

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species Mississippi Kite 2. Number: 1

3. Location ~~Cardinal~~ Cardinal Marsh near Cresco

4. Date: May 29 5. Time Bird seen: 1:05 to 1:45

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Size: about 12-14 inches long wings long and started feet - ~~yellow~~
Color of body and wings: body bluish gray darker on top. Head silverish almost pure white. Eyes black. Beak: Black. 40"
Wings: dark bluish gray with silverish secondaries. 30-~~35~~ inches

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard. Turn over

8. Description of behavior: spectacular maneuvering, such as swooping, soaring, unlike any other hawk I have seen.

9. Habitat - general: similar to a swallows flight. Also catching dragonflies in mid air with talons.
specific: marshy area bordered with woodlands.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
merganser falcon: has black mustache and stoops unlike kite.
Merlin - flies with steadily flapping and has smaller wingspan
Marsh Hawk - has white rump patch.

1. Distance (how measured)? About 50 yards at closest. distance was judged by sight. 12. Optical equipment: 7 to 10 power binoculars, 20x60 scope

3. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): mostly cloudy with sun appearing shortly while watching bird. Was behind our backs.

4. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: No experience with this species.

5. Other observers: Tom L. Stone Jr., Tom L. Stone, Russ Hayes, Frank Moore, Ted Stone, Eleanor Corwin, Lois Sherman, Antoinette Cameron.

6. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes. Everyone.

7. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Tom Stone Jr., Tom Stone, Russ Hayes, Frank Moore.

8. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Birds of North America by Robbin and Singer had best description and best.
Birds of Eastern North America by Roger Long Peterson

9. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? Two days

Signature Tom Stone Jr. + Sen. Address: 1632 Woodmays Dr.

Date: 5/31/78 City, State: Waterloo, Iowa

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, there really is no need to describe your observations in writing. But, if you have seen something unusual and want to share this experience with others, a written description is essential. It is true your immediate friends who know and respect your ability probably will accept your report without question, but what about those who do not know you, particularly the bird students 100 years from now who cannot know you? Also, what about the habitual skeptics? And most importantly, what about the compilers of regional bird lists who probably will insist that records be scientifically sound? All these critics will investigate your observation not because they assume you are wrong, but merely because they ordinarily expect verification. Whether the individual demanding verification realizes it or not, in doing so, he is employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

If your observation involves a common species during a season of abundance, verification is achieved simply by returning there again in season. If, however, the observation involves a rare species, or a common species out of season, verification is not obtained easily and special documentation is necessary. The best documentation is a collected specimen, and many bird students insist this is the only acceptable evidence. However, others recognize the importance and reliability of sight records accumulated by the experienced field observer, and maintain that even extraordinary sight records are acceptable if accompanied by an adequate verifying description.

It must be emphasized that a request for documentation is not an affront, but an effort to perpetuate a record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for all to examine. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation irrespective of the observer.

It should also be pointed out that with the great photographic equipment now available, species identification from photographs are possible. Such species documentation are highly desirable and should be sent to the state editors or to large museums.

Description of Tail: Black, underside light Gray with three black bands. Seems to be ^{the} between stage of an ~~immature~~ immature bird and an Adult bird. The rest of the body of bird look like an adult. Except for the underside of the tail.