

TECHNOLOGY

Eskimo Clothing Better Than U. S. Designed Gear

► ESKIMO CLOTHING is better for wear on Alaskan field trips than outer garments designed by the U. S. Armed Forces for use in the Arctic, Dr. William S. Laughlin, University of Wisconsin anthropologist, concludes.

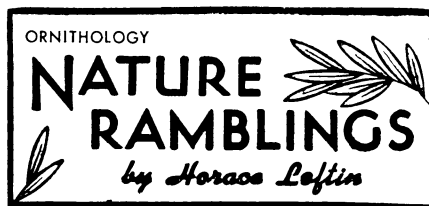
Military underwear is, however, satisfactory for Arctic use, Dr. Laughlin found.

Recently returned from an Alaskan field trip sponsored by the Arctic Aeromedical Laboratory of the U. S. Air Force, Dr. Laughlin says caribou skin outer garments, when the hair is left on the skin, are apparently lighter and warmer than anything United States scientists have yet developed.

"Perhaps the air spaces between the hairs account for the greater warmth of Eskimo outer clothing," Dr. Laughlin suggests. Air is known to be a good insulator.

The cumbersome, bulky-looking boots and mittens worn by Eskimos are not really as heavy as they look, Dr. Laughlin explains. In fact, Eskimo outer clothing weighs less than the outer clothing designed by American military scientists.

Science News Letter, February 4, 1956



Killer of the Seas

► OIL that brings calm to troubled waters also brings slow but certain death to many thousands of water birds every year.

Many tankers and other large vessels commonly pump out great quantities of oil-laden bilge water near the entrance to ports or close to land. This oil forms a thin,

glistening coat over the water. Any sea bird unlucky enough to alight on such oil-polluted water can begin counting his days, for he is doomed.

When a water bird becomes oil-soaked, his feathers become matted together. This destroys their cold- and water-repelling qualities. Soon the bird becomes water-logged, unable to fly, unable to protect himself from the cold. If he does not drown outright, he faces a slower death from exposure or starvation.

Gulls, puffins, shearwaters and terns die by the thousands each year in oil-polluted water, as do many game waterfowl like black ducks, mergansers and scoters.

One of the saddest parts of this problem is that the birds are often attracted by the glistening of the oil-coated water, or by its comparative calmness.

The problem is especially acute off Boston, Long Island, the mouth of the Delaware River, Galveston and the banks of North Carolina, reports the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Due to the nature of the coast, much of the U. S. Pacific is spared the worst effects of oil pollution.

But not just the United States is concerned with this killer. In 1954, 42 nations met in London to draft an international agreement to prevent oil pollution of the seas by ships dumping oil-containing wastes in zones where birds and other creatures might be harmed.

At present in the U. S., the Army Engineers are responsible for the enforcement of existing laws to control oil pollution from ships. But enforcement is difficult, to say the least, due to the international nature of shipping. Thus, only international law can probably give the control that is needed.

Conservationists are both pessimistic and optimistic about the oil-pollution killer. They are saddened by the needless loss of wildlife, but they know that proper controls could wipe out this menace almost completely.

Science News Letter, February 4, 1956

The true sea *snakes* have a poison as deadly as that of the cobra.

By the end of the fifth year of marriage, about three-fourths of American white women are *mothers*, the 1950 census showed.

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