we would not only save money (a factor of 10 over the accelerator and a factor of 5 over the reactor), but there would be essentially no environmental impact in the United States—none in the construction, operation, or disposal of the facility years from now.

The Russians have a surplus of tritium, and their reactors that produce the material must keep running because of their need for power production. It's too bad the U.S. Department of Energy can't understand the advantages to such a suggestion.

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Rutherford's Contribution

In the 14 March article "The weighty matter of names" by Erik Stokstad (News & Comment, p. 1570), the discovery of the atom is attributed to physicist Ernest Rutherford. The discovery of the atomic nature of matter was not a single event, but rather the result of years of accumulated evidence. Rutherford's contribution was the discovery that atoms contain a positively charged nucleus much smaller than the actual atom. Rutherford was not an Oxford physicist, as stated in the article. He worked in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University.

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Endangered Species "Hot Spots"

The biogeography and politics of species protection are inexorably linked, as evidenced by the report "Geographic distribution of endangered species in the United