

The Lake Niangua Extrusion

Lake Niangua is an extremely shallow lake in Camden county, Missouri. Ostensibly. Well, yes, it really is a shallow lake. You can fish there, and everything. Just don't do a chromosomal analysis of the fish, because their DNA is left-handed.

And it's not just the fish; the entire ecosystem of that lake is left-handed -- or, to (mis)use the technical terms: the ecosystem there displays mostly Z-DNA helical structures instead of Earth's more usual B-DNA structures. Which seems to make the fish look weird and taste a little funny, but that's about it. But what makes the situation very strange is that the effect is absolutely limited to that one lake; flora and fauna taken from it (or introduced to it) prove remarkably difficult to transplant.

Of course, the government -- and various scientific organizations -- have been analyzing the lake for the last forty years. Quietly. *Very* quietly, mostly because this place flat-out contradicts a lot of what biologists think that they know about their field of study, and does so in a way that practically guarantees getting one's career killed. There's also maybe some evidence that the ecosystem is being

restocked from somewhere else, which alarms people when they think about it too long. But, everything's been quiet, and has been so for decades, so why look for trouble?

Well, everything **was** quiet. This morning a couple of researchers masquerading as fishermen came across a scene where something apparently came out of the lake and ate a deer, then went into the woods. One look at the sucker marks on the remains of that deer was enough to make the government decide to call in a team more suited for beating the bushes for... whatever this creature is.

So good luck, and good hunting. But try to keep it alive, OK? Or at least not turned into pate. There may be things to learn about it.

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