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Guamuhaya Mountains, South-central CUBA

Chicks and nests of the

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)

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Photos: Rosalina Montes (RM) [montesninin@gmail.com], Raimundo López-Silver (RLS), Tomás M. Rodríguez (TMR). Produced by Rosalina Montes with the assistance of Juliana Philipp, and Rayane Ribeiro, Field Museum. Acknowledgements: Rubén D. Chamizo, Iroel Ruiz, Alexey Fernández, and Norlys Albelo.

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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.

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

1 [Streptoprocne zonaris] RM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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