

VII. NEST AND EGGS OF THE WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW,  
(*HIRUNDO SMITHII FILIFERA* STEPHEN; AVES,  
PASSERIFORMES, HIRUNDINIDAE) FROM NORTHERN  
THAILAND

While watching some plovers in a rice field about 8 kilometres east of Chiang Mai, on the way to Amphoe Doi Saket in the early morning of 2 February 1964, Dr. H. Elliott McClure, who was accompanying me, called my attention to several swallows that were flying and crying about us. Some of these birds were perching on electric wires alongside the road, and some were flying rapidly around us and calling loudly. First I thought that these birds were the common House Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, but Dr. McClure mentioned that this was not *rustica* but was the Wire-Tailed Swallow, *Hirundo smithii filifera*, a species I had never seen and may be one of the rare species of the Thai Fauna. McCLURE (1961) reported seeing eight of these swallows along the Ping River in December 1957. The site where we stood was close to a culvert joining the streams on both sides of the road. Some of the birds were flying into the culvert and calling. When we moved close to the culvert, they acted nervously as if nesting in it. I examined this culvert but there were no nests and only a trace of mud attached to one side.

A month later (8 March 1964), I had an opportunity to return to this place. On that occasion there were fifteen nests within the culverts on the road from Chiang Mai to Doi Saket. The culverts were cylindrical, about 90 centimetres in diameter, and extended about 8 metres through the road embankment. The nests were attached to the walls of the culverts, rarely built at a joint. One nest was examined and photographed (Plate XL Figs. 1 and 2). The nest was made up of straw and grass and was cemented with mud, semicircular and cup-shaped. The measurements were

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Greatest length (outside) | 18 cm |
| Greatest width (outside)  | 10 cm |
| Depth (outside)           | 8 cm  |
| Length (inside)           | 15 cm |
| Width (inside)            | 6 cm  |
| Depth (inside)            | 4 cm  |

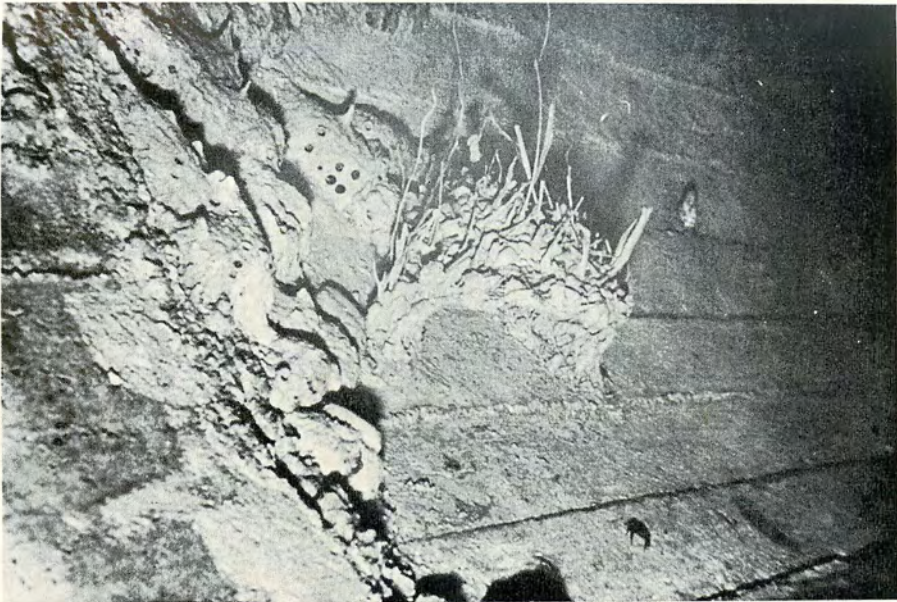


Fig. 1. A nest attached to the wall in the calvert, March 8, 1964.

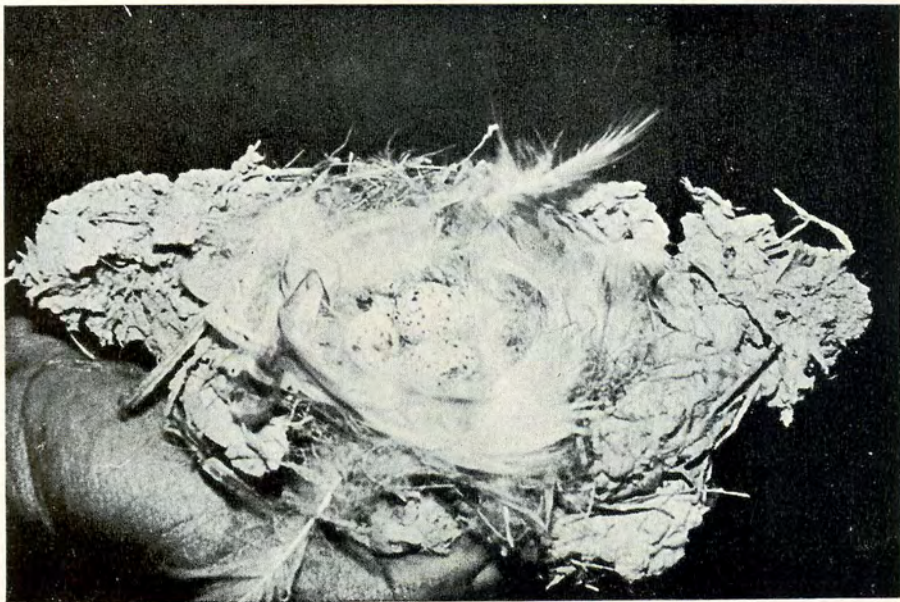


Fig. 2. A nest with 3 eggs, March 8, 1964.



The nest was lined with straw, grass, and 20 breast plumes from the parents. Three eggs were present, pinkish brown in colour and spotted irregularly with dark brown blotches. One egg measured  $1.9 \times 1.2$  cm.

There were 2 eggs in another nest in the same culvert. SMYTHIES (1953, p. 250) reported the breeding of this bird in Burma and recorded 3 or 4 eggs per clutch.

When this locality was visited again in late January 1967, there were two unfinished nests. In April of the same year there were 10 nests, from which the young had already been fledged.

DEIGNAN (1945, p. 268) observed this species in northern Thailand and remarked that at that time its status was uncertain, he recorded it only during the cold season but believed that it would be found to breed on the precipices along the large rivers.

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