

**FIRST VERIFIABLE RECORDS OF THE SWALLOW-TAILED
KITE IN FLORIDA DURING WINTER**

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Previous notes in this journal have documented the first verifiable winter records in Florida of six birds that breed in North America but winter largely in the tropics: Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*), Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*), Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*), Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*), and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) (Pranty et al. 2005 and references therein). Here we document the first two verifiable winter records for the Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) in Florida.

On 24 February 2006, DR (in litt.) saw and photographed (Fig. 1) one of two Swallow-tailed Kites over Lake Placid, Highlands County, Florida. Two days later, DF (TAS 2006) photographed (Fig. 2) a kite over Monroe Station, Big Cypress National Preserve, Collier County, Florida. Both photographs clearly show the distinctive profile and white body with black flight feathers and tail of Swallow-tailed Kites. Stevenson and Anderson (1994) indicate that the range of specimen records of Swallow-tailed Kites in Florida is 2 March (1913) to 15 September (1992), and they are unaware of any photographs taken outside these dates.

Swallow-tailed Kites begin to return to southern Florida from their South American wintering grounds during the third or fourth week of February (Meyer 1995), with potentially early reports from mid-January (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). There seems little doubt that the kites photographed by Riemer and Fitzsimmons were recent spring arrivals due to the timing of the records and the lack of earlier observations. However, because ornithological texts such as Stevenson and Anderson (1994) define the winter season as the period between 1 December and 28 or 29 February, then the photographs in Figures 1 and 2 establish the first verifiable records of the Swallow-tailed Kite in Florida during winter months.

LITERATURE CITED

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Figures 1 and 2. One of two Swallow-tailed Kites over Lake Placid, Highlands County, Florida, 24 February 2006 (top), and one Swallow-tailed Kite over Monroe Station, Big Cypress National Preserve, Collier County, Florida, 26 February 2006 (bottom). These photographs document the first verifiable records of Swallow-tailed Kites in Florida during winter. Photographs by Dean Riemer (top) and Dorcas Fitzsimmons (bottom).