

Hivers

The most commonly encountered intelligent life forms all follow the same patterns: they are vertebrates, with a head on top, a torso, arms extending to the sides, legs below supporting the body. With few exceptions, intelligent races are some variation of the human example, and there is good reason for this phenomenon. Where evolution produces many different details in physiology and anatomy, the upright, bilaterally symmetrical human model is efficient at being intelligent and using that intelligence. The Aslan, Vargr, and Droyne can all be seen as variations of the human model (although the Aslan, for example, instead see the Droyne, Vargr, and humans as variations of the Aslan model). Even the centaur-like K'kree are classifiable as merely an extreme variation of the human model.

In the diversity of the universe, however, evolutionary pressures have many opportunities to find alternatives to the human model, and explorations have found many intelligent races which use a non-human pattern. Among the major races, those which have independently developed jump drive (and more importantly, have made a lasting mark on the universe), only one race is truly distinct in its evolutionary pattern: the Hivers.

Hivers evolved from radially symmetrical non-vertebrates, perhaps best described as six-pointed starfish. Conditions on their homeworld made it ecologically profitable for these creatures to develop talents which later produced intelligence. This alien module for **Traveller** deals with this strange major race: the Hivers. It allows the incorporation of this race into any and all aspects of **Traveller**. Whether Hivers are to be used as player-characters, non-player characters, patrons, opponents, or just as a background against which adventures may take place, this module provides enough data to allow role-playing the Hivers in **Traveller** as individuals and as members of their interstellar society.

Aliens in Traveller: The basic **Traveller** rules are not concerned with aliens; they deal primarily with humans in the Third Imperium, a vast interstellar empire spanning nearly 11,000 worlds. Non-humans raised under the value system of the Imperium may vary (due to their physiology), but basically they use the same material and concepts as their Imperial human counterparts.

Once outside the cultural umbrella of the Imperium, the potential for aliens is substantially increased. Differences in physique cause some changes in rules and game concepts, but cultural differences cause even greater changes; the influence of culture, society, and thought are far stronger forces in the shaping of each unique individual. Incorporating Hivers into a **Traveller** game or campaign requires an understanding of their motivations and habits of thought. This module presents the Hivers in many different ways: physical, cultural, psychological, and social differences are explored, and the bearing these have on specific game rules is examined carefully. Using this material, referees and players may confidently make use of the Hivers in a **Traveller** game. Still, it is ultimately the ability of the individuals involved to *play the role* (by adopting the appropriate patterns of thought) that will determine the success or failure of the game in portraying the Hivers as a race that is quite alien physically, mentally, socially, and psychologically.

THIS MODULE

The subject of this module is the Hivers—a race of six-limbed

Hivers

Traveller Alien Module Seven

An alien race for use with **Traveller**.

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omnivorous gatherer/scavengers which has grown from a single world culture to the dominant race in a star-spanning empire which rivals the Imperium in power and technology. In this module, their physical and psychological differences from humans are examined in detail, and the effects of these differences on specific game rules are explained. Using this material, players and referees alike may confidently make use of the Hivers and their cultural background in any **Traveller** scenario, adventure, or campaign.

Usability: This Alien Module requires a **Traveller** rules set in order to be used. There are several rules sets available; any one will serve. It is specifically designed as a companion to *Starter Traveller*, and is oriented toward that rules set. However, this module may be used in conjunction with any **Traveller** rules: *The Traveller Book*, *Basic Traveller*, *Deluxe Traveller*, or of course, *Starter Traveller*.

Advanced character generation systems provided for the Hiver Navy and Merchants are compatible with **Traveller Book 5**, *High*

LIBRARY DATA

The following basic facts, well-known in the **Traveller** universe, are available to anyone consulting Library Data.

Ancients: Highly intelligent race which gained prominence approximately 300,000 years ago.

The influence of the Ancients is broadly felt in the universe today. Humans from Terra were transported to many worlds by the Ancients; the descendants of those humans became the Vilani and the Zhodani, as well as the other human minor races. Ancient artifacts which have been discovered show a very high tech level and an equally high degree of sophistication; such artifacts often reveal new, previously undiscovered or unexploited technologies.

There is no known evidence that the Hivers were ever influenced or dealt with by the Ancients.

Hivers: Intelligent major race inhabiting a federation located on the trailing edge of the Imperium rimward of the K'kree's Two Thousand Worlds.

