



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Pictures available

SIAMESE SUE --- SUCCESSOR TO SUPER-DIAMOND --- MAKES DEBUT

Today, Siamese Sue makes her debut. Meeting the public for the first time today, Sue -- a small, two-headed, green river turtle -- goes on stage at the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium in the Commerce Building, Washington, D. C.

A shy little thing, poor Sue is hesitant about sticking her necks out. She's heard about SUPER-DIAMOND, the world's most publicized turtle, and she has to take his place. Two-headed Super-Diamond, died recently (presumably from splitting headaches), and the public mourned -- especially those who hadn't yet seen him. Sue Pseudemys was sent from Louisiana by a talent scout to take Super-Diamond's place. It's an honor for the Pseudemys family -- fresh-water river turtles -- because Sue's predecessor was a salt-water marsh terrapin.

The talent scout was Julius J. Harris of Maringouin, Louisiana, who found Sue, with her normal brothers and sisters, hatched out in his backyard sandpile. Harris sent Sue to John C. Pearson, Director of the FWS Aquarium, who promptly started grooming her for the lead role played by Super-Diamond. Shy little Sue was not very aggressive, and had to be coaxed to eat. Now she is doing fine, and her two heads are very polite -- letting each head take its turn eating proffered white worms, which are the mainstay of her diet.

Actually, the only reason that Sue can be called a she is on the basis of her personality. Shy, polite, and rather pretty (for a turtle) it seems quite evident that Sue is a little girl turtle -- but, if not, no one will ever know the difference.

Generally speaking, a two-headed turtle has personality troubles -- one head wanting to go to the right, and the other head anxious to turn left. But Sue is very cooperative with herself, and the first head that has an idea gets to use it. She swims well and has little trouble in locomotion. The only trouble is that when one head wants to stop to look at something the other head has to wait too -- gawking absent-mindedly in the other direction.

Like Super-Diamond, Sue is only a little bigger than a half-dollar, but her personality is entirely different from his, Super-Diamond was aggressive. His two heads would quarrel over a morsel of food, and he wore himself out getting nowhere while his two heads tried to take his one body in two directions.

~~Two-headed-turtles~~ are a little-understood freak of nature. But the "principle" involved is an early division in the embryo -- similar to that which produces twins. In Siamese Sue and Super-Diamond that early division was not complete, resulting in just two heads.

The FWS Aquarium is downstairs in the Commerce Building, on 14th Street between E and Constitution Avenue, N.W. The aquarium is open from 9:00 to 5:00 daily, except Christmas.

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