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TURKEY VULTURES IN THE BIG MUDDY

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During the summer of 1989 two Turkey Vulture nests were found in the Big Muddy Valley of southern Saskatchewan by the author and Martin Bailey. Both nests were located in rock outcroppings on dry hillsides.

A small cave under the lower edge of a rock shelf held the young at one site. Although getting into the cave was made difficult because of the narrow opening and the slight incline leading to the flat dirt floor, photographs taken on 11 July 1989 show two young covered in whitish fuzzy down with protruding black wing feathers, black faces and whitish legs. The landowner also photographed the young when they emerged from the cave at the end of July. He noted that he first saw them flying in mid-August and that they remained in the area until the very cold weather began in December (pers. comm.).

At the second site the actual nest was not found although a thorough search was made of the rocky outcropping where the adults were ever vigilant. On a subsequent visit to the site on 25 August 1989, two young were perched on top of

the rocks and photos were taken. Their heads were black and legs gray. A few wisps of down still stuck out in one or two places on their necks and backs. These birds were capable flyers.



Young Turkey Vulture

Tim Lichter