

Death of a Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*.—While watching Rough-winged Swallows course in their rather steady, even flight over South Egremont Pond, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, on June 8, 1949, we witnessed a peculiar event. In front of us and near the shore, three Rough-wings met in a swirling flight, flying for a moment in a tight circle, and one bird was seen to collide with a second. I heard a definite "click," as though a bill had struck a bony structure and one of the birds fell four or five feet to the water. It made no attempt to rise; the wings remained motionless, the eyelids moved once or twice, and then the bill and head disappeared under water. Retrieved by one of the party within ten minutes, the bird was dead and without any sign of external injury. It proved to be an adult female.—DOROTHY E. SNYDER, *Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.*

A Note about the Wren-babbler, *Spelaeornis*.—The opportunity of seeing a number of specimens of this shy little Wren-babbler prompts me to discuss herewith the species of the genus. Delacour (Oiseaux, 16: 24, 1947) in his review of the Time-line genera lists several species under this genus but omits others. It seems necessary to make a definitive arrangement. I am most grateful to the authorities of the museums in London, Paris, and New York for the opportunity of examining material in their care, and to Mr. Kinnear for advising me of conclusions in the unpublished manuscripts of Messrs. Ticehurst and Whistler.

SPELAEORNIS

The genus can be defined as one of the small wren-like babblers with strong bill and legs, tail of ten feathers ranging in length from short to equal in length to the wing, and with little sexual dimorphism. Two close relatives are *Pnoepyga* and *Sphenocichla*. The former has a very short tail of six feathers and rather pronounced sexual dimorphism, plus plumage color phases. The latter is a monotypic genus characterized by distinctive size and a marked out-size, wedge-shaped bill.

SPECIES AND HABITS

Extraordinarily little is known about the habits or the ranges of these elusive birds. What notes there are on habits may be found in Stuart Baker ('Fauna Brit. India: Birds,' 449-457, 1922), Stanford (*Ibis*, 83: 215-217, 1941) and Ludlow (*Ibis*, 79: 252-253, 1937, and 86: 178, 1944). Several forms are still known only from single specimens obtained by traps, nets or native hunters. Examination of existing specimens shows that some ranges of obviously closely related forms are overlapping so that care must be exercised in arranging any list of species and subspecies. My list follows:

1. *Spelaeornis formosus* (Walden). Range: Darjeeling, Sikkim, Daffa Hills, Fukien, up to 9,000 feet.
2. *Spelaeornis haplonotus* (Stuart Baker). Range: Known from a single specimen and a nest with three eggs taken at Hungrum, N. Cachar Hills, Assam, at 6,400 feet.
3. *Spelaeornis troglodytoides sherriffi* Kinnear. Range: Eastern Bhutan at 12,000 feet and upwards. A good race.
4. *Spelaeornis troglodytoides souliei* Oustalet. Range: Southeast Tibet, extreme north Burma and Northwest Yunnan, west of the Mekong River.
5. *Spelaeornis troglodytoides rocki* Riley. Range: Yungning, Northwest Yunnan east of the Mekong River.
6. *Spelaeornis troglodytoides troglodytoides* (Verreaux). Range: Western and southern Szechuan. I have been able to examine one of the two specimens in Paris, collected by M. Dejean at Wa-tao-ko, Tatsienlu. The wing measures 48 mm. It is obviously conspecific with the forms previously listed under *souliei*.