

Observations of a Black Vulture Nest

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A pair of Black Vultures (Coragyps atratus) selected a nesting site deep in swampy deciduous woods in Madison County, Mississippi, beside an uprooted tree. On 16 April 1977 I found 2 eggs laid on bare ground and being incubated. No nest building activities were noted and there was no nest, but there was a slight depression where the eggs rested. Just before hatching (by 30 April), 1 egg disappeared from the nest. The other egg hatched, revealing a yellow-downed chick about 13 cm long. Vulture features were evident, but it did not develop the head nor leg color of a vulture until 4-5 weeks old. No adult was observed at the nest after incubation. The young bird lived alone and was fed an undetermined number of times a day. Its only defense from predators seemed to be the hissing noise it made upon approach. It grew rapidly and began standing and walking by 2 weeks of age. At 6 weeks black feathers were evident through the yellow down, and the bird could run rapidly away from intruders. Its usual hiding place was in a ditch covered over with live southern blackberry canes. It was able to fly by 12 weeks of age (by July 23). At no time was the usual offensive odor of vulture nests evident, and in fact, no nest odors were detected at all.

A Late Nesting Record of the Swainson's Warbler in Wilkinson County

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On 27 June 1977 I located a nest of the Swainson's Warbler (Limothlypis swainsonii) in a deep loess bluff ravine alongside a stream bank at the headwaters of Clark Creek in southwestern Wilkinson County, Mississippi, near the Pond community. An adult was incubating on the nest and flushed only when the nest was touched. The nest was supported by two small canes about a meter above the ground in a cane thicket and it contained 2 nest-stained eggs. The nest was typical of this species and was composed of loosely-compressed dead leaves lined with rootlets. John Phares, Jack Herring, and Bill Quisenberry observed the nest and Bill Quisenberry photographed it. The latest nesting occurrence on file at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is 14 June 1941 when 4 young left a nest observed by B. A. Bloodsworth in Boguehoma Creek Swamp east of Laurel in Jones County. I know of no other breeding record of this species for Wilkinson County or in southwest Mississippi south of Interstate 20 west of Interstate 55. I have recorded singing males previously at locations along the Natchez Trace Parkway in southwest Hinds County, and in Claiborne and Jefferson counties.