First Texas specimen of the White-collared Swift

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At approximately 1630 CST on March 8, 1983, Jean Schulenberg of Emporia, Kansas, found a large, dead swift on the beach at Padre Island, Kleberg County, Texas. The swift was found six kilometers south of the Padre Island National Seashore Headquarters and appeared to have been washed onto the beach one meter below the high tide line. Schulenberg also observed "hundreds of thousands" of dead insects (later identified as ladybird beetles, *Hippodamia convergens*) in the area of the dead swift and for several hundred meters in both directions along the beach. High tide had occurred at 1409 CST.

Schulenberg correctly identified the bird as a White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*). She cleaned the sand and debris from the bird and froze it. The frozen specimen was delivered to Texas A & M University on March 11, where Keith Arnold and R. Doug Slack of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences examined the specimen and confirmed the identification. The specimen was in good condition and was later made into a study skin (Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection #11177). The thawed swift weighed 100.0 g, and the wing measurement, from the bend of the flat wing to the tip of the longest primary, was 211 mm. The bird was a young male (testes 4 × 2 mm; skull not completely ossified, showing large windows of single-layer bone). The specimen was nearly without fat, but the stomach was full to the point of bulging. An analysis of the stomach contents later determined that the bird had fed heavily before its death on *Hippodamia convergens*, the same insect species that had been washed up on the beach with the bird. There were no signs of external or internal injuries that might have contributed to the bird's death.

The first United States specimen of *S. zonaris* was a bird found dead on Perdido Key, Florida, on January 25, 1981 (Hardy and Clench 1982). The Florida specimen was identified as the northern Middle American race *S. z. mexicana*, based on plumage and meaurements. Hardy and Clench (1982) detected differences in collar width of specimens they examined. They noted that specimens taken from Costa Rica southward into South America (*S. z. albicincta*), had narrower ventral collars than did specimens from northern Middle America. The Padre Is-

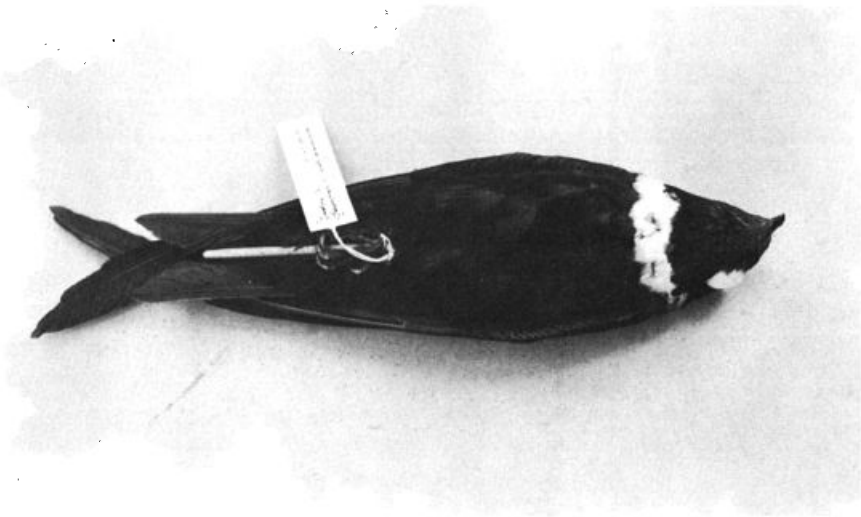

Figure 1. *White-collared Swift* (Streptoprocne zonaris) *from Padre Island, Texas. TCWC #11177. Photo/G. W. Lasley.*

Table 1. Wing measurements and weights of male *Streptoprocne zonaris mexicana* in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection at Texas A & M University.

Location	*Date collected*	*Specimen #*	*Wing (mm)*	*Weight (g)*
Padre Island, Texas	March 8, 1983	TCWC 11177	211	100.0
Guerrero, Mexico	June 9, 1953	TCWC 5487	215.5	118.2
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3056	186	127.4
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3058	203	102.8
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3060	200	90.2
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3062	192	110.4
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3063	198	104.7
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3064	203	109.8
Veracruz, Mexico	July 30, 1942	TCWC 3065	206	107.8

land swift was compared with eight specimens of male *S. z. mexicana* in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection (TCWC) at Texas A & M University. All were collected in Mexico. Considerable variation was noted in the width of the ventral collar in these specimens. The width of the new specimen's collar was within the range of variation of the other TCWC specimens. Wing measurements of the Texas swift were compared with those of specimens of *S. z. mexicana* in the TCWC. At 211 mm, the Texas swift fell between the extremes (Table 1). Like the Florida specimen, the Texas swift appears to be *S. z. mexicana,* but a positive subspecific identification is not possible at this time. It will be necessary to compare the specimen with a good series of *S. z pallidifrons* (the Cuban race) and *S. z. albicincta* before a racial determination can be made.

In late February and early March of 1983, there were unusual weather conditions that may have contributed to the swift's appearance on the Texas coast. Of particular interest was a strong low-pressure system off the California coast that came ashore March 3. This system intensified and became more organized as it moved across northern Arizona and New Mexico on March 4. By March 5, atmospheric pressure at ground level dropped to 984 millibars, and extensive rains occurred across the western two-thirds of the United States. More importantly, the jet stream that was driving this storm dipped southward across northern Mexico on March 4 and 5 and intensified. On March 5 the central jet stream flow was from west to east across the northern tier of Mexican states, bending northeast over the Gulf of Mexico off the Texas coast. Sustained winds of up to 100 knots occurred as low as 4000 meters, or well within the flight levels of certain birds (Lincoln and Peterson 1979). Both the southerly position of the jet stream and the high, sustained wind velocities at moderate altitudes were unusual (S. Haggard, Meteorologist, Espey, Houston and Associates, Inc., Austin, Texas, *pers. comm.*, 1983).

None of the environmental and physiological factors considered suggest an obvious cause of death for the Texas swift. The Florida bird was thought to have starved to death, but that cause can possibly be ruled out for the Texas swift, considering the bird's weight relative to other specimens (Table 1), and since the bird had a full stomach.

The Texas swift represents the second United States specimen of the White-collared Swift and the first documented record for Texas. In addition to the two specimens, there are two published sight records for the species in the United States. Two were reported December 4, 1974, at Rockport, Texas (Webster 1975), and another was described on May 21, 1982 in Del Norte County, California (Evans and LeValley 1982). The California sighting has since been accepted by the California Bird Records Committee (Dunn, *pers. comm.*, 1984).

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