

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get more information on the new things described here, send a three-cent stamp to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 656. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **NYLON-CORD CHAIR** weighs only six pounds and has a wooden frame of laminated walnut. Nylon cord forms the chair's back and seat. The well-proportioned chair provides the television watcher with a comfortable and sturdy seat that can be easily carried in one hand.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **SOLDERING IRON**, designed for normal or heavy soldering, heats to working temperature in five seconds and cools so fast it can be put away safely as soon as the job is done. Built into the handle are a light bulb, an off-on switch and a small transformer that provides power for the small tip.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **DRY-LUBRICANT FILM** can be brushed on any machine or instrument surface to provide a lustrous, hard, greasy-feeling but clean coating. Ranging from a fifth to a half-thousandth of an inch thick, the molybdenum-sulfur film will lubricate plastics, glass and ceramics as well as metal.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **WIRE-WHEEL HUB caps**, shown in the photograph, look like the kind put on American-made sports cars that are exported to Europe. Made of stainless steel, the snap-on hub caps cost much less than real



wire wheels and are designed to fit standard cars as well as Detroit's European models.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **PORTABLE SEWING MACHINE**, to be marketed in February, uses a unique system of slip-on plastic disks that permit the unskilled housewife to do some of the most intricate needlework without special attach-

ments. The plastic disks act as little "brains" and instruct the machine in sewing such things as zig-zag stitches, button holes and monograms.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **CHANGEABLE TYPE bars** for electric typewriters now permit the typist to type chemical, mathematical, scientific and foreign language symbols, and exponents and subscripts that do not ordinarily appear on the standard model. The type bars are designed so they can be installed or removed easily and quickly.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **CAR STARTER switch** is especially useful when unexpected stalls fluster the driver. Working on autos having fully automatic transmissions, the device automatically starts the engine when the gear shift is put in "neutral" or "park," and the ignition is on.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

⚙️ **SPOON CRADLE** of aluminum is just the thing for the housewife to keep near her stove for use when she wants to lay down spoons she has been using and not soil the stove. The bright-colored cradle accommodates three spoons at once and catches their drippings.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953

• Nature Ramblings •

➤ USUALLY, WHEN we talk of birds going leaving south for the winter, we think of their leaving northern lands that will soon be frostbound and seeking warm, sunny regions until spring shall send them north again.

This is the migration of bluebird and oriole, of duck and goose; the pattern is so prevalent that we are prone to think of it as exclusive.

Yet birds are all about, in winter; even the least observant of us sees and hears them. Their presence is apt to be explained by an easy, "Oh, they stick around the whole year."

This is by no means necessarily the case, and of some birds it is not true at all. Whole populations of birds that are seen in the northern states during the snowy season disappear or become pretty scarce in summer; nuthatch and brown creeper, for example, and that mighty hunter of mice, the great horned owl.

Most such birds nest in Canada, though in some species the summer breeding range does extend into the United States a little.

South for the Winter



In some cases, too, we apply the permanent-resident explanation to a bird species because we see representatives around practically all the time, and assume they are the same individuals. However, what we are likely to have is an overlapping of two migrant populations that do not go very far.

Crows that we see in summer are very apt to flap southward a few hundreds, or perhaps only a few scores, of miles to their winter range. In the meantime their place

in our landscape is taken by other crows from a little farther north. And since all crows look alike to us, we assume that no migration at all has taken place.

The European starling, a recently introduced species that has become a spreading pest, has developed this limited and overlapping migration to a marked degree. The starling flocks that are a wholly undesired feature of the nation's capital in winter are migrants from western New York and Pennsylvania. The capital's summer starling population in the meantime is spending the winter as uninvited guests of communities in North Carolina and southern Virginia.

Occasionally, of course, you will see or hear of a normally migrating bird that has not bothered to migrate at all. Robins that remain through winter, sometimes consorting with flocks of rowdy sparrows, are among the most frequently reported of such cases. This probably represents a response to easily available handouts of food, making the southward trip unnecessary.

Science News Letter, January 10, 1953