several hundred yards to the woodland on a circuitous route, making a noticeably slow and labored return against the strong wind. It seemed that the flycatchers sought all their food in the distant woodland. They never were seen perched anywhere in the dead forest, except close by or on the nest-tree, immediately before entering the nest or immediately after leaving it.

Since there are many decaying or partly decayed live-oaks in the woodland offering apparently suitable nesting sites, and since the skeletons of the sand-killed trees come right up to the sand wall at the edge of the woodland, it is puzzling that these birds should go so far out into the wasteland, so far from their foraging area, to establish their nests. In flying between the edge of the woodland and the nest sites, the birds passed dozens of dead trees, every one of which contained cavities that appeared (to the human eye) to be identical with those chosen by the birds. I am certain that none of these was being used by other birds, so that competition could not have been a factor in selecting the sites. This open wasteland, dotted with dead trees, is entirely free of snakes and other predators, so that the nests, because of their location, were completely insured against predatory enemies; but is it reasonable to suppose that the flycatchers could realize that fact, and act accordingly? The nests would also have been immune from attack in dead trees near the sand wall adjacent to the foraging area; in other years, I have found crested flycatchers nesting here, within 20 yards of the woodland.—WILLIAM L. ENGELS, *Department of Zoology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C.*

Probable destruction of queen bees by swallows.—Mr. Fred M. Sickler of Bonsall, California, noted my article (Condor, 47: 261–264, 1945) on swallows selecting drone bees. He is of the opinion that birds cause a very negligible loss of worker bees, that the loss of drones is a good riddance, and that swallows do real harm in eating queen bees.

Mr. Sickler writes: "This summer I noticed large numbers of barn, cliff and greenback swallows flying about 100 feet above one of my apiaries for several weeks. Fifteen parent hives became queenless after swarming, a real loss in more ways than one. Worker bees fly close to the ground whereas queens and drones fly high and slow. There was no loss of queens at another apiary three miles away where no swallows had appeared."

To the list of bee-eating birds which appeared in the above quoted article, Mr. Sickler adds the California shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*, and Brewer's blackbird, *Euphagus cyanocephalus*. I saw a California brown towhee, *Pipilo fuscus*, apparently pick up and eat a bee from the alighting board of my hive, but as I have seen this only once I cannot be sure of the case.—CHAPMAN GRANT, *2970 Sixth Ave., San Diego, California.*

Fall aggregations of cliff swallows in the Allegheny Mountains.—For the past 20 years I have been observing aggregations of northern cliff swallows, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*, in fall migration through West Virginia and Maryland sections of the Alleghenies. These aggregations are usually to be found during the last week of August and the first 10 days of September. They almost invariably occur in elevated valleys between the high Allegheny ridges. I have not found large flocks of migrating cliff swallows in autumn in any lowland section of the region.

One of the remarkable features of these aggregations is that the birds return to the same sections of telephone and power line wire each season. Mr. Brown Beard of Bartow, West Virginia, a careful observer, tells me that in 30 years the swallows have not failed to appear along a certain section of State Highway No. 28, near his

home. During seven recent seasons I have found them in this locality in numbers between 2000 and 3000 annually.

Other places where the swallows occur regularly in late August and early September are: near Oakland, Garrett County, Maryland; near Daily, Randolph County, West Virginia; at Red Creek, Randolph County, West Virginia; and near Greenbank and Marlinton, Pocahontas County, West Virginia. Despite the fact that there are hundreds of miles of telephone and power lines through this region, the cliff swallows are to be found in almost exactly the same locations year after year.

Sections of wire selected for these migration roosts are usually along public highways. There are always broad mountain meadows near by, and usually there is a stream in the vicinity. Flocks number between 2000 and 5000 birds, many actual counts having been made.

In eight such aggregations examined carefully in the autumns of 1947 and 1948, I was unable to find a single individual of any other species of swallow. Gross, in one of the Bent bulletins (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 179: 466, 1942) states, "The Cliff Swallow migrates in flocks, and practically all the reports of the large numbers seen throughout the migration route mention the association of the Cliff Swallow with Barn and Tree Swallows as well as other members of the family." Mixed flocks are certainly the rule during spring migration in West Virginia and western Maryland, but they seldom occur in autumn.

On the evening of September 3, 1947, I saw a striking variation in roosting behavior of cliff swallows. The large aggregation which appears annually near Bartow, West Virginia, usually roosts on wires on either side of the highway. On this evening, however, all members of the flock forsook the wires and settled to roost in a near by cornfield. The birds used both tassels and the axes of corn leaves as roosting perches.

That cliff swallows which occur in autumn in the Allegheny region may assemble from a vast breeding area is evidenced by a single banding record. Gross (*op. cit.*) tells of a bird of this species banded on June 14, 1937, at Dell Rapids, South Dakota, and recovered on July 16, 1937, at Ghent, West Virginia, a distance of some 1200 miles.—MAURICE BROOKS, *West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.*

January singing in the black-capped chickadee and other species.—Francis H. Allen's observations on the January singing in the black-capped chickadee, *Parus atricapillus*, in The Auk (64: 616, 1947) coincide with my own, and it is upon his suggestion that these notes have been written. I wish to point out, however, that my records only date back to the winter of 1944–45. My observations are based mainly on a special study during January, 1948, after my interest was aroused by Saunders' article 'Beginning of song in the spring' (Auk, 64: 97, 1947) and Allen's comments thereupon in the October, 1947, issue of The Auk.

At our home, which is located in the woods halfway between North Bay and Mattawa in central Ontario, some black-capped chickadees are resident all year, as shown by banding. During January, 1945 and 1946, my records note January singing, and in 1947, the first "phoebe"-song was noted on January 7. About 20 black-capped chickadees were regular visitors at my feeding station during January, 1948. No observations were made on January 10 and 24. During the remaining 29 days the blackcaps were heard singing every day except January 2, 3, 15, 18 and 19. The time preferred for singing was apparently just before sunup when one or several birds would begin to sing; sometimes they continued singing for 10 to 15 minutes. At this time they could often be heard from all parts of the