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Nesting of Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) in Everglades National Park, Florida

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Kale (1974) noted an increase in the number of occurrences of Black-shouldered Kites (*Elanus caeruleus*) in Florida from 0.26 per year (1900-1950), to 0.91 per year (1961-1973). A review of the concurrent increase in North and Middle America is found in Palmer (1988). In April 1988 I observed one pair of Black-shouldered Kites nesting in Everglades National Park (hereafter ENP). This is the first record of this species nesting in the park, and only the second recent record in Florida, the other being three pairs in Broward County in 1986 (King 1987). This paper documents the species' most recent known nesting in Florida.

Observations of Black-shouldered Kites in ENP, including the first sighting of one of the nesting birds of 1988, are listed in Table 1. I discovered a pair nesting in the Hole-in-the-Donut area of ENP on April 1988. The nest was located at about 25° 20′ N, 80° 40′ W, in Dade County, Florida. The nest tree was at the southwest end of a small (300 m^2) oval-shaped cypress head, dominated by bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), which was surrounded by cypress prairie, as described in Craighead (1971). This prairie was bordered 0.5 km to the north and east by the dense stands of Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) that dominate former agricultural lands in the Hole-in-the-Donut. The prairie was continuous for 14 km to the west and for 8 km to the south.

The nest was built in the crook of a major upper branch 4 m from the ground in a 5 m tall bald cypress with a d.b.h. of 14 cm. During the entire nesting season foliage sparsely shaded the nest. The understory directly beneath the tree consisted of a tangle of saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*), and wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) to 1.5 m in height. Surface water was not present in the prairie until 1 June, thereafter, water levels continued to rise until the kites left the area seven days later. By that time most of the prairie was covered with 2-4 cm of water and maximum depths in sinkholes reached 20 cm. The presence of water in the prairie may have affected the kite's ability to forage.

The nest was constructed of small bald cypress twigs and lined with dry grass. The entire nest measured 42 X 38 X 18 cm (depth) with the inner cup measuring 19 X 17 cm and 3 to 5 cm deep.

Table 1. Occurrences of Black-shouldered Kites in Everglades National Park.

Date	Location	Source
June 1896	Cape Sable	Howell 1932
November 1948	Whitewater Bay	B. Parker[1]
April 1964	Pa-hay-okee	T. Hayman in ENP[2]
December 1980	Mahogany Hammock	Biggs 1981
December 1987	Hole-in-the-Donut	S. Flocke in ENP[2]
2 April 1988	Hole-in-the-Donut	Neville 1988

[1]In Sprunt 1954.
[2]ENP = Everglades National Park records, South Florida Research Center.

A total of four eggs were laid, three of which hatched. On 26 June 1988 after the kites had dispersed, I found one unhatched egg that had been preyed upon. I first observed three young birds in the nest on 20 April. By 8 May, the date of the first flight of a nestling, a difference in size among the nestlings was apparent. Two of the young were larger and more active than the third and frequently perched on branches of the nest tree away from the nest. From 10 May forward I saw only two young. Prior to 8 May the adults were observed delivering prey to the two larger young away from the nest. It is possible that differential feeding by adults contributed to the disappearance of the smaller young.

The kites always foraged over open prairie (frequently beyond my field of view—18 km^2), although the male would occasionally fly over large tracts of Brazilian pepper in order to forage in small finger glades to the north of the nest.

Prey remains collected at or near the nest consisted of one pellet that contained remains of one adult cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*) and a skeleton found in the nest, identified as either a juvenile rice rat (*Oryzomys palustris*) or a juvenile cotton rat. During the nearly 50 hours of observation at least one adult was foraging 31% of the time. I observed both the start and finish of a foraging bout 25 times, 10 of these (40%) were successful. Foraging bouts ranged from 2 to 105 minutes, averaging 34.4 ± 31.8 (SD) minutes.

Black-shouldered Kites may have nested in this area in a previous year as I found a similar nest in a 7 m cypress, 100 m east of the 1988 nest. The nest was 5 m from the ground and measured 30 cm wide and 25 cm deep, with an inner cup diameter of 15 cm. Laying dates for the three 1986 Broward County nests reported by King (1987), extrapolated from information in Palmer (1988), would range from 26 February to 3 April. The Hole-in-the-Donut pair laid eggs between 6 March and 13 March, which falls in the range of the Broward nests and of laying dates reported by Howell (1932).

At the end of February 1989 I began searching the area for kites about three times a week. On 6 March I saw one adult kite (sex unknown) perched near the cypress head. I saw one adult in the area the following three days, after that no kites were seen.

Kale (1974) noted that the principal Florida range of the Black-shouldered Kite was in the prairies of the central and west-central parts of the peninsula. The next few years should tell whether or not Black-shouldered Kites become established breeders in the southern part of the state.

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First Verified Sight Record of Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*) for the Southeastern United States

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We found a Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*) at 0730 hours at the northeast corner of Compartment C-7 on the eastern side of the Arthur B. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Palm Beach County, Florida (northeast 1/4 of the northwest 1/4 of Section 1, Township 46 south, Range 41 east; latitude 26°29′58″ N, longitude 80°12′46″ W) while participating on the West Palm Beach Christmas Bird Count on 17 December 1988. The bird was studied for about 20 minutes under good lighting conditions with binoculars (7x35) and a spotting scope (30x) at estimated distances of 30-150 m. It perched on the tops of dried cattail (*Typha* spp.) stems one meter above the water in the shallow flooded freshwater impoundment managed for waterfowl and wading birds and whose perimeter dike is the refuge's Marsh Nature Trail. The kingbird called frequently and hawked flying insects from several perches during the course of this initial observation.

Based upon field notes made at time of the initial observation, the crown was medium gray and the lores were dark gray tending toward black. The auricular region was dark gray, but lighter than the lores. The eyes were black. The all-black bill was quite short, making it appear small and stubby. The nape was medium gray and the back and rump were olive-gray. The chin and throat were immaculate white and sharply defined by the color of the head and breast. The breast was medium gray. The belly, sides, and undertail coverts were pale yellow. The tail was dark brown, square at the tip, with narrow light edgings on the tips of the rectrices. There was no white in the outer rectrices. The wings were light brown contrasting with the olive-gray upperparts. The call notes were given frequently at times, particularly when the bird changed perches or after foraging. The vocalizations were a rather loud "Ke-bew" or "Chi-bew," with accent on the last syllable. The combination of small bill, medium gray breast color, and loud, frequently-given, distinctive 2-syllable call separates the Cassin's Kingbird from all its yellow-bellied congeners in North and South America.

After its discovery, the kingbird remained in the environs of Compartment C, moving about among most of the 10 impoundments within the compartment complex, through the