The Hive Federation: This is the human term for the loose interstellar community dominated by the Hivers. Though the Hivers originated on Guaran, a world in the Hive subsector of the Ricenden sector, the Federation is now coordinated from Glea/Liana in the Centrax sector.

The Two Thousand Worlds: A region of space occupied by the K'kree, an intelligent major race descended from herbivore/grazer stock. The K'kree and the Hivers are old enemies, though there have been no active hostilities for over three thousand years.

The Solomani Confederation: Interstellar community controlled by humans. More aggressive and inclined to doctrines of racial superiority, the Solomani Confederation is perceived as a threat by the Hive Federation.

Guard and Book 7, *Merchant Prince*. Advanced Hiver character generation requires that you have these two books before you can use it.

Usefulness: **Traveller** players can find any number of activities which include or deal with Hivers, whether inside the Imperium, inside the Hive Federation, or in the unclaimed territories outside both these empires. The *Hiver Worlds Map* shows the territory of the Hive Federation and its relationship with other races and cultures.

Hiver worlds can be the source of interesting expeditions—to contact Hivers, to learn more about them, to engage in trade, or to bargain for examples of their high technology, or to learn more about their fascinating history.

TIMEKEEPING AND OTHER STANDARDS

In almost all **Traveller** activities, there is a need to keep track of time and its passage. The generally accepted **Traveller** method is that of the Imperium, but the Hivers have their own timekeeping standards as well.

Clocks: Timekeeping in the Imperium is based on the standard day, composed of 24 standard hours. Clocks and watches count time using standard hours, minutes, and seconds.

The Hivers, having only originally developed largely independently of day and night cycles, place less reliance in planetary rotational periods as a method of timekeeping than do humans. Hivers seem to have an instinctive grasp of time

and its passage. Their basic unit of time is known by humans as the *interval*, which corresponds roughly to five human hours. Six *intervals* make up one rotation of Guaran, their homeworld, but this unit of time is more often used by non-human Federation races than by the Hivers themselves; it is generally known as a *cycle*. Various other divisions of time exist, but few non-Hivers use or even understand them. Hivers in company with humans frequently adopt human timekeeping standards while dealing with those humans.

Throughout this text, standard Imperial times will be used to avoid confusion. The referee and players are encouraged, however, to make use of Hiver timekeeping practices where appropriate for added atmosphere.

The Calendar: The Imperial calendar is a standard one in common use through much of human space. It is 365 standard (24-hour) days in length, with days numbered from 1 to 365. It is divided into 52 seven-day weeks, with the first day of each year a holiday not part of any week. The Imperial calendar starts with the year 0, in which the Imperium was founded; the current year is 1111.

The calendar in common use in the Hive Federation was adopted at the urging of M. Martinka, and is based on the period of Glea (the Federation capital) around its star. The Federation Year is 143 cycles, or about 179 standard days in length. This calendar commences with the year 1, cycle 001, on which Glea officially became the capital of the Federation. Dates are expressed by year/cycle (for example: 105/042); the current year is 1401.

For purposes of this module, standard years and Imperial dating will be used. Hiver dates and calendars may be used by the referee in conjunction with specific adventures.

REFEREE'S NOTES

This module is intended to be as complete as possible. The materials in it supplement the basic **Traveller** rules, and no other rules or published materials are necessary in order to use the module.

Other Necessary Material: In addition to **Traveller** and this module, players and referee will require ordinary accessories such as paper, pens, pencils, dice, graph paper, and, perhaps, a calculator.

Other Desirable Materials: The entire line of **Traveller** products elaborates and expands upon the universe of the future. Almost any can be used in conjunction with this module. Especially useful items include *High Guard*, *Merchant Prince*, *K'kree*, and *Solomani*.

Administering This Module: Most of this module is background on the culture of the Hivers and their Federation. Individual adventures are provided to illustrate how the rules and background work with a Hive Federation setting. They should be run as any **Traveller** adventure is run, with the referee administering events and guiding the adventurers (without actually making decisions for them) along a course that will lead to the most enjoyable game. This may require improvisation, interpolation, or unplanned interaction using the **Traveller** rules and this module as a basis, but using the referee's creative input as well.

