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Tree Swallows as Foster Parents to Barn Swallows

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The Red Schoolhouse Nature Center located in North Eastern Illinois in Cook County has had a wildlife rehabilitation program as part of its ongoing natural history activities. Many young wild creatures are brought in each year by the general public and we do our best to try and help with their survival. On July 11, 1979 five young Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*), whose nest was destroyed, were brought into the center as orphans. These young swallows were in good condition and were thought to be about nine to eleven days old. We fed them and placed them in a warm cage overnight.

The next day they were placed in the nest of a Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) that contained young of the same approximate age and size. This nest was chosen because of the size similarity of the young though there was some concern as this nest had five young, in it already. The nest was checked every two days until July 20 when all of the Tree Swallow young fledged along with two of the Barn Swallows. Three of the Barn Swallow young were found dead in the nest, one on July 14 and two on July 16, these were apparently too weak to survive. All of the young were banded with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bands. Since the original nest site of the Barn Swallows was destroyed it cannot be checked for the return of the young birds raised by the Tree Swallows and they have not been heard from since.