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, *Spizaëtus 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. Giai, 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

study of this intermediate specimen as well as other material of both supposed forms, totaling eleven in all, I have concluded that Giai did not go quite far enough and that "*pectoralis*" is in fact only the immature plumage of *poliogaster* and that the name *pectoralis* is a synonym. The chief reason why this has not been appreciated earlier, aside from the previous lack of specimens molting from the one into the other, is the fact that this immature plumage is so distinct and unusual that it is difficult to believe that it can be the forerunner of the plainly colored adult of *poliogaster*. Although there seems to be no other *Accipiter* with quite such a striking contrast between adult and immature, it should be pointed out that in most species of the genus in which the adult is without spots or barring the immature is so marked. *Accipiter b. bicolor* is a good example in the New World and there are others among the numerous species of *Accipiter* in the East Indies and New Guinea.

The species *poliogaster* is a rather unusual *Accipiter*, not only as regards its immature plumage, but also in its relatively short tail and stocky proportions. Some might prefer to give it a genus of its own, as was done long ago by Cabanis who applied the name *Dinospizias* to *pectoralis*. The difficulties of subdividing the genus *Accipiter* are well known and I certainly recommend leaving *poliogaster* in it.

I am indebted to D. Amadon who compared my material with that in the American Museum of Natural History and agreed in the conclusion stated above. Further details and photographs will be included in my forthcoming treatise on the avifauna of Misiones.—WILLIAM H. PARTRIDGE, *Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 19, 1961.*

An Occurrence of the Laysan Albatross on the Northwestern Coast of Oregon.—On July 13, 1960, a Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*) was found washed ashore on the beach between Gearhart and Peter Ihrdale State Park, Clatsop County, Oregon, by William M. Wallace. Due to the state of deterioration it was prepared as a skeleton and no determination of sex was possible. I find no previous mention of this species occurring on the Oregon coast in the literature. The specimen is now in the United States National Museum (no. 431309). I would like to thank Herbert G. Deignan of the National Museum for confirming the identity of the specimen.—LEON A. FREDRICH, *Portland, Oregon, May 14, 1961.*

Flight Speeds of Some Small Birds.—Numerous observers have reported speeds of flying birds, but the measurements have usually been made under conditions in which it was impossible to measure the speed and direction of the wind. The importance of correcting for air movement is shown by the fact that in the speed range of most small birds, failure to make appropriate correction for a wind described by meteorologists as merely a "gentle breeze" may cause calculation of the air speed of the bird to be in error by as much as 50 per cent. The following measurements were made under conditions of known wind speed.

Birds were trapped at Orinda, California, between February 4 and April 5, 1961, and were taken within two hours to a large, corrugated iron, highway drainage pipe 56 inches in diameter. The birds were released singly about 30 feet back in the dark culvert and were photographed with a motion picture camera as they emerged from the pipe. The camera ran at a speed of 68 exposures per second, determined by photographing a long, swinging pendulum of known frequency. As each bird emerged from the culvert, it flew across a 3-foot-wide piece of cardboard ruled with lines one inch apart, thereby making it possible to measure the bird's progression in successive exposures. A large mirror adjusted to the appropriate angle to reflect a second 1-inch grid perpendicular to the first appeared at the edge of each photograph. The position of the bird's image in this mirror enabled one to calculate the bird-to-background distance, and from this to correct for the fact that the bird was closer to the camera than was the background grid. The culvert opened into a sheltered ravine into which wind seldom penetrated. Nevertheless a sensitive wind indicator was placed so as to appear in each photograph. Only on one morning was there a detectable breeze, which was a cool draft emerging from the pipe at 2 miles per hour. Correction has been made for this in the measurements given in table 1.

On one morning the light was so weak that the image reflected in the mirror could not be seen in the photographs, and consequently the background-to-bird distance could not be calculated. In these examples I have assumed that the bird was in the middle of the possible range of distances. This assumption introduces the possibility of an error as great as 10 per cent, so I have placed these values in parentheses. The other measurements are probably accurate to within a few per cent.