

Nesting Instincts of Swallows.—As supplementing Mr. Brewster's record of the premature exhibition of the nest-building and procreative instincts of Swallows (see *Auk*, XV, April, 1898, p. 194), I may add some observations made on Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*), at Leonia, N. J., during August and September, 1897. The extensive salt marshes in which myriads of these birds roost in July, August, and September, are here crossed by a road over which I passed almost daily and rarely without seeing in the road, one or more flocks of Tree Swallows, varying in size from eight or ten to several hundred birds. Without exception, as far as I observed, and I studied them very closely at short range, these birds were in the immature plumage of birds of the year. By far the larger number seemed to have no special object in alighting in the road, they did not move about as though searching for food, indeed for the most part were practically motionless, but occasionally a pair would copulate, as described by Mr. Brewster, and more often a bird would pick up a bit of dried grass and fly up into the air with it, or sometimes it was carried fifty yards or more and dropped from the air; at others the bird would carry it to the telegraph wires bordering the road and drop it after perching a moment.

Additional evidence of inherited knowledge was apparently given by many Tree Swallows which were often seen hovering about a pile driven in a creek which traversed these meadows. I at first supposed these birds to be feeding on insects which presumably had alighted on the pile, but the number of birds, often a dozen or more were seen about the pile, and the persistency with which they remained there, forced me to conclude that in a wholly unreasoning way they were looking for a nesting site.—FRANK M. CHAPMAN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

Notes on Generic Names of Certain Swallows.—In the raid on nomenclature made a few years ago Dr. L. Stejneger seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate. I have not yet trailed him anywhere without finding that either he did not go far enough in the right direction, or else he went in the wrong direction. The A. O. U. is to be commiserated in unwittingly adopting sundry changes Dr. Stejneger proposed and sought to impose on nomenclature. For example, he undertook to upset the established names *Hirundo* and *Cotile* by substituting *Chelidon* for the former, and *Clivicola* for the latter, after Forster, 1817. It appears from Sharpe's introduction to the Monograph of *Hirundinidae*, p. xxxv, that *Hirundo* Linn. was characterized by Schæffer, Elem. Orn. 1774, with *H. rustica* as type. If Dr. Sharpe's method of determining the type of a genus be not at variance with A. O. U. canons, this operation of Schæffer's throws out Forster's later attempt to transpose *Hirundo* and *Chelidon*, and we may happily revert to the *status quo ante bellum*. Again, Dr. Sharpe, p. xlv, shows that *Riparia* Forster, 1817, has that sort of priority over *Clivicola* Forster, 1817, which results from previous

pagination, and I believe we recognize that myth officially; if so, the name of the Bank Swallow becomes the tautonym *Riparia riparia*, or else *R. europaea*, or else *R. cinerea*. It is but justice to Dr. Stejneger to say that he was aware of this (Pr. Nat. Mus. V, 1882, p. 32), only he "preferred to accept the name *Clivicola*," though the reason for his preference is obviously a futile one by our rules. It is also due him to add, that he only "supposed" his generic synonymy of Swallows to be correct (*ibid.* p. 31). But neither supposition nor preference has any place in the A. O. U. Code. I can suppose a good many things that are not canonized in the code, and certainly prefer some things that are not canonized. For example, I "prefer" *Riparia* to *Clivicola*, and I "suppose" Dr. Stejneger wrong about *Hirundo*. The case thus raised by Dr. Sharpe should come up for consideration at the next meeting of the Union.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

Accidental Death of a Hooded Warbler (*Sylvania mitrata*).—On May 27, 1898, while wandering along a roadway in the vicinity of Great Timber and Beaver Swamp, Cape May County, New Jersey, in company with Dr. William E. Hughes, a male Hooded Warbler attracted our attention by its uneasiness.

While searching the surroundings for its nest, the Doctor discovered a female Hooded Warbler suspended by a horse hair tightly looped around the lower part of the neck, it having slipped up underneath the feathers, and the other end was tangled among some small twigs and briars, where it no doubt was caught while the bird was carrying the material to line her nest with. She was hanging about two feet above the ground with her head dropped back exposing her throat, the feathers of which were parted by the action of heavy rains of the past few days. The condition of the bird was apparently fresh, and no nests of this species were found containing more than one egg at this time.—J. HARRIS REED, *Beverly, N. J.*

Notes on the Nesting of Palmer's Thrasher at El Plomo, Sonora, Mexico.—Palmer's Thrasher (*Harporhynchus curvirostris palmeri*), is one of the most common birds in this region (100 miles southwest of Tucson, Arizona); they may be seen in pairs throughout the year, and seem to remain around the old nest all winter, using it for a roost. The nesting site seems to be in any convenient place. In flat country anywhere, but in hilly country generally at the foot of a hill, seldom over quarter way up on a hill or mountain, unless on the bank of some small arroyo.

Some pairs begin building the latter part of February. The new nest is generally placed near the old one, often in the same cactus, and sometimes on top of the old nest. The nests are large and well made. The body is composed of thorny sticks, three to ten inches in length; then