

Goshawk sighting along the Rock River, Oct. 16, 1982

Saturday afternoon, Oct. 16, my wife and I along with several others were canoeing the Rock River between Doon and Rock Valley. It was a beautiful autumn day with lighting conditions excellent for birding since alto-stratus clouds were diffusing the sunlight to make "soft" lighting conditions. The particular stretch of river traveled was well bordered with trees on both sides of the river giving an impression of exclusion from nearby agricultural land

At approximately 3:00 PM. a large grey hawk came flying downstream toward us while we were drifting backwards in the current. As it flew past us approximately 10 feet above the water and 25 feet to our side where we could clearly see a dark cheek patch, unbanded grey breast and dark dorsal surface. Since the hawk was moving fast I did not have a chance to see it through my binoculars. I have been birding for 10 years and have seen Coopers and Sharp-shinned Hawks and during this trip an Osprey and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. This hawk was not the Coopers because of the larger size and unbanded breast. The cheek patch was also clearly discernable from our vantage point albeit brief. Since the hawk was flying low to the side of us with the soft afternoon light to our back and on the hawk there was no imagining of the field marks described.

As for additional credentials to being a "birder" I have a Master's Degree in biology which included a graduate level course in ornithology. I hope that this documentation will alert birders to the possibility of Goshawks occasionally migrating down river channels out of the view of most birders.

Gordon Brand. This report was made Oct. 16, 1982

*Gordon Brand*