

BANDING CHIMNEY SWIFTS AT PATTEN, MAINE

BY E. O. GRANT

DURING the nesting-season of 1926 I banded 660 Chimney Swifts (*Chattura pelagica*). These were all taken from a neighboring chimney close to my home in Patten, Maine, between June 14th and August 9th. This chimney is fifty-five feet high and has four compartments. Two of these compartments are for ventilation, and two are for smoke. The inside dimensions of each ventilating flue are 18" x 28", but the smoke flues are about one half this size. I found no evidence that Swifts nested in the chimney, it being used entirely for roosting purposes. At the top there is a space around the chimney, 10' x 10', which is horizontal and is enclosed by a railing two feet high, and my banding operations were conducted within this enclosure. The enclosure was reached by ladders, one to the roof and a second one to the chimney-top.

For trapping purposes I made a wooden frame 36" x 32" x 30" covered with mosquito-wire netting. The bottom is closed with a wooden slide having an opening 12" x 14", which has a cone of wire tapering to a nine-inch opening, through which the birds were removed for banding since they could not be driven into a gathering cage. After nightfall the trap was placed, door down, over one of the chimney compartments.

When banding began June 4th and 15th there were approximately three thousand birds roosting in the chimney at night. I was able to climb a short ladder and look into the chimney, and, while remaining in this position, the Swifts, ignoring my presence, would pass down the compartments, in some cases even brushing my ears and face with their wings. My first catch was four hundred birds, of which I banded one hundred and twenty-five. The remainder were released as several were suffocated. After this, not over seventy-five to one hundred birds were taken at once. The birds, while in the trap, would perch or cling to one another after the manner of bees.

My next bandings were July 5th and 8th. At this time the number seen was about fifteen hundred birds. On August 5th and 9th only about four hundred birds were noted. I presume that this decrease of the birds was due to the fact that the male and female arrived about May 10th, well before nesting-time, and remained together for a time, both sexes roosting in the chimney. Beginning about July 5th, the

females began to scatter to small chimneys for nest-building and did not return to the roosting-chimney at night with the males.

It was noticeable that the adult male birds increased in weight between June 14th and August 9th. The adults appeared to be quite free from parasites. Roosting took place in both the clean and sooty compartments. When they left the chimney they dipped downward immediately and then ascended gradually, making a sort of semicircle.

Patten, Maine, August 25, 1926

A PARTIAL LIST OF BIRDS WHICH HAVE BEEN CAPTURED AS RETURNS ON OR NEAR THEIR OLD NESTING-PLACES

WHILE many people feel that it has been shown conclusively that birds come back to their nesting-places year after year, it should not be overlooked that the support for this belief is in general fragmentary and inadequate, although there are numerous recorded instances where individual migratory birds have been known to nest in the same spot or locality for more than one year. Bird-banding, however, is gradually accumulating definite information which in time will enable us to know what species of birds have this habit and what species have not, whether accident plays a part in our records, or if the habit is instinctive.

The following species have been taken as returns on their immediate nesting-grounds. The returns recorded range from a single bird, in case of the Indigo Bunting, Maryland Yellow throat, Redstart, etc., up to species returning in such numbers that we may be sure that accident plays little part in our records. Such species are Song and Chipping Sparrows and Purple Finches. The list includes only records made by members of this Association and within our territory, and, as stated, it is not claimed to be complete. Species which are partially migratory or are irregularly so are omitted from consideration.

- Black Guillemot (*Cephus grylle*)
- Common Murre (*Uria l. troille*)
- Ringed Murre (*Uria ringria*)
- Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)
- Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)