

General Field Notes

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A Nest of the Swallow-tailed Kite at Wambaw Creek, Charleston County, S.C.

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A nest of the Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) was discovered 8 April 1972, in an 80-foot loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), only 15 feet from the dirt road that leads from Elmwood campground to the Wambaw Creek bridge on Echaw Road. This locality is situated in the Francis Marion National Forest approximately 8 air miles NNE McClellanville, Charleston County, S.C. The nest tree was adjacent to a small field and about 50 yards from the edge of Wambaw Creek swamp.

The nest was near the top of the tree and in an early construction stage when first discovered. The birds could be seen carrying twigs, and later Spanish moss, in their feet and bills. More than two birds were building this nest, as one could be seen on the nest, while two more were bringing nest material. I often observed four kites together flying over Wambaw Creek.

Subsequent nest trips from Columbia were made on the weekends of 15 April, 22 April, 29 April, 13 May, 3 June, and 10 June. On 29 April I showed the nest to Wadell Robey of Charleston, who photographed it with an adult on the nest. No young birds were ever seen in this nest, and whether it was successful or not is uncertain. The last two trips showed no signs of the parent birds and the nest was apparently empty.

A talk with conservation officer Fred Best at Elmwood campground revealed that he had seen kites in other parts of the National Forest carrying twigs for nests. It should be brought to the attention of CBC members that the Swallow-tailed Kite is a common but local summer resident in this area, and the Francis Marion National Forest may be the northern-most limit of the breeding range of this magnificent species. As such it occupies a unique and important role in the National Forest system. A careful eye should be kept on this Forest to protect Swallow-tailed Kite habitat from destruction by such practices as clear-cutting and road-paving that lead to excessive human interference.

Second Bridled Tern Specimen from North Carolina

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10 September 1972

On 8 January 1972 I found a badly decomposed Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus recognita*) on the shoulder of Hwy 12 at Oregon Inlet, just south of Nag's Head, N.C. The skull, wings, feet, and tail feathers were all that remained of the bird. I judged the bird to have been dead for at least 2 months. It could possibly have been blown ashore

by Hurricane Ginger during the first week of October 1971, as was the immature Bridled Tern (first state specimen) found at Oregon Inlet by David Hughes and Gary Williamson on 3 October 1971 (*American Birds*, 26:48, 1972). Roxie C. Laybourne kindly identified the remains of the Bridled Tern now deposited in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM #565914).

Traill's Flycatchers Nesting at Raleigh, N.C.

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12 August 1972

During the summer of 1971 we found a small population of Traill's Flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii*) near Lake Raleigh in Wake County, N.C. (*Chat*, 35:113). However, no evidence of nesting was found. Traill's Flycatchers returned to the same area in 1972, and a careful and intensive study of these birds by several Raleigh birders resulted in the discovery of one and possibly two nests.

In 1972 the first Traill's Flycatcher at Lake Raleigh was seen and heard singing on 20 May, but a silent *Empidonax* flycatcher on 15 May in a nearby thicket was probably a Traill's. Chris Marsh visited this area on 29 May and observed at least three singing males and a female. On 11 June he and Bill Brown found a nest of this species in an elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) about 6½ feet from the ground. Four eggs were in the nest, which was made primarily of fine grasses. The general habitat around the nest site was a low, open bushy thicket with a small cattail marsh nearby.

On 18 June Edmund LeGrand found a mass of nest material about 10 feet up in a red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) on the edge of the thicket about 50 yards from the first nest. He suspected this was the beginnings of a nest because a pair of adult Traill's Flycatchers were nervously flitting around the bush. The same day Harry LeGrand visited the first nest and found that pair of adults and their four eggs.

Harry LeGrand visited the area on 30 June and observed both pairs of adults. At least two nearly-fledged young were present in the first nest. The second nest could not be located and may have been washed away by heavy rains. Both authors visited the thicket on 8 and 9 July, but we were unable to find the second nest again or the birds associated with it. On these dates the first nest was empty but intact. Although no young birds were seen out of the nest, it is believed that at least one fledged because the adults seemed disturbed when we approached the nest and refused to leave the immediate area.

Raleigh is the second locality in North Carolina where Traill's Flycatchers have been found nesting, the other location being North Wilkesboro (*Chat*, 29:88). Thus the breeding range of this species ("fitz-bew" form) has been extended about 100 miles to the southeast.

Olive-sided Flycatcher at Montreat, N.C.

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28 September 1972

An Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Nuttallornis borealis*) was observed 19 August 1972 in Montreat, N.C., at an altitude of 2,900 feet. This is the first published record of this species in Buncombe County since John S. Cairns included it in his paper, "The Summer Birds of Buncombe County, North Carolina" in *Orn. and Ool.* February 1889. In this paper he noted "but a few specimens; one on Craggy Mountain and one shot half way up the Black Mountain." (Cairns' observations were later included in a list of Birds of Buncombe County by Brimley in 1940.) The altitudes of both of Cairns' locations exceed 3,500 feet with portions of the Craggy range exceeding 5,000 feet. The altitude