

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Goshawk 2. Number: one
  3. Location Big Creek, Polk Co, Iowa
  4. Date: 15 Feb 1982 5. Time Bird seen: abt 20 min's in afternoon
  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):  
First seen flying; crow plus size; nearly white underneath; gray above; long tail. When first perched, with binoculars, saw gray back and wings. Flew off to several different trees in succession. Finally we got back to the car and found it down the road in a dead tree. With spotting scope at about 125 yds - pale gray beneath with some very narrow striping on breast; gray wings and back; head dark with very wide white eye brow stripe.  
First seen to west then south west then south.
  7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
  8. Description of behavior: flapped wings in a 'floppy' manner - difficult to describe. When last seen it flew out of dead tree about fifty feet then suddenly went straight
  9. Habitat - general: fields and patches of down into gully.  
specific: forest.
  10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
When first saw it thot of Marsh Hawk. did not have prominent white rump of Marsh Hawk. Marsh Hawk doesn't have the wide white eye brow stripe on very dark head. Wings wider than on Marsh Hawk. much larger than other accipiters. Other accipiters don't have wide white eye brow stripe.
  11. Distance (how measured)? closest around 125 yds 12. Optical equipment:  
'guestimate' 25 X spotting scope
  13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
bright hazy; at first bird north of sun later moved to south; haze really thick.
  14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
never saw Goshawk before
  15. Other observers:  
Hank Zalatel
  16. Did the others agree with your identification?  
Hank did.
  17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
none that I know of
  18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
A Field Guide to the Birds - Peterson  
Birds of America - Golden Press  
I've tried to put down only what I actually saw.
  19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
About four hours; typed it much later of course - didn't have form.
- Signature [Handwritten Signature] Address: 1120 Marston
- Date: 1 March 82 City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010