

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Publications from USDA-ARS / UNL Faculty

U.S. Department of Agriculture: Agricultural
Research Service, Lincoln, Nebraska

10-1895

The Earliest Name for Steller's Sea Cow and Dugong

Theodore S. Palmer
USDA

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usdaarsfacpub>



Part of the [Agricultural Science Commons](#)

Palmer, Theodore S., "The Earliest Name for Steller's Sea Cow and Dugong" (1895). *Publications from USDA-ARS / UNL Faculty*. 477.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usdaarsfacpub/477>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the U.S. Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service, Lincoln, Nebraska at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications from USDA-ARS / UNL Faculty by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Board of Managers of the garden and its Board of Scientific Directors for their wisdom in securing a broad foundation and an assurance of liberal management.

The following papers were read before the Society :

Some notes on a revision of the genus *Mnium*, illustrated with specimens and photographs of types : ELIZABETH G. BRITTON.

The New York Botanical Garden : N. L. BRITTON.

A contribution to a knowledge of North American phycophilous fungi : GEO F. ATKINSON.

The genus *Liviodendropsis* : ARTHUR HOLICK.

The Laboulbeniaceæ : ROLAND THAXTER.

Notes on aquatic fungi : ROLAND THAXTER.

A synopsis of North American rushes : FREDERICK V. COVILLE.

Summary of a revision of the genus *Dicranum* : CHARLES R. BARNES and RODNEY H. TRUE.

Corrections in the description of *Coscinodon Rauai* and *O. Renauldi*, and a comparison of these species : ELIZABETH G. BRITTON

CHARLES R. BARNES.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

A NEW JURASSIC PLESIOSAUR FROM WYOMING.

THE writer has recently been fortunate in finding in the Baptonodon Beds of the Upper Jurassic of Wyoming the remains of a large Plesiosaur, the first of the group from the Jurassic found in America. The horizon is below that of the large Dinosaurs. The precise generic location of the specimen is at present difficult, until more of the specimen has been detached from the hard matrix. It is, therefore, placed provisionally in the genus *Cimoliosaurus*, to which the ascertained characters seem to refer it. The species may be known as *C. rex*.

A centrum of a dorsal vertebra measures

108 mm. in length by 130 mm. in transverse diameter. An anterior cervical centrum is deeply cupped on one end and nearly flat on the other, and measures 65 mm. in length by 80 mm. in width. The arch is united by suture, and the ribs have a single attachment. The femur is about 1200 mm. in length (a portion of the shaft is missing), 375 mm. in width at the distal end, and 300 mm. at the head. A basal phalange is 105 mm. in length, 65 mm. in width at either end and 37 mm. through the shaft.

A full description of the remains found will be shortly given by Professor Williston and the writer. W. C. KNIGHT.

THE EARLIEST NAME FOR STELLER'S SEA COW AND DUGONG.

IN 1811, Illiger published a number of new genera,* proposing among others, *Rytina* for the sea cow of Bering Island and *Halicore* for the dugong of the Indian Ocean. Nearly all recent writers on mammals have adopted these genera, apparently overlooking the fact that both animals had been named before 1811. As early as 1794 Retzius described the sea cow in the 'Handlingar' of the Stockholm Academy of Science, placing it in a new genus which he called *Hydrodamalis*,† and the species, based on the *Vacca marina* of Steller, *Hydrodamalis stelleri*. The generic description is sufficient to identify the animal even if the species and the vernacular name used by Steller had not been given. As *Hydrodamalis* has 17 years priority over *Rytina* it should be adopted as the generic name of the northern sea cow. The earliest specific name is that given by Zimmermann in 1780, and the species should stand *Hydrodamalis gigas* (Zimm.). The abandonment of *Rytina* necessitates a change in the name of the family (*Rytinidae*), which

* Prodr. Syst. Mamm. et Avium.

† Kongl. Vetensk. Acad. nya Handlingar, Stockholm, XV., Oct.-Dec., 1794, p. 292.

may be called *Hydrodamalidae*, there being no other genus in the group.

Lacépède, in 1801, used *Dugong** as a generic name for the sirenian afterwards called *Halicore* by Illiger, but not being a classical word it did not come into general use. As it is the first name for the genus there seems to be no good reason for not adopting it. The specific name was first proposed by Müller in 1776,† who spelled it *dugon*—without the final g. This was evidently not a misprint, as the same spelling occurs twice. The name for the dugong will, therefore, be *Dugong dugon* (Müller), while the unfortunate compound *Dugongidae* becomes necessary for the family, instead of the more euphonious *Halicoridae*.

T. S. PALMER.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

AN INTERNATIONAL ZOÖLOGISTS' DIRECTORY.

MESSRS. FRIEDLÄNDER & SON, of Berlin, have just issued a very useful 'International Zoölogists' Directory' of 740 pp. octavo, containing about 12,000 names and addresses. It includes to a certain degree the official position of each person, for it is not a simple alphabetical list, but has several subdivisions, the classification being primarily geographical by countries. Under the country the towns are given alphabetically, excepting that the capital is placed first. Under each place are given, first, names of those attached to the different educational and scientific institutions (each institution apart), and here the names are given in the order and with the specification of their rank; unattached names follow alphabetically; some names, therefore, appear more than once, but only once in full. There is much supplementary information in brief statements regarding the publications of the different institutions. The specialties of each person are given in

* Mém. de l'Institut, Paris, III, 1801, Nouv. Tabl. Méthod., p. 501.

† Natursystems Suppl., 1776, pp. 21-22.

an abbreviated form, and the names are again classified in a scientific register (37 pp.) at the end under each specialty, and here names of those not authors and merely collectors are designated by an asterisk. Dealers and natural history artists are given last and separately under each place. Separate geographical and personal indexes enable us quickly to find what we may seek in the volume. It is excellently planned and admirably executed. We hope it has come to stay, but it will need constant revision.

NATURAL SCIENCE TRAINING FOR ENGINEERS.

In an article in the *Engineering Magazine* for September, Professor N. S. Shaler considers the question "as to the share of natural science which should be incorporated in the several four-year courses leading to the bachelor's degree in the departments of civil, electrical, mechanical and mining engineering." The reorganization of the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University has made the investigation of this question desirable, and the results of the inquiry have to a great extent been embodied in its schemes of instruction. Sound general instruction in physics, knowledge of the principles of chemistry, an elementary course in geology, a good theoretical training in metallurgy, a certain amount of determinative mineralogy and an elementary half course in geography are enumerated as necessities for every engineer. The time required for the study of these subjects is about four-fifths of the study period of a college year, which is evidently excessive. Prof. Shaler considers that the burden of the student may be considerably lightened by attendance at the summer school of the University, when each student is required to give his time to one course. "It has been found that the six weeks' term, owing to the concentration of attention, serves to carry the pupil