

was made for the robber, which was at last discovered between a snow drift and a building in a hole formed by the thawing of the snow beneath. By means of smoke and some poking (which occasioned a very strong odour) a skunk was dislodged and shot. It proved to be a female that would have shortly produced young. It was broadly striped and measured 27 inches in length, with an additional three inches of hair on the tail. The weight was seven pounds two ounces.

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### A VIVIPAROUS SNAKE.

On a small island one and a half miles above the Chat Falls, Ottawa River, Mr. E. E. Lemieux on October 1st last, killed a large milk snake (*Natrix sipedon*) in which he found forty-one young snakes averaging about 8 inches in length. It was killed at 10.30 in the morning when the sun was shining brightly, and when first seen was taking a sun bath quietly coiled up on a flat rock close to the river. It measured four feet from head to tip of tail. It was not skinned until the following morning, when the young snakes were of course all found to be dead. They were coiled singly and crowded together. On the morning of October 3rd—another bright day—a live young snake of exactly the same size was found under a stone near the same spot, probably one of the same family.

As this seemed a very late date at which to find the young of this snake still unborn, Dr. Leonard Stejneger, the well known herpetologist was written to and the following is his reply in part:

"This snake brings forth living young, 40-50 at a time, during the autumn. In New York the records cover a time from August 17th to September 30th. Several other snakes of similar habits are known and the births of the young often cover a much longer period. It does not seem probable that the female carries the young over to spring. In the first place I know of no record of very early births of these snakes; second, I know of no record of females having been captured while hibernating which had fully ripe embryos; third, there seems to be no good reason why the young should not go immediately into hibernation themselves; and further, even if such an abnormally late brood should perish it would mean very little in the economy of so prolific a species."

In this connection it may be said that there is no foundation in fact for the popular belief that female snakes swallow their young when danger threatens.

J. M. M.