

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **VAULTING POLE** is tubular and made with low pressure resins reinforced with glass fibers. The laminated pole is said to combine an improved spring action with high impact rigidity. They are available in standard lengths of 14 and 15 feet and weigh from 4-3/16 to 5 3/4 pounds.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **HOME FUSE** has a neon light on top that flashes when the circuit has been broken, making it easy to spot the blown fuse in the dark. The fuse is not removed, but switched to another setting. The UL-approved fuse is good for six separate blow-outs.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **FLOORING TILES** designed to withstand the effect of outdoor weathering are made of a synthetic rubber. The tiles are resistant to ozone and will not support combustion. In tests, the rubber tiles showed no change in size or physical characteristics when exposed to a temperature range from 20 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **MILEAGE COMPUTER** measures miles per gallon of gasoline. The calculator can be used to figure gas mileage, mileage at



driving speeds and a car's performance with various grades of gasoline. The computer shown in the photograph is a circular device made from a rigid vinyl plastic sheet.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **UNDERSEA HOUSING** for 35 mm cameras is made of aluminum and stainless steel. In addition, the underwater housing

has a plate glass window, pointer sight, cam lock, flash port, lever wind and film lock. It is pressure-tested to a depth of 200 feet.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **UTILITY LANTERN** for sportsmen and homeowners is described as the first with a focusing lighthouse. It features a double-powered dry battery which is its own battery case. Finished in red baked enamel, the lantern weighs four pounds.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **ELECTRONIC CHRONOMETER** for seagoing vessels is described as accurate to one second in 12 days. The chronometer also can be used to time earthquake waves in seismograph vaults and celestial phenomena at isolated field stations. It occupies a volume of less than one-half cubic foot and weighs 25 pounds.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

⚙️ **SEMI-TRAILER MOVER** goes as fast backward as forward and allows the driver always to face the direction he is going in. It can pull or push a fully-loaded trailer at speeds up to 27 miles per hour. The new vehicle has a 106-inch wheelbase and a 165 horsepower engine.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ ONE of the nation's most popular annual sporting events took place a few days before and after Christmas, and results of this classic have recently been compiled and released to eager fans from Saskatchewan to Key West.

The chances are that your local sports page did not cover this event—the 57th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. So here is what happened:

There were 535 individual groups of bird watchers out in the field from dawn to dusk on Christmas count day, each working in an area limited to 15 miles in diameter. The avowed purpose of the Christmas count is to take a census of bird species and numbers of individuals in the winter period. Actually, to many or most of the thousands of bird watchers taking part, it is an exciting race between area and area, state and state, to find the most species, the most individuals and the best rare records.

Sports Classic



Honors for number of species seen on the last Christmas bird count goes to the group in Cocoa, Fla. They racked up a "score" of 186 different kinds of birds during 14 hours of the balmy winter day. This was seven species better than second-place San Diego, Calif., with 179 different birds.

But victory in the Christmas bird count is a relative sort of thing. Perhaps the greater glory belongs to a group of hardy

birdwatchers in Arvida, Quebec, who reported a total of six species seen in eight frigid hours.

The Canadians saw their six species (69 individual birds) in temperatures ranging from a low of minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit to a "high" of minus 13.5 degrees Fahrenheit. They reported a snow cover of 30 inches.

On the other hand, the Cocoa bird watchers worked in temperatures ranging from 58 to 74 degrees Fahrenheit, under "crystal clear" skies and a semi-tropical sun, to find their 186 species (33,259 individual birds)!

A grand total of 480 species of birds were seen collectively by the 535 parties in the field for the Christmas count, just short of the all-time record established the previous year.

You may be sure competition will be keen next Christmas. There is the grand total to beat. There is the record of 186 species in a single area to break. This is sport!

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957