

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) Breeding on the Coast of Georgia.—Since 1922 I have made several visits each year to an island at the mouth of the Savannah river where many hundreds of Least Terns and Black Skimmers breed. Forty or fifty pair of Wilson's Plover and two pair of Oystercatcher also nest on the island. Each year I have hoped that, attracted by the swarms of Terns and Skimmers, other species of water birds, particularly the more southern breeding Terns such as Cabot's and the Royal would come in and establish themselves. Every year a few of the latter are seen feeding in the sound and on the mud flats near the island, or mingling in flight with the Least Terns above the latter's breeding grounds, but they disappear early in June. My first trip to the island this year (1926) was made on April 26, in company with Thomas D. Burleigh, but few of the birds which breed there were in evidence. I again journeyed to the island on May 23, this time accompanied by H. B. Skeele, president of the Savannah Audubon Society, J. A. P. Crisfield, Noble Jones and G. R. Rossignol. The eastern end of the island is a high, bare, shell-encrusted area, about five acres in extent, composed of sand, crushed shells and black soil thrown up by suction dredges. The action of the surplus water flowing off has created little gullies and numerous portions of the area slope considerably. The balance of the island is low and flat, clothed in myrtle, lavender and long grass. When I entered the high section where hundreds of Least Terns had their eggs I soon became aware that a few unfamiliar Terns were hovering overhead, but I paid little attention to them, hurrying on down to the north beach to examine a nest of the Oystercatcher which I had found during my previous visit. In going there I passed through a narrow strip of drift-strewn beach. I spent some time in the vicinity of the Oystercatcher's nest searching for Willets and Wilson's Plovers. Returning to the spot where I first encountered the windrows of marsh grass, I continued on down the beach examining the little elevations and searching the open, sandy, shell-encrusted area between the dead drift for nests of Wilson's Plover. As I reached this point several birds which I thought were Cabot's Terns began to circle overhead, uttering a peculiar laughing cackle. They were too wary and flew too high for satisfactory identification, but their actions were those of breeding birds and I set about to find their nests. At each step the birds became more solicitous and I soon became positive that whatever they were their eggs would soon be found. Taking a zigzag course, I searched now up on the shelly slope then back to the drift sprinkled sand, and had gone perhaps five hundred feet when my eyes rested on a nest containing three eggs, and a moment later I spied a second and a third, each containing two eggs. At this moment Rossignol hove in sight over the crest of the hill and I called to him to come and assist in the identification of the eggs. We retreated down the beach two hundred feet or more, and in a crouching position watched through 8-power glasses for the birds to alight on their nests. This they soon did and we identified them as Gull-billed Terns. The nests were in windrows of dead marsh grass stems about fifty feet above high

water mark. The three were in a direct line parallel with the shore line, the middle one, containing two eggs, being twenty-five feet from the other one with two eggs, and seven feet from the nest containing three eggs. All are substantial and well made, and each is almost an exact duplicate of the other. Into a hollow measuring about five inches across and an inch and a half deep, the birds had arranged a single layer of broken shells about the size of a ten cent piece. Upon this, but placed in a rather haphazard manner, was a close-set cluster of dead marsh grass stems, with numerous fragments trailing over the edge of the nest and extending in a little stream eight or nine inches beyond the rim, just as if some one had dragged the material into the hollow with a rake, leaving pieces along the way. Heretofore my experience with breeding Terns has been confined to one species—the Least, whose nests are probably the simplest of all, so I was a little surprised to see such elaborately lined structures. On June 13, I again visited the island and found additional nests with eggs. Three sets were collected; two by the writer and one by G. R. Rossignol. One of my sets being now in the collection of my friend Arthur T. Wayne, of Mount Pleasant, S. C.—W. J. ERICKSEN, *Savannah, Ga.*

The Sooty Tern and Audubon's Shearwater in South Carolina.

—My friend Mr. Ellison A. Williams of Charleston, S. C., brought to me on July 30, 1926, a fine specimen of the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) that was found dead by a negro on the Mt. Pleasant shore, by the bridge which connects Sullivan's island with Mt. Pleasant. The bird was greatly emaciated but was in fine nuptial plumage and when found could not have been dead more than a few hours since the rigor mortis had barely departed.

The bird was evidently blown north by the hurricane which began in latitude 15 N. near Martinique and lasted more than a week in its course northwestward. The wind velocity at Charleston on July 28 (from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M.) ranged from 31 to 54 miles per hour accompanied by heavy rain from 4 P.M. until midnight. At Nassau, N. P., the maximum velocity was 130 miles between Monday night and Tuesday night, July 26-27. Thinking that other specimens might be found on the barrier islands opposite here I suggested to Mr. E. von S. Dingle that he make an investigation and he visited Long Island on August 2, where he found many Sooty Terns and some Audubon's Shearwaters (*Puffinus l'herminieri*) all of which had been partly eaten by sand crabs and had obviously been greatly emaciated.

Several additional Sooty Terns were seen later on my place at Mount Pleasant, which had evidently recovered from the effects of the storm and another was caught alive on Pawley's Island near Georgetown on July 30.

In my 'Birds of South Carolina' (1910) I placed this species in the hypothetical list as there was no evidence of the bird ever having been taken in the state. Therefore the actual capture of a specimen as here recorded constitutes an addition to the avifauna. Mr. Williams very