

A REMARKABLE OSPREY FLIGHT AND FIRST RECORD OF
SWALLOW-TAILED KITE FOR HISPANIOLA

DENNIS G. CROUSE, JR.¹ AND ALLAN R. KEITH²

¹PO Box 15665 FMM, West Palm Beach, Florida 33416 USA; and

²278 Standish Street, Duxbury, Massachusetts 02332 USA

ON 28 AUGUST 1999, the senior author and two companions, Isaac Pady and Jocelyn Arcy, visited an upland point overlooking the northern side of Gonaïves Bay on the western coast of Haiti. The sky was overcast and the wind was light from the north. About 08:00, a group of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) came into view over the hills to the west from the direction of Pointe la Pierre. During the next hour, additional groups and individual birds appeared from the same direction, leaving the coast just west of the observers' position and crossing the Bay to the southeast. In that period, at least 60 Ospreys were counted, by far the largest single daily count of that species ever recorded for Hispaniola. Whereas the Osprey is a routine migrant in Haiti and Dominican Republic (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), the prior high count for a single day in either country is 20 individuals.

In the midst of the Osprey flight, two Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) appeared. The striking black and white plumage pattern and long, deeply-forked tail were well seen on both kites. This constitutes the first report of this species for Hispaniola. Whereas this species occurs in migration fairly regularly in western Cuba (Garrido and Kirkconnell, in prep.), the kite is known only as a vagrant in Jamaica (Raffaele *et al.* 1998:250), the Cayman Islands (Bradley 1995:229), and the northern Bahamas (American Ornithologists' Union 1998:88). Given this distribution pattern, western Haiti is the most likely place for it to show up first on Hispaniola.

The weather in the region on 28 August was dominated by Hurricane Dennis, which was centered southeast of Cape Canaveral, Florida, in the Abaco Islands, Bahamas. Given Hurricane Dennis's position, strong counterclockwise winds would have registered as north or northwest winds just north of western Haiti. Consistent with this pattern, winds registered at Gonaïves 25–26 August were from the southwest. It seems highly likely that winds from

such directions are responsible for the unusual flight of migrant raptors, pushing them farther east than their usual migration pattern.

Corroboration of the presence of a specific migrant Osprey in western Haiti on 28 August comes from another source. The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota (<http://www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu>) has been using satellite telemetry to track the migration routes of Ospreys, Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*). In the present case, a female Osprey designated "EV," which was originally banded 24 June 1999 at Shelter Island, New York, was recorded on 23 August southwest of Savannah, Georgia; on 25 August over the ocean south of Key West, Florida; on 28 August over northwestern Haiti; on 30 August south of San Juan, Dominican Republic; and 1 September east of Barranquilla, Colombia. It is possible that "EV" was among the 60 or so Ospreys that were observed over Gonaïves Bay on 28 August. Also, the route known to have been followed by "EV" southward across the Florida peninsula passed through areas in which Swallow-tailed Kites regularly occur.

LITERATURE CITED

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