

• 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 1162. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☼ **NEWSPAPER DELIVERY TUBE** protects home-delivered newspapers from snow, wind, rain or dog. The plastic receptacle which has a hooded opening to help keep out snow and rain and is provided with an aluminum bracket and mounting hardware. When attached to the house, it keeps the newspaper within reach without stepping into the open. Rustproof, it comes in black, white or green.

• Science News Letter, 82:198 September 22, 1962

☼ **MULTI-PURPOSE KITCHEN APPLIANCE** is a portable device that opens cans, sharpens knives, mixes and whips. By means of its snap-in, snap-out attachments, the appliance can be converted from one instrument to another in a few seconds. Compact and lightweight, it comes with a hardwood wall rack on which to hang the appliance and attachments.

• Science News Letter, 82:198 September 22, 1962

☼ **PROTECTIVE MAILER/CONTAINERS** are polyethylene tubes with liquid- and air-tight caps having self-locking threads, for mailing specimens, glass slides or other materials by laboratories, doctors or researchers. The containers, which can be sterilized and reused, may be mailed with a mailing envelope attached to cap or as a self-mailer with a label.

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☼ **LIFESAVING LIGHT**, shown in the photograph, that guides searchers at sea is a safety device consisting of a self-contained light beacon that goes on automatically only when immersed in water. It is visible for miles and can be held, worn or attached to a life jacket. Recommended for sportsmen, flyers and passenger ships, it operates at all temperatures and in the severest weather.

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☼ **INFRARED COMFORT HEATER** is suitable for high mounting in corridors or rooms with small floor areas. The unit confines most of the radiant energy to a narrow area, increasing the available heat to people or objects directly below it. Particularly adaptable to areas difficult to heat by conventional methods, the heater is useful for grandstand, swimming pool, patio or passageway.

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☼ **PRISM-SHAPED GLASSES** permit bed-ridden persons, heart condition cases and those just resting to read or watch television while lying down. The glasses mirror the line of vision 72 degrees or almost at a right angle so that the wearer does not have to sit up to read. Adjustable to head size, they may be worn over regular glasses.

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☼ **SOLAR ENERGY CELL** set that converts solar energy into electric impulses can be used for demonstration in classroom or home. It consists of four wire-connected selenium photo cells connected with a small ball-bearing motor with a shaft to which is attached a cardboard disc with a spiral design. As soon as the sunlight strikes the energy-absorbing cells the disc begins to rotate. No batteries or electricity are needed.

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Nature Ramblings



By VINCENT MARTEKA

► THE RATTLE of gunshots will again echo in once peaceful marshes, rivers and ponds throughout the United States when the fall duck hunting season begins.

One of the first ducks to end up in the hunter's bag on opening day is the ever wary, handsome pintail, *Anas acuta*. These widely distributed and abundant ducks are ranked just behind the mallard and the black duck as the most popular waterfowl.

Endowed with great speed as well as a slender body, long neck and a needle-like tail, the pintail drake has well earned its name of "greyhound of the ducks." While resting or feeding in shallow waters, the colorful pintail drake is easily recognized by its gray body, dark brown head and white "bib." The neck is gracefully curved, its tail cockily pointed slightly upward. The female is drab brown.

Although pintails migrate early in the fall, they are also one of the first to push northward in the spring, moving as soon as the ice and snow breaks up in ponds and marshes. The pintail has the widest nesting grounds of all ducks, breeding in Alaska, most of Canada and many of the northern states.

The female lays her eggs as early as April and ducklings can be seen trailing the mother in early summer. The female pintail recklessly defends her nest and young from intruders, adopting "broken wing" tactics with total disregard for her own safety.

At the first hint of fall, pintails wing their way to wintering grounds along the entire U. S. coast except New England. Win-



tering pintails are also found on inland marshes and swamps south of the frost line.

Pintails feed by "tipping up," tail in the air, for water plants and seeds. The seeds from pondweeds, sedges, grasses and smartweeds are their staple diet.

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