

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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AUTO SPOTLIGHT plugs into cigarette lighter socket to use as a trunk light or to aid in changing tires or making motor repairs at night. The spotlight, which has both a handle and a hanging hook, is said to consume a minimum amount of current. Models are available for six- or 12-volt systems.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

WEATHER GLASS in the spirit of Old Nantucket serves as a decoration and a practical barometer. When the glass section is filled with clear or colored water the atmospheric pressure is indicated by the water level's rise and fall. It is 10¼ inches in height.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

CAULKING COMPOUND made of polyethylene comes in a variety of bright colors and is applicable either by knife or gun. It is weatherproof and can be applied directly from the can without mixing. The compound does not become brittle with age and can be used on many different materials.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

INDOOR-OUTDOOR FURNITURE made of rust-resistant steel wire, shown in photograph, has removable urethane foam cushions. The mildew- and fungus-resistant



cushions are covered with weather-proof vinyl upholstery. Lounge chairs, side chairs, chaises and tables are available.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

PLASTIC RAFT made of glass fiber and expandable polystyrene is 80 inches in diameter and will support 1,600 pounds. The durable 80-pound raft is round and has a slightly concave deck that allows water to drain towards an opening in the center and

helps passengers to stay aboard. A plastic rope rail is looped around the outside near the deck and an aluminum ladder is attached to the raft.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

SPARK PLUG AND CABLE TESTER can locate high tension ignition losses that sap power from the auto engine. The shock-proof, pocket-sized tester can also test spark plugs and find cracked or faulty insulation in ignition coil and distributor cap.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

GLASS COASTERS made of polystyrene are moisture-proof and do not leave rings or scratches on the table surface. The all-in-one coaster and cooler with thermos qualities is lightweight and reportedly retains ice for three hours. They are available in two sizes.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

INSECTICIDE DISPENSER releases measured amounts of pressurized insecticide every 15 minutes and thus provides around-the-clock protection for an enclosed area. The 5½-pound unit, not much larger than a cigar box, operates on standard A.C. current and can be mounted on a wall in homes, restaurants, hospitals, factories or barns. It protects a 6,000-cubic-foot area.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

THE LINE FLOWED easily from the reel, dropping the artificial bait on the water near a sodden bush. A jerk of the rod made the bait flop on the surface like a wounded minnow. This movement caught the watchful eye of the pike lurking near the bank. In an instantaneous rush the large fish struck the bait, encircling it in his well-toothed jaws and clamping down—to meet the trebled hooks.

This is often the way of the predacious fish, the hunters.

They depend upon speed and a firm, ferocious bite to catch their prey. This is also one of the reasons they are sought after as game fish. The thrill of that quick strike and the ensuing rush is what the sportsman loves above all.

But this is only one of the many ways in which fish secure a meal. Recently, a handful of goodsized minnows were placed in an aquarium with a hungry bowfin (or mudfish) about 12 inches long. The min-

Table Manners



nnows quickly spread throughout the aquarium, some swimming enticingly close to the bowfin, but he showed no sign of excitement at the prospect of a meal. But then it was noticed that the minnows became fewer and fewer as the minutes passed. What had happened to them?

This mystery was resolved when it was seen that the bowfin casually sidled up to one large minnow, keeping about one-half inch from it. Then, without the slightest movement on the part of the bowfin, that minnow simply disappeared down the big

fish's throat. The bowfin had sucked the minnow into its mouth.

Another type of fish feeding can be seen in the large salt water sheepshead. The sheepshead's diet consists largely of bits of oysters, crabs and other hard-shelled delicacies to be found on and around old pilings. These the fish crushes with his powerful teeth. The time-honored bait for sheepsheads consists of fiddler crabs or barnacles attached to a very sharp and long shanked hook.

As can be seen in clear water, the sheepshead will approach the bait with utmost caution, seeming to examine it from all angles. Then comes the taste test. He very gently takes the bait in its mouth and crushes it a bit. Fishermen say he is "sucking" the bait. It is at this moment—old-timers can tell by the "feel" of the bite—that the line is jerked to set the hook in the sheepshead's bony mouth. Otherwise, that old sheepshead will have his meal, leaving an empty and crushed crab or barnacle shell.

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