



Photo by W. Yanchinski  
Barn Swallow brood in nest

## A DETERMINED BARN SWALLOW

by Bohdan Pylypec, Yellow Creek

In the late spring, I found a Barn Swallow nest in an abandoned granary. This nest was built of mud and was lined with grass and feathers. It was on a rafter six feet above the ground. The nest was probably used in the previous year since it had to be repaired. By June 20, five eggs were laid but a few days later, only four remained. One egg was found broken on the floor. About a week later, a heavy rain fell and the rain seeped through the roof. The nest became soggy and the bottom of the nest with the eggs and the lining fell on the floor. The swallows started repairing the nest, but instead of plastering the hole in the bottom of the nest, they merely put more mud on the top and covered the hole with a lining of grass and feathers. My father, who continued the observations on the nest while I was absent from home, saw that the nest wouldn't hold. Therefore, the next day he brought some mud to plaster the hole and a piece of board which was to hold the nest securely to the rafter. A metal sheet was also put on the roof so that the rain wouldn't seep through. He came too late, for the swallow had already laid an egg, and the egg, with the lining, fell through the hole in the bottom of the nest.

Although the swallows had failed twice, they started building another nest on the other side of the rafter. Three eggs were laid, but almost a week afterward, there were no eggs or lining in the nest. A small rodent had apparently scratched out the lining and eaten the eggs.

After failing three times, the swallows decided to give one more try. They repaired the first nest again and laid three eggs. These eggs all hatched and on September 3, the three young left the nest and were seen hawking insects with their parents. Thus, due to their determination and perseverance the swallows were able to raise a brood, but it had taken them four attempts to do so. These four attempts to raise a brood were made over a period of approximately 80 days. At least 30 visits were made by us to the nesting site, three-quarters of a mile from our home.

## INTERSPECIFIC NESTING ASSOCIATIONS OF SOME ARCTIC BIRDS

by Spencer G. Sealy, Battleford

During the period July 8 to August 12, 1965, the writer had the pleasure of assisting J. P. Ryder in Canadian Wildlife Service studies of Ross' Goose (*Anser rossii*) in the Perry River region, Northwest Territories. Incidental observations of the avifauna of the area were made. The topography of this region is aptly summarized in the following excerpt from Hanson, Queneau and Scott (1956. The geography, birds and mammals of the Perry River region. Arctic Inst. N. Am. Sp. Pub. 3): "Glaciation and differential erosion have frequently produced a banded topography of parallel ridges separated by elongated roughly parallel lake or river courses." These hills or outcroppings rise to an altitude not

exceeding 200 feet (Ryder, J. P. 1964. A preliminary study of the breeding biology of the Ross' Goose. Wildf. Trust 15th Ann. Rep.). This note describes the importance of one of these "Arctic hills" to some of the breeding birds of this area in 1965.

While traveling down the Perry River on July 14, 1965, J. Ryder, Sam Emingak, a Kogmiut Eskimo, and myself stopped to check the eyrie of a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) on the side of an outcropping on the southeastern side of Lee Island (67° 36' N, 102° 5' W). The eyrie, found to be active, was inaccessible at this time. While looking for a way to approach the eyrie, we found a female Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) incubating four eggs in an abandoned nest of a Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) about 40 feet above the rocks. The nest was less than 15 feet from the falcon eyrie. A short while later on the summit of the same hill, we found a nest of the American Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) containing four newly-hatched young and one egg, in the grass amid rocks. Meanwhile, a pair of Rough-legged Hawks was vociferously defending a territory that appeared to be the same hill; however, the nest was not found on this date.

On July 25 the Rough-legged Hawk nest containing three young about three weeks old was found on the south end of this hill about 300 yards from the Peregrine Falcon eyrie. The Canada Goose nest was found destroyed at this time, but information regarding time or cause of failure is lacking. The falcon eyrie, reached July 31 by means of ropes, contained one young and one egg containing a dead embryo.

Thus, four species representing three families nested on the same outcropping within 300 yards of each other. Interspecific aggression among the breeding birds was not observed; it is not known if the goose nesting failure was due to the raptors. The other three nests were successful up to the time we left. Lapland Longspur

(*Calcarius lapponicus*) and Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) were common in the area and in one instance the former was taken by the Rough-legged Hawks for food for their young.

## BIRDS FEEDING AT SAPSUCKER TREES

by Robert W. Nero, Regina

Records of several species of insects and birds feeding at holes drilled in trees by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were recently reported by Walter P. Nickell (1965. Birds and insects feed at sapsucker trees. *Bird-Banding*, 36: 192-193). These were summer observations of the following birds: Ruby-throated Hummingbird (for which this habit is well known, as pointed out by Nickell — and see *Blue Jay*, 23:80-81), Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole.

This fall I observed four additional warbler species drinking sap at a sapsucker tree. A migrant immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drilled holes in a mature Chinese Elm (*Ulmus pumila*) in our yard, for the first time, on September 22, 1965. Late that evening I watched a tardy Myrtle Warbler and a Palm Warbler feeding on sap at the newly opened holes. The sapsucker remained for a few days, opening new holes daily in the main trunk of the tree from about one to three feet above the ground. On the evening of September 26, I saw a Myrtle Warbler again, plus an Orange-crowned Warbler and a Black-poll Warbler, visiting the sapsucker tree. On these unseasonably cold and windy days the warblers, their plumage all awry, clung with difficulty to the bare tree trunk while drinking from the holes, and it looked as if they were drawing upon a familiar emergency food source. Sapsucker trees may provide an important supplementary food supply for a variety of fall migrants, as well as for summer breeding ground associates.