

An unusual Mallard nest.—On 12 June 1963, a painter found a duck nest on top of one of the campus dormitories. This did not seem peculiar since we have several records of Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) nesting on campus buildings on the south shore of Lake Mendota, Madison, Wisconsin. The building on which the nest was found was about 100 yards from the lake. A university photographer (Gerry Schultz), the painter (William Tortorici) who found the nest, and I visited the site and photographed the duck and nest. The duck was a Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and was sitting on seven eggs. An eighth egg had rolled out of the flimsy nest and was never retrieved by the hen. The nest



was built in a rain gutter on the roof of a four-story dormitory. The incubating hen was shaded in the afternoon by the overhanging boughs of a large ash tree (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), and the slope of the roof gave partial shade in the morning. The nest was built of debris found in rain gutters, e.g., twigs, leaf fragments, many ash seeds, flakes of gutter paint, and unidentifiable material. The entire nest weighed 48 grams. There was surprisingly little down in the nest, but even the small amount of down held the other components together. The bird was very docile, indicating that it had been sitting for some time. Eight days later, all but three eggs remained, and the hen had deserted. Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) frequent the campus area and could have removed the eggs. I examined the remaining eggs and found them to be infertile or addled very early in incubation. It seems likely that a shower during early incubation would undoubtedly have chilled the eggs since the nest was in the base of the water trough.—ROBERT A. McCABE, *Department of Wildlife Management, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, 5 August 1963.*

Chimney Swifts gathering insects off the surface of a pond.—On 6 July 1960, while filming near Margaretville in the Catskill Mountains of New York, I observed two Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) in what I believe was the act of scooping insects off the surface of an ice pond on a farm about two miles northwest of town. Roberts ("Birds of Minnesota," Vol. 1, p. 650) notes that "Swifts, like Swallows, drink by dipping lightly to the surface of the water." However, the manner in which these birds dipped to the water, and especially their erratic flight, led me to believe that they were collecting insects from the surface rather than obtaining a drink. Both swifts carried on this erratic searching, darting flight just above the surface of the water, periodically dipping their bills to the water. This they did for a few minutes at a time and then they flew directly toward a group of farm buildings about a quarter of a mile away. A few minutes later they returned to repeat the performance. Speculation was that the pair had a nest somewhere in these farm buildings and were feeding their young with the material they gathered. However, time did not permit me to locate the nest and I did not observe Chimney Swifts repeating this method of food gathering even though I revisited the pond many times subsequently when swifts were flying overhead. The maneuverings of the two Chimney Swifts occurred at 9:35 AM and were observed for about 15 minutes. During this time they made three trips to the farm buildings, so apparently this was not a casual occurrence but a definite pattern for this particular time. This procedure probably continued longer, but I had to leave the scene.

Although I have not made an exhaustive search of the literature in trying to find references to this mode of feeding by Chimney Swifts, all references in *The Auk*, *Bird-Banding*, *The Condor*, *The Wilson Bulletin* and many state and regional publications were checked. There are several references in the literature of swifts "drinking" (Roberts, "Birds of Minnesota," Vol. 1, p. 650; Forbush, "Birds of Massachusetts," Vol. 2, p. 313; Witherby et al., "Handbook of British Birds," Vol. 2, p. 245) and "feeding" (MacDonald, "The Birds of Brewery Creek," pp. 108, 255-256; Bent, "Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds and their Allies," *U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.*, 176:271-272; Witherby, op. cit., 2:249) over and around water but they are vague about whether any of the swifts were actually engaged in collecting insects from the water surface.—WALLACE N. MACBRIAR, JR., *Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee 33, Wisconsin, 24 March 1962.*