

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 10/18/94

Mississippi Kite

16 May 1992

Hartman Reserve, Blackhawk Co., IA

\*Kent

IBL 62:75, 63:69

Record Number: 92-13  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:75

Records Committee IBL 63:69

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, The details are sketchy, but support Mississippi Kite. The observers very recent sighting of the birds in Clive strengthens the existing flyby details.

A-D, Combination of small white head, light undertail coverts and overall gray body color in varying shades of gray with long pointed wings and long square tail couldn't be anything else.

A-D, I wish more details were available, but I feel adequate details on shape, color, and flight pattern were available to identify this as a Mississippi Kite.

## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

*Species:* Mississippi Kite; *Number:* 1

*Location:* Hartman Reserve, Cedar Falls, Iowa

*Date:* 16 May 1992; *Time:* 10:27 to 10:29

*Name and address:* Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

*Others before/with/after:* Dick Tetrault and others, but not sure how many saw the bird.

*Habitat and circumstances:* River bottom and large field with scattered trees. The bird glided over from south to north and disappeared.

*Description of bird:* A raptor gliding overhead had long pointed wings and long square tail. Posterior edge of wing was nearly straight; the leading edge was angled. Small white appearing head. Base of undertail from below was lighter than distal tail. The bird was overall gray without demarcation other than shades of gray. The bird did not flap wings and glided down wind and out of sight. There were no other birds nearby for size comparison, but I had watched the Mississippi Kites in Clive two days before and the size and profile were similar. The bird did not flare its tail while I was watching it.

*Voice:* Not heard.

*Similar species:* We were looking for a Swallow-tailed Kite reported the day before, but this bird did not have the forked tail and contrasting black and white of that species. The underparts and tail were not white as would be expected for Black-shouldered Kite. I did note any contrast in the upper wing (white posterior edge of inner wing) -- I may not have seen this or this could of been a first-year bird that lacks this mark. The failure to flap wings and overall gray color is inconsistent with any falcon. I saw a Swainson's Hawk earlier in the morning and its contrasting underwing was very different than this bird. A Red-tailed Hawk was also seen earlier and had an obvious buteo shape.

*Any one have reservations?:* I don't know who saw this bird or how well. Most people were leaving the area at the time. Ken Lowder thought he saw it earlier over the ridge.

*Light:* Bright sky with high serous clouds and looking west to northwest; *Distance:* I'd guess 100 yards at closest; *Optics:* 10x binocular.

*Previous experience:* Watched two birds sitting and flying in Clive two days before and have seen first-year birds twice before in Iowa; also, I have seen this species in the South West.

*References before/after viewing:* None, except when writing about similar species.

*Time of notes:* On completion of sighting; *Final typing:* Form handwritten 9 hours later and typed 11 days later.