

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⊗ **LABORATORY PORCELAINWARE** is described as sintered aluminum oxide chemically pure without additions. The material does not soften, but has a well-defined melting point of 2,050 degrees centigrade. At high temperatures and pressures, the absorption is said to be nil.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **BARBECUE GRILLE** is designed for installation in brick or other masonry construction. It is made of heavy gauge steel with an angle iron type frame. The outside finish is black wrinkle enamel, with stainless steel and chrome trim.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **MEDICAL TOOL SHARPENER** for scissors, knives and scalers is made of tungsten carbide. The sharpener, five inches long, has five cutting edges for various shapes and sizes of instruments and a rounded burnishing edge.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **PLAY YARD** for infants and toddlers, shown in the photograph, is lightweight and portable. Frame and legs are made of aluminum tubing. The floor braces are of steel supporting a hard board floor. Knitted



nylon sides can be dropped. Plastic covers the top rails and the filled, reversible floor pad. The play yard measures 40 by 40 inches square.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **SPOOL LOOM** can be used by young and old for making scatter rugs, coaster sets, table place mats or chair seats. Strips of any

cloth are wound on the loom, bound through slots and joined.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **RADIO-TELEPHONE** for small boats is transistorized. The set will receive continuously for a year on a standard 12-volt battery. The four-channel 20-watt set transmits 50 to 75 miles, weighs 10 pounds and measures 5 by 10 by 11 inches.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **GARDEN MULCH** made of black polyethylene plastic is said to help plants grow faster and eliminate some weeding, watering and cultivating. The mulch comes in 20-foot lengths, 36 inches wide. Under normal conditions, it can be used for more than one growing season.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958

⊗ **RADIOLOGICAL SURVEY METER** is designed for use in industrial laboratories, hospitals and reactor installations to measure low-level radiation. The transistorized meter, weighing four and one-half pounds, is powered by five standard 1.5 volt flashlight cells. It operates for 250 consecutive hours on one set of batteries.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

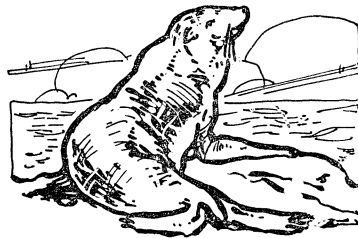
► THE COLD, fog-shrouded Pribilof Islands of the Bering Sea off Alaska are a desert of ice and snow now. You would have to look hard to find a living creature, save a few hardy sea birds.

But spring will turn this desert into a metropolis.

With the changing of the seasons, bull fur seals will come in from winter quarters south of the Aleutians or the Gulf of Alaska, each to establish by brute strength a personal domain for his coming harem. The weaker males are doomed to bachelorhood. Meanwhile, the females and their young born last year leave their winter resort, which may be as far south as southern California, for the long swim to the Pribilof Islands.

At the breeding grounds, the females will attach themselves to likely looking mates by moving to their territories. Old bull fur seals may have as many as 40 cows in their

### Fin-Footed Mammals



harems, and woe betide the bachelor bull that tries to enter these seraglios!

The young will be born shortly after the females arrive, and mating occurs soon afterward. The bulls will not leave their territory during the entire breeding season, doing without food for three months. The cows, however, may go and come as they please, bringing food back to the rookery for their pups.

The Pribilof fur seal population is under the care of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, which carefully regulates the harvesting of skins. Some 65,000 skins are taken annually under the watchful eyes of wildlife experts. From a low of 132,000 seals in 1910, before the Government stepped in to protect the much-hunted species, there are now more than 1,500,000 fur seals in the herd!

The fur seals are members of the order of fin-footed mammals or Pinnipedia. While very much like the carnivores, all of the pinnipeds have the fore and hind limbs modified into flippers. The teeth are specialized for catching and feeding on fish and other marine creatures. The group shows a high order of intelligence.

The walrus make up a separate family in the order of fin-footed mammals. They are characterized by their great size and the huge tusks, or canine teeth, which protrude from the upper jaw. These tusks may reach 30 inches or more in length. A bull walrus may exceed 10 feet in length and weigh more than a ton!

Science News Letter, February 15, 1958