

First Mississippi Nesting Record for the Swallow-tailed Kite

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On 20 June 1982 Leron Vickrey discovered an American Swallow-tailed Kite (Elanoides forficatus) nest on the east bank of Bluff Creek, a half mile south of Vancleave, Mississippi, in Jackson County. That afternoon Leron, Bridget Russell, and I visited the nest site and Bridget photographed the nest, the young, and the parent birds who came to the nest site at approximately 20 minute intervals. A photograph is on file in the ornithological collections of Mississippi State University.

The nest was in the floodplain of Bluff Creek, with slash pine (Pinus elliottii) and southern magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora) the predominant trees with an almost impenetrable understory of titi (Cyrilla racemiflora) and inkberry (Ilex glabra). The nest was well hidden in the top of an 85 foot slash pine about 100 feet from Bluff Creek. It was built of sticks tied together liberally with Spanish moss (Tillandsia usneoides) and looked to be about 18 inches in diameter. The two young were exercising their wings and peered at us over the nest rim. They seemed to be about a week from fledging.

Mrs. Patricia Vickrey called me on 26 June to tell me that the young had left the nest and were now foraging along Bluff Creek with their parents.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first confirmed nesting record of the Swallow-tailed Kite in Mississippi.