

CLIFF SWALLOWS INVADE FARMHOUSE

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Unusual nesting behavior of the various species of North American birds is not a rare phenomenon. In the Weyburn area over the past few years, the species have engaged in out-of-usual nesting activities.¹ Examples of this behavior are cases reported in 1987 and 1988 of Mallards nesting in quail nests in the Weyburn and Colgate areas.

In mid-July 1988 the writer, with fellow-observer Nick Postey, witnessed a Cliff Swallow colony which was located under the soffit of an occupied farmhouse. The colony numbered 72 birds. Cliff Swallows are known to construct nests against vertical surfaces such as under the eaves of houses, churches, banks, stores or barns.² In this area they are more likely to locate under bridges or in culverts. While the colony size in this instance is not incredible, we were awed at the circumstances surrounding the colonization. The owners of the farmhouse, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Oliver of Colgate, Saskatchewan, left on vacation and returned 10 days later to



discover the colony completely established.

On our initial visit and subsequent later visits, there was evidence of successful mating and incubation activity. The Olivers were very tolerant and did nothing to disturb the birds.

¹ BELANGER, R. and N. POSTEY. 1986. Unusual nesting site for the Great Horned Owl. *Blue Jay* 44(2)116-117.

² TERRES, J.K. 1980. The Audubon Society encyclopedia of North American birds. A.A. Knopf, N. Y.

