

LETTERS

J Raptor Res. 35(2):169–170

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A BROOD OF FIVE SWAINSON'S HAWKS IN SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

As part of an ongoing study of Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) in southwest Idaho since 1995, we regularly check 50–80 nesting territories each year to determine occupancy and breeding success, to identify banded adults, and to detect turnover. Broods with four young Swainson's Hawks are not unusual in southwest Idaho. We have found four young at 13 of 174 nests (7.5%) in which broods were counted between 1996–2000. Here, we report the only nest we have ever found that contained five young.

We observed the nest on 5 and 7 July 1999 and counted five young on both days. The nest was in a box elder (*Acer negundo*) tree 9 m above the ground, south of the city of Kuna. We counted the 31–39-day-old young through a 20 × 60 spotting scope and photographed the nest from a distance of about 50 m.

Nests with five eggs and young are unusual in Swainson's Hawks (England et al. 1997 in A. Poole and F. Gill [Eds.], *The Birds of North America*, No. 265, The Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, DC U.S.A.). A report of 5- and 7-egg clutches in Manitoba (Criddle 1915, *Ottawa Nat. Nov.* 94–97) is questionable. Two contained five eggs and the third had seven eggs. The nest that contained seven eggs was on the ground and was a bulky bunch of large sticks with a bark lining. It is questionable because it better fits the description of a Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) nest which typically has 4–7 eggs (Murphy et al. 1969, *Brigham Young Univ. Sci. Bull., Biol. Ser.*, 10: 25–36). The only record of a nest with five young was made by Houston (1998, *Blue Jay*, 56:154) who reported a nest with five young in Saskatchewan.

M. Marin, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, M.F. Lembo, Hanford Technical Library, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and M.J. Cowing, Olendorff Memorial Library, Boise State University, helped in locating publications. C.S. Houston sent various publications. We acknowledge the support of M.N. Kochert (USGS Snake River Field Station), M.J. Bechard (Boise State University), and B. Haak (Idaho Department of Fish and Game).—**JAMES O. MCKINLEY and WILLIAM G. MATTOX, Conservation Research Foundation, 8300 Gantz Ave., Boise, ID, 83709-7307 U.S.A.**

FIRST NEST RECORDS OF THE WHITE-THROATED HAWK (*BUTEO ALBIGULA*) IN ARGENTINA

The White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*), often included as a subspecies of the Short-tailed Hawk (*B. brachyurus*, Amadon et al. 1988, *Proc. West. Found. Vertebr. Zool.* 3:295–357), inhabits the Andes Cordillera, from Venezuela to southern Chile and Argentina. In Argentina, it is a spring-summer resident in *Nothofagus* spp. forests of western Patagonia (Neuquén, Río Negro, and Chubut), migrating to northern regions in autumn (Olrog 1979, *Op. Lill.* 27: 5–322; Casas and Gelain 1995, *Hornero* 14:40–42). Even though these forests appear to be important breeding areas for White-throated Hawks (Pávez 2000, *J. Raptor Res.* 34:143–147), nest descriptions are lacking. Here, we first describe two nests found in lenga (*N. pumilio*) forests in the Valley of the Challhuaco River in Nahuel Huapi National Park (northwestern Patagonia, 41°15'S, 71°16'W).

Two pairs of hawks were seen in the valley from early spring (September) to early autumn (March–April) over three consecutive years. They were absent during the rest of the year, which agreed with the observations of Casas and Gelain (1995). The hawks' territories were determined during the spring and summer of 1999, by monitoring the whole valley from positions above the forest canopy, such as rock islands and mountain tops. To determine their activities, we used 8X binoculars and 40X spotting scopes. Once activity centers (where the pairs frequently descended and entered the forest, carrying food beginning in December) were located, repeated nest searches were carried out at those forest points. The nests were located by observation of the aggressive diving behavior of one or two members of the pairs, or by observing the birds carrying food.

On 15 January 2000, we found a big platform nest placed 15 m high in the fork of a partially-dead lenga tree (16.5 m tall, 0.58 m diameter at breast height) where the pair was seen copulating on 28 October 1999. The adults responded to our presence by defending and watching nervously. When only one of us remained hidden in the

understory, the adults flew off and an adult-sized juvenile was observed eating a medium-sized passerine bird and walking on the branches around the nest. It did not fly from the nest until a week later. At the end of the nesting season (February 2000), we climbed the tree. The nest platform measured 80 X 76 cm and was nearly circular in shape. It was 22 cm in height at the center and the nest cup measured 36 X 30 cm and 8 cm deep.

The second nest was found 1.5 km away, one month after the hawks had left the nest site (March 2000) and after the lengas had lost their leaves. It was placed 15.5 m high in a partially dead lenga tree (19 m tall, 1.08 m diameter at breast height). The nest was oval-shaped and measured 72 X 68 cm. It was 26 cm high at the center and the nest cup measured 24 X 25 cm and 7 cm deep.

Both nests were very similar in their location, construction, size, and materials used. The main platform was formed by even-sized lenga branches, which were of small diameter (approximately 1 cm) but rather long, and strongly fixed to one another and to the tree. Some of the branches still had *Usnea* and/or *Protousnea* lichens attached, which indicated that they were taken directly from trees and not from the forest floor. The nests and supporting branches were covered with feces, pellets, and feathers of White-throated Hawks and their prey, and pellets contained only bird remains. Most of the feathers found in the nest belonged to passerines including Austral Thrushes (*Turdus falklandii*), House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), Thorn-tailed Rayaditos (*Aphrastura spinicauda*), and Black-chinned Siskins (*Carduelis barbata*), but we also found a few belonging to Striped Woodpeckers (*Picoides lignarius*). This was not surprising since we had observed other hawks attempting to catch even larger woodpeckers, such as the Magellanic Woodpecker (*Campophilus magellanicus*). There were also remains of beetles and some foliose lichens in the center of the nest.

Although the territories of the two pairs were only 1.5 km apart, we never observed any interactions between them. However, a territorial dispute was once observed with another congeneric species, the larger Red-backed Hawk (*Buteo polyosoma*). The latter species chased one of the smaller White-throated Hawks when both met flying at high altitude, in what we believe was the boundary between the territories of the two species. The two species did not appear to have overlapping territories.

We thank J.M. Karlanian who helped with the tree climbing. Our work was supported by Agencia de Promoción Científica y Tecnológica (Project PICT99 13-07114) and Secretaría de Investigación, UN Comahue (Project B101).—**Ana Trejo and Valeria Ojeda, Centro Regional Bariloche, Universidad Nacional del Comahue, CP(8400), Bariloche, Argentina, and Lorenzo Sympson, Sociedad Naturalista Andino Patagónica, Pasaje Juramento 190, 3° 1, CP(8400), Bariloche, Argentina.**