

they have lost.* The mules and horses appear less frightened; their manes are no longer bristled, and their eyes express less dread. The gymnoti approach timidly the edge of the marsh, where they are taken by means of small harpoons fastened to long cords. When the cords are very dry the Indians feel no shock in raising the fish into the air. In a few minutes we had five large eels, most of which were but slightly wounded. Some others were taken, by the same means, towards evening.

The temperature of the waters in which the gymnoti habitually live, is from 26° to 27°. Their electric force diminishes it is said, in colder waters; and it is remarkable that, in general, animals endowed with electromotive organs, the effects of which are sensible to man, are not found in the air, but in a fluid that is a conductor of electricity. The gymnotus is the largest of electrical fishes. I measured some that were from five feet to five feet three inches long; and the Indians assert that they have seen them still larger. We found that a fish of three feet ten inches long weighed twelve pounds. The transverse diameter of the body, without reckoning the anal fin, which is elongated in the form of a keel, was three inches and a half. The gymnoti of the Caño de Bera are of a fine olive-green. The under part of the head is yellow mingled with red. Two rows of small yellow spots are placed symmetrically along the back, from the head to the end of the tail. Every spot contains an excretory aperture. In consequence, the skin of the animal is constantly covered with a mucous matter, which, as Volta has proved, conducts electricity twenty or thirty times better than pure water. It is in general somewhat remarkable, that no electric fish yet discovered in the different parts of the world, is covered with scales.†

* The Indians assured us that when the horses are made to run two days successively into the same pool, none are killed the second day. See, on the fishing for gymnoti, "Views of Nature." (Bohn's ed., p. 18.)

† We yet know with certainty only seven electric fishes; *Torpedo narke*, *Risso*, *T. unimaculata*, *T. marmorata*, *T. galvanii*, *Silurus electricus*, *Tetraodon electricus*, *Gymnotus electricus*. It appears uncertain whether the *Trichiurus indicus* has electrical properties or not. (See Cuvier's *Règne Animal*, vol. ii.) But the genus *Torpedo*, very different from that of the rays properly so called, has numerous species in the equatorial seas; and it is probable that there exist several gymnoti