

## GENERAL NOTES

**Leach's Petrel off coast of Venezuela.**—On April 1, 1937, we sailed from Port au Spain, Trinidad, and after passing through the famous Dragon's Mouth, steamed westward at half speed about fifteen miles off the Venezuelan coast, aiming to reach Carupano at daybreak the next morning. About 11 p. m. a passenger rushed into the library and informed me that a strange bird was flopping about on the deck. I had no difficulty in catching a Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*), alive and uninjured, which promptly ejected an oily fluid from the mouth. The bird was carefully examined; the strikingly forked tail and only lightly black-tipped tail coverts definitely eliminated the possibility of *Oceanodroma castro*. It appeared both bewildered and attracted by the steamer's lights. Twice in succession I tossed it gently overboard, and after flying out of the circle of light from the steamer, it promptly came back and flopped on the deck all over again. The third time I carefully folded the wings in the normal position of 'at rest,' and grasping it firmly in my fist, threw the bird head first with all my force as if it were a baseball. This treatment cured the petrel of its attraction for the steamer's lights, as it shot out of the illuminated area, and disappeared for good into the blackness of the tropical night. According to Murphy's 'Oceanic Birds of South America,' Leach's Petrel has been recorded off the Guianas and Trinidad, but this is apparently the first record from the more 'inside' Caribbean area.—LUDLOW GRISCOM, *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass.*

**Little Blue Heron trapped by a clam.**—A Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*) in white plumage, was taken on Matanzas Inlet, Florida, with one toe securely held between the closed valves of a large clam. Caught in such a trap, the bird was captured without difficulty. From this illustration it is easy to understand one reason, and perhaps the chief reason, why so often shorebirds are seen hopping about on one leg. So caught, they must struggle and flutter until they free themselves, leaving the broken member behind. This is a menace to which they are frequently exposed.—JOHN B. SEMPLE, *Sewickley, Penn.*

**Little Blue Heron on salt water.**—In 'The Auk,' for October, 1936, page 440, in discussing the feeding habits of some of Ardeidae, Mr. E. A. McIlhenny, of Avery Island, Louisiana, concludes his interesting observations with this statement: "The other varieties of herons and egrets go to the tidal flats for food, but the Little Blue never hunts its food in salt water." The natural inference from the context is that Mr. McIlhenny is speaking only for Louisiana, but even so, one would consider it safer to pronounce the statement as a rule that sometimes has exceptions. This statement leads the writer to make the following comments in view of the fact that there are others who seem to have the strongly rooted idea that this species shuns salt water and the ocean. It has been a source of intense surprise to me that some of this country's foremost and most capable ornithologists have definitely precluded this heron from salt-water sections both as a feeder and as a nester. Such statements as the following appear in the literature: "It is rarely if ever common along the sea beaches of the coast"; "I have never found it breeding anywhere near salt water." While it is true that the Little Blue Heron favors inland ponds and swamps, it is by no means confined to such. The writer's life has been spent in coastal South Carolina, where the species is a permanent resident and where, if in no other section, it not only feeds commonly and consistently on "de salt," as the negroes put it, but breeds abundantly as well.