

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Vaux Swifts in Late Summer in South Pasadena, California.—On July 31, 1943, the writer together with several other observers saw at least four swifts, apparently Vaux (*Chaetura vauxi*), flying low over the trees and houses overlooking the Arroyo Seco in South Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California. The time was just at dusk and the birds chattered noisily, often chasing one another or sailing close together with wings at a sharp dihedral angle. On August 2 I found their roosting place, a two and a half story chimney, the flues of which were of fire-type terra cotta pipe. On each of several visits in the next two weeks all four swifts were seen flying noisily about over the area for 3 to 10 minutes before settling into the chimney at about one-half hour after sunset. None was ever seen on any mid-day visits.

At least two of the birds seen in early August had one or more remiges missing from each wing, but they gradually regained the complete wing outline by mid-September. Several worn flight feathers and one spine-tipped rectrix were retrieved from the hearth below the roost on August 9; these later were compared with specimens of *C. vauxi* and *C. pelagica* by Mr. George Willett of the Los Angeles Museum and found to be the former, as was to be expected. A thorough examination of the roost chimney with flashlight and mirror on August 10 revealed a considerable number of droppings but no evidence of a nest, the possibility of which had been considered since the birds were present several days in advance of the previous earliest fall date listed for southern California (see Willett, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 21, 1933:95).

The swifts' calls, at first a vigorous and very rapidly repeated *chipper-chipper-chipper* (almost a trill), became less frequent and were not heard after September 3. On this date also, only three birds were seen and on subsequent visits on September 10 and 22 only two were noted; these always dropped into the chimney almost simultaneously, as did two (the same two?) of the four present during August. All were gone by October 3.

Because these swifts were present so regularly at the same roost and because their behavior was so markedly different from that of other Vaux Swifts seen in southern California, the writer believes they were not merely migrants. Needless to say a careful watch will be kept in 1944 for any reoccurrence.—HOWARD L. COGSWELL, *Pasadena, California, November 24, 1943.*

Additional Records of the Chat in Marin County, California.—In the November issue of the Condor for 1934 (p. 237) I reported trapping a Chat (*Icteria virens*) on the morning of August 15, 1934, at our bird-banding station at Manor, Marin County, California. This bird, then an immature, is still alive in our large aviary and its sex is as yet undetermined, although, from its song, we believe it to be a male.

Parenthetically, it may be stated that in this species, as in many other species where the sexes are very nearly alike, the few external indicators of sex are quite variable under conditions imposed by captivity; color evanescence and similar factors make the accurate sexing of live birds exceedingly difficult, if in most cases not entirely impossible. Then, too, in *Icteria*, mimicry is a fine art in both sexes which circumstance tends to eliminate song as an indication of sex.

Since the taking of the above individual, we vainly sought further migrant chats in Marin County until July, 1942, when Mrs. Kinsey observed a single bird skulking through the shrubbery on the grounds of our home. Every effort was made to trap this bird and although it was seen momentarily twice on the succeeding day, it then disappeared. Our captive chats were still in full song and it is our belief that this particular migrant was attracted to the immediate vicinity by the vocal efforts of the pair in the aviary. At no time, however, did Mrs. Kinsey hear the wild chat utter even a call note, let alone sing, which is somewhat unusual considering the time of year and the other attendant circumstances. Because of the unsatisfactory glimpses of this bird, it was felt that the recording of the second occurrence of this species on our grounds should be held in abeyance, pending a more positive reoccurrence.

This has now taken place, for in the late afternoon of September 29, 1943, we trapped an adult chat, taken this time in a water trap. From all appearances, it is an old female; the coloration, the shape and width of the bill, the scaling on the legs, eye ring, etc., are all indicative of considerable age. It is now being accustomed to artificial food and is already quite fearless and steady in captivity.

Thus we now have two positive fall records of the chat for Marin County and one sight record for mid-summer. We have never seen or heard this species in the County on any of our numerous trapping or field trips, nor have we any records of them for Manor other than the three mentioned here. Oddly, they occur in limited numbers in Sonoma County to the north; we have seen and heard them at the towns of Glen Ellen and Sonoma.—ERIC CAMPBELL KINSEY, *Manor, Marin County, California, October 2, 1943.*