

some colors were able to export a surplus to the amount of nearly \$4,000,000. In keeping up with this modern progress, the Philadelphia Commercial Museum has added to its extensive exhibit of coal tar products a series of seventy dyes "made in America". To the same exhibit has been added a collection of 67 specimens of synthetic flavors and perfumes. It is very interesting to the visitor to learn that perfumes such as rose, heliotrope, and lily of the valley; and flavors such as grape, apple, peach, and apricot, may all come from a lump of soft coal instead of from the flowers and fruits.

ANOTHER RECORD OF THE ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW NEAR OTTAWA, ONT.—Prior to 1917, when the writer found two pairs of nesting birds eight miles above Ottawa on the Rideau river\*, the Rough-winged swallow had apparently not been observed in eastern Ontario.

On June 5, 1918, the above-mentioned locality was again visited and, though others may have been overlooked, only one nesting site was observed, from which a female bird, nest and six eggs were collected, to be used as material in the preparation of an habitat exhibition group in the Victoria Memorial Museum. No feathers had been used in the construction of the nest, but a few dry poplar leaves had been introduced and also, for some unaccountable reason, several bits of fresh cow dung, which were found adhering to the comparatively fresh eggs.

In 1906, the nearest known breeding ground of the Rough-winged swallow extended along the southern shore of Lake Ontario, therefore the Ottawa records point to the probability that the species has either crossed Lake Ontario and extended its breeding range down the Rideau valley or has ranged around one or both ends of the lake and along the north shore to the Rideau waterway.

This species is reported to become common in localities where a few years before it was unknown, so no doubt future records of the Rough-winged swallow on the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario will verify one or more of the above stated suppositions.

CLYDE L. PATCH, OTTAWA, ONT.

AN EPISODE WITH THE VIRGINIA RAIL.\*\*—Difficulties are a stimulus to the bird student, just as they are to students in other lines, but while difficulties with many birds may be almost welcome, adding zest to the study, when it comes to the dwellers in the marshes, they are an exasperation, as there is usually so little hope of fathoming them. It is, therefore, the more incumbent on the favored person who has an enlightenment with any particular species, that he shall declare his luck to the world, hence this note.

\*The Ottawa Naturalist, June-July, 1917.

\*\*Read before the Melbourn Ornithological Club.

On August 5, 1918, the writer was at one end of a crosscut saw, which was making quite a noise, though not one that was commensurate with the efforts applied at each end, and we heard, over the rasping of the saw, *cwa-ah, cwaah, cwaah*, several times repeated. The tone resembled that of the Black Duck, but more harsh and grating. The remark was made that such a noise might be made by a Florida Gallinule, but there would be no use in hunting it as a marsh bird is not a thing to be hunted in any active manner, the only successful method being to keep out of the way, and to be more or less still. So the sawing went on, and the noise was soon repeated. This kept on until some boys who were loafing around the waters' edge called out that there was a strange bird in a tuft of grass beside the pond. In a moment it was seen to be a Virginia Rail, and it soon proved itself to be the author of the strange sounds, by repeating them. Its mate approached it, and a response came across the 20 feet of water to the east, in the form of a shrill, high pitched whistling note, and very soon the author of this latter note, a jet black, downy young, about the size of a Catbird, swam across the open water, defying all dangers to get to its parent. It was followed by three others, and there were three or four more, whose courage was not equal to the task, and they remained on the east side of the water. But the four that crossed, swam and ran boldly after the parents, who now varied their calls with a *kik, kik, kik*, pitched very high, though it was several tones lower than the shrill piping of the young. The parents now led the young west into the long grass and were lost to sight, but at intervals through the day, came vocal reminders that the Rails had not left the premises, and about 5 p.m. the calls began to come from the vicinity of the crossing, and soon a bird (female?) appeared and crossed to the east side, followed as before by four young. Shrill pipings greeted her approach and doubtless she picked up the whole of those that were troubled with cold feet at the time of the morning adventure. My companion circled around ahead of them, and the mother bird led her brood within an arm's length to the stationary man who acted like a stump, and all vanished into the quiet swamp. On following days, these sounds were repeated, but the authors were no longer a matter of surmise, and no sounds were thought to come from the Sora Rail, which may not be breeding at the pond this year.

It should be added that the tone of the calls by the young resembled the squeaking of a door hinge, and the vocal sound was *Kee-a*, the final syllable being very short, while in the case of the old birds, the first syllable was so short as to be inaudible at any considerable distance.

W. E. SAUNDERS, LONDON, ONT.