

First South Carolina Specimen of the Black-legged Kittiwake

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In response to a call from the Law Enforcement Division of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department concerning oil-soaked birds, Knight investigated the beach at Folly Island, near Charleston, S.C., the morning of 19 January 1980. The only bird found appeared to be a kittiwake. It was emaciated and had oil on its breast, wings, and head. The weather at the time, through cold, was clear and sunny. Knight took the bird to the Sea Island Veterinary Hospital where Pfaff identified it tentatively as a Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). Pfaff treated the bird for shock and removed as much of the oil as possible. Nevertheless, the kittiwake died 2 hours later.

Albert E. Sanders of the Charleston Museum confirmed the identification of the Kittiwake (as *R. t. tridactyla*) and had it prepared as a study skin (ChM No. CB2349). The specimen, an adult female in fresh, early winter plumage, weighed 236.4 g. Measurements were total length 38 cm, tail 14 cm, wing 30 cm, tarsus 3.2 cm, bill 3.5 cm, and ovary 1.0 x 0.6 cm. The stomach contained grit, coquina shells (*Donax* sp.), and ingested oil.

The Folly Island specimen represents the first record of the Black-legged Kittiwake in South Carolina. Grant, Browne, and Parnell (1976, Chat 40:12-13) stated that there are no published records for South Carolina, but suggested that this species undoubtedly occurs offshore during winter. They summarized 17 sightings in North Carolina waters since 1940. More recently, Lee and Booth (1979, Am. Birds 33:719) reported additional records for North Carolina and gave the status of the kittiwake in that state as a common winter resident. Additional field work is required in order to establish its status in South Carolina coastal waters.

Range Expansion of Nesting Tree Swallows

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On 4 May 1981 at 1615 EDT I noticed a pair of Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) clinging to an empty bluebird nest box while a male Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) attempted to drive them away. The bluebird, which was nesting about 70 feet away at the time, seemed determined to keep the swallows from infringing on his territory. The male Tree Swallow would fly down to the nest box, the female would join him, and the male bluebird would try to run them away from the box. I watched this behavior for about 30 minutes. Although I at first assumed the swallows were just passing through in northward migration, subsequent visits to the site provided the first nesting record for Tree Swallows in Buncombe County, N.C., and the second for the state.

The swallow nesting site is 1.5 miles N of Asheville on NC 191. The box is 4 feet above ground and attached to a telephone pole in an open field about 50 feet from a dwelling. The elevation is 1980 feet. The French Broad River is nearby.

I visited the site almost daily from 4 through 29 May and less frequently until the day the young Tree Swallows fledged, 21 June. Although the adult swallows were at the



Fig. 1. Shown above are the nest and six eggs of a pair of Tree Swallows that bred successfully in Buncombe County, N.C., in 1981. (Photo by Bill E. Duyck)

chosen box on 5 and 6 May, it was not until the seventh that I found a few pieces of grass 4 to 6 inches long in the bottom of the box. On 9 May I finally saw the female carrying material into the box. On this date I noticed that the male bluebird was no longer harassing the Tree Swallows, though I could not determine when the bluebird ceased this behavior.

By 10 May the nest box was one-third full of nesting material. The cup had been completed by 12 May when I found two feathers in the nest. On 14 May a second female appeared on the scene. Apparently a transient, she perched on the power line for a few seconds and continued on her way.

One egg was laid each day from 15 through 20 May, completing the clutch of six eggs. During the egg-laying period more and more feathers were added to the nest (Fig. 1). The female was incubating on 21 May, and the male was carrying feathers to the nest.

When I visited the box on 23 May, the incubating female left the nest. While she was gone, the male entered the box and looked out the entrance hole. After about 3 minutes, the female returned. Just at the last second the male left the nest. The female immediately alighted upon the box and went in. According to Bent's *Life Histories*, this is normal behavior for nesting Tree Swallows.

Feathers continued to be added to the nest at least through 26 May. I identified some as dove and guinea fowl feathers.

Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain data on the hatching of the eggs or development of the nestlings because other commitments made regular visits impossible from 30 May through 16 June. On 20 June I found all six young swallows alive in the nest box and apparently about ready to fledge.

I returned at 1030 EDT on 21 June. When I took the top off the box, there were only five nestlings inside. The adults really were giving me a dive bombing. Then I realized the

young were fledging and immediately replaced the top. Suddenly the sky was filled with Tree Swallows. The young left the box so rapidly I couldn't count them, but the last one departed at 1040 EDT. The parents and the five young Tree Swallows soon left the nest site and, as is their habit, did not return.

Again I removed the top. There was one young swallow in the nest, but it was dead. Judging from the size of it, I figured that it was the last one to hatch. Apparently it was suffocated by its larger nestmates shortly before they fledged.

The only previously reported nesting of the Tree Swallow in North Carolina occurred in Ashe County in 1979 (Chat 44:9). That nest was in an old woodpecker cavity in a tree stub beside the New River at an elevation below 3000 feet. The Buncombe County site is nearly 100 miles SW of the Ashe County site, and it lies at or near the southern limit of breeding in the East.

Rough-winged Swallow Nesting in Coastal North Carolina

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During early May 1981 we found two nesting sites for the Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. These represent the first nesting records for this species from this region and one of the few confirmed ones for the coastal portion of the state (see Fig. 1).

Behind the Marine Resources Center on Roanoke Island, Dare County, we observed Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) feeding over Croatan Sound and flying about an eroded bank. One bird was seen leaving a hole, which contained an unfinished

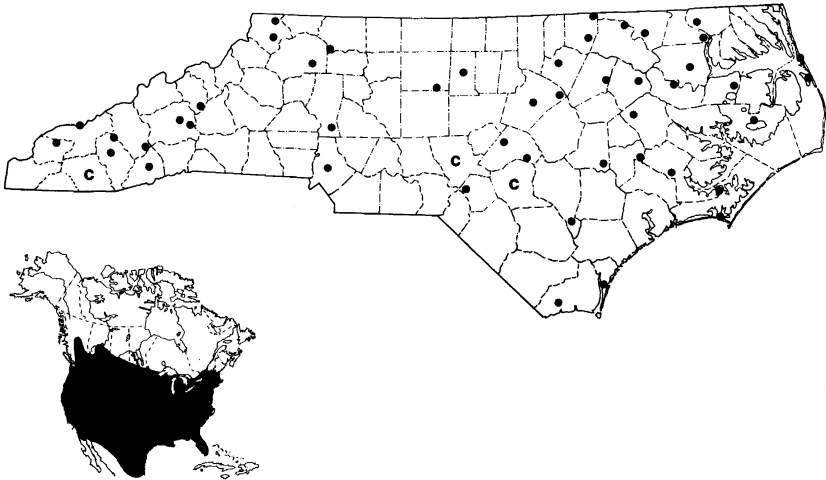


Fig. 1. Known nesting localities of the Rough-winged Swallow in North Carolina (dots). Counties from which nesting is reported but for which specific sites are unknown are marked with a C. Sources of records are on file at the North Carolina State Museum.