

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 1076. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **RAIN COVERALL**, a plastic one-piece, zip-on suit, gives complete protection against rain, sleet and snow. Roomy and action-free, it folds into a small carrying-case and can be used by outdoorsmen for sports or work in city or country.

• Science News Letter, 79:64 January 28, 1961

⚙️ **KEY CHAIN FLASHLIGHT**, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in diameter, may be recharged whenever necessary by inserting it in a special plastic case, powered by two small penlite batteries. Set in a finely wrought gold and silver globe, the tiny light is turned on by pulling the chain to which it is attached.

• Science News Letter, 79:64 January 28, 1961

⚙️ **MARINATING SYRINGE** flavors and seasons meats immediately, eliminating hours of soaking. The unbreakable polyethylene syringe is equipped with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch blunt steel needle for use in injecting wines, sauces, liquid and herb seasonings deep into foods.

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⚙️ **WELDER'S HELMET**, shown in the photograph, provides welder with clear view of his work without having to use his hands to remove light shield. He merely opens his mouth and a spring-activated mechanism in the helmet does the work. To replace the leak-proof light filter automatically, he



closes his mouth. The standard model has an adjustable headband. A hard-hat model has a safety helmet that can be worn without welding hood.

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⚙️ **TEACHING DEVICE**, a triple-track inclined plane, demonstrates a three-way down-hill race between a sphere, a hoop and a solid cylinder, illustrating the effects of differing coefficients of rotational inertia.

Electromagnets, connected in a series to a six-volt battery, hold the objects on a parallel track.

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⚙️ **SANITIZING AEROSOL SPRAY** makes telephone mouthpiece sanitary in one second, providing residual germ-killing action for up to six days. It is available in regular and economy size cans as well as lipstick size for purse and travel.

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⚙️ **LEVELER AND STRAIGHT EDGE**, made of lightweight extruded aluminum, simplifies the work of the do-it-yourself bricklayer or carpenter. The instrument plumbs two surfaces simultaneously. When used in the leveling position, it will also act as a facing straight edge. It is available in 3-, 4- and 6-foot lengths.

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⚙️ **SOLDERING GUN**, for the home handyman as well as professional technicians, is lightweight and encases a sturdy single pole construction for delicate deep-in precision work. It has a built-in pre-focused spotlight to illuminate working areas and comes equipped with six-foot cord and plug. Interchangeable soldering tips are available.

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Nature Ramblings



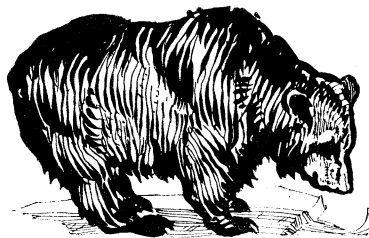
➤ **WHAT IS HAPPENING** to our North American mammals? With every new list of animals, the number of species of mammals becomes smaller and smaller.

The number of North American mammals recognized by experts in 1923 was 1,399. Twenty years later, the most authoritative list showed only 1,065 mammals. The latest roster of North American mammals, published in 1959, listed only 1,003 species.

Have 396 different species of our mammals become extinct in this short period of time? The only extinction involved has been the disappearance of 396 different scientific names. In the language of biologists, there has been a victory of the "lumpers" over the "splitters."

The "splitters" are those scientists who typically search for fine differences among the plants and animals they study, creating new species names to apply to each minutely differing group. The "lumpers,"

Our "Disappearing" Mammals



on the other hand, typically hunt out similarities and they lump two or more species under the same name. In the most recent list, this was done, for example, with some of the bears.

Actually, more different kinds of North American mammals are known today than ever before. For example, there was a total of 2,554 kinds of North American mammals in 1923, compared to 3,679 kinds in 1959. This increased variety is seen in the number

of lesser groups, called "subspecies," that are now recognized by experts.

Two eminent mammalogists have pointed out that of the 1,003 species recognized today, at least eight have been introduced into North America by modern man (for instance, the house mouse). They also agree that probably another 125 of the remaining mammals are only subspecies, which cuts the total down to about 870 distinct species.

Still at the business of lumping, they said about 170 of the dwindling number of mammals are geographically isolated from their nearest relatives, as for example on an island. Now, if these geographical barriers were broken down, most of these would probably prove to be members of more widely distributed species. Thus, we might subtract another 170 species, winding up with only 700 species of North American mammals!

—HORACE LOFTIN

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