

Although there are several reports of sawdust-nesting by Bank Swallows, *Riparia riparia* (Torrey 1903, Barrows 1912, Norton 1927, Palmer and Taber 1946, Greenlaw 1972), the only other report of similar nest sites for the Belted Kingfisher is that of Hopkins (1980). Donald McCrimmon, Director of the North American Nest Record Card Program at Cornell University, wrote us in September 1978 that he had no record cards for sawdust-nesting by Belted Kingfishers.

The use of sawdust piles by kingfishers on the Noxubee Refuge may result partly from the scarcity of earth banks in this generally flat region (although a gravel pit located only 3.1 km west of the second nest-site, when visited in the fall of 1978, contained at least five old kingfisher burrows). The first nest-site is probably the closest suitable site (0.4 km) to Loakfoma Lake, a favorite foraging area of kingfishers. Although sawdust piles may seem to be a very unstable nesting substrate, those on the Noxubee Refuge are old and highly compacted, with little tendency to collapse or slump. There are several such piles on the refuge remaining from old logging operations. Old sawdust piles are easily excavated, and as noted by Greenlaw (op. cit.) for Bank Swallows, they may offer a suitable and locally important nesting substrate for Belted Kingfishers.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Barrows, W.B. 1912. Michigan bird life. Michigan Agric. Coll., Special Bull.  
Greenlaw, J.S. 1972. The use of sawdust piles by nesting Bank Swallows. Wilson Bull. 84:494-496.  
Hopkins, M.N., Jr. 1980. Belted Kingfisher nesting in a sawdust pile. Oriole 45:22.  
Norton, D.D. 1927. Notes from Maine. Bird-Lore 29:117.  
Palmer, R.S. and W. Taber. 1946. Birds of the Mount Katahdin region of Maine. Auk 63:299-314.  
Torrey, B. 1903. Sand swallows (*Riparia riparia*) nesting in sawdust. Auk 20:436-437.

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Request for Information: Armadillos. I am studying the range expansion of Armadillos in the mid-South and would appreciate learning of any sightings (such as armadillos dead on the highway) north of a line between Greenville and Columbus in Mississippi or north of a similar latitude in Alabama. Please send details including precise location, date, and observer to: Dr. Jerome A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Observation of a Franklin's Gull at Ross Barnett Reservoir,  
Jackson, Mississippi

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On 19 December 1981, temperature below 10 degrees, little wind, 9:00 a.m., one Franklin's Gull (Larus pipixcan) was observed at Main Harbor Marina, Madison County, Barnett Reservoir from the top of the dam that separates the Marina from the sewage lagoon. Binoculars (7 x 35) and scopes (20x and 60x) were used. This bird was with several hundred Bonaparte's Gulls (Larus philadelphia), and fewer Ring-billed Gulls (Larus delawarensis) and Herring Gulls (Larus argentatus). The Franklin's Gull was easily seen at 50 feet from our car as the flock settled on the dam roadway.

We noticed that this particular gull was the only one with a completely black head, and with a white eye ring. Its mantle and wings were slaty-gray, darker than any other, its bill a cherry red, and its legs black. It was larger than the Bonaparte's and smaller than the Ring-billed gulls.

The gull flew over the sewage lagoon and through the spray whenever the aerators became active. In flight the Franklin's Gull showed the white bands separating the black in the wing from the slate-gray.

The next day, 20 December 1981 at 2:30 p.m., cloudy, little wind, and about 40 degrees, the Franklin's Gull was seen again with the same congregation at the same spot, engaged in the same activity. It has not been seen since.

Why is a Franklin's Gull in breeding plumage in late December?

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Request for Information: European Starlings. Several hundred European Starlings have been banded with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum bands and a combination of colored plastic bands near Starkville, Mississippi, in an attempt to learn more about the movements of this species. If you observe such a marked bird, please note the combination of colors or color and aluminum band on each leg and send this information along with date, location, and observer's name to: Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD 20811. Please send a copy of your report to: Opal Dakin, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Box 6Y, Mississippi State, MS 39762.