

down; but it is necessary to corroborate such statements because of the unfortunate lack of objectivity in the literature regarding this point. The generalization that "swifts and hummingbirds are completely naked" at hatching (Wallace, 1955. *An Introduction to Ornithology*, p. 47), moreover is erroneous, for at least some hummingbird species do have neossoptiles. Downy pterylosis of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird was recently described (Wetherbee, 1958. *Bird-Banding*, 29:232-236). *Apus apus* is hatched naked (Witherby *et al.*, 1938. *Handbook of British Birds*, 2:248). While Legg (*Condor*, 1956. 58:183-187) described the just-hatched Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) as naked, his statement that the two-week-old nestling is completely covered with "down" seems incompatible with his description of the day-old bird unless it is deemed necessary to reopen the argument that neossoptiles might be generated after hatching. Dixon (*Condor*, 1935. 37:265-267) also noted the Black Swift as naked at hatching. Legg (personal communication, 7 October 1955) thought that the "down" might be an adaptation for the nesting habitat of cool and moist situations. It seems probable that what is being referred to here is *not* natal down, but emerging teleoptiles.

There is a very crude correlation between cavity-nesting and nakedness of neonates in passerines (Wetherbee, 1957. *Bull. American Mus. Nat. Hist.*, 113:339-436) that may be applicable in this species. The bill had a dusky pigmentation like that of the toenails and this contrasted with the light pink of the rest of the body. The bill was without special rictal flanges and without special mouth coloration. Therefore, the assumption that the possession of flanges and mouth colors is a specialization for parental guidance in feeding the young in dark nesting cavities (Ticehurst, 1908. *British Birds*, 2:186-194) is not supported, for Barton (*Auk*, 1958. 75:216-217) has demonstrated that this species has had ample time to develop cavity-nesting evolutionary responses.

The eyelids of the neonatal Chimney Swift are closed cranially over the irides at a relatively low level of embryonic differentiation. Fischer (1958. *New York State Museum and Science Service Bull.*, 368) notes that they do not open until the sixteenth to twentieth day after hatching. Considering the disparity in development of the eyes and the feet, we have here an obvious differential acceleration that even defies axial-gradient growth. It is another example of the inadequacy and absurdity of the words "precocial" and "altricial" in ornithology (see Wetherbee, 1959. *Comparative Phylembryogenetic Dimensionality of Neonatal Birds*, University Microfilms).—DAVID KENNETH WETHERBEE, *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Massachusetts Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 30 November 1959.*

Unusual nesting behavior of Chimney Swifts.—The Chimney Swifts composing a nesting colony on the campus of Kent State University usually pair soon after their annual return in the third week of April. Occasionally a few shift about from one possible mate to another over a brief time, but soon settle down with a mate for that season. However, one female, banded with No. 21-128574, was involved in an unusual type of nesting behavior for this species in the summer of 1959. Her life history is briefly reviewed here.

No. ---74 was banded 20 August 1953 as a juvenile bird. She was captured in a flock of 18 swifts composed of both adult and juvenile birds which were roosting together following the nesting period for that season. In 1954, this female returned to the campus, but did not nest. Chimney Swifts do not ordinarily nest until their second year. In 1955, she nested for the first time, in Air Shaft L1. In 1956, she was not recaptured, but the following year she was found nesting in Shaft V1 on the roof of another building. Because this shaft had not been trapped the previous year, it is possible this female had nested there in 1956 as well. When she was found again in 1957, she and her mate had a seasonal

visitor, forming a threesome in Shaft V1. The nature of such nesting by threesomes has already been published by me (1952. *Wilson Bull.*, 64:133-139).

The following year she continued to nest in the same shaft with her same mate, but without a seasonal visitor. In 1959, her mate again returned to Shaft V1 for nesting, but No. ---74 went to Shaft M7 where she roosted for three nights with another female. Seldom are two females found roosting together. The other female soon left and No. ---74 roosted there alone until 16 May. The other female then returned to this shaft with a mate, and they remained there to nest. In the meantime, No. ---74 went into Shaft L1 where she roosted alone until 24 May when she was found in Shaft J1, roosting side by side with another swift. On some nights she was found roosting alone, while other nights she was not located at all. On 7 June, No. ---74 was found working on a nest foundation 13.7 feet down on the west wall. Unlike most nests of the Chimney Swift, this one was not glued to a vertical wall but was placed on a narrow horizontal shelf which projected for a few inches from the wall. On 10 June, an egg was laid, and that evening the female was on the nest while her mate roosted below the nest. On 20 June, the female was found at nighttime roosting alone in an adjacent shaft, J2, while her mate was in J1 roosting beside another female (24-167709), which was captured at that time as a return for the year. This female had been banded the previous August. The nest with the egg prepared by No. ---74 was abandoned. This was the first time that such behavior has been noted among nesting Chimney Swifts. The following night female No. --09 roosted alone in J1; the other two birds in this threesome were not located. The next day all three dropped out of sight. On 24 June, the male and the replacement female roosted in Shaft J1, about one inch apart, but again ignored the nest with the egg. Two nights later the new female was there alone, but following this date she abandoned this shaft. On 2 July, the original female (No. ---74) returned to J1 where she roosted alone for that night. That same night the other female roosted alone in Shaft L1. In the evening of 16 July, female No. ---09 was again alone in Shaft L1. Four nights later she was there again by herself while the male and his original mate returned to J1, but continued to ignore the nest with its egg. Nesting was never completed by any of these birds that season.

