

## ALPINE SWIFT (*TACHYMARPTIS MELBA*) OBSERVED IN GUADELOUPE, LESSER ANTILLES: A FOURTH RECORD FOR THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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We were observing about 20 swallows (Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Caribbean Martin *Progne dominicensis*) flying over an artificial pond just behind Grande Anse's beach 30 min before the sunset on 18 April 1987. The first bats were flying and a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) just failed to catch one. We then observed a large swift with white on the abdomen and lower breast, light brown upperparts similar to those of a Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), and with a dark forked tail. This swift was flying very fast about 50 m above us. Its jizz, especially shape and flight, was quite distinctive, reminding us of the Alpine Swift (*Tachymarptis melba*) with which we are familiar in France. The whitish throat was not quite visible to us, which is not unusual (Harris et al. 1990). We noted that the swift was much larger than the Caribbean Martins, with which it was flying. We were able to follow the swift for about 3–4 mins before it disappeared high in the sky. One of us drew a field sketch and we later examined the literature for the bird's identification. We believe the observed bird was most likely an Alpine Swift.

The three other records of this species in the Western Hemisphere are well documented by Burke (1994). He noted that two of these three records appear to be associated with the

passage of a tropical depression across the Atlantic Ocean. Our observation of the Alpine Swift was made during the Spring migration of many bird species and at a time of the year where there is usually no severe weather. We note that the third record reported by Burke (1994) was made in the same year as our observation, but three months later by Meier et al. (in litt.) on 20 July 1987.

Our record was not published, but was listed in the checklist of birds of Guadeloupe and Martinique prepared by AEVA in 1993. The note of Wayne Burke stimulated us to publish this additional observation.

### LITERATURE CITED

- AEVA. 1993. Oiseaux de Guadeloupe et de Martinique. Petit Bourg, Guadeloupe. 5pp.  
Burke, W. 1994. Alpine Swift (*Tachymarptis melba*) photographed on St. Lucia, Lesser Antilles: third record for the western hemisphere. *El Pitirre* 7(3):3.  
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## DEPREDACIÓN DE MARIQUITAS POR UN FALCÓN COMÚN

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El día 29 de diciembre de 1994, en las parcelas Troche del barrio Boquerón de Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, un Falcón Común (*Falco sparverius*) atacó y atrapó una Mariquita (*Agelaius xanthomus*). A eso de las 17:30 hr un grupo de aproximadamente 30 Mozambiques (*Quiscalus niger*) llegaron a un área donde acostumban pernoctar. Entre ellos se encontraba un grupo de seis Mariquitas. Cuatro de ellas, al igual que varios Mozambiques, se presentaban lesiones, similares a las causadas por la viruela, en el área de los ojos. El comportamiento de las aves contaminadas era más pasivo

que las saludables. Cerca de los árboles donde se encontraban las Mariquitas y los Mozambiques llegó un Falcón Común el cual observó al grupo de aves por espacio de 5 min. Al cabo de este tiempo una de las Mariquitas enfermas voló hacia el sur, inmediatamente el falcón la atacó en pleno vuelo y la capturó. Es menester mencionar que la Mariquita no hizo ningún movimiento defensivo. Seguramente el sentido visual de dicha Mariquita estaba afectado por la enfermedad, lo que posiblemente facilitó la captura del ave por parte del falcón.