esting to see that this ability was well developed in the downy chicks.

LITERATURE CITED

Bent, A.C. "1926" (=1927). Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 135. 490 pp.

Cobcraft, K. 1934. The jacana. *Emu*, 34: 47-49.

Desfayes, M. 1951. Râle d'eau transportant ses jeunes. *Nos* Oiseaux, 21: 129.

Hopcraft, J.B.D. 1968. Some notes on the chick-carrying behavior of the African Jacana. *Living Bird*. 7: 85-88.

Johnson, R.A. 1950. King Rail carries its young. *Bird-Banding*, 21: 18.

Olson, S.L. 1966. Purple Gallinule survives loss of wing. *Florida Nat.*, 39: 117.

Tompkins, I.R. 1937. Wayne's Clapper Rail carries its young. *Wilson Bull.*, 49: 296-297.

Walkinshaw, L.H. 1937. The Virginia Rail in Michigan. *Auk*, 54: 464-475.

Wolff, G. 1953. Grunfussiges Teichhuhn trägt Junge aus dem Nest. *Vogelwelt*, 74: 182-183.

Zimmerman, R. 1937. Fortpflanzungsbiologische Beitrage. VIII. Zur Fortpflanzungsbiologie der Wasserralle, *Rallus a. aquaticus* L. *Mitt. Ver. Sächs. Ornith.*, 5: 105-111.

*Storrs L. Olson, U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C. 20560.*

## Evidence for Learning to Feed in Laughing Gulls

Considerable recent information indicates that feeding ability improves with age and experience in several genera of birds whose feeding methods require capture of live prey – *Pelecanus* (Orians, *Anim. Behav.*, 17: 316-319, 1969); *Florida* (Recher and Recher, *Anim. Behav.*, 17: 320-322, 1969); *Sterna* (Dunn, *Ibis*, 114: 360-366, 1972). Our note presents evidence for the development of feeding behavior for the Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*).

On 29 July 1973 on the Gulf of Mexico beach at Manasota Key, Charlotte Co., Florida we cast-netted large numbers of 4 to 9 cm Scaled Sardines (*Harengula pensacolae*). Laughing Gulls continuously cruise along this beach, and when we threw fish into the air in front of one, it wheeled, called, and came to the food. Within approximately 5 minutes, 15 to 20 gulls were circling and swooping over us as we tossed fish into the air. Judging by its distinct plumage, one of the gulls was a juvenile, not more than 3 months old. The remainder were birds in adult plumage. The adult

gulls circled with the downwind passage about 2 to 4 meters over our heads. When we tossed a fish into the path of one, it caught the fish easily, often performing intricate aerial maneuvers to do so. We counted only 12 misses in 97 tosses in which we judged the adult should have caught the fish.

The juvenile, on the other hand, hovered out of the mainstream of the flock approximately 10 to 13 meters above and to one side of us. It called frequently, behavior rarely exhibited by the adults, and whenever we threw a fish in its direction, it attempted to avoid rather than catch it. It appeared to be curious about the other gulls' activity but seemed unaware of how to become involved and what to do. After several minutes of hovering nearby, the young bird joined the flight pattern of the adults but remained about 4 to 9 meters over our heads. We attempted to direct fish toward this young individual and in circumstances similar to those of the adult the juvenile caught only one of 23 fish. In four of these cases an adult stole the fish before the young could respond. The one fish the young captured was the last one thrown, approximately ten minutes after it joined the flock.

Watching this bird, it was obvious to us that at first it was attracted to the flock of gulls, and only after a period of time did it realize that food was available. Then it required practice to learn how to catch a tossed fish. Although this is a rather unusual feeding technique, along Florida beaches humans commonly throw food to hovering gulls and this may be an important supplemental food source. We believe this is an example of the learning process involved in the feeding methods of Laughing Gulls and perhaps shows one of the selective factors contributing to mortality of newly independent young.

J.J. Dinsmore and F.E. Lohrer made a valuable comment on this manuscript. *Ralph W. Schreiber and Sanford N. Young, Department of Biology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, 33620.*

## A Black-capped Petrel Specimen from Florida

The Black-capped Petrel *(Pterodroma hasitata)* is a rare bird anywhere in North America (Palmer, 1962), and may exist only in small numbers throughout the world because of habitat alteration (Wingate, 1964) and, possibly, more recently because of high DDT body loads (Wingate and Wurster, 1968). Of approximately 12 records from North America, most are of individuals blown north and inland by oceanic storms. The two previous records from Florida, both based on specimens, are from near the Indian River Inlet, winter 1846-47 (see Sprunt, 1954), and the WCTV tower, fall of 1964 (Stoddard and Norris, 1967). The specimen here reported was found sick on Melbourne Beach, Brevard County, on 14 June 1972, by an employee of the Animal Control Department, and it was given to Kale by Carlton