

Expedition encounters giant South American rat in Cypress River basin

By HUDSON OLD
Journal Publisher

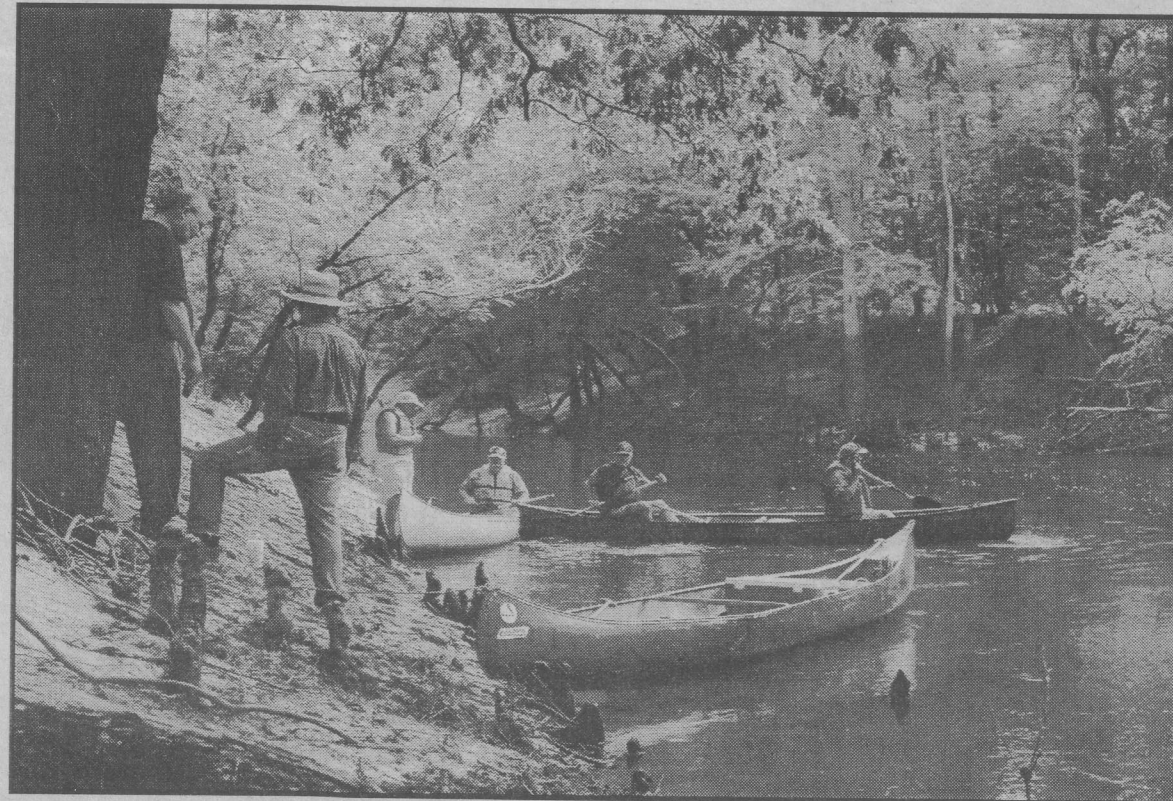
It might have been a beaver on stilts with its tail shot off.

Six witnesses saw it, all sober as a Baptist Convention for it was but the ninth hour of a river-morning Sunday on the Cypress upstream of Jefferson.

"Look!" veteran river rat Kenny Thompson called from the lead boat and we turned as one to see it trundling down the riverbank, moving snout first into the current and vanishing.

With an even half dozen eye witnesses, seconds later we were already in disagreement about what we'd seen.

"That thing weighed two hundred pounds," I said.



"A hundred," retired Houston cop Paul Lindsey said, halving my guess on the

spot. "A hundred and a quarter." Familiar with factual

disputes, Mt. Pleasant counselor Robert Rolston withheld comment.

In the bow of former attorney general's office special prosecutor Mac Cobb's boat, Pittsburg Realtor Royal Wertz flicked his fishing rod and cast through air so quiet beneath the trees over the stream you could hear the whir of his ancient Zebco 33 spinning out line.

"Capybara," he said, watching his lure hit the water in possible line with the last known direction of travel of whatever it was.

Native to South America, *Hydrochoerus Hydrochaeris* is the world's largest semi-aquatic rodent. It's got webs between its three little toes.

"It's a big rat," Mr. Lindsey researched and discovered the next day,

(See Capybara, page 8)

Long term Relationships





'I don't know how they got there but yours is the third or fourth message I've gotten over the last few years from people who've seen them in Texas.'

-- Linda Lombardi, AP columnist

Texas sighting, I zipped a photo of quality similar to those grainy tabloid shots of the Loch Ness Monster to

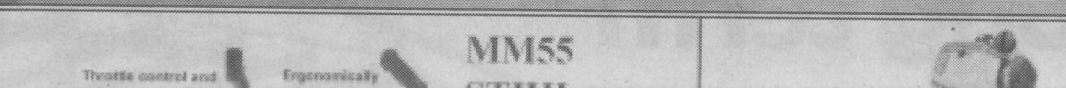
rebsig.com.

"I don't know how they got there but yours is the third or fourth message I've

gotten over the last few years from people who've seen them in Texas," said
(See Capybara, page 9).

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In keeping with the tabloid tradition of grainy, strange swamp animal photography these shots of the capybara spotted on the Cypress are pretty lousy.

(Capybara, from page 7)

zipping out cyberspace links to *The Capybara Page*. "They live in herds and fully mature weigh between a hundred and a hundred and forty pounds."

See for yourself at rebsig.com/capybara/ where you'll find another sighting reported downstream of Jefferson, not that far from the Louisiana line near Shreveport.

To substantiate our latest

The



(Capybara, from page 8)

webmaster, former zoo keeper and Associated Press columnist Linda Lombardi. "They're definitely in Florida and I've gotten reports from other states like Louisiana and Missouri.

"With such widespread reports over a number of years I'm guessing they have to be breeding out there," she said.

When spooked they'll make it to water if they can, claims Internet lore.

A moment after slipping

into the creek, capy surfaced downstream for a look, didn't like what it saw and submerged again.

Slightly rounded, the crescent of its head slipped up again near the shore, holding there as our boats glided past.



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MASON'S

BARGAIN OF THE MONTH

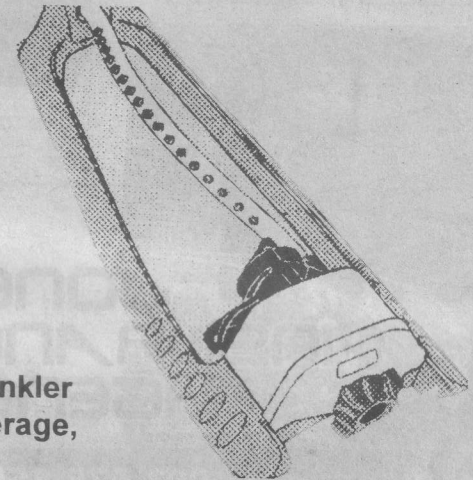
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