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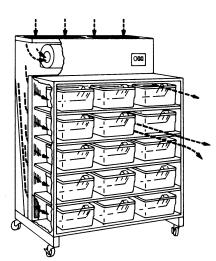


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proved varieties of high-yielding rice developed at IRRI were named and released by the Vietnamese government in November 1973. One more became available in November 1974, and at least two more will be named in April 1975.

The IRRI has also helped the IAR develop research objectives, manpower and facilities requirements, and a training program for a 10-year National Rice Research Program, and we are helping the Ministry of Agriculture find and support a Vietnamese scientist to lead this program.

R. P. Bosshart Cooperative Vietnam Rice Research Project, International Rice Research Institute, Post Office Box Q-11, Saigon 1, Vietnam

### Marine Faunal Areas

In his review (13 Dec., p. 1028) of my book Marine Zoogeography (1), Richard Rosenblatt comments that there is not an explicit statement of criteria to be used in the establishment of regions, provinces, and boundaries, that the chapter on the pelagic realm has a literature list that ends in the 1960's, and that he could not find any mention of the central oceanic gyres. The facts are that the province (the basic zoogeographic unit) is defined in chapter 1 (1, p. 16), the chapter on the pelagic realm refers to five works published in 1970 or more recently, and that the latter chapter also includes a discussion of water masses and currents (1, pp. 335-338) in which the gyres are mentioned.

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#### References

1. J. C. Briggs, Marine Zoogeography (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1974).

## The Big Horn Medicine Wheel

In his article (7 June, p. 1035), John A. Eddy describes the solstitial alignment of the cairns of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel in northern Wyoming and suggests that the heliacal risings of the stars Adebaran, Rigel, and Sirius could have been used as signals of the summer solstice. He also suggests that the 28 irregularly spaced spokes of the Medicine Wheel might

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have been used to mark the days of the lunar cycle and that the circumferential stones depicted the structure of the Sun Dance Lodge or were decorative and not astronomically significant. A quotation from Walker (1) may cast further light on this matter. The preconquest Sioux gave the timing of the Sun Dance, a midsummer festival, as occurring "when the Moon is four hands' breadth above the edge of the world, when the Sun goes down out of sight." This raises the possibility that the Plains Indians were aware of eclipse seasons and that the 28 spokes functioned as an eclipse-predicting computer in a manner similar to the 56 Aubrey holes of Stonehenge. Many of the stone rings of England, Wales, and Scotland are not circular, and Hutchinson (2) has discussed the data pointing to a sophisticated grasp of metrology, geometry, and astronomy by the builders of these megaliths. The peculiarly flattened circumference of the Medicine Wheel may ultimately be shown to be geometrically rather than accidentally constructed. The archeological and astronomical studies now in progress by Eddy and his colleagues may clarify these and other speculations about this unique high-altitude observatory and "preliterate" notational systems.

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### References

- R. J. Walker, Anthropol. Pap. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 16 (part 2), 51 (1919).
  G. E. Hutchinson, Am. Sci. 60, 24, 95, 210
- Eddy's article "Astronomical alignment of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel" was excellent, but I would like to add a note. Eddy asks, "Why would a nomadic people wish to mark the solstice?" since this is a practice "more commonly associated with agricultural societies." This problem should be seen in the proper context: in 1700, the "nomadic" big game hunters familiar to homesteaders and John Ford fans were largely agricultural people. The 19th-century bison hunters practiced some agriculture, but their grandparents were even more dependent on agriculture and a sedentary economy. It should also be noted that hunting requires a detailed understanding of seasonal changes.

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