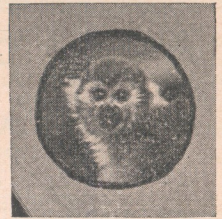




ODD PETS



Raising Rats and Mice

By JACK MORRISON

As pets, white rats have always been popular because of their amusing antics. Rats appear to be more lively than mice. I sell most of my rats for pets in warm weather when the young ones can be seen playing in the runway or on the exercise wheel. A pen of rats situated where the public takes notice of it is a fine advertisement.

Sexual maturity of rats and mice is attained at from two to three months of age. It is best to wait until the age of six months or more before breeding. The gestation period is twenty days and young are weaned when twenty-five days old. The average litter of rats is eight, however, fifteen to twenty is not uncommon. When breeding rats, allow the male to remain in the same pen with one to five females. Remove females to nesting pens when signs of young appear. Sexes should be separated when weaned.

Rats thrive well on a grain diet. Occasionally bread, milk, hard-boiled eggs or lettuce should be given in small quantities. Uncracked nuts may be given occasionally to keep the teeth from becoming overlong. Fresh drinking water should be available at all times. All dishes should be disinfected frequently,

Rats may be housed simply, such as in the following type pen. One pen should be no smaller than fifteen inches wide, thirty inches long and ten inches high. Fine galvanized wire may be used for the floor. There should be a door on top which may also be of wire. A box supplied with nesting materials of paper, straw, cotton, etc., should be placed on the inside of the pen or else a hole may be made in one of the sides and attached to the box on the outside. One of these boxes may be sold along with the rats. However, a smaller pen should be used, preferably eight inches wide, by ten inches long and by six inches high.

Reaction of Small Life to DDT

As experience teaches more about the effects of the wartime insecticide, DDT, some answers have been found to fears that it might do widespread harm. One of these fears was that it was so destructive to small life that it might "upset the balance of nature."

Cameron Siddall, entomologist for the A. and M. College Extension Service, says upon excellent authority that Nature is grossly out of balance when there are extensive outbreaks of insect pests. This is the opportunity for a qualified insecticide to help put Nature back on an even keel.

Mr. Siddall's authority is Dr. P. N. Annand, chief of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Washington. Scientific workers of his bureau in cooperation with other interested agencies have been making increasingly encouraging tests of DDT which would give clearer information as to the effect of the chemical upon beneficial insects, birds, fish and other wildlife.

One of the early fears was that DDT would destroy too many bees, which serve as pollenizers of many crops, especially legumes and fruit. Mr. Siddall quotes Dr. Annand further that test indicate that DDT is not as deadly to bees as was feared. In work so far it has appeared less deadly than the arsenical sprays now commonly used. Moreover, there is evidence that beekeepers may come around to view DDT as a promising relief from arsenical poisoning of bees.

In other fields, especially those requiring large scale use, DDT appears to offer for the first time a practical control for some forest insects. Again quoting Dr. Annand, Mr. Siddall says that the occurrence of these outbreaks in itself is evidence that beneficial insects, birds and other predators have failed to hold down the population. This suggests that a supplement is needed to bring the insect population

more nearly in balance with the vegetation on which it feeds.

Fairly large scale tests of DDT indicate that it may check a pest which is on a rampage and thus actually restore the balance of Nature which would otherwise be destroyed.

Oldest Shoebill in U. S. Dies

Jimmy, the Shoebill, first of its kind in the United States and probably the most famous single bird in the Bronx, New York, Zoo, is dead at the age of 19 years, 3 months and 6 days, having set a longevity record unequalled outside its native Egypt.

The autopsy performed by Dr. Leonard J. Goss, the zoo's veterinarian, revealed that Jimmy died of a chronic kidney ailment, and that "he" was a female—a fact unsuspected by the zoo throughout the years, because male and female Shoebills are identically colored and marked.

Jimmy's huge, shoe-shaped beak and ungainly body had been photographed by countless amateur photographers, for she always stood immovable and unblinking in her summer corral at the north end of the zoo. Last summer an amateur photographer climbed the fence to "pet" Jimmy, and she bit the end of his finger off. Five years ago she was a star performer in the New York Zoological Society's motion picture, "Sweeney Steps Out."

The Shoebill came to the Bronx Zoo in 1926 by way of a missionary stationed in the Sudan.

A Package For the Pet

A card at each table in the Stephen's Restaurant, New Rochelle, N. Y., asks, "Do you like pets?" then goes on to say: "Our chef likes pets and gets a kick out of taking care of them. So, after you have dined with us, won't you please ask your waiter for a Pet Package? It is a selection of the meal's best scraps done up nicely so that you can take it home. There's no charge. We reason that we feed so many of Westchester's best families, we certainly should not overlook their dogs or cats."—*Clementine Paddleford in N. Y. Herald Tribune.*