

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