

General Field Notes

General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

Observation of Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) Post-fledging Parental Care in Hampton County, South Carolina

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On 6 August 2008, David Jones observed adult Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) feeding an immature (Fig. 1) at his farm in Hampton County, SC (32° 47' 19.973" N, 80° 59' 16.931" W). The young kite was fed six times while beg calling. Jones believes that he observed feeding by two different adults. In South Carolina, most young have fledged the nests by mid- to late-June. Assuming this immature bird fledged within the normal breeding cycle for Swallow-tailed Kites, it may have been between 6 to 8 weeks old. It is still not clear when young Swallow-tailed Kites become fully independent and parental care ceases (Meyer and Collopy 1990, Meyer 1993). In southwest Florida, young kites leave the nest area at 2 to 12 weeks post-fledging. Upon leaving natal territories in Florida, immature kites have been observed with adults and occasionally being fed by adults, but usually foraged on their own. There are few if any examples of parental care in South Carolina during the pre-migratory/migratory period after the kites have left natal breeding territories (John Cely pers comm).

Literature Cited

- Meyer, K. D. and M. W. Collopy. 1990. Status, distribution, and habitat requirements of the American Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus forficatus*) in Florida. Final report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm., Tallahassee, FL.
- Meyer, K. D. 1993. Communal roosts of the American Swallow-tailed Kite in Florida: habitat associations, critical sites, and a technique for monitoring population status. Final report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm., Tallahassee, FL.



Figure 1. Swallow-tailed Kite adult feeding young 6 Aug 2008. Photo by David Jones

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) on Lake Hickory

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On September 30, 2003 at 18:30, while scanning parts of lower Lake Hickory from Dusty Ridge Access area in Alexander County, North Carolina, I found a gull on the lake. This seemed unusual at first because gulls are not normally there that early in the year. The gull was approximately 300 yards out sitting on the open water nearer to the Catawba County side of the lake. I set up my scope (Leica 77) on the gull. The first thing I noticed was the brown color around the neck that extended to the back and wings of the gull. It appeared to be a small gull. I had an idea of what the gull was, but I wanted to get a few more markings. Soon a boat passed near the gull and it took flight. It flew very much like a tern—bouncy in flight. As the gull flew it came somewhat closer and then banked, showing its back and tail. The tail was forked and the back had the “V” pattern of a Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*). The bird was a juvenile because of the brown coloration. The brown coloration started at the point of the mid-wing and extended down to the tail and back up to the mid-wing on the other side and covered the whole back. The Sabine's Gull flew around for a few more minutes and then landed back on the water near the original spot at which it was found.