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A Large Red Hydra

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No tuition fees are charged. The expense of getting there is not so great as might he expected, owing to reduced rates to western points. The station is reached over the Burlington and Northern Pacific by stage from Selish to Polson on the lower end of the lake and thence by steamer tri-weekly, or over the Great Northern to Kalispell, by stage four miles to Dlemersville on the Flathead river and thence by steamer.

The station work has so far been eminently successful, due very largely to the untiring energy of the director, Prof. M. J. Elrod. I believe he has started what will finally become the most famous fresh water station in this country.

A LARGE RED HYDRA.

BY MAURICE RICKER.

During the summer session of the University of Montana Biological Station, we found what is believed to be a new hydra. It was taken in large numbers from Echo lake, Flathead county, Montana. It has never been found in any of the other numerous streams or lakes in this vicinity, and so far as is known no other hydra has ever been collected in the state.

The following are some of its most noticeable characteristics: The animals are conspicuous on account of their bright coral red color and large size. In fact, one can recognize them as hydra while standing on logs. A fair sample of the larger ones measured, when feeding, five-eighths inch from the mouth to the proximal end. None of the tentacles of this hydra were less than two and one-half inches long, measured from the mouth to the end, and the longest was two and eleven-sixteenths inches, making a total length from tip to tip of three and five-sixteenths inches.

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When feeding, the tentacles are capable of unusual extension until they seem a mere thread bearing noticeably large nematocysts, like beads strung on a string.

The color is a deep bright coral red, most intense near the distal end and seems to be distributed in chloroplast like granules, as in H. viridis. It is apparently constant and may be due to symbiotic algae.

Since the waters of Echo lake contain large numbers of a reddish Daphnia, and, thinking the question of their effect on the color of the hydra would arise, a number of the latter were taken alive, and fed for five weeks upon colorless entomostraca, from Flathead lake, at the station laboratory. While they did not seem to thrive, no noticeable dimming of the color bodies was observed.

A careful study of the literature and of hydra from various localities will be made. Some eight species have been described but only two are at present allowed. This one seems to possess as much difference as is found between the H. fusca and H. viridis and careful study should either reduce them all to varieties or establish at least three species.

The striking color; the large size; the isolation of the animals from related forms; the apparent division of the body into a stalk and an enlarged gastric cavity, of about equal length; the removal of gonads and buds beyond this apparent division altogether seemed to make it worthy of notice. Histological examination will be made and it is believed the characters enumerated will prove constant and new.