What to Show the Players: Players should have free access to the material in this booklet; it is as much a part of the **Traveller** rules as anything in the basic rules set. Individual scenarios, however, should be kept secret until the material within them would logically become available.

Origins of the Hivers

The history of space exploration is rife with misconceptions and mistaken identifications. The four-footed K'kree are sometimes called centaurs because of their slight resemblance with the legendary half-horse, half-man of Terra; there is a race called cloud-walkers because the paths between their mountain villages are covered with a peculiarly dense mist. The name Hiver has similar origins. And because there is no spoken word for the Hivers to replace it, the name has stuck.

The first humans to contact the Hivers were struck by their complex, hive-like cities combining spires, tunnels, and domes into organic communities reminiscent of Terran bee hives and Olingian swooper hives. Later contacts with the Hivers provided a better and more accurate picture of their physiology and society, but with no spoken Hiver language to provide an alternative world, the name Hiver stuck.

The Hivers are the most alien of the major races; they are the farthest from the human norm in appearance, mind, and behavior.

EVOLUTION ON GUARAN

A common start for life on any world is the organic soup of the primeval ocean. Mere chance, however, determines which particular types of organic molecules are created. In the first few million years, the molecules combine and recombine until one particular combination proves itself especially suited to survival and reproduction. That molecular combination is the initial seed of life for that world.

On Guarán (the Hiver homeworld), the pressures of predators in the sea and the natural search for favorable ecological niches forced some species onto the land. One of these, a six-point sort-of-starfish, was the ancestor of the modern day Hiver. The high evolutionary path on that world split at the shoreline. At sea, the vertebrate bilaterally symmetrical form became dominant, but on land the radially symmetrical forms were ascendent.

In the evolution of life on land, animals developed a radially symmetrical nervous system which extended up all six limbs to the centrally-located brain. The brain encased in the body was a survival trait, protecting it not only from predators, but also from extremes of heat and cold.

Eventually, as animal life specialized, it tended toward bilateral symmetry while retaining the effects of earlier radial symmetry: one limb became a pseudo-head with a sensory cluster; the opposite limb became a tail and reproductive organ.

All higher life forms on Terra can be seen as variations on the basic theme of a central backbone, an uppermost head and brain, two forward limbs and two lower limbs. On Glea, all higher life forms are variations on the basic theme of a central brain with nerve cords extending outward to six roughly identical limbs; of those limbs, one contains all the specialized sensory clusters, and the other is a reproductive organ.

As on any world, there is great diversity. Some animals have armored hides and can roll themselves into a ball in time of danger. Others have developed their limbs for speed and the chase. Still others are greatly specialized and shoot blinding acid

or irritating allergenics at their enemies.

The survival mechanism which proved effective for the Hivers was intelligence.

THE PROTO-HIVERS

In the carefully preserved wilds of Guarán (and on several other Hiver worlds), there is a large burrowing animal called the *snohl*. This thousand-kilogram intermittent creates extensive tunnels in its search for food, and built-up mounds which serve as nests. The proto-Hivers were originally omnivorous scavengers which were attracted to the *snohl*'s leavings.

Over the course of time, groups of proto-Hivers moved into the *snohl*'s burrows, digging out small dens in the edges of the *snohl*'s main tunnels; eventually a symbiotic relationship was established where the proto-Hivers evolved into gatherers which accumulated food for themselves and the *snohl*, and, in return, the *snohl* provided shelter.

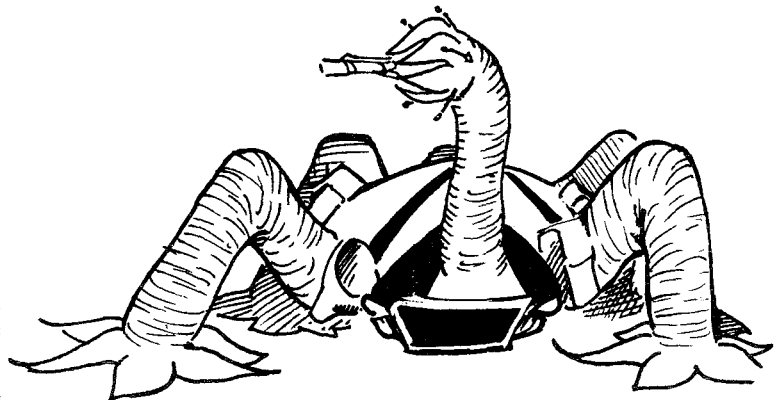
Proto-Hivers were relatively solitary, with one forming a relationship with one *snohl* and sharing that *snohl*'s burrows. When one *snohl*'s tunnel crossed another's, they mated and each *snohl*'s proto-Hivers also mated.

