

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Golden Eagle How many? 1 AdultLocation? About 3/4 mi w. of S-62, 1 1/2 mi. n. of B-20, Rock Falls, IowaType of Habitat? Plowed field and pasture with stream through it.When? date(s): May 10, 1992 time: @ 4:00PM to @ 4:05Who? your name and address: Jan L Walter, 934-13th St S.E., Mason City, Ia 50401Others with you: Jim B. WalterOthers 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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We spotted a long winged raptor, larger than a Red-tailed Hawk, above the horizon to the north, perhaps a half mile away. As it slowly soared southward towards us in wide circles, the profile showed the wings in a "slight dihedral," swept up at the tips. When it occasionally flapped its wings a few times, the wing beat was "slow, powerful, but not very deep." A couple times it "kited" very briefly as it was headed northwest into a very strong wind. As it got nearer we noted a "small head, long tail" appearance and "pinched in at the base, slightly bulged out secondaries" shape to the trailing edge of the wings. The color was a uniform "dull, very dark blackish-brown" all over. A few times the "flight feathers" looked "slightly paler" than the "dark underwing linings." Most of the time even this slight contrast was not seen. The bird circled to possibly 1/6 of a mile from us, then, when a truck drove past ^(over).

Similar species; how eliminated: Small head, longer tail, absence of any white in plumage eliminated Bald Eagle. Size much larger than common, familiar Red-tailed Hawk eliminated dark morph buteos as did lack of strong contrast between flight feathers and under wing linings. It did not have the 2-toned under wings, strong dihedral or rocking flight of the Turkey Vulture

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.

Overcast Sky
Distance 1/6 to 1/2 mile (guess)

7x35 and 8x40 Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: We've seen and studied perched and flying Golden Eagles, both adults. Over the past few years, we've seen increasing numbers of Bald Eagles in all plumages during both spring and fall migrations

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Hawks: William S. Clark/Brian K. Wheeler
Hawks in Flight: Pete Dunne, David Sibley, & Clay SuttonHow long before field notes made? Right Away this form completed? Next day

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back to the north and out of sight. At no time during the approximately 5 minutes we watched, did either of us see any white in any part of the plumage. Also we did not see a golden color on the head or nape, but this was possibly due to the overcast sky. We did not hear any call or vocalization.

Others with you: Jim B. Walter

Others before or after you: None

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts, etc. ... it occasionally flapped its wings a few times, the wing beat was slow powerful, but not very deep. A couple times it "flashed" briefly as it was headed northwest into every strand with it. ... got nearer we noted a "small head, long tail" appearance. ... "flushed" in at the base slightly paler than the "dark underwing lining". ... the trailing edge of the wings. The color was a uniform "dark" very dark blackish-brown "all over". A few times the "light feathers" looked "slightly paler" than the "dark underwing lining". ... the time even this slight contrast was not seen. The bird appeared to possibly 1/2 of a mile from us, then when a brown overcast ... similar species: how similar? Small head, long tail, absence of ... in plumage: limited to Bald Eagle. Size: Much larger than ... Common: familiar Red-tailed Hawk eliminated dark wings, but as did lack of strong contrast between light feathers and under wing lining. It did not have the stained under wings and under wing lining. It did not have the strong light of the ... strong dihedral or rousing light of the ...

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No. If yes, explain.

Viewing conditions: fine lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.

Distance to bird (miles/guess) 2.5 and 3.5 to 4.0 miles (guess) Overcast sky

Previous experience with species and similar ones: We've seen and studied ... finding Golden Eagles both adults. Over the past few years we've seen many ... the number of Bald Eagles in all plumages during both spring and fall ... identified and person consulted before writing description: Hawks in flight: Eric Bruner, David S. Day, Clay S. Hall, Hawks: William S. Clark, Brian K. Johnson, How long before field notes made: Right away from completion. Next day

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of form) and label.