

DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTAL SPECIES

Species: Mississippi Kite, Ictinia mississippiensis

Date and Time: 20 June 1993, 9:30-10:00 a.m.

Location: Clive (7660 Harbach), Polk County, Iowa

Description:

Two adults in the same site for third straight year. This year the first bird arrived about 14 May and the second followed sometime between mid-May and mid-June, per Fred Crane. Medium-sized raptors observed as close as 20-30 feet for half an hour with the naked eye and 10x40 binocular. Pale ashy-gray head and underparts. Rounded head with dark mask around red eye. Small, short beak with long hook at tip. Back dark gray. Tail and long folded primaries black. Distinct silvery-white secondaries.

The birds perched near each other on dead snags and frequently took flight alone or together. On one occasion the male stooped over 50 feet to land on the perched female's back and they copulated. In flight, wings long and pointed with abbreviated 1st primary. Tail with very shallow notch at tip. High-pitched squeal and whistled notes given several times as birds perched and flew about. Fred Crane reported seeing one of the birds carrying nest material on 18 June.

Past Experience:

I have many years experience with Mississippi Kite as a common migrant and rare nester in southeastern Texas. With a good look such as this, the adults are unmistakable.

--Randy Pinkston
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