

ORNITHOLOGY
NATURE RAMBLINGS
by Frank Thone



South for the Winter

➤ USUALLY, when we talk of birds going south for the winter, we think of their leaving northern lands that will soon be frostbound and seeking warm, sunny regions until spring shall send them north again. This is the migration of bluebird and oriole, of duck and goose; the pattern

is so prevalent that we are prone to think of it as exclusive.

Yet birds are all about, in winter; even the least observant of us sees and hears them. Their presence is apt to be explained by an easy, "Oh, they stick around the whole year."

This is by no means necessarily the case, and of some birds it is not true at all. Whole populations of birds that are seen in the northern states during the snowy season disappear or become pretty scarce in summer; nuthatch and brown creeper, for example, and that mighty hunter of mice, the great horned owl. Most such birds nest in Canada, though in some species the summer breeding range does extend down into the United States a little.

In some cases, too, we apply the permanent-resident explanation to a bird species because we see representatives around practically all the time, and assume they are the same individuals. However, what we are likely to have is an overlapping of two migrant populations that do not go very far. Crows that we see in summer are very apt to flap southward a few hundreds, or perhaps only a few scores, of miles to their winter range. In the meantime their place in our landscape is taken by other crows from a little farther north. And since all crows look alike to us, we assume that no migration at all has taken place.

The European starling, a recently introduced species that has become a spreading pest, has developed this limited and overlapping migration to a marked degree. The starling flocks that are wholly undesired feature of downtown Washington, D. C., in winter are migrants from western New York and Pennsylvania. The Capital's summer starling population in the meantime is spending the winter as uninvited guests of communities in North Carolina and southern Virginia.

Occasionally, of course, you will see or hear of a normally migrating bird that hasn't bothered to migrate at all. Robins that remain through winter, sometimes consorting with flocks of rowdy sparrows, are among the most frequently reported of such cases. This probably represents a response to easily available handouts of food, rendering the southward trip unnecessary.

Science News Letter, November 27, 1948

cloud feature which is then tracked for a minute or so. During this period of tracking, one of the indexing arms remains fixed on the scale and the other moves.

At the end of the tracking period the vertical distance between plane and cloud may be computed from the air speed, time of tracking and the difference in scale readings at the two arms. The actual cloud height above the earth is this distance added to or subtracted from the reading on the plane's altitude instrument, depending on whether the cloud is above or below the aircraft.

Science News Letter, November 27, 1948

PUBLIC HEALTH

If You're 65 Years Old, You Should Live To Be 80

➤ SIXTY-FIVE-year-olds today can look forward to living almost to the age of 80, statisticians of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company assure them. The average white man aged 65 has 12 and two-thirds more years of life. The average white woman has even more, 14 and one-half years. For the fairly sizable proportions of persons who will reach age 75, there remain, on the average, seven and three-fourths years for men and more than eight and one-half years for women.

Science News Letter, November 27, 1948

LINGUAPHONE



is your *Passport* to the World

In your own home, alone or in a group, you can now learn to speak

**SPANISH • PORTUGUESE
 FRENCH • RUSSIAN
 ITALIAN • GERMAN**

or any of 23 other languages by the world-famous

**LINGUAPHONE
 Conversational METHOD**

You learn the new language by listening to voices of native teachers. It is amazingly simple; thousands have succeeded. Educators hail Linguaphone as a notable advance in simplifying the mastery of languages. That is why so many Linguaphone Sets are used in schools, colleges, universities, as an aid to fluent speaking.

Available to Veterans under
G I BILL OF RIGHTS

SEND FOR FREE BOOK
LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE
 31 RCA BUILDING NEW YORK 20, N. Y.

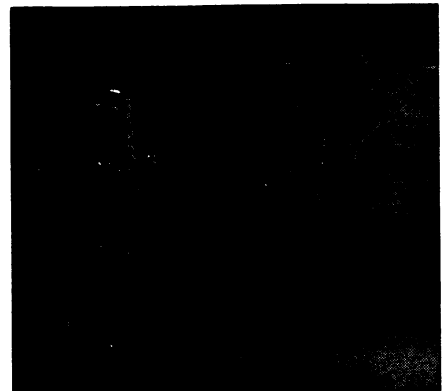
LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE
 31 RCA Bldg., New York 20, N. Y.
 Send me the FREE Linguaphone Book.
 I am , am not a World War II Veteran
 I want to learn.....language.
 Name
 Address..... City.....

ENGINEERING

**Cloud Heights Computed
 From Planes in Flight**

➤ THE HEIGHT of a cloud can now be accurately determined from aircraft in flight by means of a simple device, a modified illuminated gunsight, developed in Fort Monmouth, N. J., in Army Signal Corps laboratories.

The instrument is mounted on a frame and coupled to two indexing arms which slide along a graduated scale. In use, the gunsight is trained on some prominent



MICROMAX CONTROL

Adds a Helper To The Research Team

In a research or control lab, such as is shown above, the man-hours required for temperature regulation of a furnace can be all but eliminated by the same kind of Micromax Program Control which industry uses on its giant furnaces.

For information, write Leeds & Northrup Co., 4977 Stenton Ave., Philadelphia 44, Pa.



Jrl. Ad N-33-249 (1a)

