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American Swallow-tailed Kite Nesting in Hampton County, S.C.

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On 28 May 1985 an American Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) nest was found at the Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton County, S.C. The Webb Center is a 2346-ha state-owned tract of open pinewoods and bottomland hardwoods adjacent to the Savannah River. The nest with sitting bird was in a 5-ha Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*) stand surrounded by a Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia*) and Switch Cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) flat interspersed with Overcup Oak (*Q. lyrata*) and Swamp Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* var. *biflora*) sloughs. Three small fields totaling 4 ha occurred within 300 m of the nest. The nest was 390 m from the Savannah River swamp bottomland and 1.3 km from the river itself. The nearest water was an oxbow lake 390 m away.

The nest was near the top of a 36-m Loblolly Pine (52 cm DBH). The pine stand had been thinned to a basal area of 11.5 m²/ha several years previously. A seldom-traveled

woods road is 52 m from the nest tree. A Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) nest, which fledged one young, was in another pine 72 m from the Swallow-tail nest. The Swallow-tail nest fledged one young about 15 July.

This is the first nesting record for the Swallow-tailed Kite in Hampton County, although Swallow-tails were former breeders in the Savannah River coastal region (Murphey 1937). A review of Swallow-tail sightings suggests partial reoccupation of historical range in this area after an absence of several decades. Murphey (1937) noted that Swallow-tails disappeared from the Augusta area after 1919. Hamilton (1964) made no mention of Swallow-tails from Screven County (Georgia) on the Savannah River midway between the coast and fall line. Her observations spanned 1937 to 1964. Ivan Tomkins made periodic trips on the Savannah River from Augusta to Savannah during the 1940s and 1950s, apparently without noting Swallow-tails. R.A. Norris worked at the Savannah River Plant (SRP) between 1955 and 1958 without reporting Swallow-tails (Norris 1963). The SRP is on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River and slightly to the northeast of Screven County.

Except for two isolated sightings at Augusta in July 1938 (Murhey 1938) and May 1943 (Thomas 1943), consistent reports of American Swallow-tailed Kites from the coastal Savannah River started during the 1960s after an apparent 40-year hiatus. One kite was seen near the mouth of the Savannah River at Jasper County, in April 1961 (Chamberlain 1961). Baker (1966) reported two Swallow-tails from upper Screven County in July 1965, apparently the first kites seen in this area since 1943. A Swallow-tail was reported from Augusta on 30 July 1967 (Rial 1967) and another on 31 May 1969 (Knighton 1970). Several Swallow-tails were seen at Augusta in company with Mississippi Kites in early July 1973 (Teulings 1973), and three were seen on 20 July 1975 (Swiderski 1975).

Lewis Rogers, who has been at the Webb Center since 1969, saw his first American Swallow-tailed Kite there in the late 1970s. Rogers (pers. comm.) feels that Swallow-tails are gradually increasing in this area. He reported 19 Swallow-tails in a flock at the Webb Center in early May 1985. In 1985 Jim Geddes (pers. comm.) found Swallow-tails (up to 6) between river km 284 and 152 (Screven, Allendale, and Hampton Counties). During the spring of 1986, sturgeon biologists working the Savannah River from river km 214 (adjacent to the Savannah River Plant) to the coast found kites between river km 152 and 141 (Screven and Allendale Counties) and between river km 82 and river km 51 (Effingham and Jasper Counties) (Lamprecht and Green, pers. comm.).

The Hampton County nesting site is approximately 160 km SW of the nearest known kite breeding population in South Carolina, the Francis Marion National Forest. However, a nesting population may occur halfway between these locations at the Edisto River near Cottageville, Colleton County. Frank Cuthbert (pers. comm.) reported up to 10 Swallow-tails here during the early 1980s, and one bird was seen carrying moss and twigs.

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Adult Male Rufous Hummingbird Photographed in North Carolina

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About midafternoon on 2 September 1985, an adult male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) appeared at a hummingbird feeder in the yard of the Henry Haberyan residence at Cedar Point, Carteret County, N.C. Numerous Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) of both sexes had been present at this location since mid-April, and they offered excellent opportunities for comparison with this new bird. The differences, including the larger size of the Rufous, were readily apparent. The Rufous Hummingbird was a fully adult male, as evidenced by a rusty-orange back without any green, which would have been present on an immature Rufous, an adult female Rufous, or an Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*) in any plumage. The rusty orange was also noted on the sides, flanks, and under-tail coverts. The gorget was orange-red with striking iridescence in the proper light. Green feathers were present in the crown, but they were not conspicuous. No white was seen in the rusty-red, unforked tail. This bird was not particularly shy, readily allowing an approach to within 30 feet. No closer approach was attempted.

The Rufous had a deliberate, "bumblebee" flight characterized by arcing turns rather than the rapid, darting flight of the Ruby-throateds, which at first did not seem to know what to make of the newcomer. Eventually several Ruby-throateds showed aggressive behavior by making flight passes at the Rufous.

The male Rufous Hummingbird was present throughout the remainder of the afternoon and appeared at the same feeder on the morning of 3 September. During this time a number of color photographs were obtained, and the bird was studied by Wayne Irvin, Ricky Davis, and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. The call of the Rufous Hummingbird, a buzzing *bee* or *bzee* note, was heard on several occasions. The bird disappeared about 0945 on 3 September and was not seen subsequently.

This is the third reported occurrence of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird for North Carolina, but the first for an adult male. Because of the difficulty of separating female and immature Rufous from the Allen's Hummingbird in the same plumages, the previous two records could only be considered as "probably Rufous," based mainly on the much greater likelihood of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in the East being Rufous rather than the Allen's.