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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

FOOD DELIVERIES AT SWALLOW-TAILED KITE NESTS IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA

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Abstract. We studied the diets of nesting Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) at eight nests in 1988–1989 in southern Florida, where the species reaches its greatest abundance in the United States. Males fed females during the incubation stage an average of 2.1 ± 0.8 times per day. The adults averaged 10.9 ± 4.5 deliveries daily during the nestling stage, and 10.3 ± 12.5 deliveries to young daily following nest departure. Vertebrates comprised 97% of the biomass for the 1092 identifiable prey items delivered to nests. Frogs accounted for 56%, birds 30%, and reptiles 11% of all prey. Numerically, frogs made up 83% of the reptile and amphibian prey. The relative proportions of prey types varied substantially among nests within years, and significantly more snakes and insects were delivered in 1989. Total biomass delivered in 1988 did not differ from that in 1989. Bird biomass, however, was greater in 1988 and insect biomass was greater in 1989. Anoles and snakes were brought to nests in larger numbers during the morning and evening hours; and birds were delivered mainly from midmorning to midafternoon.

Key words: diet, *Elanoides forficatus*, Florida, foraging behavior, nestlings, Swallow-tailed Kite.