

Mississippi Kite
17 May 1994
Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA
*Jim Fuller
IBL 64:74; 65:81

Record Number: 94-09
Classification: A-D

94-09

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240 [19 Aug 1994]

REFERENCES

- Field Reports: IBL 64:74
- Records Committee: IBL 65:81

VOTE: 7 A-D

- A-D, A male N. Harrier was no eliminated by author, but would have white undertail coverts.
- A-D, Gray body, white head, short bill are all convincing.
- A-D, Coloration and flight indicate Mississippi Kite, but I see no reason to say that this was not a subadult (vs. adult).
- A-D, Combination is diagnostic for this species.
- A-D, Excellent description by observer cautions about other possibilities.

DESCRIPTION: I had been looking for warblers, and was on the way to Hickory Hill Park. I thought was a falcon coming toward me from the west. I watched the bird for the 20-30 seconds time it took to pass over the top of the trees. I marked the location of the sighting. The view was excellent from the side and rear. It was only about 50 feet off the ground, and passed within 20-30 feet of me.

APPEARANCE: The general appearance was that of a falcon which was a little larger than a Merlin or Kestrel. It had very long and pointed wings, and a very long, dark and unmarked tail, which appeared to be barred on the end. From the side and beneath, the tail was pretty much dark gray, except for a whitish head and neck. It also appeared to have a bill; it was so short, I do not recall seeing the upper part at all. Its flight was very direct, though it tended to wheel and vary its altitude a little.

APPEARANCE: Nothing is dark gray with a very dark otherwise unmarked tail. No falcon has an unmarked whitish head and neck. Common Nighthawk is brownish with obvious white wing markings.

APPEARANCE: Swift. Audubon 8.5 X 44 illustrations. Early morning, looking first toward the northwest, then west, and then back toward the east. Distances ranged from 50-300 feet.

APPEARANCE: Seen in Iowa twice, and numerous times in Missouri and Ohio.

APPEARANCE: None were made in the car while watching the bird, and this form was typed on 20 May. The National Geographic field guide was viewed after notes were made.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: MISSISSIPPI KITE (Adult)

LOCATION: Hickory Hill Park, Iowa City

DATE & TIME: 17 May, 1994 (7:45 AM for 20-30 seconds)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa,
52240

OTHERS: None

BACKGROUND: I had been looking for warblers, and was on the way back to my car near the north parking lot at Hickory Hill Park. I noticed what at first I thought was a falcon coming toward me from the northwest. I watched the bird for the 20-30 seconds time it took to pass almost over me and then fly over the line of trees that marked the beginning of the south canyon. The views were excellent from the side and somewhat beneath the bird. It was only about 50 feet off the ground, and passed within 30-40 feet of me.

DESCRIPTION: The general appearance was that of a falcon which would be a little larger than a Merlin or Kestrel. It had very long and pointed wings, and a very long, dark and unmarked tail, which appeared to be squared on the end. From the side and beneath, the bird was pretty nondescript dark gray, except for a whitish head and neck. It also hardly appeared to have a bill it was so short. I do not remember seeing the upperwing at all. Its flight was pretty direct, although it seemed to wheel and vary its altitude a little.

SIMILAR SPECIES: No falcon is dark gray with a very dark otherwise unmarked tail from below, and no falcon has an unmarked whitish head and neck. A Common Nighthawk is brownish with obvious white wing patches from below.

OPTICS & CONDITIONS: Swift Audubon 8.5 X 44 binoculars. Early morning, sunny, looking first toward the northwest, then west, and finally to the south. Distances ranged from 50-300 feet

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Seen in Iowa twice, and numerous times in the south and west.

REFERENCES and FIELD NOTES: Notes were made in the car within a minute after viewing the bird, and this form was typed on 26 May. The National Geographic field guide was viewed after notes were written.