Interbreeding of Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses

ROTHSCHILD *(The avifauna of Laysan and the neighboring islands,* p. 292, 1893) recorded a single specimen of albatross which he regarded as a cross between *Diomedea nigripes* and *D. immutabilis.* In May, 1945, on Midway Island, I noted a *nigripes* and an *immutabilis* feeding the same partly fledged young. Because of this, I made a particular search for further evidence of interbreeding when I again visited Midway in December, 1946.

On Eastern Island of Midway on December 30, 1946, an apparent hybrid was observed for 40 minutes, and kodachrome pictures were made. This bird was *nigripes* in color except for white underparts on the body extending forward to the anterior part of the breast. Its behavior, however, was like that of *immutabilis;* the head was carried high in walking—not extended forward and low as is customary for *nigripes.* It was standing in a mixed group on a sand dune near the beach.

In two different places on the beach of Sand Island, Midway, a *nigripes* and an *immutabilis* were present at a single nest isolated from th rest of a *nigripes* colony. In both instances Laysan Albatross was incubating an egg, an the Black-footed Albatross was resting along side. A subsequent visit to one of the nest revealed a *nigripes* incubating the egg and a *immutabilis* standing near-by.

Still another mixed pair was observed, on th beach on December 31, rubbing the bills togethe and stroking the feathers of the neck. Occa sionally one or the other would execute som movements of the dance typical of its species but the couple never did perform at the sam time. No nest was present here.

It seems likely that interbreeding of thes species is more frequent than is usually believed This may not be surprising in view of the sim ilarity in size, structure, and habits, and the over lap of nesting colonies on crowded islands.— *Harvey I. Fisher, Department of Zoology an Entomology, University of Hawaii, Honolulu Hawaii.*

The Poisoning of *Bufo marinus* by the Flowers of the Strychnine Tree

ON MAY 9, 1947, a paralyzed toad, *Bufo marinus,* was picked up beneath a large strychnine tree, *Strychnos nux-vomica,* growing on the grounds of the Territorial Board of Agriculture and Forestry. This toad would become convulsed, with the fore and hind legs stiffly extended in a muscular spasm, whenever it attempted to move or was touched. Any stimulus above or along the spine was especially effective in causing such a spasm.

The animal was anesthetized by an injection of sodium pentobarbital and the stomach dissected out. On opening the stomach, the following material was found: one snail, two ants, two cockroaches, one small beetle, one small unidentified leaf, and ten flowers of *Strychnos nux-vomica.*

It would appear probable, judging both from the symptoms and the presence of *Strychno nux-vomica* flowers in the stomach, that the toad was suffering from strychnine poisoning. Arnold reports the fatal poisoning of *Bufo marinus* in this fashion and speculates on the reason for the ingestion of the *Strychnos* flowers by the toad (Arnold, Harry L., *Poisonous plants of Hawaii,* 71 p., 24 pl. Tongg, Honolulu, 1944) It is possible that such ingestion by the toad reported here was adventitious while feeding upon insects, since the area beneath the strychnine tree was thickly carpeted with blossoms fallen from it.—*Vernon E. Brock, Director, Division of Fish and Game, Territorial Board of Agriculture and Forestry, Honolulu, Hawaii.*