

The naked mole rat from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, shown here in a scientist's hand, has researchers excited over its curious insect-like behavior. In the wild, the tiny mammals congregate in large underground colonies that are dominated by gueens. Colonies are now being studied at the University of Michigan and Cornell University.

Strange Insect-Like Mammals Discovered

WASHINGTON - Colonies of the naked mole rat, an extraordinary African mammal that behaves like an insect, have been set up in laboratories at the University of Michigan and Cornell University.

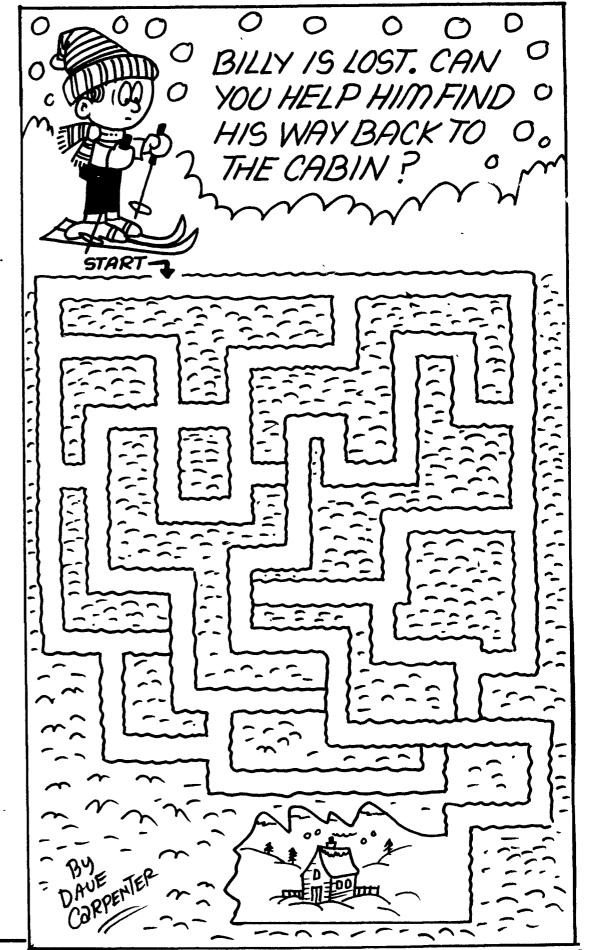
The naked mole rats' appearance is almost as bazarre as their behavior. The almost hairless rodents have bodies resembling little sausages and two protruding front teeth that make them look

like pocket-size walruses.

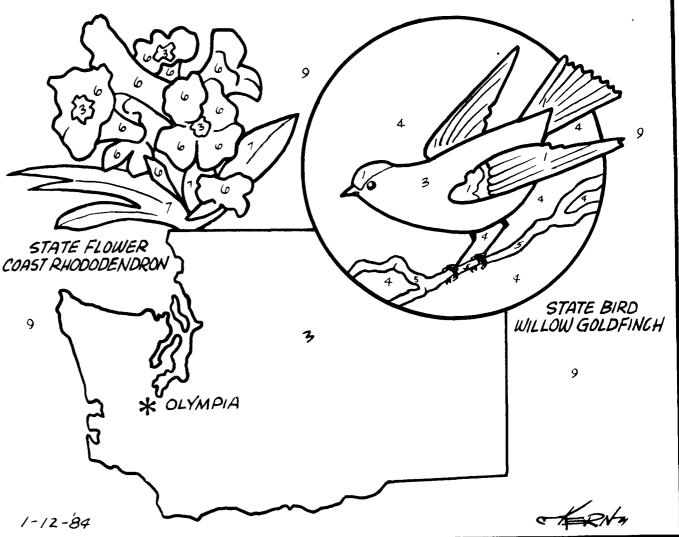
They've been described as "one of God's ugliest creatures," but in the eyes of some beholders, the weird-looking animals are beautiful to watch because of their behavior.

"They're the most insect-like mammals I've ever seen," says Paul W. Sherman, assistant professor of neurobiology and

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