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A fecundity record in the Tree Swallow

Peter Dring

On 15 May 1970 I banded an AHY-F Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*), No. 116-24466, that was incubating 4 eggs in a nest box at a .1 ha pond at the Red Schoolhouse Nature Center 34 km SW of Chicago, Illinois. This bird fledged 4 young in that nesting effort. I subsequently recorded this bird nesting each year until it failed to return in 1979. Her fecundity and other pertinent data are summarized in Table 1.

The fecundity record of No. 116-24466, of 54 eggs recorded and 47 young fledged, makes her by far the most productive female Tree Swallow I have encountered.

Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, 536 N. Harlem Ave., River Forest, IL 60305.

Table 1. Summarized data for nesting history of Tree Swallow No. 116-24466.

Year	Distance from 1970 nest	Eggs	Clutch complete	Young hatched	Young banded	Young fledged
1970	0 m	4	15 May	4	10 June	4
1971	427 m	6	12 June	6	1 July	6
1972	488 m	6	24 May	4	16 June	4
1973	579 m	5	23 May	5	22 June	5
1974	854 m	5	19 May	5	12 June	5
1975	518 m	6	28 May	6	15 June	6
1976	549 m	8	22 May	5	3 July	5
1977	396 m	8	14 May	6	4 June	6
1978	854 m	6	25 May	6	12 June	6
Totals		54		47		47

All nests were in nest boxes. Those from 1971 through 1978 were at a 17.7 ha slough, the edge of which was about 200 m from the original nest site.

Only twice was she found with a male: once on 3 May 1974 when No. 1280-29369, a bird banded on 9 July 1973 as a nestling sex-U, was recaptured with her in the nest box; again, on 28 April 1978, she was found with a 2-year-old male (No. 1340-50425), a bird banded on 11 June 1976, also as a nestling sex-U.

The 1976 nesting was unusual. On 20 May 1976, No. 116-24466 was captured on 6 eggs. Checks on 12 and 17 June revealed 8 eggs and, finally, on 3 July, 5 young were banded at about 7 days of age. Assuming the normal 1 egg/day, the clutch was complete on 22 May; however the young were hatched about 26 June, indicating an incubation period of 33 days. Normal incubation requires about 14 days. I have encountered similar delayed incubation several times before and since this nesting in 1976. Each time I carefully examined the nest contents at the end of the season to determine if a second nest had been built over the first. No old eggs were found in this nest, so delayed incubation was indicated.

Nest site

