

a sustained flight of approximately forty miles. STEPHEN S. GREGORY JR., 456 Surf St., Chicago, Ill.

A Crowd of Hummers.—On May 1, 1920, after I had returned from a remarkable field trip, on which I had found 94 species of birds, one of my neighbors, Colonel B. F. Procter, called me to see the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds about a red-flowered horse-chestnut on his lawn. There was a continuous going and coming of the hummers, twenty or more being in sight all the time. I saw several perched on the smaller twigs of the tree, in addition to the group buzzing about the fragrant blossoms. Though these tiny birds came every day for a week, I never again saw so many at one time. I feel sure that I saw on that one day more individuals of this species than I have ever seen in any other whole season. This bird is usually so rare that I keep a record of every individual seen.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Plumage of the Chimney Swift.—Dr. Wetmore's interesting article on the wing claws of *Chaetura pelagica*, in the December 'Condor,' reminded me of another curious fact regarding this bird.

In May, 1898, I put up a lot of skins of Chimney Swifts which had been suffocated in a chimney at Waukegan, Ill., and found concealed among the feathers of the abdomen at about the middle, a tuft of pure white down. This could only be noticed on parting the feathers, and was present in all of them but was lost or absorbed in making up the skins. Last Spring, while preparing a specimen (with the wings spread) my attention was called to a tract of naked black skin on the underside of the wing joint, and upon closer inspection, I found a single smoky black oval shaped feather growing from the center of the naked skin.

Upon examining a number of other specimens of *Chaetura pelagica*, and of *C. vauxi* from California and *C. caudacuta* from New South Wales and Japan, the single feather was also found.—HENRY K. COALE, Highland Park, Ill.

Mortality among Chimney Swifts.—In 'The Auk', Vol. XXV, No. 3, pp. 317-318, July, 1908, under the heading "Curious fatality among Chimney Swifts," Mr. Ruthven Deane has recorded that some 700 Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) entered a chimney in the house of Dr. Maxson, Waukegan, Ill., during a heavy rainstorm, while gases from a furnace fire were passing off through the chimney. More than 100 of these birds were killed, and the rest were released while yet alive by the occupants of the house. In another chimney of the same house no Swifts were found at that time.

A destruction of Chimney Swifts in even greater numbers, at Truro, Nova Scotia, under circumstances similar, yet different, is described in the following extract from a letter dated June 1, 1919, addressed to me by Mr. E. C. Allen, now of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to whom I am indebted for permission to publish this note.

"We have had a week of dark and sometimes rainy weather, with strong, very cold north winds during the last half. Yesterday and the day before I noticed an occasional Chimney Swift beating up against the wind toward the First Presbyterian Church, in the large flues of which hundreds of them congregate. This morning I found a dead one on the steps of the Normal Science Building, and a few minutes later another was brought to me. Then I began to suspect trouble, and, after getting permission, visited the church. Twenty-two were picked up on the grounds, though, I was told, several had been carried off. Probably several will reach me tomorrow. Several others were reported about town. Then I went to the basement. There are really four flues. The furnace pipe enters one of these. From the opening at the base of this I took out 1175 dead and nearly dead, and approximately 100 living birds that could fly. Of the other three flues, one contained none, another about a dozen, and the third two dozen.

Now I had taken it for granted that the cause of the tragedy was starvation, as the birds feed entirely on the wing, and few or no insects have been flying this week. The janitor's theory was that the fire built this morning (the first for two weeks) had killed them, and I must say that the location of the greater part of the dead birds seems to substantiate his theory. But what of the others in the other two flues and about the grounds and town? Driven out by heat and smoke and died of cold perhaps. Or could it be that they all or nearly all sought the warm chimney this morning and succumbed to starvation?"

In a letter Mr. Allen informed me that he had examined the alimentary canals of several of the dead Swifts, and had found them entirely empty.
HARRISON F. LEWIS, *Bergerville, P. Q.*

An Attack on Live Stock by Magpies (*Pica pica hudsonia*).—

Last autumn, my friend, Mr. H. S. Betts of the Forest Service, Washington, D. C., visited the ranch of Mr. Keith Smith at Linwood, Utah. While in Madison, Mr. Betts stated that Magpies had attacked the sheep, and injured one so badly that it had to be killed. A request for detailed information, brought from Mr. Smith the following letter:

Linwood, Utah,
October 25, 1920.

"Dear Mr. Schorger:

"Referring to letter of the 16th inst., it is only in the past two years that the magpies have injured my rams and I have not heard of anyone else's stock being molested.

"Answering your questions:

"1. The wounds were always in the back, the magpie sitting there and pecking until it had opened up a small hole in the flesh. This got deeper and deeper until in one case the entrails of the ram were exposed.

2. The sheep were not wounded previous to the attack.

3. The magpies worked one at a time.