

Mississippi Kite  
13 May 1990  
Ledges S.P., Boone Co., IA  
J. Sinclair  
IBL 60:67, 62:22

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Record Number: 90-06  
Classification: NA

## DOCUMENTATION

Jim Sinclair

## REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:67  
Records Committee: IBL 62:22

VOTE: 3 A-D, 4 NA

NA: This document is lacking in details! Probably a correct identification from a good birder.

NA: This documentation is suggestive of Mississippi Kite but is so brief it is also suggestive of a bird not seen in any great detail. The white secondaries are actually the only feature that distinguish the description from any number of other raptors. Sorry, but this identification needs more detail to eliminate confusion with other species.

A-D: Description rather sketchy. The only descriptive details given are pale head, white secondaries, and crow-sized. The white secondaries are, according to Dunne, diagnostic, however.

A-D: In view of the brevity of this description, this is a difficult record to accept. Even with a fly-by, more detail should have been possible. Were the wings rounded or pointed? Was the tail short or relatively long? However, pale head and white secondaries preclude other raptors.

A-D: Although the documenter did not eliminate other Kites the white upper secondaries does. The details listed are few, but I think they are diagnostic for adult Mississippi Kite.

NA: Documentation does not give any indication of the coloration of the bird seen, just that it had a pale head and white secondaries that slowly circled and had a broad tail. The description needs to give more in depth study of the tail shape and color and how and why it differs from other kites, as well as Northern Harrier. The description is highly indicative of Mississippi Kite but does not completely try to eliminate some similar species that could be confused with Mississippi Kite. I am not convinced beyond reasonable doubt.

NA: More details are needed! Details and description of body shape, tail color and shape, more body coloration if possible, and other details would have been very helpful. Since a Peregrine Falcon is often confused in size and shape with a Miss. Kite, I don't understand what you mean when you said "wings and tail too broad for one of the larger falcons". This possible Miss. Kite sighting just needed lots more information and details. Also, notes are of greater value if taken immediately after seeing the bird.

## Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species Mississippi Kite  
 Location Ledges St. Pk. - Peas Creek  
 Habitat wooded valley  
 Date(s) May 13, 1990 Time 9:15 a.m. to 9:17 a.m.  
 Name and Address Jim Sinclair, 810 North B St., Indianola  
 Other observers David Youngblut 50125

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 behavior and voice.

Crow sized raptor. Because of the angle of the sun the bird appeared all dark when observed from straight below. When observed at 45° with the bird slowly circling allowing a view of the dorsal side the pale head and white secondaries identified the bird as an adult. The bird soared virtually the whole time circling several times before drifting away.

Similar species and how eliminated: Too large and uniform in color for a kestrel or merlin. Wings and tail too broad for one of the larger falcons.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: clear day - bird observed with 8.5 x 44 binoc at 120 ft from below to 300 ft at 45°. Distance measured by eye.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Familiar with this species and the large falcons with which it can be confused.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

M.G.S. Field Guide to North American Birds

How long before field notes made? 2 hrs. How long before this form

completed? 16 days