

never observed to prey on adults, nestlings, or eggs of the Barn Swallow. Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 211, 1958), however, reported that Great-tailed Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus*) ate eggs and nestlings of other birds. McIlhenny (Auk 54:274-295, 1937) presented no evidence of Boat-tailed Grackle predation on the eggs and nestlings of other avian species in Louisiana.

This study was conducted through the authorization of National Wildlife Refuge Permit No. 4-73-24. We wish to thank Mr. John R. Walther, Refuge Manager, for allowing access to refuge facilities, Dr. Carroll L. Cordes, and Mr. Philip A. St. Romain for constructive criticism of the manuscript.—HARLAND D. GULLORY AND DWIGHT J. LEBLANC, *Dept. of Biology, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70501. Accepted 17 Aug. 1974.*

**Clapper Rail feeding on water snake.**—The ornithological literature makes no reference to reptiles as food of the Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*). On 2 May 1974 I observed a Clapper Rail feeding in a salt marsh ditch about 50 m from open water in Buzzards Bay, Mattapoisett, Plymouth Co., Massachusetts. When I arrived, the bird was throwing from side to side a snake approximately 40 cm in length. I watched the bird for about one minute as it tore the entrails of this specimen. I flushed the bird and found a recently killed water snake (*Natrix sipedon*). Most of the entrails had been removed. I do not know exactly how the snake was killed or if it was killed by the Clapper Rail.—JAMES G. HOFF, *Southeastern Massachusetts Univ., Dartmouth, MA 02747. Accepted 2 Aug. 1974.*

**An additional record of two Tree Swallow females using the same nest box.**—Although the Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) is normally a monogamous species, Farber (Wilson Bull. 84:204, 1972) reported an apparent case of polygyny in that species and Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 179, 1942) reports several instances of more than two adult Tree Swallows occupying the same nest site.

On 29 May 1974, I encountered a nest of Tree Swallows in a nest box near Washington, Macomb Co., Michigan, which contained 11 eggs. On that date I was able to capture and band three of four birds which remained near and defended the nest box. Two of the four birds were females; both had well-developed brood patches, although one was much duller than the other. A third bird was judged to be a male, as no brood patch was present. The fourth bird, thought to be a male, was more cautious and could not be trapped.

Hatching occurred on 8 or 9 June and was synchronized, since 11 young of about the same size were present on my subsequent visits on 12, 13, and 19 June. However, beginning on 19 June and continuing thereafter, only three adults were seen feeding and defending the nest; all were banded and thus excluded the fourth bird which I was never able to capture.

During a 1 hour period (1300-1400 EST) on 20 June I recorded 82 feedings by the three adults, 35 by the dull female and the remainder by the other two adults. Most feedings consisted of leafhoppers (Cercopidae: Homoptera). On 20 June I banded and measured the 11 young. Two of the three smallest young were missing (and presumably had died and been removed) on a visit on 27 June. All nine of these young fledged before my next visit on 6 July, when the nest was found with 2-3 cm of excrement atop the grasses.

The presence of four birds around the nest early in the nesting cycle suggests that this nesting was initiated by two pairs of adults occupying the same site; polygyny, therefore, appears unlikely. Of approximately 180 nests of the Tree Swallow I have examined, only one other contained an unusually large number of eggs (also 11). That one was destroyed by a predator before I could determine the number and sex of adults in attendance.—BENEDICT C. PINKOWSKI, 60510 Campground, Washington, MI 48094. Accepted 27 Aug. 1974.

**Some unusual nest sites of the House Sparrow.**—The sites of 28 nests of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) occupying barns and sheds on a farm in western Illinois were recorded during April and May, 1973. Half of the nests were in typical sites, such as under the eaves of buildings, but the other half were in more unusual sites. Twelve were in holes in the once-baled hay in a barn loft. The hay in the barn had been undisturbed for at least 5 years. Entrances to the nest cavities were spaces between boards in the floor of the loft (the ceiling of the main floor), so that the birds had to fly upward to enter. From there a narrow opening extended from 5 to 20 cm horizontally into the hay until it opened into a 10 cm diameter nest chamber. The chambers were lined with feathers and dry grass other than the original hay, but the added material was scanty in comparison with normal nests. The digging of the nest holes in the hay may have been done by rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) or by the sparrows. Sparrows have been reported excavating a nest hole in a rotting tree branch (Philipson, Br. Birds 32:17, 1938). No previous reference to House Sparrows nesting in hay bales has been found.

House Sparrows had also modified and occupied a nest of a Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and a nest of an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). Similar instances have been previously noted (Bent, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 211, 1958). The Barn Swallow nest we observed was on a joist and was at least a year old and unoccupied when the House Sparrows began modifying it. Large amounts of grasses, feathers, and other materials were added inside and outside until the original diameter was trebled. A dome was constructed over the top, leaving a small entrance at one side.

The robin nest was on a purlin about 20 cm beneath the roof of the barn. Robins had been incubating for 6 days. On the 7th day, grasses and one House Sparrow egg had been added to the robin nest; we never saw the robins at that nest after the first sparrow egg appeared. An additional House Sparrow egg was laid in the nest on each of the next four days, after which the nest was deserted. No dome was constructed over the nest and no lining materials were added to the inside. The sparrows may have been attracted to the open nest due to the roof boards forming a ceiling about 13 cm above the nest rim.—ERICA WERLER AND EDWIN C. FRANKS, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Western Illinois Univ., Macomb, IL 61455. Accepted 23 Sept. 1974.

**Soaring vultures use a dust devil to gain altitude.**—An observation during the afternoon of Sunday, 18 July 1965 suggests that large birds are aided by visual perception of thermal air columns. I was driving north of Oklahoma City in a search for dust devils as objects of motion picture photography. The whirls are clearly visible when