AFRICAN PALM SWIFT

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States

African Palm Swift
Cypsiurus parvus

Collected from Morondera, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe, 1973
The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

African Palm Swifts live in sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Arabia, and Madagascar. Using their sticky saliva, they bond a shallow platform of soft feathers and plant down to the underside of a downward hanging palm leaf. If palms are unavailable, they adopt other trees, or even manmade structures. When the female produces an egg, she carefully lowers it into the nest platform and glues it in place with saliva. Both members of a pair incubate the eggs, pressing them tightly against the nest, trading shifts carefully.