

# General Field Notes

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## Wood Storks over Asheville, N.C.

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At noon on a mild and sunny 2 December 1977, Blue Ridge Parkway Ranger Larry Freeman, who had been stationed in the Everglades for several years, asked if I could identify three large white birds circling over the French Broad River. From the office window they looked like herons, but at his urging, and with binoculars, we saw they had black heads and necks and a black-and-white wing pattern. A quick check of a field guide confirmed them to be three Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*). The birds leisurely circled and soared downstream.

What is particularly interesting about this observation is that it occurred from the seventh floor headquarters office of the Blue Ridge Parkway in downtown Asheville, N.C. A number of different sightings have been made there including migrating monarch butterflies, American Kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks, Broad-wing Hawks, and assorted warblers—but none quite like this one.

[NOTE: Although Wood Storks have been reported from several places in piedmont North Carolina, the above sighting appears to be the first known from our mountains.—JFP]

## Swallows Apparently Taking Prey from the Ground

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On 1 May 1978 at 1500, we observed about 300 swallows, mostly Barn Swallows with a lesser number of Tree and Rough-winged Swallows, alternately perching and fluttering over bare agricultural land at the Central Crops Research Station, Clayton, N.C. Some of the birds appeared to be hawking prey in the air, whereas others waddled about pecking at the ground.

Examination of the field revealed a large concentration of small flies. These either crawled over the surface when approached, or less made short, labored flights. The air temperature was in the range of 14 degrees C under an overcast sky. Thus the flies appeared to be partially incapacitated by the low temperature.

Although we were not able to approach near enough to the swallows to confirm that they were feeding on the flies, a few House Sparrows were observed taking the insects. That fact, coupled with the behavior of the swallows, led us to conclude that the flies had attracted the birds. Although the taking of terrestrial prey objects is doubtless exceptional