

Chicks and nests of the White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)

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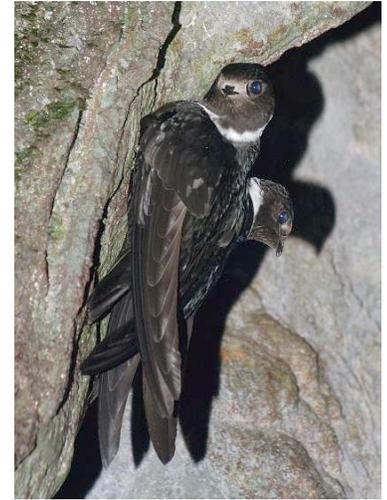
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The White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) is the largest of the four species of swifts reported for Cuba. It has a wide distribution in the Americas, but on the island it is restricted to the mountainous regions of the center and east. The reproductive cycle of this bird in Cuba begins in late April with nest construction and concludes in July, when the chicks fly. They only have one clutch per year, usually two white eggs. Their nests are built with materials that they collect within the nesting sites, mainly mosses and other bryophytes. Five stages have been established to classify the development of chicks in the nest, based on their plumage and basic behavior.

The purpose of this guide is to facilitate the identification of nests and the determination of the development stage of *S. zonaris* chicks, without the need to know their age. It can be used as a tool for field work by park rangers and other staff in protected areas, and by ornithologists and birders to assess the timing of the reproductive season of the White-collared Swift.



1 *Streptoprocne zonaris*

RM

Their refuges and nesting sites are associated with rock walls and caves along waterfalls and rivers, which gives them their characteristically high relative humidity.



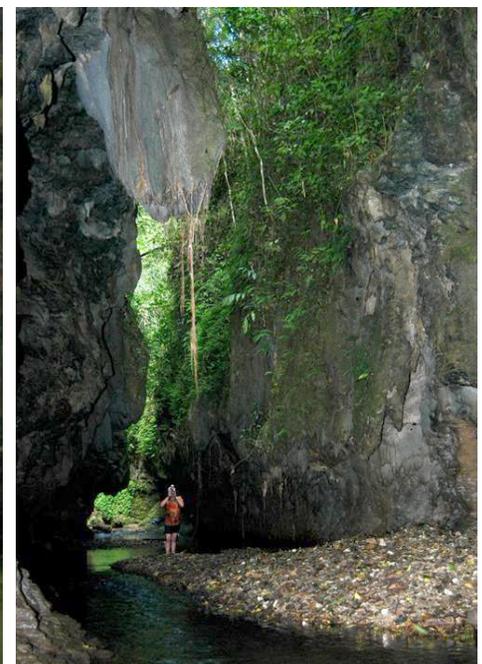
2 Vegas Grandes Waterfall, Topes de Collantes, Guamuhaya Mountains, Cuba

RLS



3 La Batata Cave, Topes de Collantes, Guamuhaya Mountains, Cuba

TMR



4 El Colín Canyon, Topes de Collantes, Guamuhaya Mountains, Cuba

RM

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5 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Stage 1. From hatching to the appearance of down.
Closed eyes, pink skin. Bill and nails pinkish white.
Presence of the egg tooth TMR



6 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Stage 2. Gray down, primary feathers
and developing tail, until the appearance of the coverts.
Closed eyes and gray skin, with a dark gray to black
bill RM



7 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Stage 3. Gray down, appearance of the coverts with continuous
development of wings and tail. Eyes open, very alert, moderate
activity in the nest. Appearance of the white collar RM



8 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Stage 4. Disappearance of the down except in the abdomen, legs and
rump. Development of adult plumage. Very active in and around nest RM

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9 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Stage 5. Fully developed adult plumage. Forays out of the nest with wing exercises and temporary abandonment of the nest with flights into the cave halls

RM



10 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Adult pair of White-collared Swift perched on the wall within the refuge and nesting site, in their usual resting position

RLS



11 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Nest consisting of accumulation of accumulated plant materials on the rocky substrate

RM



12 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Typical cup-shaped nest

RM



13 *Streptoprocne zonaris*
Nest without structure. Eggs deposited directly on the mud

RM