

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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COMBINATION STAPLER AND PRYER is used for variety of household repairs such as replacing worn screens. Folded out, the base of the stapler becomes a prying tool to remove screen-frame moldings. The stapler proper may be used to tack new screening to the frame.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

OPEN-WINDOW LOCKS keep windows securely locked in any one of three different open positions, from top or bottom or both. The locks fit any standard-size wooden frame window.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

TELEVISION STAND AND ANTENNA combination uses its four legs as reception elements, each leg being electrically insulated from the others. A knob at the front of the stand regulates antenna orientation.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

POOL VACUUM CLEANER of plastic, shown in the photograph, uses water pressure from the garden hose to suck up debris such as leaves, dirt and sand from the bottom of swimming pools and wading pools. An eight-inch suction head is equipped



with a brush for plastic pools or with wheels for concrete and other hard-surfaced pools. The cleaner weighs only three pounds.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

ENGINEERING DESK of steel can be assembled in a few minutes without tools. Standing 31 inches high with top dimen-

sions of 43½ inches by 72 inches, the desk is designed for maximum convertibility to a drafting table or general office desk with drawers.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

THERMOMETERS for general industrial, scientific and educational use have triangular-shaped heads to keep them from rolling off table tops or other surfaces. Several different models cover temperatures from minus 120 degrees centigrade to plus 405 degrees centigrade.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

FOOD SAVERS of polyethylene may be used for leftovers, picnics, freezer storage or as cannisters. They are 9½ inches long, 6⅞ inches wide and 3 inches deep and have sliding styrene covers. They come in two styles, with or without a dividing wall that creates a double compartment.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959

TOOTH PASTE DISPENSER sticks on any wall without nails. Tooth paste is squeezed through a self-closing opening by pressing the side panels. The holder comes in translucent yellow, pink or aqua.

Science News Letter, June 20, 1959



Nature Ramblings



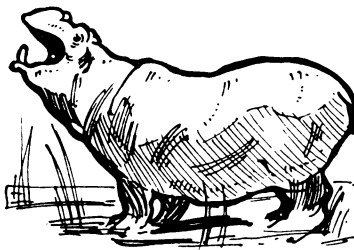
By HORACE LOFTIN

Aquatic Mammals

DRIFTING DOWN a crystal-clear, cypress-lined southern river, the naturalist watched a pair of otters chasing each other in exuberant play. Just a few minutes before, a hefty muskrat had climbed to the bank in full view, and he idly puzzled the question of how or why certain mammals had taken up an aquatic life.

A hint of the answer awaited him around the next bend of the river. For there he saw half a dozen huge forms emerging from the water like a herd of sea cows. As the canoe came closer, his "sea cows" proved to be just that—six cows that had forsaken the swamp to browse almost shoulder-deep on the lush aquatic plants of the river.

Perhaps the ancient predecessors of the whales, the hippos, seals, manatees and other aquatic mammals made such a first step toward an aquatic life as these cows were taking. Because of a lack of food on land or an abundance of it in water, they ven-



tured more and more into the watery element until they came to be perfectly adapted through centuries of evolution to aquatic life.

In some instances, the water may have provided safety from enemies as its special inducement. In any event, there are now many mammals as perfectly at home in the water as is any fish.

The hippopotamus represents a sort of midway stage between terrestrial and com-

pletely aquatic mammals. While they can roam at will over the land and are far from being streamlined, they are still bound closely to the water and will perish if kept from it for too long a time. In spite of their ponderous bulk, however, they are graceful movers beneath the water.

Whales are the peak of perfection of mammals living in the water. Their form is ideally streamlined for rapid motion through the water. The forelimbs have become efficient paddles for steering, the hind limbs have disappeared, and the tail has turned into broad flukes for propulsion.

The eyes of whales are specialized for underwater vision, the external ears have gone, and the nostrils have moved upward to the highest point of the head where they are opened and closed by complicated muscles. Their lungs have a cartilaginous support to prevent their being crushed at great depths, and they have a tremendous capacity for storing air. They are truly fitted for an oceanic home.

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