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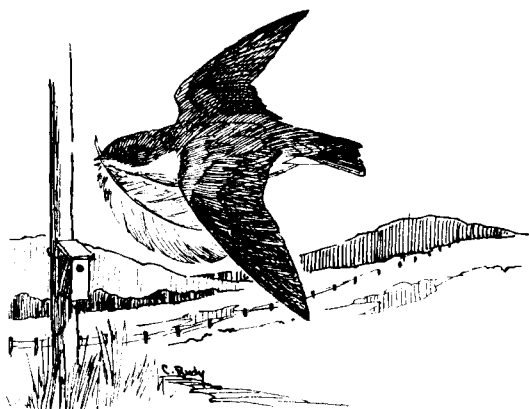
Longevity and fecundity records in the Tree Swallow

David J.T. Hussell

According to J.H. Kennard (*Bird-Banding* 46:55-73, 1975), 9 years is the oldest age recorded for a Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*). The original record of L.B. Chapman (*Bird-Banding* 26:45-70, 1955) shows that this female laid 53 eggs in 10 clutches in 9 breeding seasons. Recently P. Dring (*North American Bird Bander* 7:25, 1982) reported another female Tree Swallow which lived to be at least 9 years old and laid 54 eggs in 9 seasons. Here I report an 11-year-old female Tree Swallow which laid at least 55 eggs in her lifetime.

On 17 June 1970, G.L. Holroyd placed band no. 75-48658 on a female Tree Swallow attending a nest in one of Long Point Bird Observatory's nest boxes at the eastern end of Long Point, Ontario (42° 33'N, 80° 04'W). Aged as a yearling (=SY, second year, in banding terminology) in 1970, based on the predominantly brown plumage of the upper parts, she was retrapped as a breeder in full blue plumage in all years 1971-80 except 1974 (Table 1), but was not found in 1981 or 1982. (Few adult swallows were trapped in 1974, so she may have bred at Long Point that year also). In the summer of 1980, 75-48658 was 11 years old.

Breeding statistics for 75-48658 are given in Table 1. Excluding 1980 (see below), dates of first egg ranged from 22-30 May; clutch size was 7 in the first 2 years, then became consistently 6 until 1979 when it was 5. In 9 breeding seasons 75-48658 laid 55 eggs. Unfortunately clutch size data from 1973 were lost in a fire, but 75-48658 did breed that year and it is extremely unlikely that she laid fewer than 4 eggs, so a lifetime fecundity of at least 59 eggs can be safely assumed.



In 10 breeding seasons, 75-48658 never nested in the same box twice; the greatest distance between nest sites, however, was only 348 m. She was mated to a different male in each of 3 years that her mate was trapped (1976, 1978, and 1979). In 1980, her last breeding season, 75-48658's performance was abnormal. The first egg was laid on 31 May, one day later than in any previous year; the second egg did not appear until 11 June. Another 4 eggs were laid in the next 9 days with additional gaps in the normal pattern of daily egg-laying. By 25 June the number of eggs had been reduced by unknown causes to 4 and, although infertile, they were incubated into early July.

Thanks to the many people who assisted with the fieldwork, especially those in footnote 1, Table 1. My research in 1971-72 was supported by a Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fellowship at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Long Point Bird Observatory provided other support.

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Table 1. History of female Tree Swallow 75-48658.

Year	Date trapped (June)	Trapped by ¹	Date of first egg (May)	Clutch size	No. eggs hatched	No. young raised
1970	17	GH	24	7	6	5
1971	19	DH	30	7	6	8 ²
1972	11	DH	25	6	5	3
1973	15	DH	—	— ³	—	3 ²
1974	—	—	—	—	—	—
1975	17	DD	22	6	4	4
1976	15	DD	26	6	6	8 ²
1977	14	AR	22	6	6	6
1978	24	LG	29	6	5	5
1979	25	ES	30	5	2	2
1980	15	AN	31	6 ³	0	0

¹ GH - G. Holroyd, DH - D. Hussell, DD - D. DeSteven, AR - A. Rivers
LG - L. Gibb, ES - E. Silieff, AN - A. Nash

² These broods had young added to or removed from them for experimental purposes.

³ See text.