

## GENERAL NOTES

Conducted by M. H. Swenk

**The Original Roosting Habits of the Chimney Swift.**—One day in the late summer, just after the Civil War, in the deep woods of middle Tennessee, I came upon a very large Tulip-tree, nearly six feet through, and at least fifty feet to the first limb. One of the limbs had been broken off, leaving a hole about two feet across, which had been the starting point of a deep hollow in the tree. It was just before sunset, and the Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) were pouring into the hole by the dozens, just as they now do into chimneys when going to roost. I have never noticed another instance of the kind.—J. A. McLAUGHLIN, *Marshall, Mo.*

**The Bald Eagle in Indiana.**—On January 13, 1926, I read of an eagle captured in a corn field near Greenfield, Indiana, twenty miles east of Indianapolis. The next day Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Coburn and I drove over and located the person who had it in captivity. It was being kept loose in a cellar, but, after a little difficulty, we caught it. We found that it was a Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus* subsp.) not yet in the adult plumage. It measured more than seven feet across the wings. The shoulders were calloused as if from having been bruised and healed many times. Its strength of talons was prodigious. I found it less of a fighter than the adult Barn Owl, though much more powerful. After taking some moving pictures of its actions we again liberated it in the cellar. No nests of this eagle have been reported in recent years nearer than northern Ohio.—S. E. PERKINS III, *Secretary Indiana Audubon Society, Indianapolis, Ind.*

**Some Notes on the Horned Grebe in Michigan.**—On May 19, 1925, while on the State Ferry crossing the Straits of Mackinac and about a third of the way across from St. Ignace, I saw a bird on the water, which, after consulting Reed's "Bird Guide," I identified as the Horned Grebe (*Colymbus auritus*). A strong south wind was blowing, so that the waves were rolling fast and rather high for the bird. Sometimes when the waves, especially the large ones, would overtake it, it would be completely submerged, and, as the wave passed over, it would sometimes appear to go entirely out from under the bird, thus dropping it down on the water as it was left by the passing wave. On the next day (May 20) I saw three Horned Grebes at the edge of a lake near Odin, Michigan. They were first seen as I passed by in a car, which was stopped as soon as possible. The birds were yet near the edge of the water upon my approach. They hastened into deeper water as soon as they saw me and my three companions, but I obtained a good view of their colors before they got far enough out to go under the water. They remained under but a short time before coming up, which gave another good view, their farthest distance away being not more than seventy-five feet. In identifying the Horned Grebes the buffy white ear tufts were the principal field marks; but also a comparison of the size with that of other grebes was considered. It may be possible that the localities here given are included in the summer home of *Colymbus auritus*, but if they breed there it still remains to be proved by the finding of a nest.—O. M. BRYENS, *Three Rivers, Mich.*

**Franklin's Gulls as Insect Destroyers in the North Platte Valley of Nebraska.**—The most momentous ornithological event of the season in our part of the North Platte Valley has been the arrival of large flocks of the Franklin's Gull (*Larus franklini*). We have been inflicted, for several years now, with a grasshopper plague. Having read so much about the gulls, we had been hoping

that they would come and rid us of our trouble. Last year they were in the lower end of the valley, and this year they came back again in July, coming up the river almost to the state line.

Although they were to be found almost everywhere, they seemed to have a preference for the new-mown fields of alfalfa, where grasshoppers and other insects were most plentiful. Scattered as they would be over great fields, their white plumage contrasting against the vivid green of the hay made a most beautiful picture. They also delighted in newly plowed fields, where some would follow the plow, walking in the furrow while looking for choice grubs or even mice. On the plowed ground they would pay no attention to the horses until they were almost up to them, when they would fly a short distance and settle again.

I delighted in watching them as they skimmed above the alfalfa or beet tops after small flying insects, or as they came straggling up the river early in the morning in many small scattered groups, because their flight was so easy and graceful, the very poetry of motion. They stayed until late in October so that I had many chances to observe them, both in flight and on the ground. They usually flew quite low so that their soft blue-gray mantles and black heads were easily seen, even without field glasses, and when they would circle just above the village the children, and even older persons, would grow quite excited, and you would see people everywhere out on the sidewalks watching them. Their great numbers has created a local interest in bird study that just our common birds could not have produced.—MRS. J. W. HALL, *Mitchell, Nebr.*

**The Re-use of Old Nest Material by the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.**—Soon after I began studying birds I made a collection of nests of the species that were commonly found near my home at Eubank, in south central Kentucky. My usual procedure was to take the nests soon after the young birds had left them. I soon learned that to secure the nests of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliotila caerulea caerulea*) and Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) it was necessary to collect them as soon as they were deserted, for when they were left any length of time they either disappeared altogether or were so badly torn to pieces that they were worthless for my collection.

On May 28, 1889, I learned what becomes of the Gnatcatchers' nests. I had gone to the woods to collect a nest that had been located on April 26, at which time the bird was incubating. The nest was about thirty-five feet up, on a limb of a Red Maple. I climbed almost to the base of the limb, and was within twelve feet of the nest, when I paused to catch breath. In less than a minute a female Blue-gray Gnatcatcher came to the nest, and, with much twittering, began to pull lichens from it. As soon as she had a bill full of the lichens she flew away to the south. I waited, and soon she returned for another load, going with it in the same direction. This time I slid down the tree and followed her, and soon found the new nest. I have no means of knowing whether the new nest was a second one of the same pair that built the first nest, or was the work of a different pair. Since then I have seen these birds carrying material from an old nest several times, the last time being last spring, when an early nest was carried away soon after the young birds had left it.

I have no written record of having seen the Ruby-throated Hummingbird carrying away material from an old nest, but have a distinct recollection of having seen it doing so in at least one instance, a number of years ago. The fact that