

crows, and crabs. The predation of a Clapper Rail by a Canebrake may not be unusual, however, as both are found at the edge of the salt marshes during periods of high tide. I know of no previous recorded evidence of this interesting predator-prey relationship, however.

## **An Early Record of the Saw-whet Owl From Western North Carolina**

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Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (*Birds of North Carolina*, 1942) state that North Carolina's first record of the Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) was based on a mounted specimen which H.H. Brimley obtained at the Fish and Oyster Fair in New Bern during February 1892. The exact origin of this bird was uncertain, however, for the authors pointed out that the owl "presumably had been killed in the state" (italics mine). Apparently the first specimen conclusively taken in the state was collected by John S. Cairns of Weaverville, Buncombe County, on 30 November 1894. In a letter to William Brewster dated 11 March 1895, Cairns mentions having collected a female Saw-whet Owl; and subsequently the specimen was given to Brewster, for Raymond A. Paynter Jr. (pers. com.) informs me that the bird is now in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, where it is listed as accession No. 247,615. In addition to being the earliest positive North Carolina record, this specimen represents one of the only two autumn and winter observations of the owl from the mountain region of the state, the other being Peake's record on 26 October 1963 in Jackson County (*Chat*, 29:110-111, 1965).

## **Barn Swallow Observations In Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

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According to Stupka (1963) the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is an uncommon migrant and possibly a rare summer resident in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. As a result of observations made by me during the summer of 1969, it would seem that the status of the Barn Swallow in the park needs to be revised. Stupka lists no records for the North Carolina portion of the park. All of the following observations are from North Carolina.

On 9 June I discovered a nest with three almost-fledged young Barn Swallows on the porch of the Park Service Seasonal Quarters at Oconaluftee. This constitutes the first breeding record for this species within the park. Subsequently, other nests were located in the vicinity. Barn Swallows were present in the Oconaluftee area throughout the summer months of June, July, and August. A population estimate for the area would be about 150 birds.

On 7 August I observed a large flock (ca. 50) in flight near the Lone Pine Lookout on the Noland Divide Trail. The weather was clear, and the time was 4:00 PM. The birds appeared to be taking advantage of the updrafts of air over Noland Divide. In addition to the Barn Swallows, the flock contained Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*). There is no evidence that these birds represent breeding birds in the park. Indeed, suitable nesting sites for these species are lacking in the Noland Divide section of the park. This is evidence, however, that the Barn Swallow uses the park as a feeding ground even though actual nesting may be limited.