The proto-Hivers had a complex (although only instinctual) culture in which they gathered decaying vegetation and dead animals and farmed fungus in a crude way.

Late in this period, Guarán underwent a severe environmental change (probably an ice age) which put extreme stress on the proto-Hivers' and *snohls*' ecological niche. It became necessary for the proto-Hivers to range farther and farther afield in search of food and fertilizer. In doing so, the proto-Hivers were forced to cooperate with each other, forming scavenging and gathering parties to handle the task of gathering at great distances. Some division of labor was necessary in order to handle the fungus farming in the burrows while the gatherers were away. And cooperation was necessary in order to properly assign and carry out all the tasks required. Those proto-Hivers with greater intelligence had a survival trait which helped them survive and prosper.

With intelligence came communication (basically a sign language), a sharing of ideas, and an ability to give orders and receive instructions.

With the rise of intelligence, the specific animal called the Hiver arrived. Over a period of perhaps 100,000 years, the Hivers built their culture and their technology, expanded their tool-use and their social interaction to create the foundation for the Hivers as we know them today.



Hiver Physiology

Hivers are approximately human-sized. It seems to be a universal or (or maybe just a statistical) rule that intelligent life tends to evolve within certain size and mass limits, and those limits are easily enough defined by the concept of human size. Hivers stand approximately 1.5 meters in height, but they prefer to measure the distance between opposite limb-tips: which is about 3 meters if the individual really stretches. Hivers mass about 150 kilograms.

Hivers are descended from omnivore gatherer/scavengers which were originally adapted to a largely underground existence. As a result, they show many characteristics which originally were required for that existence. For example, their teeth are differentiated to allow both cutting of meat and grinding of vegetable matter. Their eyes are adapted to the visual spectrum and to the infrared, but are sensitive enough to require protective lenses in bright sunlight. Their hearing is roughly equivalent to the human auditory nerve, but has a peak response in very low frequencies (to better sense shifts in the ground and tunnel walls).

GENERAL FORM

The Hiver body has a modified six-fold radial symmetry: six limbs radiate from a central body. The brain and most important organs are contained in the central torso; the six limbs radially extend from the torso and end in manipulating tentacles or fingers; the limbs function interchangeably as arms or legs, hands or feet.

The Skeleton: The internal skeleton is composed of calcium compound-based bone which is stronger than the human equivalent, and slightly more flexible. The brain and essential internal organs are protected by a carapace plate. Attachment points on the carapace support a series of rib-like rings, and extending from the rings are the internal bones for the six limbs. The skeleton extends to the ends of the limbs, but not into the tentacles.

The Skin: Hiver skin is an extremely tough layering of tissue and insulating fat covered with a fine invisible down. The skin's qualities make clothing unnecessary in ordinary situations; clothes for Hivers are protective or utilitarian, or are purely decorative.

Hiver skin ranges in color from pink to tan, with occasional patches of grey or brown. Aging brings on randomly placed spots of brown.

The fine down which covers a Hiver is a form of hair which emanates from nerves lying beneath the skin. The hairs are sensitive to air movement, light contact, and even moderate heat and cold; consequently, the large Hiver can feel changes in the immediate environment as well as sense the placement of its limbs and their relationship to nearby objects. The nerve connections of the down assist in the fine dexterity of the six limbs.

The Prime Limb: The head (actually a sense-organ cluster) is a modification of one of the limbs and contains six eyestalks and six manipulative tentacles, plus three infrared sensor organs and three ears placed around the circumference of the modified

limb. There is no sound-producing organ.

The six flexible eyestalks can be turned in any direction independently, but are generally used in pairs to provide binocular vision. The brain can process data from up to three pairs of eyes at one time, and a Hiver can see everything in a 360° circle simultaneously. Hiver vision is equal to that of a human in normal light. The infrared sensors work in conjunction with eyestalk pairs to help vision when underground or without proper illumination.

Hiver hearing is about equal to the human sense.

