



### Solitary Albatross

Powerful wanderer of the ocean sky and master of dynamic soaring, the albatross can live at sea for months, sleeping on the waves and feeding on fish, squid and other marine animals, with no need of land.

As big as a fat goose, with a large head, stocky body and extremely long narrow wings, the albatross is related to those ocean birds called the petrels, of the family Diomedidae.

Unlike most other birds, the albatross has nostrils opening into hornlike tubes which lie along the upper part of its hooked bill, which is stout and covered with horny plates. With this nasal construction, the bird is able to consume salt water. An internal desalination process gives the bird's body what fresh water it needs, and discharges the excess salt from special glands in a highly saline solution that constantly drips from its bill.

There are 13 different species of this bird, some of which are black, brown and white, and some of which are almost totally white. Their names indicate their characters—the black-footed albatross, the sooty albatross, the shy albatross, the short-tailed albatross. The wandering albatross has the greatest wingspan of any bird—about 12 feet. Skillful performers, they can soar with the ocean wind currents for hours, scarcely moving their wings.

Sailors used to believe that anyone killing an albatross would bring bad luck upon himself and his ship—the central theme of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Despite the superstition, however, many sailors used to amuse themselves on long sailing voyages by catching the birds with hooked bait. For a while, the albatross in the North Pacific was systematically slaughtered for its feathers, and came close to extinction.

## New Ideas and Gadgets

New Ideas and Gadgets is an editorial service to readers; more information on items can be secured from the manufacturers.

### Marine Signal Kit

Packaged in a resealable waterproof bag, this kit contains two flares that produce orange smoke for over two minutes, a five-minute flare that burns a brilliant red light, an orange water dye to attract rescue planes and a 24-by-24 inch yellow orange distress flag. A small mirror and whistle are also included.

Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp., Associated Products Operations, 460 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022

### Swim Trainer

Babies and small children may be taught to swim with the help of this swimming trainer consisting of molded blocks of expanded polystyrene. The blocks, strapped together to form a unit 9-by-6-by-4 inches, are attached to the child's back. As the child learns to manipulate himself in the water, a block at a time is removed until he can swim independently.

Tocar, Inc., P.O. Box 55209, Houston, Texas 77055

### Polymer Coatings

Suitable for use on micro-circuit conductive paths, electro-plating base, printed circuit repair or shielding, these easily applied thermosetting polymer alloy coatings are electronically conductive and adhere to glass, metals and ceramics. The substance may be applied by dipping, brushing, silk screening or spraying and dries in 15 minutes. Baking at 200 degrees C. will complete crosslink the polymers.

Dynaloy Inc., 408 Adams St., Dept. 375, Newark, N.J. 07114

### Laboratory Still

Chemical laboratories can make their own distilled water as needed by means of this portable still which is thermostatically controlled and provides up to 1.5 gallons of distilled water every 24 hours. The current is cut off automatically when the receiving bottle is full.

Edmund Scientific Co., 104 E Gloucester Pike, Barrington, N.J. 08007

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