

Mississippi Kite

FA 1887

Burlington, Des Moines Co., IA

Record Number: 81-MG

Classification: A-D

or 26 Aug 1884 per DuMont; Bailey 1918, DuMont 1933

REFERENCES

Bailey, B.H. 1918. The Raptorial Birds of Iowa. Iowa Geological Survey Bull. 6, Des Moines. p 57.

DuMont 1933

VOTE (1981): 4-I, 3-III

I, if can't locate then II.

III, Specimens examined by Bailey and DuMont, labeled.

I, verified by DuMont.

I, specimen still in Iowa Wesleyan collection?

III, If specimen extant, I-S. Seen by reliable observer (DuMont). Assumption that labels correct (i.e. 1884) casts a little doubt, as Bailey stated 1887.

Elanoides forficatus. Cory, C. B., Birds of Illinois and Wisconsin, p. 461, 1909.

Elanoides forficatus. Beebe, Mary B., and C. W., Our Search for a Wilderness, p. 164, 1910.

Elanoides forficatus. Bruner, L.; Wolcott, R. H.; Swenk, M. H., A Preliminary Review of the Birds of Nebraska, p. 50, 1909.

Elanoides forficatus. Bunker, C. D., The Birds of Kansas, p. 146, 1913.

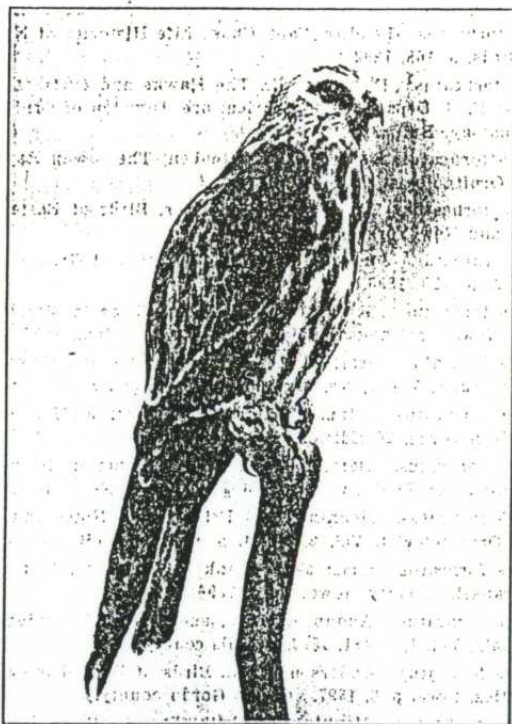


Fig. 18.—The Mississippi Kite, young bird.

Genus *Ictinia* Vieillot

3. *ICTINIA MISSISSIPPIENSIS* (Wilson). 329.

Mississippi Kite.

Field Characters.—A rather small, slaty blue, or lead-colored Kite, with black tail. Immature birds have streaked heads, dark

backs and white-barred tails, and are heavily streaked with dusky below. An easy flying bird, migrating in flocks, sometimes at a great height.

Description.—Adults: On both neck and head grayish above; back slate colored; tips of wings and entire tail black. Below grayish.

Immature: Streaked on the head with black and white; back dusky with rufous edged feathers; tail with three or four incomplete white bars. Below heavily streaked with blackish brown on a buffy background.

Measurements.—Length 13 to 15.50 inches, wing 10.60 to 12.30 inches, tail 6 to 7 inches.

Range.—Southern Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, southern Indiana and South Carolina, south to Texas and Florida; wintering in Florida, southern Texas, and beyond. Accidental in Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

This Kite is by no means the equal in elegance and beauty of the Swallow-tailed Kite, but is said to share with it remarkable powers of flight.

R. M. Anderson says: "I was for a long time constrained to place it in the hypothetical list for want of a definite authentic record of its capture in Iowa."

Two specimens of the Mississippi Kite were secured in the fall of 1887 near Burlington. They were mounted by Mr. Chas. Buettner, of that city, and were examined by the writer in the museum of the Iowa Wesleyan University at Mount Pleasant. This is its first recorded occurrence in the state.

An immature female Mississippi Kite collected near Omaha, Nebraska, and purchased for the Coe College Museum, is the first of this species recorded for Nebraska. (The Wilson Bulletin, September, 1915.)

This Kite is said to be fully as gregarious as any of the other Kites and oftentimes may be seen in flocks of twenty or more circling over a favorite hunting ground. It is also said to be not at all shy, and Col. N. S. Goss, in his History of the Birds of Kansas, relates that at one time he shot two of these birds from the same tree, the second one remaining in the tree undisturbed by the discharge of the gun which killed its mate.