The Tail: Opposite the prime limb is the tail; it contains the reproductive organ. Hivers have only one sex. Reproductive cells are exchanged each time two Hivers meet, using the modified rear hand; the process has been termed *shaking hands* by humans (who tend to avoid it). The cells are kept in a reproductive pouch on the lower body surface, where they conjugate, exchanging genetic material. Once every forty days or so, a cell will develop into a larva, which then drops from the parent's body.

The Limbs: Although the prime limb and the tail are specialized, all six limbs are more alike than different. Hivers are multidexterous, and use all limbs interchangeably as arms or legs. Normally, at least three limbs are used as legs at any given time, but any combination is equally possible; some trained runners use all six limbs as legs, while some craftsmen sit on a stool and use all six limbs as arms.

Each limb ends in a six-fingered radial hand. The tentacles or fingers are extremely flexible, with muscular adhesion pads along about half their length. Hiver arms and hands have less strength than do human limbs, but they are also very tough, showing great endurance and a resistance to injury.

Each limb is connected directly to the brain, rather than through branches from a central nerve cord. As a result, each is marginally more responsive than a vertebrate's; there is little preference between limbs for manipulation. Hivers seem to choose the arm that is nearest, rather than showing any handedness.

Limbs are also used as legs. The fingers are curled up to form a cushioned ball away from the limb tip which serves as a foot.

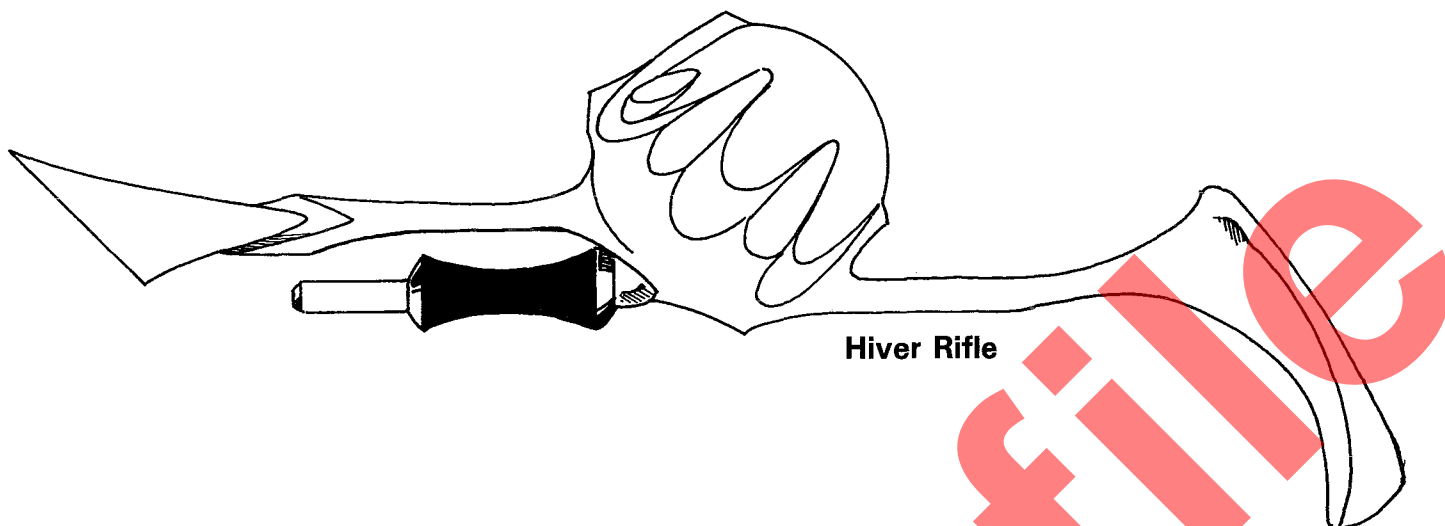
Some animals have claws at the ends of their fingers; Hivers have a vestigial claw (similar to a human nail) which is little more than a flat spot of firmness which aids in manipulation.

The Torso: The central body of the Hiver contains all of the essential organs, from the lungs and respiratory apparatus, to the heart and circulation system, to the stomach and digestive system. Surrounding them all is a bony carapace which protects them from injury and climate. Within the carapace is a separate skull which encloses the brain; it is supported by muscles and cartilage attached to the inside of the carapace.

