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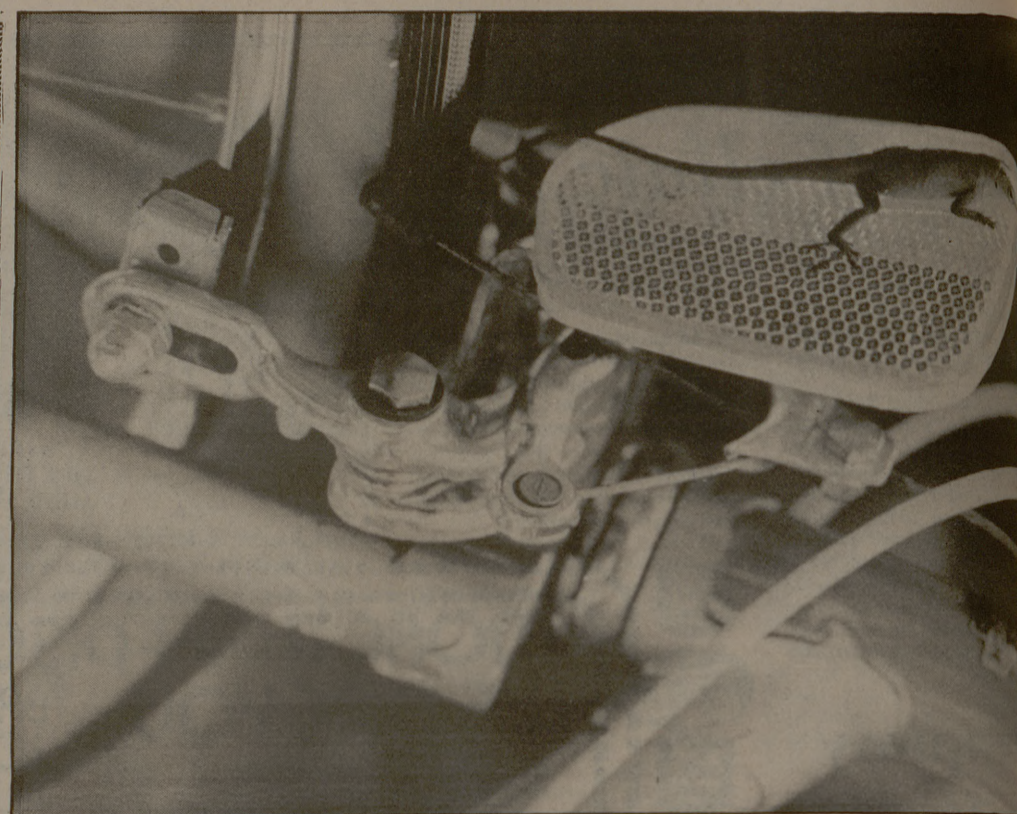
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Move fast, my man, my date awaits

A lizard suns itself on a bicycle reflector as it joins the machine in a rest between classes. The cyclist, Ed Cunniss, also the photographer, caught the scene near the Harrington building Tuesday.

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Breeding programs help

Extinction rate increases

By DOUG GRAHAM
Battalion Staff

The topic was the death of species, but a baby jaguar proved himself both alive and a ham Tuesday night at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine.

Bill Calfee from Exotic Wildlife

Unlimited, a local firm that specializes in raising and breeding exotic wild animals, brought the 4-month-old cub to a meeting of the Humane Society of Brazos County.

Calfee, who has been handling animals professionally for eight years, used the cub, Zapata, to ac-

cent his talk.

He spoke on extinction. The rate of extinction has increased to 100 species per year. The reason is the effect on ecology, he said. Present climatic change or competition among species caused most extinctions, Calfee said, adding that extinction was a natural part of evolution.

Today, however, destruction of species is taking place faster than evolution of new ones. Habitat destruction by urban expansion, highway construction, mining and industrial pollution is causing most of the new extinction, he said.

Even though strip miners seek to replace the earth and plant life, trees, birds like the ivory-billed Woodpecker are dying out, Calfee said, because that bird needs old forests with dying insect infested trees for food.

Other endangered animals include grizzly, sable antelope, and California Condor, Calfee said. They are being exterminated either by destruction of their feeding and living spaces, or by being hunted for trophies or fur, he said.

To combat this decline, Calfee said, zoos and operations like Exotic Wildlife Unlimited are putting breeding programs into operation.

Thus there are many animals in captivity that so not exist in the wild. The black-maned Atlas is one example, he said. Almost all sable antelopes live in captivity, he said, too, he said.

Zoos are beginning to cooperate more on breeding of exotic animals and they are beginning artificial insemination programs, Calfee said.

Though there is an overabundance of some animals in zoos — he mentioned lions in particular — Calfee said they would not do any good to introduce animals to their natural habitats. He said that unless damage to the environment was rectified, "you'll just place a heavy burden on those animals who managed to survive."

He said that, in effect, if you caused the animal to become extinct initially was not remedied, that animal would just become extinct again in that area.



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