



Those African killer bees which reportedly have been rapidly pushing northward through South America are not due in the United States until much later than previously predicted. In any case, many of the wild horror stories circulated about the aggressive nature of the insects are myth. Dr. Orley Taylor, a University of Kansas entomologist, reports the bees are taking a more circuitous route northward, avoiding the Amazonian rain forest. They probably won't hit the United States until the early 1990s. Taylor also notes that most of the colonies are passive and prolific producers of honey and wax—producing twice as much as the common European honeybee. "It is the one in 100 that gives trouble," says Taylor. Whether the bees will cause problems for American beekeepers is yet unknown, but Taylor thinks the insects might develop more favorable genetic traits as they interbreed with gentler strains on their trip north. The African bee, accidentally introduced into Brazil in 1957, requires a warm climate and could only survive in the southernmost states.

Just before placing the small bird in the trash, as she had other dead birds which had struck her family's picture window during migration, seven-year-old Suzanne Doerger of Westwood, Ohio, noticed that it was wearing two leg bands, one of aluminum and another of blue plastic. Suzanne's mother arranged to have the five-inch-long bird turned over to Arthur Wiseman, curator of ornithology at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, who confirmed Suzanne's chance finding was a rare Kirtland's warbler. Wiseman learned from Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, that the warbler had first been banded as a nestling in Michigan in 1971, and then again in 1973. It marked the first time that a banded Kirtland's warbler had been discovered beyond its Michigan nesting grounds. Though the 358 remaining Kirtland's warblers winter in the Bahamas, few are seen in the winter or on the migratory path in between. The chance of finding a banded bird is extremely rare, as only 10 percent of the entire species is banded at any one time. The Kirtland's warbler that Suzanne found has been made into a study skin at the Cincinnati museum.

One thousand pounds of "Mojave blue lobster" were harvested this fall in the sand dunes of the California desert. Farming of the lobster, actually an Asian prawn (*Macro-*

*brachium rosebergi*) which tastes like a lobster, half-acre pond near Barstow is the brainchild of Gary Daniel, an airline sales representative. After years of experimentation, Daniel has learned to use the naturally brackish water and climate of the area to duplicate the shrimp's natural Asian habitat. The shrimp are hatched in wall-to-wall aquariums in his home and transferred to a desert pond when one centimeter long. Daniel claims the quality of the area remains high and pond development has caused minimal environmental impact. He hopes to eventually harvest 63,000 to 80,000 pounds a year on 40 acres.

A new class of chemicals which are suspected carcinogens, polynuclear aromatics, has been discovered for the first time in birds. A Canadian Wildlife Service research team found the PNAs, pollutants from coal combustion and petroleum products, in herring gulls that breed in Lake Ontario near the city of Kingston, Ontario. While the team did not find gulls with cancers, it did find birth defects, including cleft beaks and splayed legs as well as aberrant behavior. The colony is virtually unproductive, but Dr. David P. Schecter, chief of the Canadian Wildlife Service toxicology section, tentatively attributes lack of reproduction to high levels of organochlorines, such as DDE, PCBs, and dieldrin, also found in the birds. Peakall ventures that the PNA level in the birds may not be overly significant for wildlife but adds, "I think that it's a major potential concern for human health." The same fish consumed by gulls in the Great Lakes are consumed by humans.

A novel energy-saving law—designed to save homeowners 10 percent on their heating and cooling bills—is now in effect in Davis, California. Enacted November 15th and believed to be the first such ordinance in the United States, it requires that all new homes constructed in Davis be designed to harmonize with the local climate for maximum energy efficiency. Buildings must meet minimum insulation standards, have light-colored roofs, and have windows large in size and designed for best use of the sun. In winter, windows will have to be shaded with foliage, overhangs, or shutters. A builder also must meet a minimum standard for energy efficiency, designed specifically to take advantage of the mild Sacramento Valley climate and figured in units of heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer. It is estimated that construction costs will be \$500 higher for new homes but that substantial savings will be realized over the long run. Authors of the code stress that new houses do not necessarily look different from older ones.

A serious loss of hearing accompanied the shift from the world of the dog team to the world of the snowmobile in the North. A survey of 3,770 Eskimos in the Northwest Territories of Canada showed that 33 percent of adults suffered from impaired hearing. In fact, 83 percent of the males in one Baffin Island village—all of whom dash for snowmobiles for long hours in their search for caribou, fish, and other game—were found to have serious hearing difficulties. The hearing loss was proportional to the amount of hunting done and the distance traveled during the hunt. Constant noise levels for the snowmobile driver range from 105 to 120 decibels when the engine is running full

Hanson, D., ed. 1976. Just before placing the small bird in the trash...  
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