

zontal position, slowly raises its wings to a high angle, holds them still momentarily, and then claps them vigorously against the sides of the body. The bird may then remain in place and repeat the performance in a few seconds or drop down several feet where the process may be repeated if the disturbance continues. The mate usually follows suit or may perform simultaneously. Seldom will one swift clap more than twice in succession without an interval of rest. When incubating eggs or brooding young, the swifts usually require a longer period of irritation before giving the clapping reaction. Sometimes the birds will push off entirely from the nest or wall, clap their wings in rapid succession for several seconds while fluttering in the well, and then return to the same spot. Mates may alternate in doing this or perform at the same time. Worth apparently heard only the single-clap behavior and raised the question as to whether it may be incidental to changing position in the chimney. Having observed these phenomena for many nights in succession over a period of several months each year, the writer is convinced that they are deliberate behavior reactions which come to an end soon after the disturbance ceases.—RALPH W. DEXTER, *Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

**Land birds at sea.**—On October 11, 1945 I was returning to the United States aboard ship. Early in the afternoon I saw a Red-shafted Flicker land on the ship's rail. As the afternoon passed, two more flickers, a small owl of undetermined species, three White-throated Sparrows, and approximately fifty other small birds of undetermined species landed on various parts of the ship. When the first flicker landed on the ship, we were nearly five hundred miles due west of the southern California coast. With the exception of making short flights into the wind or to the other ship, the majority of the birds remained on the ship until we entered San Diego harbor two days later. During this same period I also observed several small birds floating in the water, and on one occasion saw a small bird picked from the water and swallowed by an albatross. A strong easterly wind, which frequently approached thirty miles an hour on October 9, 10, 11, and 12, may have accounted for the presence of such non-migratory species as the owl nearly five hundred miles from land.—JOHN L. BUCKLEY, *New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse, New York.*

**Tree Swallow mortality from exposure during unseasonable weather.**—The Tree Swallow, *Iridoprocne bicolor* (Vieillot), is said to be one of the hardiest of its family and often arrives early enough in the spring to encounter more or less snow and cold weather. The spring of 1945 was unusually cold and wet at the time the Tree Swallows were arriving and some, possibly many, birds contracted pneumonia and subsequently died. One birdhouse in the heart of Syracuse, N. Y., produced eleven dead Tree Swallows on May 15, all victims of pneumonia. By coincidence, the writer happened to be at the Huntington Forest, Newcomb, N. Y. (in the Adirondacks), on the above-mentioned date and found Herring Gull pellets on the gull nesting rocks in Wolf Lake that contained feathers, feet, bills and other parts of Tree Swallows. The inference in this case was that the swallows were not taken on the wing but rather in the water or its immediate environs, where they had dropped in a weakened condition and perhaps later died. Innumerable Tree Swallows were observed in the act of catching small insects above the surface of Wolf Lake and in so doing often came near the gulls. The gulls never showed any aggressiveness toward the swallows and that in itself undoubtedly accounts for their fearlessness. Herring Gulls are noted for their scavenging propensities and they undoubtedly were acting in that capacity at Wolf Lake rather than as predators.—WILFORD A. DENCE, *Roosevelt Wildlife Forest Experiment Station, N. Y. State College of Forestry, Syracuse, N. Y.*