

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **SHOE SHINE MIT** is plain on one side and studded with molded knobs of shoe polish on the other side. For a shine, the mitt is slipped onto the hand, polish side rubbed onto the shoe and shined with the plain side. It is designed to be pocket-carried and produce 50 touch-up shines.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **METAL DETECTOR** for skin divers can be used to help locate metal objects, such as outboard motors, guns, anchors, cameras and ship hulls. With a maximum detection range of 10 feet, the detector can be used in either salt or fresh water. Made of clear plastic, the detector is powered by a 67½-volt battery. Two flashlight cells light the meter.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **GLASS COASTERS** made of a polyethylene plastic trap condensation to prevent wet rings on furniture. Designed to hold glasses or bottles firmly, the flexible coasters also fit soft drink, catsup and sauce bottles.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **INFLATABLE BELT**, shown in the photograph, designed for water enthusiasts hugs the waist and can be worn under or over outer garments. Made of plastic, the



belt is worn with the inflated side forward. It supports water-skiers, swimmers or sportsmen face up and is colored yellow for easy spotting. It can also be used as a pillow.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **PLASTIC SHOE CASE** is designed to help travelers carry their shoes. Made of

weatherproof vinyl plastic, the case is sectioned to take six pairs of shoes of any size or shape. It weighs four pounds, two ounces, and is available in blue, gray or brown.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **BOAT STEP-PLATES** can be attached to the decks of pleasure craft to provide traction and prevent scratching. Made of plastic, the step-plates are available in blue, red and black with white borders. The borders, with screw holes for mounting, are separate pieces designed to fit over the colored centerpiece.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **LAMP SHADES**, molded from a combination of plastics, give good light transmission and maximum light diffusion. Made from acetate and butyrate plastics, the shades are shatterproof, washable and chip-proof, and are available in nine colors.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957

⚙️ **MAGNETIC CONVEYORS** can automatically elevate nails, wire products and other small ferrous items. Designed for small-parts industries, the conveyor is available in four to 12-foot lengths. Belt speed is 85 feet per minute but can be adjusted.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

It was a misty, early morning, and the young hunter crept as quietly as he could to the edge of the mill pond. For the first time his father had allowed him to take the shotgun out alone, and now he would bring home a big mallard to show them all.

He reached the water's edge and crouched on his legs in the tall marsh grass, waiting for the mist to lift. Before many minutes had passed, his fingers became numb and "burned" against the cold steel of the shotgun barrel.

Soon he forgot his cold fingers and the leg which had fallen asleep, for there on the still pond in front of him was his prey! Well, not a mallard exactly; only a little fellow. But to the young hunter it must have seemed quite as big as a mallard.

He could have shot it as it glided along on the water, pushing effortlessly with alternate strokes of its feet. But his father had said that game birds must be taken on the wing. He would flush the bird, then.

Water Witches



Slowly, slowly he rose to his feet, careful not to move a blade of the marsh grass. He clicked the gun off "safety" and suddenly stepped forth, ready to shoot the startled bird as it took to the air.

But the bird did not take to the air, it simply disappeared before the young hunter's eyes. Though he watched for many minutes, he saw no more of the vanished bird. He went home empty handed from that hunt.

The would-be prey of the young hunter

was not a duck as he thought, but a pied-billed grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps*. His error was an easy one for a beginner to make, for these water-birds do look superficially like small ducks. However, in his first lesson, the young hunter learned a big difference between grebes and ducks: grebes are primarily swimming birds and rely on their diving ability rather than their wings to escape danger. They can dive with such rapidity that they almost seem to vanish, as the lad learned. They can then swim remarkable distances underwater.

Their "disappearing act" has earned the grebes the popular name of "water witches." Also, since they sometimes seem never to come up, they are also called "hell-divers."

If the young hunter goes back to the pond during the breeding season, he may see another witch's trick. As his grebe dives, he may suddenly have one or more baby grebes appear before his eyes—chicks that were riding on their parent's back!

Science News Letter, February 16, 1957