

An Early Reference to Torpidity in a Tropical Swift.—Torpidity in birds has been of great interest for centuries, but authentic accounts of this phenomenon are rare and are confined to only a few species. McAtee (*Amer. Midl. Nat.*, 38, 1947:191–206) gave a virtually complete list of references on avian torpidity up to that date, and Bartholomew, Howell, and Cade (*Condor*, 59, 1957:145–155) and Howell and Bartholomew (*Condor*, 61, 1959:180–185) cited publications on this subject appearing since McAtee's compilation. A previously overlooked account of torpidity in a bird seems worthy of mention for the sake of completeness.

Almost one hundred years ago, Osbert Salvin described the Greater Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila sancti-hieronymi*) as a new species (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 1863:190–192). His specimens were obtained from the highlands of Guatemala. In his account of the new form, Salvin wrote that "In July of last year (1862) I had the satisfaction of having brought to me alive, by Mr. Carter of San Gerónimo [Vera Paz, Guatemala], two birds . . . They had been caught by an Indian under a rock near the village of Matanzas, in the mountains. The birds, though apparently uninjured, were quite sleepy, not attempting to fly; the only energy they exhibited was by making their powerful claws meet in my fingers when I endeavoured to secure them."

There can be little doubt that Salvin had obtained two swifts in a torpid condition. His comment that "the only energy . . . exhibited" was the strong grip of the feet corresponds well with our own observations on torpid White-throated Swifts (*Aëronautes saxatalis*). As Salvin's birds were evidently captured in a roosting place at a high elevation, it is likely that they had been exposed to air temperatures as low as those at which torpidity has been noted in other swifts. However, it would be worth while for biologists to look for evidence of torpidity in tropical swifts of lowland as well as highland distribution. Large species in particular must have to expend considerable energy to remain airborne continuously for many hours, and heavy rains of long duration such as often occur in the tropics could make food gathering difficult or impossible for extended periods of time. A reduction of energy expenditure by hypothermia during roosting would therefore be advantageous in warm lowland areas as well as in the cool highlands.—THOMAS R. HOWELL, *Department of Zoology, University of California, Los Angeles, California, June 2, 1961.*

Accipiter pectoralis, a Synonym of Accipiter poliogaster.—In all recent works on the genus *Accipiter* in South America two widespread but rare forms of the South American lowland forest are listed as species, namely *Accipiter pectoralis* (Bonaparte, 1850) and *Accipiter poliogaster* (Temminck, 1824). The latter is a plainly colored form, leaden black above, darker on tail and crown, with obscurely barred tail; below it is uniformly grayish white, becoming white on the throat. *Accipiter pectoralis* is entirely different in color, with a pronounced pattern, which, it has often been remarked, is surprisingly similar to that of the adult of the Ornate Hawk-Eagle, *Spizaetus ornatus*. It is blackish above, the feathers narrowly bordered with white, becoming brownish on the wings, and with the tail barred with black and gray. The sides of the head and neck and a collar on the hind neck and interruptedly across the breast are rich chestnut. The remainder of the underparts are white, conspicuously marked with scattered black bars.

The entirely different coloration of these two birds is presumably responsible for the fact that in such standard works as Peters' Check-list and Hellmayr and Conover's Catalogue other species are placed between them. Nevertheless, careful comparison of *pectoralis* and *poliogaster* will show that they are identical in every respect of size and external anatomy. Furthermore, the differences in their distribution as indicated in various check-lists might easily be, and in fact is, the result of their rarity. So far as I know Bertoni was the only author to indicate a close relationship between these two accipiters; in fact he thought that *pectoralis* was the female of *poliogaster*. It was later shown that this was not the case and thereafter almost everyone regarded the two as perfectly distinct and not necessarily very closely related.

In 1951 (Hornero, 9:258–262) my colleague, A. G. Gai, reported *Accipiter poliogaster* from Argentina for the first time. He also described in detail a specimen taken on January 18, 1950, in the course of our joint explorations of Misiones Province, which he considered to be the hitherto unknown immature of *poliogaster*. He found its plumage pattern to be somewhat like that of *pectoralis* and concluded that these two species were related and that in the field it would be impossible to tell the male of *pectoralis* from what he considered to be the young of *poliogaster*. After careful renewed