

ORNITHOLOGY

New Exhibit Offers Sights of Rare Birds**See Front Cover**

► BIRDWATCHERS can now watch 160 species of beautifully preserved North American birds, all displayed in a new hall at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Many authentic panels in the Hall of North American Birds represent the swamps and marshes along the East Coast, inhabited by birds such as the brants, terns, clapper rails, laughing gulls, black skimmers and others which are being seen less frequently as the wetlands are drained and urban communities move in over the land.

Although many of these swamp areas have been given over to human development, some places are being fortunately preserved as refuges and parks for wildlife such as Everglades National Park, Fla. Seen on this week's front cover is a pair of little blue herons at their nest, a part of a habitat group exhibit representing the Cuthbert Rookery at Everglades, where a large number of herons and other wading birds nest.

Deterioration of nesting areas and feeding grounds, as well as irresponsible shooting, has caused the depletion of many of America's beautiful birds, now shown in the museum exhibit.

Some birds such as the Carolina parakeet and the Labrador duck already are extinct. Other birds are in danger of dying out—the imposing bald eagle, emblem of the United States; the stately American egret with its delicate aigrette feathers; the white whooping crane, tallest of the North American birds; and the California condor, largest of American land birds.

Other birds, the peregrine falcon or duck hawk, are not yet in danger of extinction, but are no longer seen in many of their former habitats, such as the Palisades along the Hudson River.

Presenting 160 species of realistically mounted birds in 27 habitat exhibits, the hall was dedicated in memoriam to Dr. Frank M. Chapman, renowned ornithologist.

In the careful reproductions of actual places, extreme care has been taken by scientists and artists to reproduce every leaf, twig and flower at particular seasons and at certain times of day.

• Science News Letter, 85:409 June 27, 1964

AGRICULTURE

Aluminum Sheets Repel Garden Aphids in Tests

► PESTY APHIDS in the garden may be foiled by aluminum foil, and by nontoxic aluminum sprays.

But the method is so new, agricultural scientists do not recommend it for individual gardens or farms.

For some reason not yet understood, aluminum repels the destructive insects, those small soft-bodied creatures that are often green in color and found grouped on leaves.

In a series of research experiments, con-

ducted at Beltsville, Md., and Farmingdale, N. Y., plant scientists of Cornell University and the Agricultural Research Station, part of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, have been testing the use of aluminum sheets and sprays to divert aphids from gladiolus flowers and Indian ironweed. Indian ironweed is a potential oilseed crop grown for materials used in plastics, paints and other products.

Some of the winged aphids, which move rapidly from one plant to another in search of food, transmit viruses that damage plants in various ways.

When aluminum sheets were placed between plant rows and around borders of plots, the number of aphids decreased. Aluminum sprays also were effective, but the spray did not stick to the plants more than two or three days.

The agricultural scientists stressed the fact that the experimental materials are not yet recommended for use by growers, since more about effects must be learned.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

New Film Developed In Boiling Water

► A NEW KIND of photographic film that can be developed in boiling water has been produced by scientists at Leningrad Institute for Film Engineers in Russia, according to information reaching Washington, D. C.

In the new films the Soviet scientists have substituted polyvinyl plastic for gelatin, the usual material for backing the photo-sensitive layer.

The plastic surpasses gelatin in binding qualities, in transparency and in resisting wear and tear. The film is also more elastic than gelatin film. It can be developed in one or two minutes.

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METEOROLOGY

Weather Plane Joins Appalachia Poverty War

► A NEW WEAPON has been added to the war against poverty in Appalachia: a twin-engine airplane that will be used to make weather studies over the central Appalachian Mountains.

The connection is not quite as remote as it might seem. Rainfall is vital to growing crops, and much rain that might fall evaporates in winds to the leeward of the low mountains in central Appalachians.

Prof. Charles L. Hosler of Pennsylvania State University, University Park, believes seeding clouds in these "lee waves" would prevent their breakup, thus giving them a chance to drop their rain.

He now has a new, fully instrumented airplane, purchased from the Piper Aircraft Corporation, Lock Haven, Pa., to check his theory. Rain is scarce in many of the valleys of the central Appalachian chain, low-lying mountains that curve southwestward from Pennsylvania through West Virginia and Virginia to eastern Kentucky and Tennessee.

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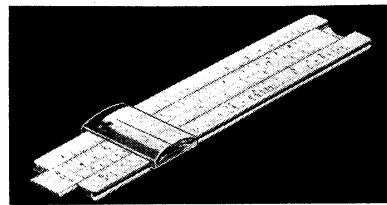
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