

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 10/18/94

Mississippi Kite
13 Jun 1992
Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA
*Berry
IBL 62:106, 63:70

Record Number: 92-31
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Robert Berry, 4670 Sioux Ave. SE, Iowa City, IA 52240
(6/30/93)

REFERENCES

Field Reports IBL 62:106
Records Committee: IBL 63:70

VOTE: 1 A-D, 6 NA

NA, Document seems short on details and long on theory.

NA, The pointed wings and white head are suggestive of Mississippi Kite as is the behavior noted. A more detailed description of the plumage, along with size and shape of the bird would be needed to be acceptable. Falcons, Northern Harrier, and some gulls could fit the description given.

NA, The description is not diagnostic enough to eliminate falcons and other kites. I know of no N. A. raptor with white shoulders. The white head and pointed wings are the only characteristics mentioned. The back lighting was very poor also. Although I think the bird is likely a Mississippi Kite I can't be certain based on the information given.

A-D, Shape, coloration, and behavior all fit. Probably a second-summer bird.

NA, Not enough of a description to conclusively say that this was a Mississippi Kite. The only field mark noted that sounds like Mississippi Kite is the white head. This species does not have white shoulders. No description is mentioned other than the bird had very pointed wings and the only size comparison was that the bird was smaller than a Bald Eagle. I do not think we have enough in the documentation to say this is a Mississippi Kite.

NA, While this bird has characteristics of a kite, I feel more details are needed to adequately evaluate this bird. Size comparison to a Red-tailed Hawk or Peregrine Falcon or Kestrel would have been helpful. Description of tail length and shape, wing length, and head size would have been nice. A Black-shouldered Kite may have been a possibility and wasn't eliminated by the details provided. Please send in more sightings and includes as many details as possible.

What species? Mississippi Kite How many? one

92-31

Location? The north edge of Iowa City, near the Rochester Hy-Vee.Type of habitat? Above a wooded residential area.When? date(s): June 13, 1992 time: 10 A M to 10:25 A MWho? your name and address: Robert Berry, 4670 Sioux Ave. S E, Iowa City, Ia. 52240others with you: Glorine Berry, Diane Amundsonothers before or after you: none

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.

The very pointed wings of a thermaling hawk caught my attention. We observed that once each circle when it faced the sun we could see a white head and shoulders. Binoculars were secured and we could see a large white head and shoulders. The rest of the bird was dark. The bird was darting about as though feeding on insects. Moving swiftly from one thermal to the other and circling. It was about 400 to 500 feet high. It moved from southwest of us to the north, then southeast. After observing it 25 minutes it disappeared to the East at 10:25 A M.

At 2:30 P M that same afternoon Don Gurnett observed a very pointed winged hawk briefly north of Stockton, Iowa. It was about 500 feet high and 38 miles east of where I last observed it.

Don flies gliders and sees lots of hawks and was really impressed by the very pointed wings. This spring he flew in the same thermal with three bald eagles.

Similar species and how eliminated: I consulted three books and Jim Fuller.Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? yesIf yes, explain: The two women briefly thought it was a bald eagle until

Viewing conditions: I mentioned that it was much too small and didn't have a white tail.
clear bright sunny day. We used binoculars for a better view.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I've seen the Mississippi Kite and the Swallow-tailed Kite in Texas and Florida.References and persons consulted before writing description: Three bird books.How long before field notes made? 48 hours this form completed? Six daysMAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240