

"The McCarty sisters say that although they have seen this bird several times over a period of almost twenty years, yet they have rarely seen it more than once or twice in any one year, . . . usually when the rainy season starts about the twentieth of June. At that time they laugh and play in the very tops of the great *Sabino* trees in the evening before the rain. They saw five playing at one time. There is said to be an old Indian drinking song called 'The Laugh of the Huaco.' The Mexicans call them Rain Crows."

An attempt to keep the young bird alive was without success and it was prepared as a specimen. Colors of the soft parts were as follows, all of them except the bill and claws from a Kodachrome film and not from the living bird: Iris, dark brown; bill, black, with base and cere putty color; tarsi and feet, grayish blue; claws, black. There is no color plate in Ridgway's 'Color Standards and Color Nomenclature,' 1912, which matches the rather uniform body color of this chick. It may be described as immaculate, light brownish buff, perhaps nearest to pale 'Clay Color,' distinctly paler on the chin and throat and deepening gradually to between 'Clay Color' and 'Sayal Brown' on the crown, back, and wings. The outstanding feature is the black facial mask and collar around the nape, precisely as in the adult except that there is no white spot on the lower eyelid. The down is very soft and dense and exceeds in this respect any downy hawk with which we are acquainted; in fact it compares favorably with a newly hatched duckling.

The eggs, as before noted, resemble those of an owl. They are bluntly 'Rounded Ovale,' pure white, and rather smooth in shell texture. Measurements of the two collected are 44.2 x 37.6, and 43.5 x 37.7 mm.

Selection of natural cavities in cliffs as nesting sites in a district where they are abundantly available, together with the peculiar nest which, in each of the three instances, consisted only of a mass of detached leaves, naturally leads to speculation as to the choice of sites and type of nest construction employed in forest areas where cliffs are non-existent.—W. J. SHEFFLER AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, 4731 Angeles Vista and Dickey Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, California.

Notes on the nesting of the Song Sparrow.—In both 1941 and 1942, a pair of Eastern Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia melodia*) have nested in the writer's back yard.

On June 7, 1941, four flightless young were in the yard being fed by their parents. In the following October, the nest was found in a barberry hedge, 41 inches from the ground. It contained one unhatched egg.

In 1942, on April 23, an adult was carrying nesting material. On June 3, a nest was found 94 inches from the ground. The nest, which contained four eggs, was between a brick wall and a wire netting that was covered with a dense growth of roses. When examined on June 6, the eggs were gone and the nest was disturbed. The birds nested again in 1942, and on June 24 four small young were in the yard being fed by their parents. In the fall, when the leaves were gone from the roses, two nests were found. The second nest behind the wire was almost directly above the nest of June 3 and eleven inches higher. The young seen on June 24 probably came from this nest.

The above account differs from several statements of Margaret Morse Nice (Wilson Bull., 43: 92-94, June, 1931). Her findings in that paper, based on the study of sixty-four nests, were that a second nest was never placed closer than thirty-two feet from the first and that no nest ranged more than thirty inches from the ground.

The fact that these nests were forty-one, ninety-four, and one hundred and five inches from the ground (eighty inches average height) may be attributed to the fact that no ground cover was available. As there was abundant food supply, the birds utilized the only cover at hand and the nests were thus necessarily close together and some distance from the ground.—ROBERT G. LANNING, 56 *Chatsworth Drive, Toronto*.

Chimney Swifts (?) at Manaus,¹ Brazil.—At dusk on March 28, 29, and 30, 1943, a cloud of thousands of swifts, resembling in every visible detail our North American Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), was seen hanging over a large, abandoned, red chimney in the town of Manaus, situated on the Rio Negro about a thousand miles up the Amazon valley. The chimney in question is about sixty feet in height and stands near the southeastern limits of the city where a deep, finger-like inlet of the Negro leads inland from its mouth on the northern bank of the great river. This body of water, known as the Igarapé da Cachoeirinha, winds northeastward past a tiny island bearing the picturesque name of Ilha Mte. Cristo, and the chimney stands on the mainland but a short distance northwest of this island.

The circumstances under which these observations were made are worth reviewing because of the problem involved, for if this sight record can be later substantiated by specimens, it will be of the highest value in uncovering one of the last unknown winter ranges of a North American migrant bird, a range which has defied thorough collectors so completely for two centuries that we have no evidence beyond logical supposition that this species winters in South America. Our only records of the millions of Chimney Swifts that annually depart from these shores are of a few birds taken in Nicaragua and Panama, and certain reliable sight records of migrating flocks over the Caribbean area. In fact, one feels inclined to bow to old Olaus Magnus, Archduke of Upsala, and to ponder his ostensibly factual illustration showing fishermen seining torpid swifts and other such creatures from the bottom of the sea! However, since his time in the 16th century, we have become assured that birds are not among the varied forms of animal life which hibernate, and the old Archduke has fallen into disrepute.

Some among us have written that when the secret of our Chimney Swifts' migration is finally divulged, in all probability the key to the puzzle will be found somewhere in the vast valley of the Amazon. Whereas in eastern North America Chimney Swifts are the sole representatives of their family, in the Amazonian region they may have remained effectively hidden among many other forms of swifts, nearly all of which at any distance are quite similar in appearance—with the exception of the Palm Swifts of the genus *Reinarda*. Because of this similarity, exact records must, of necessity, be in the form of collected specimens, since most sight records, perhaps even as here recorded, are too uncertain. The chief purpose of this note, then, is to record an observation for the benefit of future investigators.

Our first view of the Manaus 'Chimney Swifts' took place just before dusk on Sunday, March 28, when, after a day of hunting, we were returning by launch with a party of six men including naturalist George A. Seaman. As the boat entered Igarapé da Cachoeirinha within the limits of the city, as evidenced by the hundreds of houses hugging its steep banks, I saw the flock and said: "Look! Chimney Swifts." A flock of these birds settling into a chimney is quite noticeable and so at that time and during the two succeeding evenings when we passed

¹ Spelled 'Manaus,' according to modern Brazilian orthography; formerly Manáos.