

**TURKEY VULTURE NEST IN A UNION COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI CAVE**

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While surveying a dry cave (Figure 1) for bats on 22 March 2017, I came across a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) nest (Figure 2). The dry cave is in Union County about 10 km east of New Albany on private land. There were two eggs, and adults were not present. The nest was located ~3 m from the closest entrance where the ceiling was no more than 60 cm tall. After ~1 hour of surveying the cave, my colleague who opted to not crawl into the cave spotted the adult Turkey Vultures coming back. They stayed perched on a tree until we left, but we did not stay to watch to see if they went into the cave after we left. Turkey Vultures nest in a variety of dark recesses, including caves, hollow trees, brush piles, old buildings, rocky crevices, and tangles of low vegetation (Jackson 1983). At least one other occurrence of Turkey Vulture nesting in a cave from Mississippi has been reported from Tishomingo County in 1941 (Turcotte and Watts 1999).



Figure 1. Cave in Union County, Mississippi with a Turkey Vulture nest.



Figure 2. Turkey Vulture eggs and nest inside a Union County, Mississippi cave.

### **Literature Cited**

- Jackson, J.A. 1983. Nesting phenology, nest site selection, and reproductive success of Black and Turkey vultures. In *Vulture Biology and Management* (S.R. Wilbur and J.A. Jackson, Editors). University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. pp. 245-270.
- Turcotte, W.H., and D.L. Watts. 1999. *Birds of Mississippi*. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS.