

Short Note: My Summer Guests

John D. Kraus

1854 Home Road, Delaware, OH 43015

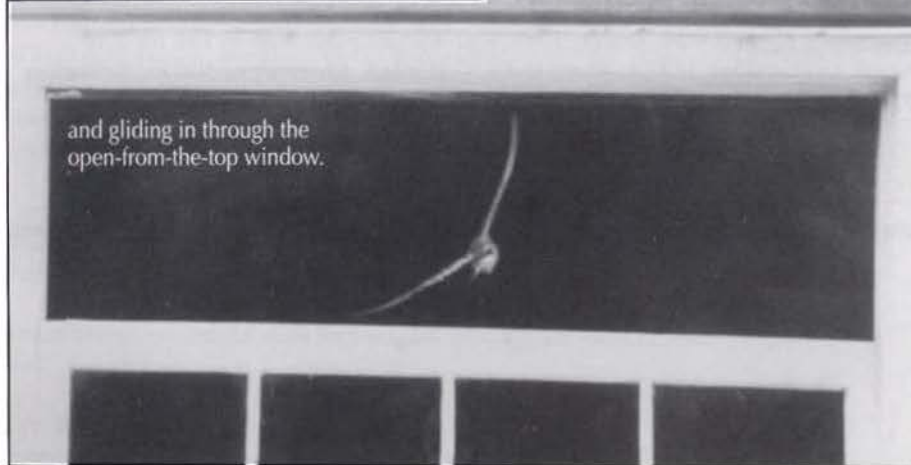
w8jk@midohio.net

Since 1969, barn swallows *Hirundo rustica* have nested annually in my garage. I adore these beautiful, graceful birds, masters of the zig, the zag, the swoop and U-turn, snatching insects, their "fast food," as they speed through the air. Each April I welcome them and each September am sorry to see them leave. They fly to South America, arriving there in October, then leaving in March to return. One swallow I called "Early Bird" always arrived earlier than the rest, sometimes by many days.

"Early Bird"
in full flight . . .



and gliding in through the
open-from-the-top window.

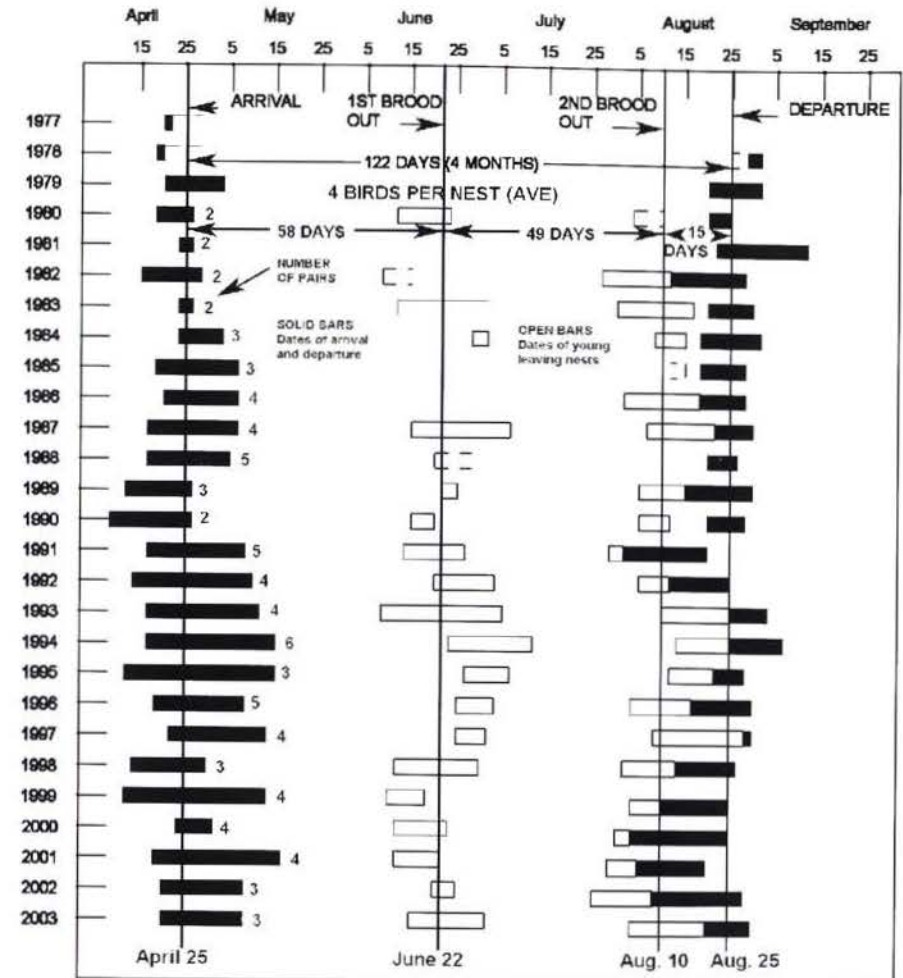


What unseen force drew "Early Bird" across continents and oceans to that open-from-the-top garage window, through which she flew fast-as-a-bullet year after year?

One April I forgot to have the garage window open. I was sitting outside on the deck when I saw a swallow circling overhead. It came by very close to me emitting a piercing shriek, saying in effect, "Look, we're back. Open the window!" I did and the swallow zoomed right in.

In 1977 I began keeping accurate records of the arrivals, nest activity, and departures as summarized in the chart on the next page.

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DATES FOR BARN SWALLOWS
At 1854 Home Road, Delaware, Ohio
40 deg. 11.766 min. N. Lat., 83 deg. 3.953 min. W. Long.