

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Salivary Glands in the Black Swift.—In 1956 Lack (Auk, 73, 1956: 2) stated that all swifts use saliva in their nest building and that "all, so far as known, have enlarged salivary glands in both sexes in the breeding season." These general statements were questioned, however, by Johnston (Condor, 60, 1958:79) especially with regard to the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*). This species has been reported by Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 176, 1940:256-260) and Legg (Condor, 58, 1956: 183) to nest in situations where saliva would be unnecessary for construction of the nest; in fact, both men stated that saliva was not used in the nest. These reports do not preclude the possibility that Black Swifts do have salivary glands but just do not use them in nest building as do some other swifts.

An opportunity to resolve these apparently conflicting statements presented itself when I came into possession of two specimens of Black Swifts preserved in alcohol. The adult birds, a male and female, were taken at random from a flock at Vancouver, British Columbia, on June 13, 1960, by Dr. Miklos D. F. Udvardy. At this time the birds should have been nesting; the male had testes 9 mm. in length and the female had follicles 1.5 mm. in diameter. Gross examination of the floor of each bird's mouth did not reveal the presence of salivary glands which are so conspicuous in *Chaetura* and *Collocalia* (Johnston, Condor, 60, 1958:80; Marshall and Folley, Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 126, 1956:385), so histological sections of the floor of the mouth were prepared. After staining with hemotoxylin and eosin, these sections showed a few small lobes of the sublingual salivary glands, but each of these lobes was only 400 μ or less in diameter whereas those of the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) were shown by me earlier to be as much as 1000 μ .

From these data it is evident that the Black Swift does have sublingual salivary glands but that these glands are smaller than those found in some other swifts. These observations support the contention by Bent and Legg that saliva is not used in nest construction of this species.—DAVID W. JOHNSTON, *Department of Biology, Wake Forest College, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, January 5, 1961.*

Second Specimen of the Dovekie from Alaska.—An unsexed specimen of an adult Dovekie (*Plautus alle*) was received in 1948 from the late Roger Menadelook who collected it on Little Diomedede Island, Alaska, July 8, 1948. It is now no. 9089 in my collection. Mr. Menadelook writes (*in litt.*) that this type of auklet "is very rare on this island, the occurrence being in my estimation about one in 50,000 of other auklets. The Eskimo name is Koogigahkrook. Weight 8 oz., wing spread 18 in., beak to tail tip 9½ in. Its wing beat is steady and unwavering like that of murrens and its flight steady. The ones rarely seen here are all of the same color . . . but there is no knowledge of any laying eggs."

Gabrielson and Lincoln (The Birds of Alaska, 1959:483) report that "the only definite Alaskan record of this eastern Arctic species is a bird . . . [taken] . . . offshore at Point Barrow on July 13, 1935. This specimen, a high plumaged, unsexed adult, was sent to the Chicago Academy of Science where it is now No. 7864. . . ." The bird in my collection is the second known specimen from Alaska.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, January 11, 1961.*

Growth Rate of the Lens of the Eye of House Sparrows.—The dry weight of the lens of the eye has successfully been used by Lord in aging cottontail rabbits, *Sylvilagus floridanus*, and gray foxes, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus* (Jour. Wildlife Manag. 23, 1959:358-360; Jour. Mammal., in press). By weighing lenses of caged rabbits ranging in age from one day to 30 months, he found that the lens continues to grow in weight throughout adult life. Overlap in lens weights between one-year-old and two-year-old rabbits was slight. Because of this success with the lens technique in aging mammals, it appeared desirable to determine the growth rate for the lens of a bird in order to find out whether or not the same technique might also be useful in aging birds.

The more important characters that have been used to age birds are the degree of ossification of the skull in song birds, the presence or absence of the bursa of Fabricius, and the plumage in species with age-specific plumage characters (see for example, Miller, Bird-Banding, 17, 1946:33-35; Gower, Trans. Fourth N. Amer. Wildlife Conf., 1939:426-430; Selander and Giller, Condor, 62, 1960:202-214). These methods generally are limited to distinguishing first-year birds from older