

American Swallow-tailed Kite  
11 May 1834  
mouth of Little Sioux, Harrison Co., IA  
Prince Maximilian  
Anderson 1907

Record Number: 93-BM  
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Anderson 1907 [quotes Reise,ii,340]

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, I hope one of the reviewers can have the German translated verbatim. It is likely that this species was present at that time, but need details. /thk

NA, At least mentions color of birds, but inadequate for identification. German translates: "Noticed in the air a pair of pretty white and black kites, which the French people along the Mississippi call 'frigatebird' [:la fregata]." /wrs

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).

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.