

Tree Swallow Tragedies.—As the 1933 breeding season of Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) at my banding station was marked with a series of unusual tragedies, the following notes on the destructive behavior of two females have been prepared. For convenience these are referred to as "No. 2" and H49344, the latter an adult female mated to an immature bird (a return-1) which were nesting by late April in Box 5. On May 3d an immature female (No. 2) appeared. She was almost constantly about the boxes, unattended by a mate. Then about mid-May she and F60913 disappeared when H49344 was sitting on eggs, and they did not reappear until June 10th, when H49344 had young which she was feeding alone. At some time in the afternoon of the 10th, Bird 2 visited Box 8 in the adult's absence and killed five young by striking them at the posterior corner of or just above the eye, probably doing this when the young lifted their heads to be fed.

In the late afternoon of the 12th, it was also found that Bird 2's forenoon visits to Box 1 had resulted in another tragedy: The young had been killed and pulled from the nest and the female, F41555 (mother of F60913), had fought Bird 2 in the box and had experienced the worst of the fray, the torn-up nest holding some of her tail feathers, many fine body feathers, and the white-duck nest-lining feathers were blood-spattered.

It was also observed, in the forenoon of the 12th, that, having been set upon numerous times by the birds at Boxes 2 and 4 and Substation D when Bird 2 went to them, No. 2 attacked H49344 while brooding her young in Box 5; and in the following fight many feathers were torn loose from both birds, including all but the right outer tail-feathers from H49344. On the 13th, H49344 was at her nest-box. At intervals during the day she looked in without entering or feeding, and on these visits she was seen to kill three of her five young. This was accomplished in practically the same manner that Bird 2 adopted, by striking several blows near the center of the crown when the young raised their heads, crushing one skull badly. The remaining two young were at this time too weak to lift their heads. Bird 2 was not present at the station the 13th or 14th.

On the morning of the 15th, Bird 2 was proving to be extremely troublesome at Boxes 2 and 4. She was often at Box 5 with F60913 and made her raids on the young from there. F60913 was never known to accompany her on her raids. On the morning of the 16th, Bird 2 made intermittent visits to Substation D, where she also became troublesome. Late in the afternoon, taking advantage of both birds being away at the same time, Bird 2 succeeded in dodging into Substation D box and, before we were aware of the fact and of her intentions or could intercept her, had killed five more young in the same manner she killed the other eleven.

Late in the afternoon of June 17th just before dusk, Bird 2 found opportunity to enter and kill the six young at Box 4, when they were nearly grown, the adults having finished feeding for the day and apparently having gone to roost for the night.

It was on the 18th, too, that Bird 2 visited Substation B during the rain of early morning, and, again by blows on the head, killed three more young. —LEWIS O. SHELLEY, East Westmoreland, New Hampshire.

If a like number of people were killed by a human being, a motive would be looked for, but it would probably be found that the perpetrator was insane. Are we justified in explaining the behavior of these birds in the same manner?—EDITOR.