
UNUSUAL NESTING SITES OF BANK SWALLOWS — A number of species with wide distribution follow different behavior patterns in localized areas. A brief observation recorded on June 11, 1955, may alert others for such instances in the future. This observation involves the selection of peculiar nesting sites by two small colonies of Bank Swallows.

While driving along the valley route (9N) through Upper Jay, Essex County, in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains, I noted Bank Swallows flying about in close proximity to two separate sawmill operations. I asked Ed Seeber, with whom I was vacationing, to stop the car for further examination of this interesting behavior. When studying the area with binoculars my attention was arrested by small apertures in the sawdust pile. Further study indicated that both piles contained active nesting colonies, estimated at ten pairs each.

Individuals emerged and dived into nesting cavities despite the proximity of the buildings and human activity of all sorts, including all the noise and action one expects of a functioning sawmill. Swallow activity continued regularly even though the metal flume from the saw constantly threw fresh sawdust upon the pile.

Although I've noted Bank Swallows using gravel piles and even honeycombed quarries, this seemed quite unusual. Dr. Harold H. Axtell, Curator of Biology at the Buffalo Museum of Natural Sciences, indicated that he too thought the record unusual. A. C. Bent (1950, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 179: 404) records two such nesting sites: Barrows observed a fairly large colony at an abandoned logging operation in Michigan, and Slosson studied a smaller colony in New Hampshire. Neither indicates nesting while so much human activity was being carried on. The studies of the Bank Swallow in New York State made by Dayton Stoner (1936, Roosevelt Wild Life Annals, 4(2): 122-233) do not refer to this type of behavior. — Art Schaffner, 170 Laurel Street, Buffalo.
