

The criterion used was simply the presence or absence of soft pellets in the stomach. In 135 of the rabbits examined a note was also kept of the contents of the rectum; in only 4 cases did it contain soft faecal pellets, whereas in 19 cases they were found in the stomach. It is clear from this that the process of formation and evacuation of soft faecal pellets takes a comparative short time and is evidently not a process which is going on continually during the day resting period of the wild rabbit. This is what would be expected, if, as Eden³ maintains, the production of dry faecal pellets goes on most of the time, interrupted at certain points by a rapid emptying of the deeper part of the caecum and production of soft pellets.

Period (G.M.T.)	No. of rabbits examined	Per cent stomachs with pellets
21 — 2 hr.	12	33
2 — 6	62	0
6 — 11	30	86
11 — 14	17	88
14 — 16	21	86
16 — 19	9	45
19 — 21	41	5
Total ...	192	

The accompanying table summarizes data from 192 rabbits. The periods are unequal because it was difficult, when collecting field data at other people's convenience, to narrow down the time of death to within the same range of time all through the twenty-four hours. The number of stomachs containing soft pellets is expressed as a percentage of the total for each period.

It is clear that at this time of the year (March 9–12) there are two periods during the twenty-four hours when refection of faeces takes place. The main period is, as Taylor suggested, during the day from 6 a.m. until 4 p.m., though it is not quite accurate to say that soft pellets are not found during the morning: it would be more accurate to substitute "late night and early morning". From 4 until 7 p.m. the rate of occurrence falls to 45 per cent and from 7 until 9 p.m. it is only 5 per cent. This drop corresponds with the normal commencement of feeding at this season. From 9 p.m. until 2 a.m. there is a smaller peak, and then again, when late night and early morning feeding commences, there is a drop right down to 0 per cent. In practically all rabbits examined at this time the stomach was crammed with fresh food.

These data are confirmed by activity records made at an experimental rabbit warren. The area was wired round with netting: the rabbits went out to feed through gates which operated mercury switches and recorded the time. Through March feeding activity showed peaks at dusk and just before and after dawn.

The apparent discrepancy between my previous observations and the observations given by Taylor² is explained by the fact that the morning occurrences of refection observed by me would come just at the beginning of the large day-time peak: rabbits shot during the early morning activity period would be earlier than this. The lack of observations of evening refection is probably accounted for by the process taking place inside the warrens.

These results, of course, only apply to a season

when day and night are equal. In summer, when the shorter nights give less feeding time, it is possible that the rhythm may change.

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¹ Southern, H. N., *NATURE*, **145**, 262 (1940).

² Taylor, E. L., *Vet. Rec.*, **52**, 259–62.

³ Eden, A., *NATURE*, **145**, 628–9 (1940).

A Substitute for Glycerine as a Mounting Medium

FIFTY per cent glycerine which is widely used as a temporary mounting medium for sections of plant tissues is now difficult to get. Instead, a nearly saturated solution of calcium chloride can be tried. Put excess of commercial calcium chloride in tap water, remove the slight amount of chalk with hydrochloric acid, let any bits settle and filter if necessary. This solution is rather similar to 50 per cent glycerine in viscosity, refractive index and, of course, will not dry up. At pre-war rates it is a good deal cheaper than 50 per cent glycerine. It can be used in just the same way as glycerine with such stains as iodine, Sudan III, alcoholic phloroglucin (but not alkalis or sulphates). If the bulk of the calcium chloride is removed by washing the section in water or alcohol for a moment, it can be stained and dehydrated in the ordinary way.

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Simplification of Musical Notation

JEANS'S great work on music is difficult for the ordinary physicist, if he knows nothing of music, and for the musician, not readily understandable, if he be unsympathetic to physics. There seems a moral to be drawn from it, however, that has been missed. It is, how can we make music simpler so that more people can play, anyhow to start with, the basic instrument—the piano.

I wonder if I shall awaken a chord in the youth of many when I say I tried like others when young, but found it just too difficult, and its difficulty lies in its notation. I maintain, in that all have been taught to read thoughts from printed paper, by virtue of conjuring up sounds to the brain as speech, so it should be simple to devise a method by which we could hit the correct notes indicated on a piece of written music with the facility we do the typewriter. The reason we cannot do this is that there is a conspiracy against us to make it difficult, and it is wrapped up with sharps and flats.

I will not go into the details why *A* sharp and *B* flat are not theoretically the same note, but due to what is known as 'equal temperament', they are in fact on the piano actually the same note. What is the point of making such a fuss to discriminate between the two, when all that can be struck is the one note?