There is no record of its nesting in Iowa. The eggs are from one

to three, dull whitish or bluish white, measuring about 1.63 by 1.32 inches. Authors generally state that the food of this species is similar to that of the Swallow-tailed Kite, with which it is said to be seen not infrequently.

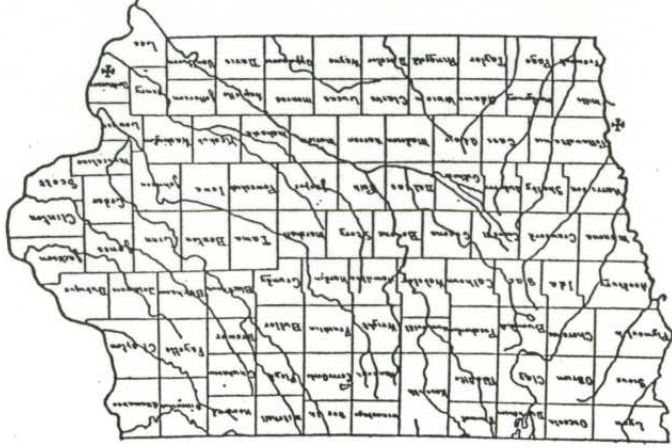


Fig. 19.—Map showing the distribution in Iowa of the Mississippi Kite.

- Ictinia viciellii*, Analyse, 24, 1816. Type, by monotypy, *Milvus genivitta* Vieillot=*Falco plumbeus* Gmelin.
Falco mississippiensis Wilson, Amer. Orn., III, 80, pl. 25, fig. 1, 1811. (A few miles below Natchez, Mississippi.)
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wils.)
 *Falco mississippiensis Wilson. Say, Thomas, in Major S. H. Long's Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mts., 1819-20, p. 370. (Engineers Cantonment, Pottawatomie county.)
Ictinia mississippiensis Gray. Allen, J. A., Catalogue of the Birds of Iowa: Geology of Iowa, White, Vol. 2, App. B, p. 424, 1870.
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, History of the Birds of North America, Land Birds, Vol. 3, p. 204, 1874.
Ictinia subcoerulea. Coues, E., Key to North American Birds, 2d Edition, p. 525, 1884.
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Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Cory, C. B., Birds of Illinois and Wisconsin, p. 454, 1909.
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). A. O. U. Check-List, p. 154, 1910.
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Chapman, F. M., Birds of Eastern North America, p. 291, 1912.
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Bunker, C. D., The Birds of Kansas, p. 146, 1913.
Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Bailey, B. H., The Wilson Bulletin, No. 92, September, 1916.
4. *CIRCUS HUDSONIUS* (Linnaeus). 331.
 Marsh Hawk. Harrier. Blue Hawk.
Field Characters.—A moderately large, slender, long-tailed hawk usually seen flying low over meadows or marshes, perching on fence

Ictinia mississippiensis (Wilson). Mississippi Kite

Formerly a casual visitor. Anderson (1907) lists the following county records: "Blackhawk—'only one observed here. I remained over half an hour within twenty feet of the bird when it was resting on a post in hedge, so that identification is positive' (Salisbury) . . . Van Buren—'a kite of this species occurred one spring on Big Cedar at a certain place and stayed four or five weeks, then disappeared. I saw the bird many times and once while fishing it came and sat within twenty yards of me, so I positively identified it. The stream running about east and west, it ranged in Van Buren and Henry counties, four and one-half miles north and a little east of Hillsboro' (W. G. Savage). Webster—'a specimen was seen around Duncombe's Stucco Mill (Ft. Dodge) nearly every day, and I finally shot him a mile further down the stream (Des Moines River); length 14.5 inches; dark bluish, grayish to slate color; tail nearly black' (Somes). Woodbury—'according to D. H. Talbot, formerly visited this county' (Rich)." Bailey (1918) states: "Two specimens of the Mississippi Kite were secured in the fall of 1887 near Burlington. They were mounted by Mr. Chas. Buettner, of that city and were examined by the writer in the museum of the Iowa Wesleyan College at Mount Pleasant." These two specimens remain in the collection at Iowa Wesleyan College, and were seen recently by the writer. The date on the label of one specimen is August 26, 1884. The catalogue of the University of Iowa Museum contains the entry, "No. 17446, *Ictinia mississippiensis*, Sioux City, Iowa, 7-1-84, D. H. Talbot." Probably this was the Talbot specimen cited by Bennett (1931). However, the specimen cannot now be found. There are no records since 1890.

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DuMont 1933
 pp 46-47