

Mississippi Kite

26 Sep 1994

Grammer Grove W.A., Marshall Co., IA

*B. Proescholdt

IBL 65:13, 81

Record Number: 94-33

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb [2/23/95]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:13

Records Committee: IBL 65:81

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Although the sighting was brief, accepted on a combination of plumage, structural characteristics, and flight pattern.

A-D, While I get a bit nervous accepting records based primarily on flight, a good hawk watcher can tell a kite in an instant, which is exactly what occurred here.

A-D, Juvenile.

A-D, Description adequately eliminates other possibilities considered by observer.

What species? Mississippi Kite How many? 1Location? Grammer Grove, Marshall County - hawk-watchType of habitat? Wooded ridge paralleling Iowa RiverWhen? date(s): September 26, 1994 time: 10:30 to 10:31 AMWho? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Eugene & Eloise Armstrongothers before or after you: none - bird seen only a minute

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Over the line of trees 35' away at the edge of our hawk-watch suddenly appeared this falcon-like bird, flying to the right directly in front of us, below tree-top level, about 20 feet away.

It was near the size + shape of a Peregrine with long tapered wings, slim body, + long tail, + on that heavily overcast day we detected faint bands on the tail of this chocolate-brown bird. Mostly we saw only silhouette. As it disappeared behind a row of spruces I thought, "Mississippi Kite".

I knew this wasn't a Peregrine (but an immature ♂ Peregrine + an imm. Mississippi Kite are similar).

However the slim, pointed wings of this bird had a different shape; the tail was longer, proportionately, than a Peregrine's, + squared-off rather than tapered like a Peregrine's. (over)

Similar species and how eliminated: Peregrine, imm ♂, is similar.

See above

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain: :

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

heavily overcast day, NW winds, 20' and more - 8X30 Nikon binocs - big flight of 382 hawks that day

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen a few Mississippi Kites, and many Peregrines.

References and persons consulted before writing description: I always study Hawks in Flight by Dunne, Sibley, Sutton and Hawks by Clark + Wheeler

How long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Nov. 6, 1994

I couldn't see if its tail flared at the tip,⁹⁴⁻³³
but in the gap where we had a second, very
quick look, Eloise noted its twisting of the
tail which is a Mississippi Kite trait.

But it was the wing beat that determined
absolutely that it was a Mississippi Kite -
light, bouyant, floppy, leisurely, like a moth -
so different from the powerful, rapid, direct
flight of a Peregrine, and different from
any other raptor's flight we have observed.
It could only be a Mississippi Kite.

With the light bands on the tail, and
overall brown color this was an immature
Mississippi Kite, a great addition to the
good flight of 382 raptors that passed over
that day.