

Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Keeping up with the outdoor world... Some super-duper strawberries and blackberries have been brought to this country from the lowlands and highlands of Chile, Ecuador and Colombia. One of these two-inch long strawberries came from within 1,500 feet of the permanent snowline of the towering Andes. If crosses can be obtained between these and our local varieties we may soon have disease resistant berries able to withstand cold, dry mountain climates and in some instances heavy rainfall, predicts G. M. Darrow, horticulturist with the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

A wind meter designed for the sportsman can be held in the hand and read like a thermometer. It registers wind speeds up to 60 mph.

Last year more than 7½ million people swam, fished, boated, picnicked and studied nature in our national wildlife refuges.

Smelling booze on a person's breath is no positive proof of drinking, says Dr. Herman A. Heise of Milwaukee, and neither does the absence of an alcoholic breath prove that a person has not been drinking.

How come? In the concentration that alcohol occurs in the breath it has no odor and the sniffer only catches the flavor of the drink. Also pure alcohol could be inhaled and there would be no tell-tale odor.

Selfish fur farmers imported the South American nutria, better known as the "king-sized muskrat." During the past few years the fur has been falling off in favor. So what happens?

Some "escape" from their Louisiana fur farms. The females go right on producing about two batches a year of five to six young. They have now spread from the delta of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Rio Grande and are now on the west coast eating waterfowl out of house and home.

In case you're interested: It takes a little more than 4½ quarts of milk to make a pound of cheese on the average; almost 10 quarts to make a pound of butter.

Plastic Table
For you beach hounds: there is now a plastic table which when inflated measures about 30 inches square and keeps food a foot off the ground.

A Swedish scientist has come up with a machine which will take the core-boring of a tree and automatically count the number of concentric rings (its age) and measure width between rings (annual growth).

For some time it has been known that you can give a female chicken or turkey a shot of male sex hormone, testosterone phenylacetate and soon have it sounding like a male. Now they're trying it on canaries. Given a shot, a normally songless female canary can be made to warble her pretty little head off... and then when the effect wears off go back to her cheerless chirp. It takes about 12 days for the hormone to take hold; about five weeks to wear off.

The Mayas, Aztecs and other pre-Columbian peoples of the Americas did not have steel saw or axes but yet were able to cut wood in vast quantities. The stone axes will do it, but its mighty laborious work. Now, after studying the paintings of old Aztec war clubs, Dr. J. Ogden Outwater Jr., of the University of Vermont, came up with a new idea: he inserted pieces of ordinary bottle glass in a wooden "blade" and made some saws which cut wood easily. Of course these early people had no empty beer bottles lying around but they did have obsidian—a natural volcanic glass. What's more, piles of such obsidian flakes shaped like glass-saw teeth have been found. Could this be the answer?

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