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.

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

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 passepartout 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 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

skins of mammals. The main difference in the treatment of mammals is that the stick must be made to extend beyond the nose, to provide the secondary support which, in the case of birds, is furnished by the beak. This is accomplished by thrusting the stick through the skin of the animal—entering just below the left hind leg and emerging just

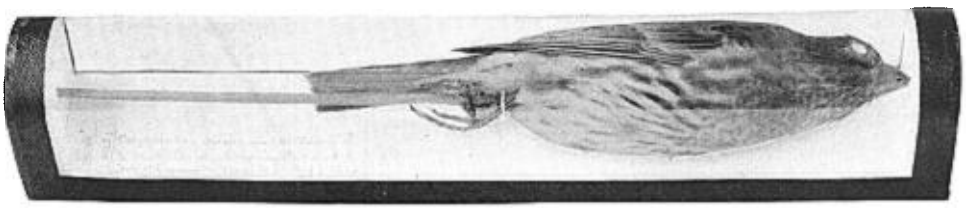

Fig. 33. THE SPECIMEN CONTAINER, OF WOOD AND CELLULOID.

above the left front leg—and tying the two legs to the stick. As in the case of birds, the mammal is placed with one side toward the wooden bottom of the cylinder.—WILLIAM S. WRIGHT, *Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, September 21, 1926.*

The Derby Flycatcher near Los Angeles.—On September 4, 1926, a phone message from Inglewood announced that a "yellow-bellied kingfisher" had been killed at a cemetery there. Investigation disclosed the fact that a Derby Flycatcher (*Pitangus sulphuratus derbianus*) had been taken while apparently trying to catch fish in the goldfish pond where Belted Kingfishers had caused much trouble. Its actions, kingfisher-like appearance, and swoops toward the water, from a perch in the tules, were its undoing.

The bird was a female, in full molt. Dissection showed an empty stomach. Dr. H. C. Oberholser, who identified it, suggested that it had probably worked northward from Sinaloa, Mexico, its nearest normal habitat. This appears to be the first record of the species for the United States outside of extreme southern Texas.

The fish-catching habit of *Pitangus* is noted by Hudson, as also by Grayson who says he has "often seen them plunge into the water after large insects and small fish." —L. E. WYMAN, *Los Angeles Museum, Los Angeles, November 9, 1926.*

Sabine Gull off San Diego County.—Frank Stephens, in his "Annotated List of the Birds of San Diego County" (Transactions, San Diego Society of Natural History, III, no. 2, 1919) does not include the Sabine Gull (*Xema sabini*), although he mentions other pelagic species, such as the Pacific Kittiwake, which are known to occur off the coast of the county. Dr. E. W. Nelson writes (Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences, XVI, 1921, p. 13): "We were much interested, when a few miles off the mouth of San Diego Harbor (May 15, 1905), to see a number of Sabine Gulls scattered about feeding on the tide lines formed by the currents in the smooth sea. This was, I believe, the first record of these beautiful birds at San Diego."

However, no Sabine Gulls found their way into the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History until August 28, 1925, when Laurence M. Huey collected thirteen specimens. Since then there have been added six specimens collected by J. W. Sefton, Jr.—five taken on July 29, 1926, and one on September 13, 1926. All were taken on the ocean within a few miles of Point Loma. Of the 1925 birds, three were in immature plumage and six were adults in various stages of transition from dark to light heads. The remainder and all the 1926 birds were dark-headed. It is safe to assume that the Sabine Gull migrates regularly through Southern California waters.—CLINTON G. ABBOTT, *Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, September 21, 1926.*

Account of the Discovery of a Rare Bird in Costa Rica.—The Puff-bird (*Micromonacha lanceolata austinsmithi*) was named by Dwight and Griscom (Amer. Museum Novitates, no. 142, 1924, p. 2), from a single bird taken by me at Carrillo, Costa Rica. In view of the fact that I have made subsequent trips to the vicinity of Carrillo, and failed again to meet with this species, also that none of the various collectors visiting that region in the years past have secured it, leads to the supposition that it may be very limited in number of individuals.