

Mississippi Kite  
13 May 1995  
Windsor Heights, Polk Co., IA  
\*Pam Allen  
P-0450, IBL 65:71, 66:96

Record Number: 95-10  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Pam Allen (13 May), 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines 50265  
[\*8/14/85]

Chris Edwards (18 May), 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty 52317  
[8/14/85]

PHOTOGRAPH

T. H. Kent, 18 May, P-0450

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:71

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

VOTE: 7 A-P



Mississippi Kite P-0450  
Des Moines, Polk Co., IA  
18 May 1995 T. H. Kent 95-10

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**DOCUMENTATION**

95-10

SPECIES: **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

HOW MANY: Two (2)

LOCATION: Polk Co., Windsor Heights, 73rd Street north of University Ave., behind Olivet Church.

DATE: 13 May 1995

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 1:15 - 1:30 p.m.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Jane Clark, Clive, on 12 May 1995

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: These two birds were in the same plumage and were sitting about 4 feet apart in a cottonwood tree. These birds are probably the same ones that have been seen in years past at the home of Fred Crane who lives directly west about 1/4 mile. Both birds had pale grey heads with red eyes and a short black bill. The wings and back were a darker slate grey color and then the wing-tips were black with a whitish grey edge along the outer secondaries. The tail was completely black.

SIMILAR SPECIES & HOW ELIMINATED: White-tailed Kite has a white tail and black shoulder patches.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Sky was completely obscured with clouds and there was a light mist falling. Viewing distance was about 30 yards.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Viewed extensively in Des Moines in prior years.

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope; Bushnell 8x36 Custom Binoculars.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, National Geographic Society, Second Edition, 1987.

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES MADE: After viewing birds.

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: May 31, 1995.

**DOCUMENTATION FORM**  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

**What Species?** Mississippi Kite

**How many?** 1

**Location?** Des Moines, Polk Co.

**Type of Habitat?** Urban woodlot

**When?** May 18, 1995 from 7:15 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.

**Who?** Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

**Others with you:** Jim Fuller, Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault

**Others before or after you:**

**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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.**

All details were noted while the bird was perched. Approximately the same size or slightly larger than a Rock Dove. Small round head; breast feathers were ruffled, giving the body a plump appearance; long wings crossed near the tips and extended slightly past tail; outermost primary on outstretched wing distinctly shorter than other primaries. Head very light gray; breast and belly light gray; back and wing coverts dark gray except for narrow white line on tips of folded secondaries; upperside of primaries black; upperside and underside of tail black. Small, hooked, black bill; black lores; dark eyes; dark orange legs and feet.

During an hour of observation the bird remained perched on a dead branch of a large cottonwood tree and was not seen in flight. It frequently turned its head to scan its surroundings. It was observed spreading its wings and tail; scratching its head; and regurgitating eight small pellets. No vocalizations were heard.

**Similar species; how eliminated:** No similar birds have a solid black tail.

**Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification?** No

**Viewing conditions:** Perched in full view on an overcast day approximately 30 yards away. Viewed with 8 x 40 binoculars and 15x - 45x telescope.

**Previous experience with species and similar ones:** None.

**References and persons consulted before writing description:** National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America; Peterson Eastern Birds.

**How long before field notes made?** During observation.

**How long before this form completed?** Six hours.