

A specimen of Leach's Petrel from the Gulf coast of Florida.—On 30 May 1965 an oiled storm petrel was found entangled in seaweed on Anna Maria Island, 4 miles north and 9 miles west of Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida, and given to Mrs. Tom Stewart who donated it to the University of South Florida after it died 2 days later. The bird, a male Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*), largest testis 7×5 mm, weight 36.5 g with no integumentary fat, original number S.A.R. 318, is the first known specimen from the Gulf coast of Florida and apparently only the second for the entire Gulf of Mexico. In his revision of Howell's *Florida bird life*, Sprunt (New York, Coward-McCann, 1954, with addendum, 1963) lists only two specimens from all of Florida, both from the Atlantic coast.

The prominent white on the rump and the measurements (wing chord, 157 mm; tail, 83; exposed culmen, 17.5; tarsus, 24.5; middle toe with claw, 26) of our specimen correspond with the characteristics given in Palmer (*Handbook of North American birds*, vol. 1, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1962) for the nominate race. The bird appears to be over one year old, for the upper wing coverts and scapulars, although worn, appear to lack the white margins of the juvenal plumage (Palmer, *op. cit.*). The remaining feathers, with the exception of those of the forehead and throat, show little wear.

Daily weather maps for May 1965 reveal no widespread disturbances nearby in the Atlantic and show moderate winds maintaining their prevailing easterly direction at Nassau, Miami, and Key West. Except for winds averaging between 21 and 25 miles per hour on 24 May at Nassau, the average daily wind velocities these stations recorded for May were below 20 miles per hour, which do not seem sufficient to blow an oceanic bird off course.

Watson (*Seabirds of the tropical Atlantic Ocean*, Washington, D. C., Smithsonian Press, 1966) and earlier authors agree that it is nearly impossible to distinguish Leach's Petrel from Harcourt's Petrel (*O. castro*) in the field. Therefore the following sight records of "Leach's" Petrels from the Gulf and nearby are probably of little value beyond indicating the presence of *Oceanodroma* petrels. Single birds have been seen at St. Joseph Bay, Gulf County, Florida, and inland at Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida (Sprunt, *op. cit.*), and several were reported in the Gulf to within 200 miles east of Galveston, Texas (Danforth, *Auk*, 52: 74, 1935). The only other specimen from the Gulf of Mexico known to us is cited in Lowery (*Louisiana birds*, Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1955).

The only procellariiform bird recorded regularly in the Gulf of Mexico is Wilson's Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) which occurs in small numbers (*Check-list of North American birds*, American Ornithologists' Union, 1957). Furthermore, few strandings of sea birds are reported from the Gulf coasts even though at least half of the surrounding shores are well populated with bird enthusiasts. Although knowledge of the distribution of sea birds in the Gulf of Mexico is meager (Watson, *op. cit.*), these data suggest that procellariiform and probably other pelagic species are indeed uncommon there. The Gulf of Mexico is almost a closed sea containing warm water and lacking sustained upwellings (Galtsoff, coordinator, *Gulf of Mexico, its origin, waters and marine life*, U.S.F.W.S. Fishery Bull. 89, 1954). Such conditions prevent the formation of plankton concentrations in the upper strata necessary to support an abundant sea bird fauna.

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