

BREEDING OF THE BLACK SWIFT (*CYPSELOIDES NIGER*) IN COSTA RICA

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The Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) is found locally from northwestern North America and the West Indies south through Middle America (Bent 1940, AOU 1983). Most of what is known about its breeding distribution is from data from western United States (see Bent 1940, Knorr 1961, Foerster & Collins 1990). Other breeding records outside the western United States include a few records from western Canada (Bent 1940, Campbell *et al.* 1990), a single record from Dominica (Bond 1941), and two records from Mexico. The two Mexican records are the southernmost continental localities and include a nestling from Veracruz (Collins & Landy 1968) and a nest and egg from Oaxaca (Rowley 1966). Although, the Black Swift was suspected by Kiff (1975), Stiles & Skutch (1989), and Marín & Stiles (1992) to breed in Costa Rica, these authors only reported birds in breeding condition. Here we report the first documented breeding record for the Black Swift for Costa Rica, extending its breeding range by c. 1500 km SE.

On 28 May 1997, while searching for swifts nests in an upper section of the Río Tiribí (ca. 9°57'N, 83°55'W) between 2000 and 2100 m, MM encountered three active nests of this species with birds sitting on the nests. Two nests were located on a mossy, humid wall bordering the river. MM easily reached one nest placed at about 1.6 m above ground level that contained a single fresh egg (Fig. 1). The second nest was placed at 4 m above the ground and out of reach. The third nest was about 500 m upriver on the side of a waterfall at about 6 m above water level. The third nest, however, was easily observed at the same level from the opposite bank of the river. On 31 May, MM, JS and R. Fischer returned with a ladder and reached the third nest. It contained a fresh egg, both nest and egg were collected at this time (WFVZ # 165,223). On 14 June a new nest was found at the same site, probably the same nest that was rebuilt, but no egg or bird was ever seen on the following two months. If the bird ever re-nested, the egg was probably depredated,



FIG. 1. Nest of the Black Swift in Costa Rica.

which happened frequently here (MM unpubl. data).

The three nests found were half-cup shaped and made with living mosses and liverworts with bits of dry material as lining. All three were attached to the walls with some mud at the base. The nest heights varied with the angle of the substrate to which they were attached: the lower the angle, the higher the nest. In all three nests, the inside of the cup was similar and their average was 60 x 55 mm. The eggs measured: 27.1 x 17.9 mm, 4.9 g; 29.6 x 19.3 mm, 6.0 g; 27.2 x 18.4 mm, 4.9 g. All three eggs were unmarked dull white and subelliptical in shape.

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