

Goshawk - 1

26 November 1983

John Wilson farm, NE Mills County, Ia.

Description: Blue Jay called, Juncos + Tree Sparrows flew into a tree, + a largish hawk flew ~~at low~~ low over oak trees over me, flying quickly + not soaring. Rounded wings, long rounded tail. Uniformly gray ~~on~~ underparts with a small pattern. White tip on tail. Looking up from not-quite-underneath it, I saw a dark patch on face contrasting strongly with the gray throat + lower face. I thought this was a dark cap, but consulting a book suggests this was the dark side of the face.

Similar species: Tail too long + flight too quick + direct for a Red-tail. Wings rounded - not a falcon. Young accipiter (+ many buteos) would be streaked below. Adult accipiters, ^{of other kinds} would be barred below, but reddish or brown, not gray. Marsh Hawk would fly with a more leisurely pace + have longer wings. As I saw it, identifications went clicking through my brains one after another. Red tail? No ... Marsh Hawk! - No ... Coopers Hawk! Yed - no - its gray! I certainly did not expect a Goshawk.

Viewing conditions: Overcast. Bird fairly close + NNW of me when I saw it first, going SSE right over me. 8x

binoculars, + at its closest the bird more than filled the field of view. A brief view, but not instantaneous; about as good a look as one gets of accipiters. I've only seen one Goshawk before; in NE Iowa last fall. No fieldguides used.

Written 29 November from notes taken right after the sighting Nov. 26.

- Barbara L Wilson
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