A Snake-eating Robin.—On February 6, 1958, while staying at the Archbold Biological Station, Lake Placid, Florida, I frightened a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) from an open place in pine woods and near a swamp. The Robin flew to the edge of a thicket of saw palmetto (*Serenoa*) with something hanging from its bill. I now saw that it was trying to swallow a small snake, 8 to 10 inches of which hung from a corner of its mouth. A little later the Robin flew 15 or 20 yards to open ground. Here it assumed a peculiar stance with head forward and body vertical, as if leaning back on its tail. By this time and for the remainder of the 18 minutes I had the bird under observation, it made no real efforts to swallow or to disgorge the snake but just let it dangle. It flew to several other places. Its final perch was on a limb in full sunshine where I took its picture through a telephoto lens. After that I lost track of the robin in a thicket. The snake, pale yellowish underneath and dark on top with a thin yellow stripe, corresponded to pictures of the Ribbon Snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*). Exact identification, however, could not be made. I have found no similar instance reported by Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull., 196: 14–6, 1949), though he mentions the case of a robin eating a dead field mouse, possibly killed by a terrier (*op. cit.*: 50–51).—LAWRENCE KILHAM, *7815 Aberdeen Road, Bethesda, Maryland.*

A Connecticut Breeding Record for the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.—The author with Hans Weber observed on territory a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (*Polioptila caerulea*) during June, 1957 near the Mansfield Hollow Dam in Mansfield, Connecticut. We were able to establish what appears to be the first Connecticut breeding record for this species, which has been observed with increasing frequency in the state in recent years. A pair did build a nest in southwestern Connecticut in May, 1947 but were not successful (see Auk, 67: 255, 1950). The A. O. U. Check-list (1957) does not list it as a breeder northeast of New Jersey and New York.

The dam basin consists of rather well drained marshland and storage areas, unusually dry in June, 1957. The surrounding areas are partly oak and pine forest and partly old fields growing into scrub woods. The pair was first observed on June 10, 1957 in a large white pine on the edge of the basin. They flew frequently between the pine and a nearby thicket although apparently were carrying neither food nor nesting material on that date. A Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) which flew into the pine was viciously attacked by the gnatcatchers until he withdrew. A House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) singing from the tree top was not molested.

Repeated observations of the birds were made by members of the Natchaug Ornithological Society. The birds were usually to be found in the pine or in the nearby thicket. Although the nest was not located, the author and many members of the Society (including Jerault A. Manter and James A. Slater, respectively Professor Emeritus and Professor of Ornithology in the University of Connecticut) on June 28 observed four young being fed by adults in oaks on a nearby ridge. The young on June 28 were barely able to fly and could not have been more than a day or two out of the nest. Neither the adults nor young were subsequently observed.—ROBERT W. LOUGEE, *University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut.*

The Affinities of *Oreothraupis arremonops*.—One of the unsolved problems in the classification of the passerine birds is the delimiting of the tanagers and the groups to which they are closely allied. Until much more is known about the behavior and anatomy of many species, the final answer cannot be expected. Still, it is possible on the basis of "skin" characters to point out certain apparent rela-

tionships. A case in point is the systematic position of *Oreothraupis arremonops*. This bird, called the Finch-like Tanager by Hellmayr (Cat. Birds Americas, Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser. 13, part 9, 1936), is known only from the subtropical zone of western Colombia and Ecuador. Birds of both sexes are predominantly rust-color, the belly and under tail coverts being white and the crown striped with black and gray. The large feet and strong legs indicate that these birds are at least in part terrestrial.

The species was described as *Saltator arremonops* by Sclater (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 23: 84–85, 1855), who at the time stated that the bill was "altogether abnormal, the upper mandible swelling in the middle and overlapping the under, as in the genus *Lanio*, though not developed into a decided hook." The following year, Sclater (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 24: 80, 1856) set up the monotypic genus *Oreothraupis* for this species, using the bill character as the basis for the generic diagnosis and placing the genus between *Cissopis* and *Arremon*. In 1886 (Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., 11: 298), Sclater placed *Oreothraupis* in the "Pitylinae tumidirostres" with the genera *Cissopis, Schistochlamys,* and *Pitylus*. In 1912, von Berlepsch (Verh. 5th Internat. Ornith. Kongr., Berlin, p. 1104-1105) placed *Oreothraupis* between the genera *Lysurus* and *Arremon*. Ridgway (U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 50, pt. 1, p. 24, 1901) removed several genera, including *Pezopetes, Buarremon, Arremon, Saltator,* and *Pitylus* from the tanagers and placed them in the Fringillidae. Among these transferred genera he listed *Oreothraupis* with a query, but he made no further comment, presumably because the genus did not occur within the region covered by the work. Hellmayr (*op. cit.*) for the most part followed Sclater's 1886 arrangement but omitted the genera which Ridgway removed to the Fringillidae. He retained *Oreothraupis* in the Thraupidae but stated in a footnote (p. 437) that "the systematic position of this remarkable bird can only be determined by the study of its anatomy. It may prove to be of Fringilline affinities."

