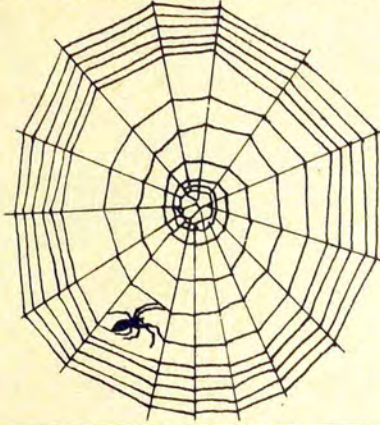


Eating around

Look closely at this web. You will see two spirals; the widely spaced inner one runs clockwise and the closely spaced outer one, anti-clockwise. The spider spins the inner one first and then, even as it begins to spin the outer one, which is sticky, it *eats* the inner spiral. A remarkable example of how to have your web and eat it too!



Pheasants walk, they don't fly. Except, of course, in short bursts to escape from danger. Why, when they know how to fly, do they prefer to walk most of the time? The answer lies in the constitution of their flight muscles. As these muscles are incapable of quick respiratory exchange the result is oxygen starvation, or breathlessness.

All of us have experienced breathlessness, after undertaking some particularly strenuous exercise and would therefore understand the pheasant's plight—flight simply tires the bird out.

A snow leopard was once observed leaping 49 feet uphill over a ditch.

The world's smallest mammalian carnivore is the dwarf weasel which measures less than seven inches from nose to tail.

Why no rhino?

For over 50 million years the great Indian rhino has survived in Asia as it was able to secure for itself an ideal niche in the swampy terrain of the Himalayan foothills. Poaching and habitat destruction in recent years, however, threatens to terminate the rhinos' long 'innings'. Alarmed at this situation, conservationists have very correctly pointed out that alternative sites must urgently be identified to relocate some of the remaining few animals so as to avoid placing all our eggs in one basket. Unfortunately, misguided elements in Assam, where the rhinos are located, wish to oppose any proposal to shift the rhinos out of the state. The reason? Because they feel Assam's tourist monopoly will cease! Such a narrow outlook bodes ill for tomorrow's India. Wild animals do not recognise political boundaries. In fact they cross over international borders everyday. Politics has sullied almost every walk of life everywhere. Is it too much to ask influential political leaders to show more sensitivity (and intelligence) where our future generation's natural heritage is concerned?

Red eye

Desert animals will do everything in their power to conserve moisture. Why then do we observe the phenomenon of the horned lizard periodically squirting *blood* out of its eye sockets? No one really knows but here are two guesses. May be *you* could think of other reasons! First squirting blood may be a way of deterring predators. Second, it may be a poison disposal system. That's it. For further possibilities, your guess is as good as ours.