Another instance of unusual behavior is described as follows. The swifts which nested in Shaft N9 in 1958 returned to it in 1959 where they were reunited, but soon dropped out of sight and were not found together again that season until 9 October. On that date they were in a roosting flock of 15 swifts in Shaft V1, but their whereabouts during the nesting season is not known. On 3 June, the male was recaptured for the second and last time in Shaft N9 where he was roosting with three unbanded birds. Two of the newly banded birds (24-167740 and 24-167741) remained in this shaft presumably to nest. However, these birds apparently were incompatible as shown by the following behavior. In the evening of 5 June, No. ---40 was in the shaft alone. Three and four nights later both were present, but roosted six inches apart. In the evening of 10 June, one roosted on the north wall while the other was on the south wall. By this time all of the other resident swifts had completed their nests and most of them were incubating eggs. On 20 June, the two birds were found side by side on the south wall, but the next night they roosted two inches apart. On 22 June, only one roosted for the night in the shaft. Two nights later both were together again roosting five inches apart. On 26 June, one was on the north wall while the other was on the east wall, but the next night they were again side by side on the south wall. On 2 July, they were found roosting on a nest foundation. Progress on nest construction was slow, and on 9 July the birds were found roosting on opposite walls. The nest foundation, 20 feet down on the south wall, was deserted. In the evening of 20 and 21 July, the two birds again roosted side by side on the wall opposite the

deserted nest foundation. On 23 July, they were once more separated, one on the north wall and one on the east wall. Nesting was never completed by these two birds. A similar case of incompatibility was reported earlier by me (1951. *Amer. Midl. Nat.*, 46: 227-229).—RALPH W. DEXTER, *Department of Biology, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, 10 March 1960.*

Downy Woodpeckers scaling bark on diseased elms.—Woodpecker activities may, at certain times, have interesting associations with diseases of trees. West and Spiers (1959. *Wilson Bull.*, 71: 348-363) mentioned that some of the three-toed woodpeckers which invaded southward in 1956-1957 were observed chipping off the outer bark of elms, thus revealing the fawn-colored inner bark. One observer suggested that the invaders were seeking the *Scolytus* beetle, which is a vector of the Dutch elm disease. This disease is important in the ecology of woodpeckers in the vicinity of Seneca, Maryland, for I have found the nest holes of Pileated (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Red-bellied (*Centurus carolinus*), and Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopus pubescens* and *D. villosus*) in trees killed by its effects. Diseased elms are recognizable by the engraving of multibranching tunnels which the beetle provides for its eggs and larvae. Of the above species, only those of the genus *Dendrocopus* consistently feed on the various stages of *Scolytus*, which occur in great concentration in the bark of some elms. This food supply attracts Downy Woodpeckers in particular. In observations made from 1956 to 1959, I have noticed that these woodpeckers may begin scaling the bark on dying elms as early as 15 September, and continue to do so until late in April. I have seen as many as four of them busy on one elm. Flakes of bark litter the ground below such trees, and trunks and limbs become fawn-colored as the openings of hundreds of minute tunnels are revealed. Such elms are of no further interest to the woodpeckers in a succeeding year. The remaining bark begins to fall off in large pieces at this time. Hairy Woodpeckers work on diseased elms in much the same manner, but I have only a few records of their doing so. The report of West and Spiers that *Picoides articus* and *P. tridactylus* both fed on elms during their invasion is of interest, among other reasons, because the bark-scaling activity appears to be especially characteristic of the genus *Dendrocopus* and systematists regard *Picoides* and *Dendrocopus* as belonging to closely related genera.—LAWRENCE KILHAM, 7815 *Aberdeen Road, Bethesda 14, Maryland, 21 January 1960.*

A winter record of the Forster's Tern for Rhode Island.—On 6 January 1960, an immature Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) was seen along the shores of the Sakonnet River in Middletown, Newport County, Rhode Island. When first seen the bird was perched on a buoy about 400 feet from shore; it later flew along the shoreline and passed within 50 feet of my car. While on the buoy, it was studied for several minutes through a 20× telescope and it was especially noted that the dark patch behind the eye was restricted and did not extend around the nape. Later, when the bird was seen in flight, the paleness of the upper parts was particularly conspicuous. A half-hour after the original sighting I returned to collect the bird but it had disappeared. It should be noted, therefore, that (1) the bird was observed for 10 or more minutes under the best of conditions (at noon on a bright clear day), (2) it is a species well-known to me, and (3) I was fully aware at the time of the unique aspect of the record. A check of the literature indicates that this is the first winter record of this species for Rhode Island, and the latest winter record north of Cape May, New Jersey.—JAMES BAIRD, *Norman Bird Sanctuary, Third Beach Road, Middletown, Rhode Island, 29 January 1960.*