ONE OF AMERICA's most unique strains of dogs—the Catahoula hog dog—now is little more than a memory in the minds of Louisiana's sportsmen and stock breeders, and is still as profound a mystery in its rapid extinction as it was regarding its origin.

Dr. J. W. Scott, a typically fine, old "country doctor" who could have been the original for Norman Rockwell's characterization of the gentle doctor on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post, is believed to be one of the leading authorities in the State relative to the Catahoula hog dog, its use and its characteristics.

Dr. Scott, who now practices in the pine region of Ponchatoula, vividly recalla his initial practice in Winnfield and Winn Parishes when they were a bountiful lumber and stock area, about 35 years ago, and the Catahoula hog dog was then herding itself into legendary proportions with its exploits in driving and herding hogs in that region.

"I will never forget my first meeting with the Catahoula hog dog," Dr. Scott will announce when you mention stock dogs.

"I was living at the edge of the town when I saw a man on horseback, and two of the dogs, driving and herding a pack of wild hogs to a new location. There were 41 hogs in that herd.

"Those two dogs, one driving from the front, and the other trailing behind, to harrow and recoup strays, along with the rider executing simple commands, drove those hogs in the easiest manner possible.

"The driving dog, or what you might call the lead dog, would agitate the hogs into following him, allowing them to nearly overtake him and then drawing away. Throughout the trek, they continued to follow him.

"All the man on horseback would have to do is alter the course of the herd was to shift his position to either side of the pack. The dog would always maintain the herd between the rider and himself. I was deeply impressed by the intelligence of these dogs.

"Being a sportsman and stock owner I began searching into their background. It

seems that they were first used as hog dogs in Catahoula Parish. Prior to that they were used as yard dogs.

"These dogs are very easily trained in the stalking or herding of wild hogs. They can be readily to hunt, or drive, by the time they are a year old. They usually

reach their peak at about two and one-half to three years of age.

"As a hunter he is excellent in searching out hogs. The wilder and fiercer the hogs, the better the dog likes it. The hogs have an instinctive dislike for these dogs and stalk them. When the hogs give chase

they further their dislike for him by barking and biting at them—all the while, leading them to prearranged traps.

"The hunter, of course, guides the pack by shifting his position from right to left to lead them and the dogs to the trap. In hunting the hogs for the purpose of shooting them, the hunters are placed in prearranged spots, and the dogs will lead the hogs past them.

"In addition to herding and driving hogs, the Catahoula cur is very capable in driving other stock—goats, cattle and sheep. If the prospective young are intended to drive stock other than hogs, the

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CATAHOU LA CUR . . .
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mothers are placed in association with the

type stock that the young will later be

instructed in handling.

"The Catahoula cur is a remarkably in-
telligent stock dog. He can be trained to
handle any type of stock—but, his first
love is stalking wild hogs. Yes sir, he is a
wonderful animal," summarized the kindly
doctor in reminiscing of a unique strain of
dog that is now practically extinct.

Dr. Scott says that although the dogs are
known to have originated in the Cata-
houla Parish area, their exact origin can
not be ascertained. Some say they were
nurtured by the Catahoula Indians, of the
Catahoula Parish region, and then passed
into the hands of the white settlers. The
latter used them as yard dogs, watch dogs
and for hunting wild hogs.

It has been established, the doctor says,
that the Catahoula cur has been prominent
as a hog dog for a good many decades.
His ability and intelligence, in seeking out
stock and herding them, as well as his use
in leading wild hogs into the proximity
of sportsmen, made him soon useful in
handling other stock.

The Catahoula hog dog, Dr. Scott ex-
plains, is becoming extinct because the
areas in which he was the predominant
stock dog have deteriorated as concen-
trated regions of stock raising. This has
caused the breeding of the dog to be neg-
lected; removing it from its thoroughbred
rating.

Dr. Scott avers that the genuine Cata-
houla hog dog is characteristically recog-
nized for its "glass" or whitish eye and
bobbed tail. The dogs, who are of the
short-haired variety, are built along the
lines of a bulldog, stocky of shoulders, but
of long sturdy legs.

They are leopard-spotted of blue and
black, or brown and black, on a white
background about the legs and neck.

The coat of the Argali, mountain sheep
of Armenia, is a mixture of wool and
hair. The wool retains the body heat and
the outer coating of hair throws off the
moisture from the dense undergrowth
through which the animal ranges.

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such a department as wildlife and fisheries
is comparable to trying to handle 5 p. m.
traffic at Texas and Marshall with a
board of eight pollicemen—one for cars,
one for trucks, one for bicycles, one for
pedestrians, and so on.

"Louisiana's wildlife and fisheries pro-
vide a combination of sports and business.
On one side is hunting and fishing for
pleasure. On the other is commercial fish-

ing and fur-trapping, each a major Louisi-
aiana industry. A commission member
from the pine hills of North Louisiana
hardly could be competent to decide how
to protect Gulf Coast oyster beds.

"There is a vast difference between the
illegal wildlife commission plan and
Judge Kenyon's very worthy proposal for
a state highway board established by con-
stitutional amendment and with staggered
terms to prevent gubernatorial control.

"Highways are a single, continuing and
unchanging problem dealing with tens of
millions of dollars of public tax money
during the four-year term of each admin-
istration. The highway department is not
engaged in proposing legislation or prose-
cuting law breakers. Its work is simply
planning, constructing and maintaining
roads. It deals with the people's money
but not with their personal actions. It is
a big spending agency—the second largest
of the state.

"Administration of wildlife and fish-
eries involves activities chiefly of people
—of the citizenry rather than the citi-
zen's tax money. Its problems change
almost as often as the moon and range
from commercial operations to recreation,
from squirrels to mallards, from fishing
as a business to stocking bayous with in-
land perch. The department fundamen-
tally is a law enforcement agency, with
certain leeway as to establishment of
policies.

"Board or commission control over
highway development and spending is a
step toward efficient use of public funds.
Board or commission operation of wildlife
and fisheries is simply spreading bureau-
cracy in its most evil form.

"If the wildlife and fisheries depart-
ment needs strengthening, the need rests
in stiffer laws—which only the legislature
can provide no matter how many commis-
sions are established—and in stronger en-
forcement, which no number of commis-
sions could guarantee."

The two most poisonous snakes in the
world are said to be the tiger snake of
Australia and the island viper which is
found on a small island off the coast of
Brazil.

The largest frog is the Goliath frog of
West Africa. Its large thigh bones are
highly prized by the natives for use in
ceremonial rites.