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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

FOOD DELIVERED TO NESTS OF SWALLOW-TAILED KITES IN TIKAL NATIONAL PARK, GUATEMALA

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Abstract. In 1990 and 1991, we studied Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus yetapa*) diets by recording food delivered to nests in northern Guatemala. Kites delivered primarily vertebrates to incubating mates. During the nestling period, 62% of 1496 prey deliveries were insects, 18% nestling birds, and 10% lizards; frogs and fruit were brought infrequently. Coleopterans and hymenopterans were the most frequent insects delivered. Birds comprised most of the biomass. Lizard deliveries were most frequent early in the nesting season, whereas insect prey were infrequent until after the first rains, in late May. Compared to *E. f. forficatus* in Florida, *E. f. yetapa* provided more insects and fewer frogs, and did not adjust feeding rates based on brood size. Swallow-tailed Kites delivered more vertebrates, particularly birds, than sympatric Plumbeous Kites (*Ictinia plumbea*), and used different foraging space and hunting techniques than sympatric Double-toothed Kites (*Harpagus bidentata*) and Gray-headed Kites (*Leptodon cayanensis*).

Key words: *Elanoides forficatus*, *food habits*, *Guatemala*, *nestling diet*, *Swallow-tailed Kite*, *Tikal National Park*.