After examining six skins of this species at the American Museum of Natural History and U. S. National Museum, I am convinced that *Oreothraupis arremonops* is closely related to the members of the "finch" genus *Atlapetes* which were formerly separated as the genus *Buarremon*. Points of resemblance are the pattern and texture of the plumage, particularly the black and gray striped crown; the broad, lax, somewhat pointed rectrices; the stout legs and feet; and the short, rounded wings. One female in the collections of the American Museum has retained part of the juvenal plumage on the throat and under tail coverts. These juvenal feathers are sooty in color like those of some species of *"Buarremon."* The rusty color of much of the adult plumage of *Oreothraupis arremonops* is suggested by the orange tinge of the green plumage of *Atlapetes* (*Buarremon*) *torquatus basilicus*. Finally, bill form in the genus *Atlapetes* is quite variable, and the bill of *Oreothraupis* falls within the range of variation of that genus, except for its greater breadth, more curved culmen, and the slightly greater swelling of the upper mandible first described by Sclater.

Nowhere in the literature have I been able to find a critical discussion of the relationships of *Oreothraupis*. In most instances an author's beliefs regarding the affinities of this genus must be inferred from his linear arrangement of it and the genera placed near it. *Oreothraupis* was described and placed in the tanagers at a time when the emberizine genera *Arremon, Buarremon, Lysurus,* and *Pezopetes* were considered tanagers. That *Oreothraupis* was kept in the Thraupidae after these other genera were removed was very likely a result of Sclater's having used

the root "thraupis" in the generic name. It must be admitted that a taxonomist can (albeit unconsciously) be influenced in his thinking on the matter of relationships by a bird's name, either vernacular or scientific.

In spite of Hellmayr's comment that the systematic position of *Oreothraupis* can only be determined by a study of its anatomy, I believe that evidence from the study of skins alone is strong enough to warrant its removal from the tanagers and its transfer to a position near (or possibly in) the genus *Atlapetes*.—ROBERT W. STORER, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

Recent Additions to the Avifauna of Alabama.—Field work in Alabama has increased considerably in recent years, with the result that observers have collected species new to the state or first specimens of others that occur rather regularly. These records modify the A. O. U. Check-list (1957) status of the species concerned or provide specimen confirmation of sight records accepted by the Check-list. Except for the records of the White-faced Ibis at Marion, the Mottled Duck in May, 1955, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Livingston, and the White-fronted Goose at Coden, all records since 1947 herein cited have been noted very briefly in *Audubon Field Notes* (Central Southern Region) for the appropriate season (**1–12,** Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, 1947–1958). The present paper coordinates these records by species, rather than chronologically, and gives additional details. The following initials refer to collections where specimens are housed: DC—Alabama Department of Conservation, FSU—Florida State University, LSU—Louisiana State University, UA—University of Alabama, USNM—United States National Museum.

1. *Bubulcus ibis,* Cattle Egret—The only record is that of a specimen without any fat at all (UA) collected by James E. Keeler on Cochrane Causeway near Mobile, November 8, 1957.

2. *Dichromanassa rufescens,* Reddish Egret—The first record was that of five birds seen on Dauphin Island, July 23, 1955. The observer, Ralph L. Chermock, collected one (UA). This species has since proved to be a regular transient on Dauphin Island in small numbers (most seen, 5, July 23, 1955, and October 6, 1956); extremes, March 17 (Chermock) to April 21 (Imhof) and July 23 (Chermock) to October 20 (Dusi and others). Also one bird was seen on a farm pond 25 miles south of Montgomery, August 13, 1955 (L. E. Goodnight), and another at Gulf Shores, October 6, 1956 (Francis M. Weston and Goodnight). Additional specimens were collected September 23, 1955 (UA) and October 7, 1956 (FSU).

3. *Plegadis chihi,* White-faced Ibis—On May 30, 1956, Burt L. Monroe, Jr. found a freshly-killed specimen (LSU) at Gulf Shores. The specimen, a second-year bird, was identified by Newman, Lowery, and Belknap. Imhof and Lois McCollough found another specimen (UA, *chihi, fide* John W. Aldrich) on Dauphin Island, October 5, 1956. It was blind in one eye and had been run over by a car. At least a dozen additional sight records of *Plegadis* (most seen, 5, Petit Bois Island, June 17, 1956, Imhof and others) are for the period April 29 (1952, Furman, Wilcox Co., Keeler) to November 6 (1948, Gulf Shores, Weston and M. Wilson Gaillard). Except for one at Marion in the summer of 1956 (R. Snow), none of the observers saw white behind the eye; nevertheless, bearing in mind the geographic position of Alabama, the specific identity of these dark-faced birds must remain in doubt.

4. *Dendrocygna bicolor,* Fulvous Tree Duck—The only record is that of a