

The Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon l. lunifrons*) in Indiana.—On the Ratliff homestead situated just west of Richmond, Indiana, where the writer spent a portion of his life, was found a colony of at least thirty pairs of Cliff Swallows, whose irregular nestings covered a period of more than twenty-five years. The large farm buildings constructed with over-jetting roofs, with roughly-sawed rafters and eave boards, furnished desirable nesting sites for the "Mud Daubers."

A small boggy pond located but a few rods away from the barns furnished the mud that was used in the "adobe," bottle-shaped nests.

Large farm buildings similar to those on the old homestead, were found on neighboring farms, about the eaves of which the swallows nested. These structures were not so far from the before-mentioned pond, but were adjacent to a sluggish stream of water, Clear Creek, upon whose edges the particular kind of wet soil also abounded.

It was not generally known at that time, that it was a peculiar trait of this bird to not nest consecutively, year after year, at the breeding places. It was observed, however, that at times, perhaps a couple of years out of every five, at one or other of the farms, scarcely an individual bird would be seen. This was evidently counterbalanced, by the increased numbers, at the others.

About the year 1885, fire destroyed our barn buildings. And not long after, a similar fate befell the barn on the nearest adjacent farm. In rebuilding, machine-dressed lumber was used and the poor swallows, after repeated trials, had to abandon building their adobe nests, as the mud houses would break from their adhesions to the smoother lumber and fall to the ground. This, with the drainage of the pond, followed by agricultural cultivation, really left the birds nought but to seek other quarters.

A couple of farms, two or three miles away, to the north and along the Clear Creek streams, were selected, and from then until at present, the constantly diminishing numbers have been almost annually nesting. At present, but a mere half dozen pairs are seen.—WALTER S. RATLIFF, *Richmond, Indiana.*

Nesting of the Louisiana Water-Thrush in Massachusetts.—On June 9, 1920, at Huntington, Massachusetts, in company with E. R. Cross I visited a nest of the Louisiana Water-Thrush. We spent at least an hour in careful examination at close range of both adults and one of the young, which I held in my hands. The nest itself was so cleverly concealed that we might have been unable to find it had not the birds, feeding their young, disclosed its location. On the perpendicular moss-covered bank of a small spring brook the bird had hollowed out a place for the nest, the bottom of which was not more than six inches above the running water. The nest was invisible from above, but by getting down on hands and knees and by peering into the hole we could see the young.

While I was trying to get a good close look at one of the young birds,

they all left the nest. They were well feathered and able to fly eight or ten feet at a time. As the young left the nest the parent birds became greatly excited, creeping about on the ground with outstretched wings and chipping to attract attention away from their offspring.

The nest was composed outwardly of dead leaves, tightly compressed, and was lined with the round stems of grasses and fine black rootlets.—ALBERT A. CROSS,

The Short-billed Marsh Wren in the Montreal District.—Mr. H. Mousley's recent record of a Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stel-laris*) taken at Hatley¹, drew my attention to the fact that it is the only published record of the occurrence of this wren in Quebec Province, and it is quite time that the erroneous impression regarding its status here should be corrected, as at least a few observers have been aware of its occurrence in the Montreal District for several years past.

In this locality the Short-billed Marsh Wren has a decided preference for sphagnum bogs—not so much the bog proper as the firmer ground about the bog margins, where there is a certain amount of free surface water and a fairly heavy growth of grasses and sedges. Here the silky tassels of the cotton-grass, waving above the lesser growth, are a familiar sight and one is more apt to find swamp laurel in greater abundance than bushes of Labrador Tea, which appears to thrive better in the yielding sphagnum. Clumps of alders are also commonly found with an occasional tamarack sapling and sometimes beds of cat-tails, while often there is a thicket of poplars and birches in the background. The intrusion of a rail or wagon road into the bog appears to create the proper environment as it is in such places that I have found the birds most commonly, which leads one to surmise that the road-beds antedated this Wren's arrival here. It was near a railroad that I first saw the Short-bill, frequenting the undergrowth about a drainage ditch that parallels the high-banked road-bed, skirting the margin of a five-mile stretch of intermittent sphagnum bog known as the "Bad-lands," and situated near St. Janvier in Terrebonne County, about eighteen miles from Montreal.

These "Bad-lands" (from the farmers' view-point) comprise a number of more or less open sphagnum bogs interspersed with wooded areas or islands. The tree growth is mainly black spruce and tamarack with patches of poplar and white birch. Almost the entire area, lying between some forested sand-hills and the Mascouche River, and extending for several miles in a north-easterly direction, is of this character.

Since my first view of this Wren, on June 18, 1911, I have seen it on various occasions in different portions of this area and I consider it common and well distributed in loose colonies. Although it is difficult to form even an approximate idea of the number of Wrens occurring there, I believe that one hundred pairs would be a low estimate.

¹ The Auk, 1918 and 1921.