Outside the carapace is a system of musculature which helps move the limbs, insulate the body, and cushion blows to the carapace.

At the center of the lower surface of the body is a single, multi-purpose opening called a *cloaca*. The cloaca leads to separate channels for the digestive system (the mouth), the excretory system (the anus), and the reproductive system (the pouch). A system of manipulatory organs (analogous to the human tongue) push food, excrement, and reproductive cells around to the proper channels.

The Hivers' nose (breathing oriface) is located on the upper body surface and connects to a set of six lungs inside the



Hiver Rifle

carapace. The lungs are driven by the same large internal muscle which pumps the heart. About half of all Hivers have an acute sense of smell; the olfactory nerves are located in the nose on the upper body surface, and connect through a separate nerve trunk directly to the brain.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Evolution has worked changes on the Hivers. Gross changes took place during the long prehistory of the race, but there have also been notable changes in the centuries since the Hivers achieved civilization and began recording their history.

The Sense of Smell: The prehistoric pre-Hiver depended more on smell than on sight in dealing with its environment. A chance mutation in the pre-Hiver disabled the smell-brain (that portion of the brain which concentrates on processing smell data) and forced the sight-brain to assume dominance. It was this dominance of the sight-brain which led the way to intelligence for the Hivers. Depending on sight forced the Hiver more toward manipulation of objects; sight allows a finer dexterity than does smell. Many feel that a smell-oriented brain simply cannot process as much data as efficiently as a sight-oriented brain.

However, since the dawn of recorded Hiver history, a major mutation has occurred: the re-enabling of the smell-brain. The change took place in about -5600 (nearly 1,000 years after recorded history began; but 1,500 years before the Hivers achieved space travel). A few Hiver larvae were dropped (humans would say born) and later found to have a heightened sense of smell. The trait has since been passed from generation to generation, gradually widening the pool of individuals who can experience the joys of smelling things. For the curious Hivers who have it, the sense of smell is a wonderful ability; for those who don't, it is a sense which is envied but not really understood.

The genetic basis for the re-enabled smell brain, however, is a complex one, and one which has not lent itself to rapid dissemination into the general population. Today, after more than 5,000 years in the gene pool, the re-enabled smell brain is present in only about half of all Hivers.

Coloration: Hivers of early civilization had a wide variety of coloration on their hides; much of that differentiation is now gone. Hivers routinely exchange embassies between worlds to help keep the race homogeneous, and as a result coloration is now a consistent tan to pink.

On the homeworld of Guaran, Hivers from different latitudes or regions had different colors which ranged from pure white through pink to dark blue. As a world civilization arose, Hivers travelled more widely; the gene pool became larger, and these colors blended. But in the early years of space flight, it was not uncommon for hybrid Hivers to be produced from the relatively small gene pools available to colonists and starship crews. It was M. Fioran who successfully demonstrated the overall negative effects of small gene pools on the race, and promoted the current practice of embassies and cultural exchanges which help keep the Hiver race relatively homogeneous.

HIVER MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hivers developed an effective medical science during their long history, and they make use of it to prolong their lives and enhance the quality of their lives.

Regeneration: Hivers have a limited ability to regenerate fingers and even limbs.

Larvae naturally and automatically regenerate lost or severed limbs if the accident happens before one year of age.

For all Hivers, severed fingers regrow over a period of about twenty weeks without additional treatment.

Drugs: Hivers have a centralized six-lobed gland (surrounding the skull) which produces all of the body's hormones and controlling secretions. These hormones can properly be considered drugs because they control the responses of the body to illnesses, infections, trauma, and fatigue.

Hiver pharmacology is devoted to reproducing the drugs which the body naturally manufactures, or to stimulating the body's main gland to produce them itself.

Deficiencies: The major medical problem confronting Hivers is a malady called deficiencies. When the main gland cannot produce the proper hormones or secretions to respond to a specific medical problem, then the hormones or secretions must be supplied from outside. When the body does not respond correctly to outside supplied drugs, the problem is called a deficiency.

The major problem confronting Hiver medicine today is the control and remedy of deficiencies. Deficiencies vary greatly and cases are dissimilar enough to preclude blanket remedies, requiring individualized diagnosis and treatment. Perhaps the most common deficiency encountered is recurrent olfactory deficiency; where a Hiver with the sense of smell loses it on a recurring basis. The solution remains undiscovered.