

too much of an ordeal.—MALCOLM DAVIS, *The National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C.*

**Wilson's petrel in interior Florida.**—On June 10, 1948, while investigating the birdlife of Biven's Arm, a lake south of Paine's Prairie south of Gainesville, Florida, I noted a small, dark bird resting on the water about 75 yards distant. A few moments later, a low flying plane flushed the bird which was then obviously a Wilson's petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus oceanicus*). The white rump, characteristic legs and feet, were plainly visible. With me, at the time, were James Pittman and Marshall Nehrenberg, of Orlando, Florida.

The next morning an attempt was made by Dr. Pierce Brodtkorb, of the biology department of the University of Florida, to secure the bird, but it was not found. The weather for this period, and both before and afterward, was quite normal.

Search of the literature fails to reveal any other inland Florida record. Biven's Arm is practically in the center of north Florida. A few days later, several of these petrels were observed en route from Key West to the Dry Tortugas, where I have seen them every June for the past four seasons.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, 4TH, *The Crescent, Charleston 50, South Carolina.*

**Death of a brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*).**—On November 5, 1945, at about 7:30 a. m. on the northwest shore of Pensacola Bay just opposite its entrance into the Gulf of Mexico, my attention was attracted to a disturbance in the water approximately one hundred yards off shore. Closer inspection with field glasses revealed that a school of small fish was being preyed upon by larger fish at a point where the shallow waters of the bay met the deeper channel of the inland waterway. Within a few minutes a flight of 15 or 20 brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), which had also apparently been attracted by the commotion, began diving into the school and feeding on the small fish.

As the school of fish moved away the pelicans followed, still diving and feeding, with the exception of one male which remained behind on the water, apparently in some difficulty. A breeze from the southeast carried the bird toward shore as its struggles became weaker. Within twenty minutes the bird had ceased activity, except for a slight movement of the head and neck. When the dead pelican was examined a large living fish was found lodged in the pouch. It was probably the movement of the fish which was responsible for movements of the head and neck of the bird just before it was picked up. The fish, a sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*), measured about 15 inches in length and 17 inches in girth and was estimated to weigh about six pounds. The position of the fish in the pouch was such that the snout of the fish apparently interfered with the glottis of the pelican. A little water was found in the trachea and lungs of the pelican, and it was assumed that the bird died of suffocation hastened by exhaustion from struggling.

The bird had been unable to disgorge the fish because the width of the fish's body was more than an inch greater than the space between the lower jaws. It was necessary to slit the pouch of the pelican to remove the fish for examination. Experimentation demonstrated that the fish slid into the pouch quite easily by springing the lower jaws apart, but it was impossible to remove the fish, tail first, through this opening without injuring the bill. It was also impossible to turn the fish end for end within the pouch.

The question which naturally arises is whether the pelican purposely attacked such a large fish, or if, by a freak circumstance, the fish was engulfed by accident. The latter could occur if the pelican and sheepshead had arrived simultaneously at the

same target (that is, some smaller fish on the surface of the water), one from above and the other from below. Evidence for this explanation lies in the fact that the sheepshead rarely comes to the surface except for swift, nearly vertical lunges for food, after which it returns to deeper water immediately. Also the fact that the sheepshead could enter the pelican's beak at only one angle indicates that they must have met head on.—DONALD E. STULKEN, *Department of Animal Physiology, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.*

**Brown pelican on the coast of Surinam, Dutch Guiana.**—Murphy (*Oceanic Birds of South America*, pp. 130–131, 1936) discusses at length the oceanic conditions which prevent brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) from extending their normal range much to southeastward of the point at which the southern end of the Antillean arc approaches the mainland. He further states that "Brown Pelicans have, of course, been reported from the coast of the Guianas and even from inland waters of the Amazon" and concludes: "all such records, however, appear to be based upon wandering individual birds." His opinion is that "the muddy water of this coast is the factor that limits the southeastward extension of the Brown Pelican's distribution so abruptly in the neighbourhood of Trinidad."

As to British Guiana all records seem to go back to Schomburgk (*Reisen in Britisch-Guiana in den Jahren 1840–1844*, 2: 456, 1848), and Young (*Ibis*, 1928: 751–752) does not mention the pelican in his account of the coast between the Corantyne and Demerara rivers. The Penard brothers (*Vogels van Guyana*, 1: 76, 1908) state that this bird is only of irregular occurrence on migration in the Guianas but give no further details. Count Hans von Berlepsch (*Nov. Zool.*, 15: 312, 1908) does not list the brown pelican for French Guiana, but there are at least two records in Brazil (Snethlage, *Catalogo das Aves Amazonicas*, 120, 1914, and Pinto, *Catalogo das Aves do Brasil*, 1: 25, 1938).

According to my observations during the last two years the brown pelican is of regular occurrence on the coast of Surinam, Dutch Guiana, but only in small numbers. Starting in the northwest of the country my list of records is as follows: coast east of Nieuw Nickerie, August 17, 1947, two birds; coast near Coronie, July 9, 1946, one bird; tributary of Saramacca and Coppename rivers, April 28, 1947, six birds (at least three of them in adult breeding plumage), May 10, 1947, two in adult breeding plumage, June 5, 1948, three, June 6, 1948, nine, July 10, 1947, four, July 11, 1947, twenty, August 7, 1946, eleven at least two in adult breeding plumage, August 24, 1947, seventeen, September 10, 1947, twenty, September 13, 1947, two; coast west of tributary of Surinam River, October 10, 1947, two birds, November 21, 1946, two, December 7, 1946, one bird in adult breeding plumage.

The best locality, however, seems to be the tributary of the Saramacca and Coppename rivers where large sandbanks are found teeming with waterfowl and where the pelicans can regularly be found sitting on stakes put in the shallow water by fishermen. On this shallow and muddy coast the pelicans cannot dive from the air as is their regular fishing method in deep water. On July 11, 1947, I accompanied a fisherman in the tributary of the Saramacca and Coppename rivers. There were about 20 brown pelicans fishing in our immediate neighborhood undisturbed by the presence of our small boat. They fished in exactly the same way as described for the white pelican by Bent (*U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.*, 121: 288, 1922) quoting observations by Goss, "swimming on the water with partially opened wings, and head drawn down and back, the bill just clearing the water, ready to strike and gobble up the prey within their reach."

There are no indications that these birds ever breed along this coast. My records