

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF AN EXTREME EASTERN MIGRATION ROUTE ACROSS THE GULF OF MEXICO

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An article by Stevenson (*Wilson Bull.* 69:39-77) suggests that there is a well-traveled trans-Gulf migration route that passes east of the Yucatan Peninsula. We believe that we have additional evidence for such a route. On 26 Mar 1987, William Hollis was on a 68-ft racing yacht enroute from Key West, Florida, on a direct course to Biloxi, Mississippi. Winds were from the SE with an overcast sky early in the daylight hours, but winds turned to northerly during late morning. The location of the yacht at 1600 hrs was approximately 25°45'N, 83°00'W with a speed of 8 knots.

Warbler-sized birds flying a northerly course began to arrive on the deck shortly after 0600 hrs. They were flying singly or in pairs, and approximately 15 cm above the water. The weather was getting rough by 1000 hrs and the small birds were often obscured in the troughs between waves. By 1200 hrs the wind was directly from N and the numbers of small birds increased. These birds were perching on anything available including the shoulders of the crew. At 1300 hrs there were dozens of birds on the deck. At 1500 hrs Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) began to arrive in flocks. These latter birds would not land on the yacht but continued their northward course at an altitude of 25-30 m. There were no birds seen at night during any part of the yacht's course.

Shortly after 0600 hrs on 27 Mar, more warbler-sized birds appeared and began landing on the yacht. There was the same pattern as the day before, smaller birds as singles or pairs and close to the water, with the Barn Swallows in flocks. Small birds were so numerous on deck as to impair walking by the crew. The Barn Swallows began perching high on the rigging but would not get close to people. This activity continued all day of 27 Mar until dusk.

The morning of 28 Mar was calm and foggy at a position 160 km SE of Biloxi at 0600 hrs. There were no small to medium-sized migrating birds seen on 28 Mar. Thus during daylight hours migrating birds were seen continuously over a distance of approximately 450 km from