

except as a blurred streak of color. As the flight ceased I saw them separate, and in one instance the female was seen to fall to the ground, but later to regain her perch, while the male continued his towering flights.

This towering flight, as is well known, has another purpose, namely, to intimidate other birds. However, on May 12, 1923, a male Rufous Hummingbird tried it once too often, when he staged a drop on a Black Pigeon Hawk, and got caught. (The hawk was collected.)—G. D. SPROT, *Cobble Hill, Vancouver Island, September 12, 1926.*

Least Petrel Added to the California List.—The petrels, as a family, are well known to be birds of wide range, and it is therefore not surprising that the Least Petrel (*Halocyptena microsoma*), which nests on islands off the coast of Lower California, should wander into United States waters. There appears, however, to be no published record of such occurrence; and I therefore report that, while collecting birds for the San Diego Society of Natural History in my motor-boat on September 9, 1926, I took a male bird of this species about 500 yards northeast of the whistling buoy off Point Loma. The specimen is now in the collection of the Society.—J. W. SEFTON, JR., *San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, California, September 21, 1926.*

A Protective Container for School Specimens.—The San Diego Society of Natural History, in its Nature Study extension work among the rural school children of San Diego County, encountered the problem of the rapid deterioration in bird specimens deposited by the Society in each school. It was found that the usefulness of a study

skin, when handled by the children, was limited to but a few months, even when the system was adopted of preparing the school skins with a stick extending beyond the tail, for handling purposes (see Grinnell, *Condor*, xxvi, 1924, p. 107). A complete enclosure, but one that permitted a view of back, breast and side, was seen to be the only real solution.

Such a container has now been devised, which is in the form of a cylinder flattened on one side. The two semicircular ends and the flat side or "bottom" are of wood, the remainder of curved celluloid. The bird-skin should preferably be made up on a stick, as referred to above, although a sharpened stick can be inserted into a skin already prepared. The stick provides a rigid support for the specimen in the cylinder, being sunk into one of the wooden ends. The beak of the bird, which is placed with one wing downward, rests in a small depression in the other end. The celluloid is fastened to the edges of the bottom and curved ends with small tacks. The heads of the tacks are covered and a finished appearance given to all edges with passe-partout binding paper. A descriptive label is pasted on the bottom of the container, and it is thus impossible for the specimen and the "story" to be separated. The scientific specimen label, if



Fig. 32. MR. WILLIAM S. WRIGHT, OF THE SAN DIEGO SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND THE SPECIMEN CONTAINER HE HAS DEVISED.

desired, may be preserved inside the cylinder.

The plasticity of both wood and celluloid permit any variation in the size and shape of the cylinder. If it were desirable to exhibit the underside of a wing, that particular specimen could be prepared with one wing raised and the container made correspondingly taller. Furthermore, these cylinders have been found equally suitable for study