

American Swallow-tailed Kite
< 1879
Coon Lake, IA

Record Number: 93-BQ
Classification: NA

nest with egg to Smithsonian; Krider 1879, Anderson 1907

REFERENCES

- Krider, J. 1879. Forty Years Notes of a Field Ornithologist.
J. H. Weston Press, Philadelphia.
Baird, Brewer, Ridgeway. 1875. N. A. Birds 3:192 [in Anderson]
Bendire. Life Histories [see Anderson, ? same egg]
Anderson 1907.

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, Krider made some mistakes, but it's hard to believe that he was wrong on this one. He even gives location. However, there is no description and we do not know whether the eggs can still be located. Can this species be identified from eggs? Can someone do some more research? Any evidence still at Smithsonian. /thk
NA, Letter to Smithsonian seems in order. /wrs

93-BQ

Krider, J. 1879. Forty Years Notes of a Field Ornithologist.
Philadelphia, J. H. Weston Press. p 10

Nauclerus Furcatus.—Vigors.

Swallow-tailed Hawk.

It was considered by all collectors the most rare of all hawks, and is now sought after more than any other. I have found it very abundant in Iowa, Minnesota and Kansas, where they breed; have shot them in Philadelphia and in New Jersey. The first nest I found was at Coon Lake, Iowa; I watched the bird building, and only obtained one egg, which is now in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C.

135. (327). *Elanoides forficatus* (Linn.). Swallow-tailed Kite.

The Swallow-tailed Kite was formerly a tolerably common summer resident throughout the state, but of recent years it is of infrequent occurrence, though reported by nearly all observers.

Thomas Say observed the species in Pottawattamie county in 1819-20. Prince Maximilian also observed it on the Missouri (Reise, i, 306): May 8, 1833—"Etwas weiter aufwärts tritt Floyd's-River hervor, und an den Floyd's Hügeln zeigen sich einzelne Nadelholz-Bäume, über dene der weisse gabelschwänzige Milan (*Falco furcatus*) in der Luft schwebte." . . . (Ibid. ii, 340) May 11, 1834 (mouth of Little Sioux), "bemerkten in der Luft ein Paar der schönen weiss und schwarzen Milanen, welchen die französischen Abkommlinge am Mississippi la fregata nennen." Audubon noted "a Swallow-tailed Kite" near Council Bluffs in 1843 (Journals, i, 481).

Anderson 1907
pp 242-243

J. A. Allen (Mem. Bost. Soc., i, 1868, 500) writes: "Common. Often seen in considerable numbers, and generally over or near the timber skirting the streams. At Denison, in the timber of the Boyer River, they were very common and nesting; the nests being placed on horizontal branches, at some distance from the trunk. By the middle of July the young had not flown. With a peculiarly graceful, swallow-like flight this beautiful bird was seen not infrequently skimming over the prairie, singly or two or three in company, eagerly searching for their reptile food." John Krider (Forty Years' Notes, 1879, 10) says: "I have found it very abundant in Iowa, Minnesota and Kansas, where they breed. The first nest I found was at Coon Lake, Iowa. I watched the birds building, and only obtained one egg, which is now in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C." Baird, Brewer and Ridgway (N. A. Birds, iii, 1875, 192) describe an egg taken in Iowa by Krider; and Bendire, in his "Life Histories," figures a type specimen of an egg taken in Blackhawk county, June 3, 1875. Morton E. Peck writes me that it "once bred regularly in Blackhawk and Benton counties, where a number of sets of eggs were taken by George D. Peck, the last in about 1877. At present it rarely if ever appears in the county."

Various observers give the food of this species as consisting chiefly of snakes, frogs and grasshoppers. It has been recorded in Iowa at various dates from April until December, but the larger number of specimens appear to be seen in September.