

ENTOMOLOGY

### Insect Activity Photos By Electronic Flash Device

➤ A MOSQUITO does not seem to mind having its picture taken with an electronic flash, reports a scientist in *Nature* (June 22).

Usually insect picture-taking is made difficult since the firing of an ordinary flash bulb will send them flying away. Now photographing insects with the electronic flash offers scientists a new way of recording their activities, especially at night. In one test of the flash, it was placed 11 and one-half inches from some mosquitoes and failed to disturb them when it was fired.

The apparatus designed to record insect activity consists of a recording camera synchronized with the electronic flash. The flash lights the chamber containing the animals from the back through two plates of opal glass. One of these plates is the back wall of the chamber while the front wall is a glass plate which admits light simulating both day and night. The insects in the experiment described were photographed every minute.

The difference in one insect's position as recorded in two photographs can be used as a unit for expressing animal activity.

Erik T. Nielsen of the Florida State Board of Health's entomological research center in Vero Beach, who performed the experiment, says perhaps the greatest value of the method is that it lets the scientist see what the animals are actually doing undisturbed by any artificial surroundings and without handling them.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

## Do You Know?

Fluorescence can be used to analyze complex mixtures and check products against harmful impurities.

In king crab meat the non-protein nitrogen fraction is especially abundant, suggesting that there is a high free amino acid content which could help to explain the high rate of *spoilage* of crab meat.

In 1900, *life expectancy* at birth was 49 years; today it is 70.

The Great Plains region is one in which fresh *ground-water* supplies are generally deficient, but is underlaid by geological formations containing saline water at moderate depths.

Water-flooding used to promote the flow of *oil* from wells has resulted in the production of 12,300,000 barrels of Kansas petroleum that might otherwise have remained underground.

The "*common cold*" affects 25% of all U. S. working adults in January and February alone.

The Atlantic *octopus* deposits up to 180,000 eggs.

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