

American Swallow-tailed Kite

E Jul 1931

southwest of Oakland, Pottawattamie Co., IA

a farmer, Karl Swarz, Swenk

Swenk 1932, DuMont 1933

Record Number: 93-CH

Classification: A-D

REFERENCE

Swenk, M.H. 1932. The Swallow-tailed Kite in Pottawattamie County Iowa. Wilson Bull. 44:182.

DuMont 1933

VOTE: 5 A-D

A-D, Swenk substantiated the origin of the specimen and measured it. It was 556 mm (about 22.25 inches) long. Clark and Wheeler give length of 20-25 inches for this species. I do not have references immediately available for the other dimensions given by Swenk. I accept this record based on the circumstances, measurement, Swenk's ability, and ease of identification. /thk

A-D, Measurements are puzzling. Palmer gives male and female data (sexes about same size) as culmen 19-20 mm (male), 19-21 mm (female); wing 423-436 (male), 436-445 (female); tail 328-343 (male), 343-370 (female). Must have been a very small bird. Swenk was a careful observer and contributed greatly to NE ornithology.  
/ wrs

Swenk, M. H. 1932. The Swallow-tailed Kite in Pottawattamie County Iowa.  
Wilson Bull 44:182.

**The Swallow-tailed Kite in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.**—It has now been about two decades since the Northern Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus forficatus*) has been reported from Iowa. Early in July of 1931 a farmer shot one of these birds along the West Nishnabotna River, a few miles southwest of Oakland, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and brought it to Mr. Leo Lockhart, of Hancock (a few miles north of Oakland), for mounting. The bird was, however, subsequently sent to the shop of Karl Schwarz, the taxidermist at 419 South 13th Street, Omaha, Nebraska, who mounted it. I first learned of its presence in his shop on July 8, and some time later secured the specimen from Mr. Lockhart, and it is now in my collection. It is a good specimen, and from its size I should judge was a male, the measurements of the mounted bird being in millimeters as follows: Length, 556; wing, 400; tail, 263 (unusually short); tarsus, 30; exposed culmen, 20.5 (from feathers, 27); depth of bill at base, 13.5.—MYRON H. SWENK, Lincoln, Nebr.

*Elanoides forficatus forficatus* (Linnaeus). Swallow-tailed Kite

Very rare. This beautiful bird was formerly a fairly common summer resident throughout the state, but by 1880, apparently, it was considerably reduced in numbers and was thereafter observed most frequently as a migrant. The last migratory flight of any size is mentioned by W. W. Searles, of Lime Springs, Howard County (Iowa Ornithologist, I, 1895, p. 90) who found them abundant for three days during May, 1888.

1933  
DuMont ~~1934~~  
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Records of this bird in Iowa since 1900 are indeed few. An adult specimen taken during the fall of 1901 by D. J. Bullock in Jasper County, is now in the Bullock collection, Des Moines. An immature male was collected at Cedar Rapids, Linn County, September 20, 1903. It is now in the Coe College collection. Another taken in Sheridan Township, Poweshiek County, September, 1907, is in the collection at Grinnell College. The collector is unknown. Spurrell (1917) says: "Mr. Lee reported the swallow-tailed kite as rare, with the last one seen in 1908." Nauman records (Palimpsest, V, p. 137) seeing one flying over the town of Sigourney during the summer of 1910. Bailey (1918) states: "The last recorded observation of this bird in Iowa was made by J. H. Scott, of Iowa City, on Wapsipinicon River near Independence in August, 1912." One of the two specimens of Swallow-tailed Kite in the Shaffer collection, Jefferson County Library, Fairfield, was killed by B. F. McElhinny in 1913, in Jefferson County. Fenton (1923-24) records one seen by C. H. Belanski and himself at Hackberry Grove, Cerro Gordo County, May 28, 1916. Myron H. Swenk records (Wilson Bull., XLIV, p. 182) a specimen killed by a farmer early in July, 1931 along the West Nishnabotna River, a few miles southwest of Oakland, Pottawattamie County, Iowa. The specimen was mounted by Karl Schwarz of Omaha, and is now in Swenk's collection, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Besides the five Iowa specimens mentioned above there are several others taken prior to 1900. One in the U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., was taken at Sioux City by D. H. Talbot. Another Talbot specimen was collected by J. F. Baker at Sioux City, Woodbury County, April 8, 1883. It is a male, and is in the collection of the University of Iowa Museum. A mounted specimen, taken by J. B. Atkins in Jasper County, is in the Parker Museum at Grinnell College. Three specimens from Scott County, without dates, are in the collection of the Davenport Public Museum. Two of the specimens were taken by S. C. Bowman and the other by W. L. Allen. A second specimen in the Shaffer collection, Fairfield, was probably taken in Fairfield County by J. M. Shaffer, sometime before 1900. Fenton (1923-24) states that there is a specimen in the Miles collection, Charles City, which was probably taken in Floyd County. Spurrell (1917) records that one in the H. B. Smith collection, Odebolt, was taken in Ida County.

Bailey (1918) recorded this species as a former breeder in Woodbury, Crawford, Carroll, Greene, Decatur, Blackhawk, and Benton counties.