

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE SERVICE, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 913. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☸ **CHRISTMAS TREE STAND** that is described as unbreakable is made of glass fiber reinforced plastic. The stand has a 15-inch base and can be used indoors or outdoors. It also has a deep well which will hold water and adjustable clamps to hold the tree.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **COIN HOLDER** helps you with Christmas parking problems. The plastic holder can be attached wherever desired in an automobile with a screwdriver, but without drilling holes. It holds four nickles and six dimes or pennies. The coin storer is available in five colors.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **CATCH GAME** for both children and adults consists of saucers that fit on the hand like shields, and a dart-like feathered arrow with a suction-cup head. Each saucer has a scoring target on its face. The catcher scores, rather than the thrower, when the bird is caught on the target.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **PLASTIC CHRISTMAS TREE** is reusable. Designed as an outdoor decoration, the tree, shown in the photograph, is cut to the shape of an evergreen and is vacuum



formed from a sheet of a butyrate plastic. It is wired for lighting and equipped with sockets that take regular Christmas tree bulbs.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **MONEY BELT** for Dad is made of morocco-grained steerhide and has a concealed inside zippered money holder. The belt-wallet combination also features a pearl initial monogram buckle. It is available in black or brown.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **ANGEL KIT** for the do-it-yourself Christmas decorator contains two sheets of copper that make one seven-inch angel and four, four-inch angels. Copper curls, tape and instruction sheet are included. A pair of household scissors is all that is needed.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **CHRISTMAS CARD** opens to let Santa Claus fly out. Santa can be wound up and inserted in any letter, book or Christmas gift and can be used again and again. It is five and one-half inches high and is available with a greeting card and envelope.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957

☸ **MITTS AND MUFFS** for Mom are made of rabbit fur and leather. The matching set has furry white bunny mitts with palms of leather in one of five colors and furry earmuffs with plastic headband in the same color choice.

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► OFTEN, one of the biggest problems in science is not that too little research has been done, but that the data which have been accumulated become pigeon-holed and lost to view.

This was what happened in the scientific study of birds during the latter half of the 19th century. A vast amount of information had been collected on American birds since the time of Audubon and before, but nowhere was this brought together into a meaningful, unified picture.

At this time, the young American Ornithological Union formed a committee to organize the welter of facts about birds in the U. S. From their work, a new book emerged in 1886, the first edition of the "A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds."

This volume soon came to be the bible of American bird students. It clarified the complicated business of scientific names, common names, and sub-species. It brought

Birdman's Bible



together in summary form knowledge of the breeding, distribution and migration of our birds.

But soon, science had outdated this first edition, as new facts in bird study came to light. Another edition was forthcoming in 1895, then a third in 1910, and a fourth in 1931.

This year is a big year among American bird students, with the new arrival of the Fifth Edition of the "A.O.U. Check-list."

This 1957 edition has been under prep-

aration since 1939, by a committee of America's top birdmen. It is at the same time a fatter and a slimmer volume than its 1931 predecessor. Fatter, since the fourth edition covered 1,420 species and subspecies, while this number has grown to 1,686 in the new edition.

It is slimmer in that a sizable section on fossil American birds has been omitted from the new edition. Our knowledge of fossil birds has increased so much that including them in the new volume would have required more than 100 additional pages. As is, the fifth edition is 691 pages long.

Perhaps the most intriguing pages of this book to bird students are those containing the "Hypothetical List" of rare or exotic birds that have been reported from North America but not sufficiently verified. The birdman who can make the record that removes a bird from this "hypothetical list" to the accepted list of North American birds would have a fine feather added to his cap!

Science News Letter, December 14, 1957