

**Gull-billed Tern nesting in Florida.**—In the April 1940, 'Auk,' Alexander Sprunt reported the nesting of Gull-billed Terns (*Gelochelidon nilotica aranea*) in Florida. On June 21, 1940, I found a small colony in the north end of the Indian River, near the Haul-over Canal. On June 30, there were eight nests, with a few young recently hatched. The birds came readily to a blind, and while no specimens were taken, they were photographed with some two hundred feet of kodachrome. There have been a few reports of this species in the Haul-over area in recent years, sight records of one or two birds, but this is my first contact with Gull-billed Terns in over thirty years of observation along the Florida east coast.

Attention may here be called to the previous record of a nest with two eggs of this species found near Pensacola Bay, Florida, by Francis M. Weston (Auk, 50: 215, 1933).—R. J. LONGSTREET, *Daytona Beach, Florida*.

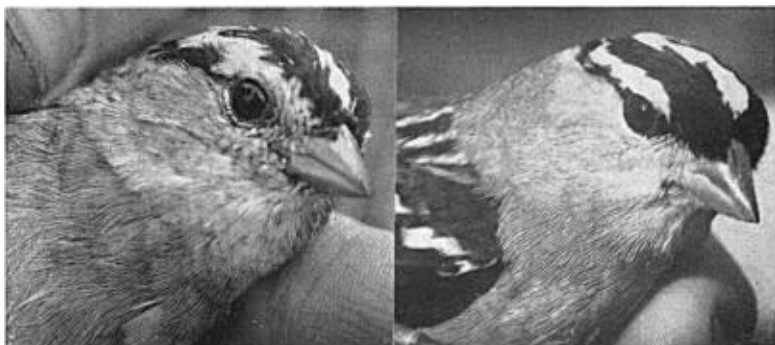
**Foot-washing by the Black Skimmer.**—Pettingill (Auk, 54: 343, 1937), in discussing injury-feigning in the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops n. nigra*), tells of seeing the birds swoop down to a shallow pool and drag their bellies in it. This bit of behavior has been familiar to me for years, and I have thought it to be simply foot-washing. It has been noticed most often among birds in winter or early spring, or among the non-breeders that remain on the sandbars in winter plumage during the nesting time. It has not appeared to be connected with any of the behavior peculiar to the reproductive season.

Flocks of skimmers often congregate on sandy shores where there is some mixture of mud or clay, and when disturbed the entire flock will swing out over the water and repeatedly dip the feet and the lower belly in the water. There is then no appearance of nervousness about it, and the habit is as common as the oft-reported gull habit of 'picking its teeth' or scratching its head, with a toenail, while in flight. Skimmer legs are small and would soil the belly feathers if pulled up when covered with mud or clay.

While on the subject of skimmer feet, the very inadequate size and musculature of the feet and legs present counter evidence against Arthur's theory (Auk, 38: 566-574, 1921) that the species feeds as a wader. The bird has enough difficulty landing on a good hard beach at times, ever to be able to maneuver those long wings and that weather-vane head in a flawy breeze, and display enough agility to catch small fishes, in the bare inch of water its length of leg would allow. The water of the Savannah River is usually quite yellow, and easily stains white feathers. If the skimmers waded at all, our local birds would have the belly feathers soiled, rather than immaculate.—IVAN R. TOMKINS, *U. S. Dredge DeWitt Clinton, Savannah, Georgia*.

**Saw-whet Owl in Tennessee.**—On March 16, 1940, two high-school boys, Leslie and Eugene Davis, caught a Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) at their home in a closely built residence section of Nashville, Tennessee. As it perched high in a rose vine, they reached it with a ladder, later taking it to their biology teacher, M. S. Carter, who brought it to me for feeding and banding. This constitutes the second positive record of this species for the State. The other individual was seen on March 1, 1936, at Memphis by Ben B. Coffey, Jr., who almost caught it (The Migrant, 7: 19, 1936).

When received by me, the owl weighed 100.8 grams. It snapped its beak belligerently when one put a hand near it. In a few days it weighed 104.5 grams, had adapted itself to its new environment to such an extent that it had ceased



SHARP: GAMBEL'S AND WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS IN PENNSYLVANIA



LASKEY: SAW-WHET OWL IN TENNESSEE

its snapping, and from the benign expression of its eyes when its head was rubbed, had learned not only to tolerate but to enjoy that attention from me. It was given freedom of the house at intervals when it usually flew to a perch on a door or a curtain rod where it sometimes preened, stretched, shook plumage, and occasionally dropped a pellet. At first it was force-fed with lean round steak, small pieces of which were placed in its mouth after forcibly opening the beak. Very soon, mice, House Sparrows, and other freshly killed birds, found on the highway, were added to its menu. The little owl showed a marked preference for mice, swallowing them as soon as they were placed (dead) in the cage. It showed fear of a live House Sparrow placed with it, fluttering to the opposite side of the cage. The dead birds were not eaten until the owl became very hungry. Usually only the head was consumed and most of the birds offered had to be removed.

The face of this owl (Plate 4) was predominantly gray in color without the white markings about the eyes shown in most plates and photographs of Saw-whet Owls. The back was grayish brown. The flattened wing measured 149 mm.

A hippoboscid fly was collected from its plumage and was identified by K. W. MacArthur of the Milwaukee Public Museum as *Lynchia fusca* (Macquart). He writes: "Up to the present time, to the writer's knowledge, this species has been taken from hawks and owls from the western States and from Florida."

The little owl was released in excellent condition on the night of April 2, 1940, when it immediately flew into the woods.—AMELIA R. LASKEY, *Graybar Lane, Nashville, Tennessee.*

**Feeding and disposition of nestling feces by the Kingbird.**—A nest of the Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*, was under daily observation at Lincoln Pond at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York, during late June and early July 1939. Since the disposition of the nestling feces appears to be unique, the following note may be of interest. During the first ten days in July the young Kingbirds in the nest were fed largely on damselflies and dragonflies. The female easily captured these large Odonata on the wing as they hovered over the grassy border of the pond; many other insects which had fallen on the surface of the pond were picked up by the female. After feeding, the feces of the young were taken one by one to a boat dock 180 feet away where each was laid. In several days a long row of feces was present on the dock as well as on the back seat of a rowboat which was fastened to the dock. When the dock was occupied, the feces were carried to a point approximately 330 feet from the nest and deposited along the edge of a large flat stone topping a wall near Lincoln Pond dam. As far as could be observed no place other than the two localities mentioned was used. Barn Swallows (*Hirundo erythrogaster*) nesting in a barn nearby would often fly out over the pond, a distance of up to 300 feet, and drop the nestling feces over the water.—EDWARD C. RANEY, *Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Quebec.**—On October 30, 1938, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, *Muscivora forficata*, was found alive but in a highly weakened condition in a ditch in the town of Noranda, Quebec. An attempt was made to restore it but it died in the night. Fortunately the remains were preserved and mounted by Mr. J. A. Hedge and have lately been presented to this museum through the intermediary of Mrs. L. C. Bent. Noranda is a mining town near the Ontario provincial boundary and about thirty miles south and east of Lake Abitibi. There are in this museum two other Canadian specimens of the species, both