

## GENERAL NOTES

**Nests of Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift in México.**—Prior to Edwards' (1959. *Auk*, 76:358-359) discovery of an occupied nest on the trunk of a tree at Tikal, Guatemala, the Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*), north of Honduras, was known only from a bird taken at Presidio, Veracruz, México, in June, 1943 (Moore. 1947. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.*, 60:143-144). Edwards' note appeared shortly after I had submitted the following related observation made some 160 miles from Tikal, but in Mexico. These developments fulfill Moore's expectation and suggest that the Veracruz specimen may not represent a disjunct population.

On July 24, 1958, at Palenque Ruins, Chiapas, Mexico, elevation about 800 feet, I found a remarkable nest under the portico of the Temple of Inscriptions. From my sketch and notes made on the scene, I have been informed that it was a nest of *P. cayennensis*.

The nest, about 18 inches long, was fastened on the corbeled wall some 12 feet above the floor. Only the upper one-third, about 6 inches in diameter, was attached. The remainder, consisting of slender entrance tubing, hung vertically free. Honey-colored and rough-textured, it seemed to be made entirely of long-tailed achenes that glistened. A torn place in the top, however, exposed numerous small feathers.

This swift, known to nest in buildings, makes either a straight tube, or one with a bulbous top. The Palenque nest was of the latter type. Essentially, it fitted accounts given by Richmond (1898. *Auk*, 15:7-10), Haverschmidt (1954. *Wilson Bull.*, 66:67-69; 1958. *Auk*, 75:121-130), Sick (1958. *Auk*, 75:217-220), and others, except that the free-hanging entrance tube was bifurcated.

Beneath its bulbous top, the nest tapered before branching into two nearly parallel tubes forming the lower third of the structure. Both orifices were smooth inside, between two and three inches in diameter, and perfectly round. The left tube was about two inches shorter than its mate, with a slight outward tilt. It seemed possible that both tubes were functional, rather than the shorter one's being a "false entrance," such as Salvin (1863. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, p. 191) shows for the Great Swallow-tailed Swift (*P. sancti-hieronymi*). They were nearly equal in diameter and emerged symmetrically; whereas, in Salvin's drawing the "false entrance" is quite short, appearing as an inverted, open pocket midway on the outside of a long, six-inch-wide tubular nest.

I saw a second nest (badly damaged and apparently single-tubed) high on a wall inside the ground floor of the nearby Observatory ruin. The caretaker, attributing such nests to "swallows now gone for the season," voluntarily remarked that these birds had built in the ruins in previous years also.

Deploring destruction of nests of this rare Mexican bird, Sr. Miguel Alvarez del Toro, Instituto de Ciencias Naturales de Chiapas, is conferring with authorities toward ending an abuse that is doubly distressing, since, according to Haverschmidt (1954. *op. cit.*: 68-69), a nest may be used for more than one season.—LOVIE M. WHITAKER, 1204 West Brooks Street, Norman, Oklahoma, July 29, 1959.

**Ross Goose taken at Horseshoe Lake, Illinois.**—While undertaking research dealing with Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in the area of Horseshoe Lake, Alexander County, Illinois, during the fall of 1956, two small white geese were repeatedly seen on and near the refuge. Very few Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*) were in the area that season and none was reported killed. On November 26, one of the two small white geese was killed by a hunter and given to me for mounting. It was a Ross Goose (*Chen rossii*) in

full adult plumage but the sex was not determined. The accompanying bird was similar in size to the bird collected but had typical grey juvenal plumage.

The following measurements were taken from the skin: culmen 39 mm., total length 572 mm., wingspan 1376 mm., and tarsus 69 mm. The mounted bird is in my collection at Campbell, Missouri.

In searching the literature for reports of Ross Geese in the Mississippi Valley the following were found. Texas: one killed and two others sighted in Wharton County, winter 1954 (Miller, 1954. *Condor*, 56:132); one was taken in Jefferson County, December, 1953, and another killed on Lissie Prairie near Eagle Lake, January 3, 1954 (Buller, 1955. *Auk*, 72:298). Louisiana: one taken on Little Vermilion Bay, February 23, 1910 (McAtee, 1910. *Auk*, 27:338); one taken in Cameron Parish, 1916 (Arthur, 1931. *Birds of La.*, Dept. of Conservation Bulletin No. 20, p. 126). Kansas: one seen in Wyandotte County, November 22, 1951 (Tordoff, 1956. Checklist of Birds of Kansas, Univ. of Kansas Publications—Museum of Nat. History, 8(5):314). Missouri: Mike Milonski, manager of the Busch Wildlife Area, Weldon Springs, Missouri, remembers one taken by his brother while hunting on the Mississippi River near St. Louis about ten years ago.—GLEN SMART, *Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Columbia, Missouri, July 14, 1959.*

**Comment on the flight distance of the Great Blue Heron.**—Orr and Sudia (1960. *Wilson Bull.*, 72:198), measured the flight distance of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) at Lake Itasca, Minnesota. They report considerable variation of this flushing distance among what are assumed to be different individuals. Variation was not so great between successive flushes of the same individual.

Probably these authors are not aware of the fact that many herons in Itasca Park have become quite tame. The park is a sanctuary, and firearms have been prohibited, except during deer seasons, for many years. Very little molesting of wild animals occurs here. As a result, some herons have found that human occupants of boats are not to be feared but are in fact to be welcomed because dead yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) found around fishing boats represent an easily obtained food supply. In the past 15 years I have always found at Lake Itasca several herons which have adopted the habit of alighting on shore near fishing boats or circling near to look for perch. Sometimes two or three will keep watch at the same time. We always keep some perch in the boat to throw out for them. Typically, the heron flies out to the dead fish, settles down in the water, leisurely picks up and swallows the fish, then struggles into flight and goes back to shore to watch again from a vantage point on a tree, stub, log in the water, or just the ground. Sometimes the fish is carried to the shore before being swallowed, and then it is usually washed down with a few sips of water. One heron may accept several perch in succession. If the fish is not thrown far enough away from the boat, it may be ignored or the heron may fly out and shy away more than once before returning to shore. Presumably not all the herons present on the lake have learned this method of obtaining food.

As Orr and Sudia state, marked individuals should be used in determining flight distance. In addition, such work should be carried on where unusual tameness is not a factor.—WM. H. LONGLEY, *Kasson, Minnesota, July 14, 1960.*

**Additional notes on the singing height of Ovenbirds.**—Stenger and Falls (1959. *Wilson Bull.*, 71:125–140) recently presented data on utilized territory of the Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) of Algonquin Park, Ontario, in a variety of habitats. These data include measurements of the stratum (height) from which nine males sang (singing