

Bulletin of the

## OKLAHOMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. VIII

September, 1975

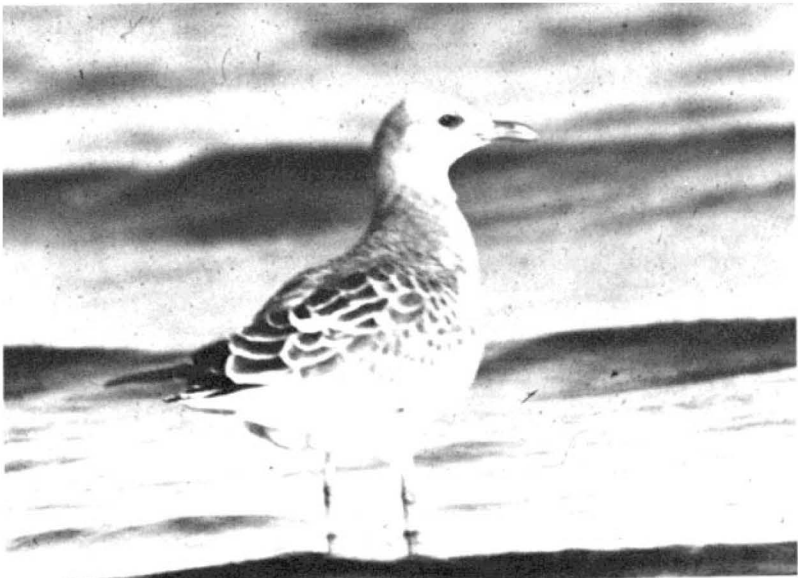
No. 3

### SECOND LAUGHING GULL SPECIMEN FOR OKLAHOMA

BY JACK S. ROBERTS AND JOHN G. NEWELL

On the morning of 29 July 1972, along the south shore of Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, we watched a puzzling gull for some time as it flew about over the water. Occasionally it alighted on a sandbar. We carefully noted its shape and markings — especially the large bill and brownish-gray band across the chest — and decided that it must be a young Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). Using a telephoto lens, Roberts photographed it after it had alighted close to the shore. Knowing, as we did, that only one Laughing Gull specimen had been taken in Oklahoma, and that that bird had been an adult, we decided that this young bird should be collected.

When Roberts returned that afternoon, he saw two gulls, one slightly the



LAUGHING GULL

*Bird in complete juvenal plumage photographed at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma on 29 July 1972 by Jack S. Roberts.*

darker, each with a dark band across its chest. He collected the lighter-colored bird, the one he had photographed. The specimen proved to be a male in complete juvenal feather (UOMZ 7309, weight 253.2 grams, wingspread 39¼ in.). In identifying it as *L. atricilla*, George M. Sutton compared it directly with two juvenal Franklin's Gulls (*L. pipixcan*) collected in North Dakota on 23 August 1972 by Robert W. Stewart and forwarded through the courtesy of Lewis W. Oring, and with a not-quite-fledged Laughing Gull collected on 29 June 1973 along the Texas coast by David Blankinship and Brent Giezentanner. Identification was confirmed at the American Museum of Natural History in New York by John Farrand. The brownish-gray of the chest apparently is diagnostic, the juvenal Franklin's Gull being white-chested. When, after completion of the post-juvenal molt, the young Laughing Gull becomes white-chested, it may, indeed, be "not separable" from the immature Franklin's Gull (Robbins, Bruun, and Zim, 1966, Guide to field identification birds of North America, p. 138). The photograph does not show the dark chest band at all clearly, but it does show the large bill.

5816 N.W. 53RD ST., OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73122; 4129 N. EVEREST, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73111, 7 JULY 1973.

## A CANYON WREN NEST IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

BY DOROTHY B. NEWELL

The Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*) is resident in the Black Mesa country of far western Oklahoma and in rocky formations in southwestern Oklahoma; it has been found nesting in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County, but there is no record of its nesting anywhere in Oklahoma east of these mountains (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 415).

In late afternoon on 28 May 1973 I discovered a Canyon Wren nest with young at the Methodist Canyon Camp in Caddo County, central Oklahoma, a few hundred feet west of the Canadian County line. My husband John and I were on a field trip with Wesley Isaacs, Charles Frichot, his wife Berniece, and Al Reed. Suddenly we were startled by the scolding notes of a wren that was darting about behind rocks and on ledges on the canyon wall right beside us. We noted the white throat and realized that this was a Canyon Wren, not a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). Wanting to get a better look at the bird, the rest of the group followed it along the wall while I remained at the spot where we had first seen it. Within a short time the group was out of sight, but the bird had doubled back and was now not far from me, moving in and out among the loose rocks that had fallen to the bottom of the canyon. This time I followed the wren closely, looking behind and under the rocks and in crevices, hoping that it might have a nest hidden there. The wren soon disappeared, but I continued to look for the nest. I noticed a row of small eroded holes in the red sandstone wall about 4 feet above the ground. Looking into a hole that had some debris